

## **Housing Strategy 2010- 2025**

**Providing housing choices that meet the  
needs and aspirations of Barnet residents**

**March 2010**

		<i>Page</i>
<b>1.</b>	Introduction – Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration	<b>2</b>
<b>2.</b>	Executive summary	<b>3</b>
<b>3.</b>	Increasing housing supply, including family sized homes, to improve the range of housing choices and opportunities available to residents	<b>6</b>
<b>4.</b>	Improving the condition and sustainability of the existing housing stock	<b>12</b>
<b>5.</b>	Promoting mixed communities	<b>16</b>
<b>6.</b>	Maximising the options available for those wishing to own their home	<b>19</b>
<b>7.</b>	Providing housing related support options that maximise the independence of residents	<b>21</b>
<b>8.</b>	Providing excellent value services that exceed residents expectations	<b>28</b>
<b>9.</b>	Borough investment plan	<b>31</b>
<b>10.</b>	Appendices Corporate priorities Barnet Policy Map Equality impact assessment Consultation Action plan	<b>33</b> <b>34</b> <b>35</b> <b>37</b> <b>38</b>
<b>11.</b>	Contact	<b>41</b>

## 1. Barnet Housing Strategy - Introduction

I am happy to welcome this new strategy as it takes forward housing provision in a changing market and funding environment.

It is remarkable how we have been able to take our regeneration programme forward in spite of the recession. However, it is disappointing that investment funds have not been as available as we expected and that progress has been impaired. We look forward to moving ahead further, producing mixed tenure districts that reflect the aspirations of the community. The mixed tenure will provide exemplars for those who may have become dependant on the state and trapped in deprivation. The aim must be that we respond to recent research and help residents who want to move from rented homes up the ladder into the independence of owner occupation.



**Councillor Richard Cornelius**  
**Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration**

## 2. Barnet Housing Strategy - Executive summary

### Introduction

Barnet's Housing Strategy was last reviewed in 2006/7, when the council identified the importance of the *housing journey*, recognising the role that different housing tenures have to play in meeting housing need and aspiration at different points in peoples' lives, often starting with renting and culminating in ownership, which the majority aspire to. Whilst the housing journey is still relevant, significant change has occurred that means a new strategy is now necessary. In particular, there are three new elements that the Housing Strategy needs to address:

Firstly, a new London Mayor has been elected and he has produced a new Housing Strategy for London that the council needs to take account of in its own plans. In addition, in October 2009 the Mayor launched the consultation draft replacement plan (the London Plan) which will provide a new strategic framework for planning in London when it is finalised in 2011. We are producing a new planning framework for Barnet known as the Local Development Framework (LDF) which will replace the Unitary Development Plan by 2012. An important part of the LDF evidence base is the Strategic Housing Market Assessment of housing needs and requirements in Barnet and neighbouring areas.

Secondly, there has been a fundamental change in the way that investment in the housing market will operate in future following the severe economic and housing market downturn that started in 2008 and subsequent recession. This means that the investment models that we previously expected to deliver new housing and our wider regeneration plans can no longer be relied upon to provide the best outcome. Public investment in housing is likely to be significantly reduced over the coming decade. Barnet is committed to exploring new and innovative investment models that will deliver new homes and increase the housing choices available to residents. These include joint venture vehicles, special purpose or local asset backed vehicles (LABVs) and working with institutional investors to develop new and high quality private rented housing. This approach is also expected to provide some major contributions of resources to invest in the existing housing stock and bring it up to a modern standard.

Thirdly, the council has undertaken a major review of its strategic direction called **Future Shape**. Since 2002/3, Barnet has received amongst the lowest rate support grant settlements of any local authority in the country; in 3 of those 6 years the council has been on the 'Grant Floor' – only the government's damping mechanism preventing a negative grant settlement. At the same time, the council has become a high performing council as judged by the Audit Commission, and currently receives the top possible score for its Environment, Housing Benefit, and Community Housing services. Despite this improvement, resident satisfaction has remained stubbornly static: although high, other councils have begun to catch up.

In response, the Future Shape proposals seek a new relationship with citizens based on a better understanding of their aspirations and needs, as well as to provide more seamless services combined with a relentless drive to improve efficiency across the public sector in the borough.

The Housing Service has always and continues to be at the forefront of such approaches. In 2002/3 the council accepted over 1000 households as homeless, and experienced widespread dissatisfaction in the way it let council property to housing applicants. The advent of the Housing Options approach has radically changed this landscape: in 2008/9 only 325 households became homeless but more importantly we re-housed more people

in housing need in the private rented sector than in council or Housing Association homes. We believe this may be a first for an urban housing authority, representing an important shift away from the traditional view that social housing is the only suitable option for people in housing need, when the private rented sector can provide flexibility and choice, as well as meeting housing aspirations in many cases. Research into the housing needs of black and ethnic minorities in North London has revealed that whilst social housing may meet a need by providing a stepping stone on the housing journey, it is not what the majority of people aspire to, and that given the choice, most would rather own their home. These shifting public expectations require us to consider hard both the housing choices we facilitate for local people, and the value of our Housing Register that is open to all, regardless of housing need, as a means of managing housing demand.

### **Barnet the Place**

Covering 86.7 square km, Barnet covers a large geographical area stretching from Chipping Barnet in the North to Cricklewood in the South, and from Edgware in the West to Brunswick Park in the East. Barnet is a very attractive place to live and work, with large amounts of high quality greenbelt land, parks and open spaces, popular and high performing schools and good transport links. There are pockets of deprivation, particularly in the west of the borough which provide the focus for our regenerations plans. Barnet also has the capacity on a number of large brown field sites, to deliver significant numbers of new homes, this will, however, require substantial investment in infrastructure if development is to go ahead.

### **Objectives**

The popularity of the borough and the high demand this has created for housing presents a number of challenges, including high prices, a shortage of affordable housing and a potential threat to the qualities that make the borough attractive in the form of pressure to replace more traditional suburban houses with flatted developments. There are also other areas, particularly in the West of the borough that provide opportunities for significant transformation and regeneration without damaging successful suburban areas. The council has embraced these challenges through its regeneration agenda as expressed at a strategic level in the Three Strands Approach, which seeks to **Protect** and **Enhance** the qualities that make Barnet attractive, whilst recognising the need to accommodate **Growth** where appropriate and particularly as a means of improving less successful parts of the borough. There is potential within Barnet to deliver an additional 31,000<sup>1</sup> new homes over the next 15 years as set out in the emerging Barnet Local Development Framework Core Strategy and in line with existing London Plan targets. A key objective for the Housing Strategy is therefore:

**“Increasing housing supply, including family sized homes, to improve the range of housing choices and opportunities available to residents”**

Much of Barnet’s housing is characteristically classic interwar suburban –with some 60% of the housing stock comprising houses, two thirds of which are detached or semi-detached. This type of housing remains extremely popular but provides challenges in terms of ensuring it meets modern standards, particularly for energy efficiency. In addition, the council provides some 11,000 properties for social rent, which have benefited from an investment of £189m since 2004 through the Decent Homes programme – these will require ongoing investment to ensure that they are maintained to a good standard and

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<sup>1</sup> Including vacant units being brought back into used, non self contained units such as student housing and small windfall sites.

further improved to meet resident's expectations. A key objective for the strategy is therefore:

**“Improving the condition and sustainability of the existing housing stock”**

The tenure of choice in Barnet is owner occupation, with two thirds of households owning their home and about half of owners owning outright. The remaining third of households are divided equally between social renting and the private rented sector, with the latter playing an increasingly important role in meeting housing need in the borough. In 2008 the council secured more property for housing applicants in the private rented sector than in the combined housing association and council sectors. We believe this may be a first for an urban local authority; it has huge significance for the council and its ALMO, Barnet Homes, in terms of providing a desirable housing choice in the next decade. The council's housing strategy update 2007 recognised that the affordable housing sector would never be able to meet the housing needs identified in Barnet's 2006 Housing Needs Survey, and that anyway most people aspired to own their own home. We believe that more use needs to be made of the private rented sector to reduce the numbers of people living in temporary accommodation combined with providing wider access to social housing through a local lettings policy to promote more mixed communities - key objectives for our strategy are therefore:

**“Promoting mixed communities and Maximising opportunities available for those wishing to own their home”**

Barnet is generally a prosperous place but there are significant vulnerable and disadvantaged groups particularly located in the west of the borough, and potentially increasing pressures associated with the growth that is taking place. Our Local Area Agreement identifies **Tackling Disadvantage** as a priority and the council's Corporate Plan includes an objective of **Promoting Independence**. The number of older people living in the borough is expected to increase at a much greater rate than the rest of the population, and we have developed proposals to modernise the housing related support available to older residents. In addition, whilst the number of people becoming homeless has reduced, this has not been the case with young people under 25 years old. Whilst Barnet has historically enjoyed relatively low levels of unemployment, the recession has seen increases in numbers claiming benefits, and young people not working and not in education. Unemployment is much higher amongst council and housing association tenants, and we will work with our partners to address this complicated issue. A key objective for our strategy is therefore:

**“Providing housing related support options that maximise the independence of residents”**

The council is directly responsible for providing services to people in the borough who need housing advice or are homeless, and households in the private sector who need adaptations. In addition, Barnet Homes have been appointed to manage the council's housing stock comprising 11,000 tenants and 4,000 leaseholders. It is important that the services we provide represent excellent value for money, meet high standards and the expectations of residents. We also want to ensure that we work closely with partners such as private landlords and housing associations to ensure that the best possible services are delivered in the borough. A key objective for our strategy is therefore:

**"Providing excellent value services that exceed residents expectations”**

### 3. Increasing housing supply, including family sized homes, to improve the range of housing choices and opportunities available to residents

Barnet is a successful place where people want to live and work, which is reflected in high property prices. The population is set to grow by some 60,000 people from 331,500 in 2008 to 361,000 by 2016 and to 394,000 by 2031. The council's emerging Local Development Framework Core Strategy, which sets out planning priorities for Barnet, has identified capacity for 28,000 new homes that can be delivered by 2026 to accommodate this increase in population. This is reflected in the current London Plan targets (see below).

Our analysis has shown that since 2008 when the housing market downturn started, prices in Barnet have fallen relatively little, with the main difficulty being a shortage of funding for mortgages. This has meant that whilst housing market activity has reduced, the underlying demand has remained strong both amongst people already living here, but also those wishing to come to the area. Unlike other parts of London, the market for low cost home ownership has remained buoyant.

We are undertaking a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which will identify future housing requirements for all types of housing in Barnet for the coming 5 years. Draft results from the SHMA suggest that there is a need for 650 new homes a year once household formation and migration in and out of the borough are taken into account. This is significantly lower than the existing annual London Plan target of 1960 for Barnet, which the Mayor has indicated he wishes to increase further to 2225 in the new draft London Plan, and reflects the council's position of having the capacity to deliver more housing than is needed locally and making a significant contribution to London's overall growth as a Successful London Suburb and Opportunity Borough<sup>2</sup>.

We recognise that Barnet's popularity and success as a place means that developers will continue to see it as an excellent place to invest, meaning that growth is inevitable and requires a robust and ambitious strategic framework to ensure that the character of the borough is maintained and improved. To ensure that Barnet continues to be a successful London suburb, the council has put in place its *Three Strands Approach* which is designed to **Protect** the Green Belt and **Enhance** the classic suburban environment whilst accommodating **Growth** in areas of the borough that have the capacity to support it.

#### The Three Strands Approach

- **Protecting** the 'green lungs' of Barnet and north London provided by the Green Belt and valuable open spaces...
- **Enhancing** the classic suburbs, conservation areas and vibrant town centres while there is...
- **Growth**, as new communities are formed in areas of the borough undergoing regeneration and strategic development, particularly in the west of the borough within the new strategic North West London- Luton- Bedford growth corridor

<sup>2</sup> The London Opportunity Boroughs are boroughs in London which are recognised as having high housing targets, but are not included in a Growth Area. To recognise their contribution to housing supply, Barnet, Brent and Islington were designated as London Opportunity Boroughs in 2006, and given access to growth funding as a result.

## Regeneration and strategic development

A great deal of housing growth in Barnet will be delivered through our ambitious programme of regeneration and strategic development, which includes our four largest council estates, and wider areas such as Colindale, Brent Cross/Cricklewood and Mill Hill East. Therefore growth is focused on the parts of the borough that have the capacity to accommodate it and will benefit from regeneration without damaging the quality of classic suburban areas elsewhere. Good progress has been made in drawing up the planning frameworks to take forward this agenda, with the planning framework adopted in the form of Mill Hill East Area Action Plan (AAP) in January 2009, and Colindale AAP was adopted in March 2010. Outline Planning permission for Brent Cross Cricklewood was agreed by the council in November 2009. More importantly, in spite of the recession new homes are being built at Stonegrove, Grahame Park and Mill Hill East.

The SHMA will provide us with information about the variety of accommodation tenures and sizes needed to ensure that residents are able to rent or purchase high quality homes that meet their aspirations and needs. An affordable housing viability study is also underway, and this will identify the amount of affordable housing for rent and sale that can be delivered in Barnet.

Our estate regeneration schemes will see the dismantling of our largest mono tenure council estates which have proved to be unpopular and limiting in terms of opportunities for residents living on them. These failing post war estates, Grahame Park, West Hendon, Stonegrove/Spur Road and Dollis Valley will be replaced by mixed tenure estates with new social housing, but also opportunities for entry level and market home ownership.

Whilst the downturn in the housing market has proved to be a significant challenge to maintaining progress for our regeneration plans, we have succeeded in mitigating this by working closely with our partners, including developers and the Homes and Communities Agency. Kick Start funding has been secured from the HCA enabling the next phase of construction to go ahead at Stonegrove/Spur Road which will provide 117 new homes, and we anticipate a start on site at West Hendon in June 2010. Work on the first major phase of building work on 161 new homes has also started at Grahame Park. Dollis Valley has proved to be the biggest challenge, and we have now started the process of seeking a development partner to take this scheme forward.

Looking beyond our existing regeneration plans, we recognise that there is a need to start considering a wider regeneration and enterprise strategy that brings together requirements for transport, skills and employment and housing based around Barnet's existing town centres where there are opportunities for growth, such as Finchley Central, and Edgware. In some areas, for example, there are opportunities to reinvigorate the local area by supporting redevelopment of under used office space for residential and other viable mixed uses. We have already started working with local traders to improve the experience of shoppers and increase the use of town centre shops and facilities.

The HCA is a major partner in delivering new housing in the borough, and we are in the process of preparing a local investment plan, which will identify how our priorities for growth and investment will be delivered with their support; this will lead to a Borough Investment Agreement being in place by March 2010 which will be a significant business and implementation plan to drive the housing and regeneration programme.

## Investment and innovation

We recognise that the changed economic conditions mean that public investment in housing is likely to reduce significantly over the next few years. We are exploring more innovative ways of increasing housing investment in the borough, including investment and delivery vehicles in partnership with developers and investors, and potential models for encouraging institutional investment in the private rented sector. This will help to deliver a greater variety of housing options available in the borough in a way that is less likely to depend on the public purse.

If we are to successfully deliver large numbers of new homes, it is essential that the new enabling infrastructure such as schools, transport and other local services, is in place to accommodate the increased population. The Barnet Financing Plan, or '**Barnet Bond**', is our response to funding infrastructure investment. Within a defined area, the plan uses the marginal uplift in revenues generated by growth, such as National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) in commercial properties, increased transport fares and Formula Grant as a ring fenced income stream to repay borrowing for investment that enables that growth to occur. In this way Barnet is both investing in success and, through retaining revenues generated by this growth, seeking to provide the infrastructure necessary to support it in a sustainable way. Barnet is a member of the Government led Core Cities Group to develop this concept and have submitted a proposal to the Government to use Colindale as a pathfinder for this approach. Only the NNDR element of the Barnet Bond approach will require regulatory change by government.

## Quality homes and family sized accommodation

It is essential that new homes built are well-designed places where people will want to live and stay, and proposals will be expected to meet Building for Life standards. Through a partnership led by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the Home Builders Federation, the Building for Life website<sup>3</sup> sets out 20 criteria which provide a national standard for well designed homes and neighbourhoods, covering Environment and Community, Character, Streets, Parking and Pedestrianisation and Design and Construction.

In addition, the London Mayor has published a draft Housing Design Guide setting out internal space standards that new homes will be expected to meet as well as addressing external quality issues such as outdoor amenity space and reducing opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour.

The council recognises the contribution that existing family sized units, particularly houses make to the character and cohesiveness of Barnet and we will seek to protect them through our planning policies, as well as seeking larger units as part of new developments. Further evidence of the need for family sized units is provided by a significant increase in the birth rate in Barnet since 2001 and a predicted 24% increase in the need for primary school places by 2019. This means that suitable housing and an expansion of school places will need to be built into our plans. Flatted developments with smaller units will be targeted at those areas where they have a positive impact and provide affordable starter homes of special needs housing and accommodate the "missing generation" of younger local people who would like to stay in Barnet, such as in the regeneration areas and town centres. To help ensure that enough family sized homes are delivered, we aim to ensure

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.buildingforlife.org/>

that 70% of all new homes have at least 2 bedrooms, and we will develop more specific targets for other bedroom sizes with in this through planning policy.

Our affordable housing supplementary planning document (SPD) published in February 2007, sets out our preferred mix of sizes of new affordable homes for new affordable rented housing including 50% of social rented housing to be 3 or 4 bedrooms. Providing larger intermediate homes represents more of a challenge but we will seek to provide family sized homes as a low cost homeownership option where this is possible. The affordable housing SPD reflects the current London Plan ratio of 70:30 between social rented and intermediate housing, we recognise that the current London Mayor is seeking to move to a 60:40 ratio and we support this.

## Sustainability

We recognise the need to reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions in the borough, and that this has to be approached through behavioural change by public services, citizens and businesses, with the council providing a leadership role. Reducing our environmental impact whilst supporting growth is a major challenge, which we are addressing on a number of fronts:

- The council has put in place a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Sustainable Design and Construction which sets out our requirements for environmental design and construction management. The SPD sets out requirements on air, noise, water and habitat quality in order to achieve protection and enhancement of the environment. It also sets out requirements on energy, water, waste and materials in order to achieve the prudent use of natural resources. All new properties will be required to meet Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes<sup>4</sup>, and the council is encouraging the use of modern technologies such as combined heat and power (CHP) and combined cooling heat and power (CCHP) on new housing developments in the boroughs growth areas such as at Colindale and Mill Hill East.
- A local environmental policy – A Greener City Suburb 2008/9 – 2011/12 provides local leadership, and the council has also published a Carbon Emissions Reduction Plan and is working closely with the Energy Saving Trust to promote sustainable energy use and encourage action on climate change amongst the community.
- Compulsory recycling has been introduced across the whole borough

Section 4 deals with the sustainability of the existing housing stock in Barnet.

## Overcrowding and making best use of existing stock

Whilst Barnet does not suffer from the levels of severe overcrowding<sup>5</sup> that are experienced elsewhere in the Capital, there are nevertheless 437 households on the council's Housing Register who are short of 2 or more bedrooms to meet their needs. The 2006 Housing needs survey estimated that there are an estimated 38,000 households who are under occupying larger properties – many of whom are older people whose families have grown up. By ensuring that new homes meet the Lifetime Homes standard<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/buildingregulations/legislation/codesustainable/>

<sup>5</sup> Families living in accommodation with at least 2 fewer bedrooms than they need.

<sup>6</sup> Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society – Communities & Local Government Feb 08

and increasing the housing choices available for the elderly, we expect that some older owner occupiers will opt to move into smaller more manageable accommodation, freeing up larger properties. In addition, we already operate a successful *trade down* scheme to help council tenants under - occupying larger units move to smaller flats freeing up homes for larger families who need them.

The council recognises the value family accommodation; particularly houses have in meeting housing need choice in the borough. A draft design guidance note has been prepared which seeks to deliver alterations and extensions to such property in manner that reflects the growing need of Barnet's diverse communities whilst protecting its high quality suburban environment.

### **Achievements**

- Housing Supply increased by 968 units in 2008/9
- 512 Affordable homes provided in 2008/9
- Stonegrove Estate-62 new homes completed and a further 117 on site
- Grahame Park –building work started on 161 new homes
- West Hendon ready to proceed in Jan 2010 subject to kick start funding
- Mill Hill East Area Action Plan adopted January 2009
- Colindale Area Action Plan adopted by March 2010
- Colindale Area Action Plan EIP November 2009
- Outline Planning Application for Brent Cross/Cricklewood agreed November 2009
- Barnet financing plan – detailed proposals submitted to central government
- £ 142 million has been secured from the Homes and Communities Agency to deliver affordable housing schemes in the borough for the period 2008-11
- 172 overcrowded households re-housed in 2008/9
- 65 *trade downs* achieved

### **Targets**

#### **2010- 2012**

- Net housing supply increased by 1388 between April 2010 and March 2011 as part of our Local Area Agreement to increase net housing supply by 3506 between April 2008 and March 2011
- Net housing supply increased by 1400 between April 2011 and March 2012
- 70% of net increase in housing supply to be suitable for families<sup>7</sup>
- 495 affordable homes in 2010/11 as part of our Local Area Agreement commitment to deliver 1160 affordable homes between April 2008 and March 2011
- 700 affordable homes provided between April 2011 and March 2012
- Continue to work with Government on a pilot TIF project in Colindale
- Develop the. Barnet Finance Plan on a wider borough infrastructure basis to support Barnet's continuing growth and regeneration
- Local Development Framework Core Strategy in place during 2011
- Complete affordable housing viability study June 2010
- Borough Investment Plan in place by March 2010
- Borough Investment Agreement in place by March 2011

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<sup>7</sup> This means at least 2 bedrooms

- New Homes<sup>8</sup> delivered on regeneration schemes and through strategic development
  - Colindale (inc Grahame Park) - 551
  - West Hendon - 173
  - Stonegrove/Spur Road – 214
  - Mill Hill East - 180
- Development partner in place for regeneration of Dollis Valley
- 87 *trade downs* in 2010/11
- 220 overcrowded households re-housed in 2010/11

### **2013-2018**

- Net housing supply increased by 12000 between April 2012 and March 2018
- 5000 affordable homes provided between April 2012 and March 2018
- New Homes<sup>9</sup> delivered through regeneration and strategic development
  - Colindale (inc Grahame Park) - 5887
  - West Hendon - 630
  - Stonegrove/Spur Road – 155
  - Mill Hill East – 1264
  - Dollis Valley 250
  - Brent Cross Cricklewood – 1138
  - North London Business Park - 250

### **By 2026**

- 31,000<sup>10</sup> new homes provided including an appropriate mix of tenures
- Regeneration of Stonegrove, Grahame Park, West Hendon and Dollis Valley completed
- Brent Cross Cricklewood completed to provide 7,500 homes and a new town centre

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<sup>8</sup> Net

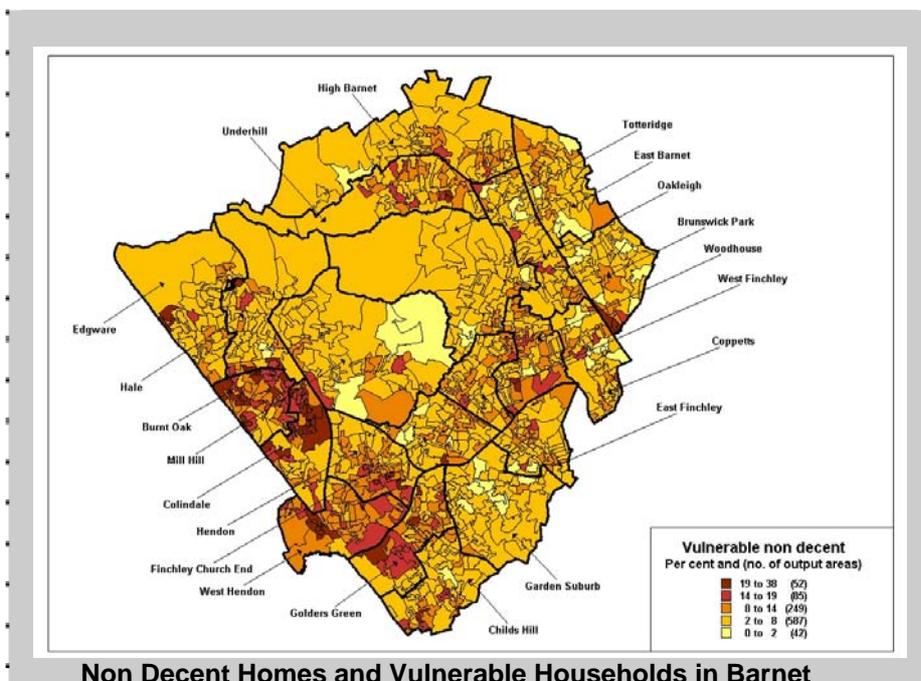
<sup>9</sup> Net

<sup>10</sup> Including vacant units being brought back into used, non self contained units such as student housing and small windfall sites.

## 4. Improving the condition and sustainability of the existing housing stock

The council recognises that maintaining and improving the existing housing stock in the borough is just as important as providing new homes. Whilst the majority of the stock in the borough is attractive and sought after, there are issues associated with its age as 66%<sup>11</sup> of the Barnet's housing stock was built before 1944 (compared to 40%<sup>12</sup> in Great Britain as a whole).

Analysis carried out for the council by the Building Research Establishment (BRE), shows that there is work required to improve the condition of the borough's housing stock. The analysis shows that whilst there is a spread of homes across Barnet that fail the Decent Homes standard, those that are occupied by vulnerable households are predominately found in the west of the borough.



The main reasons for failure in the private housing sector identified through the BRE analysis are:

Reason	Properties
Inadequate thermal comfort	21,825
Health and Safety Rating System Category 1 Hazard <sup>13</sup>	22,138
Suffering from disrepair	9,669
Un-modernised facilities (e.g. kitchen, bathroom)	2,819
SAP rating of less than 35	14,304

Our approach will be to encourage owners to improve their homes using their own resources in the majority of cases, with public expenditure being targeted at less well off households, particularly families with children, older people and those with long term illnesses or disabilities.

Additionally, working with the North London housing sub-region we have obtained funding for Barnet of £794,000 to enable us improve private sector homes occupied by vulnerable households to the Decent Homes Standard. Further bids will be submitted for subsequent years.

<sup>11</sup> Source – LB Barnet Private Sector Stock Condition Report 2001

<sup>12</sup> Source - General Household Survey, Office for National Statistics 1998-99

<sup>13</sup> *Housing Health and Safety Rating System* [www.clg.gov.uk](http://www.clg.gov.uk)

## Decent Homes programme and beyond

The Decent Homes programme is on track to deliver significant improvements to the council's housing stock. By the end of 2010/11 we will have invested £185m since April 2004 to provide

- 1992 new bathrooms
- 4441 new kitchens
- 3635 window replacements
- 2007 new heating systems
- 210 new roofs
- 5148 electrical upgrades

Beyond 2010, we aim to continue to maintain and improve council homes to a standard higher than Decent Homes. We have expressed our support for the Government's proposals to dismantle the current national council housing subsidy system, to which Barnet tenants contribute £11m of their rent a year, and move to a locally self financing arrangement. Provided this is done without creating an unsustainable amount of debt, we believe this will enable us to provide enough money to continue to improve the stock in line with residents' expectations and to high environmental standards.

Working with Barnet Homes, we have identified that the council's Housing stock will require £165m worth of investment over the next 10 years. Under the present subsidy system, this leaves a gap of £40m which could not be supported through borrowing. We recognise that the move to a system of self financing may not be implemented as quickly as we would like, and are working with Barnet Homes (including consultation with tenants and leaseholders) to ensure that council tenants' homes continue to receive the level of investment necessary to maintain them to the Decent Homes standard.

## Sustainability

The investment in the council's housing stock has seen improvements in the fuel efficiency of council homes, with an increase in the SAP rating from 64 to 70 since 2004. In addition, in 2008 Barnet Homes carried out a comprehensive retrofit of a 1930s built council house, which enabled an evaluation of a variety of measures that can be implemented to reduce carbon emissions. Barnet Homes are now working with United House to carry out environmentally friendly improvements to a block of 20 flats, which will act as a pilot for extending this work to the council's housing stock more widely.

We recognise that the wider housing stock in the borough has a relatively high level of carbon emissions compared to the London average, and we have operated a private sector decent homes programme targeted at vulnerable households, which has seen 871 homes provided with measures to reduce fuel poverty, such as insulation, and improvements to heating systems. We will continue to target the resources available to us at the most vulnerable households in the private sector. We recognise that doing more than encouraging self sufficient private owners to invest in energy efficiency measures to their homes is a challenge that needs to be tackled in partnership with regional and national government.

The council is at the forefront of developing new approaches to encouraging residents to make changes to their behaviour that will be of benefit to the environment. A pilot scheme

in partnership with Futerra<sup>14</sup> was trialled in Finchley in 2009 providing information on a face to face basis to residents on how small changes to their behaviour could reduce their carbon footprint, and seeking pledges from them to take action, such as reducing their central heating thermostat setting. However, the high level of householder planning applications in Barnet is an indication of the level of work being carried out on the borough's housing stock, and provides scope for working with owners to focus on improving energy efficiency as part of wider home improvement works.

A step we have already taken is the retrofitting a council house as an exemplar of energy efficiency measures that can be installed, including heating improvements and insulation. This work has achieved recognition in the 'big green home improvement category' for existing domestic properties at the National Home Improvement Council's Awards. We are also exploring the potential for a scheme operated by Eaga renewables to install solar panels across the council's housing stock.



**The eco house**

### Empty homes

At the end of March 2009, Barnet had 2020 private dwellings that had been empty for more than six months. At 1.7% of the private housing stock, this is a relatively high when compared to the London average of 1.2%. We recognise that there are legitimate reasons for homes being empty, for example whilst probate is being resolved. We would like, however, to ensure that the borough's housing stock is fully utilised and will encourage owners to keep their properties occupied. To achieve this we intend to limit the discretionary discount of Council tax for properties that have been empty for more than six months with effect from April 2011. In addition, we will offer advice and assistance to owners who wish to bring empty properties back into use and continue to provide a range of opportunities for owners to let homes to people in housing need who approach the council for help through our private sector leasing scheme and the *Homechoice*<sup>15</sup> scheme. In cases where a long term empty property is poorly maintained and the owner will not work with the Council to bring the property back into residential use the appropriate enforcement action will be taken. Since March 2008 fifteen properties have been approved by the Council for compulsory purchase action to be commenced, which in all cases has prompted owners to improve their properties.

#### Achievements

- Non decent council homes reduced from 53% to 16% between April 2006 and March 2009
- SAP rating measuring fuel efficiency of council homes increased from 64 to 70 between 2004 and 2008
- Fuel efficiency improvements to 871 homes in the private sector under decent homes programmed including:

<sup>14</sup> Futerra is a sustainability communications agency [www.futerra.co.uk](http://www.futerra.co.uk)

<sup>15</sup> *Homechoice* provides a rent guarantee for new tenants but the owner manages the property, whereas private sector leasing is where the council leases a property from the owner and manages it.

- Improved insulation (570 properties)
- Full central heating systems (193)
- Replacement boiler (302)
- Eco home retrofit demonstrated Autumn 2008 and award received from National Home Improvement council in 2009

## **Targets**

### **2010- 2012**

- Complete the Decent Homes programme for council homes by December 2010
- Investment strategy for council housing stock in place by Autumn 2010
- In the private sector 135 owner-occupied homes occupied by vulnerable households brought up to the decent homes standard plus 21 brought up to the thermal comfort standard and 123 with serious (category 1) health and safety
- Review the financial options offered to assist home owners in maintaining their homes
- Thirty properties returned to residential use annually following Council involvement
- Initiate compulsory purchase action on six empty properties annually
- Provide cross tenure advice on ways to reduce carbon emissions

### **2013-2018**

- Decent Homes standard maintained and exceeded

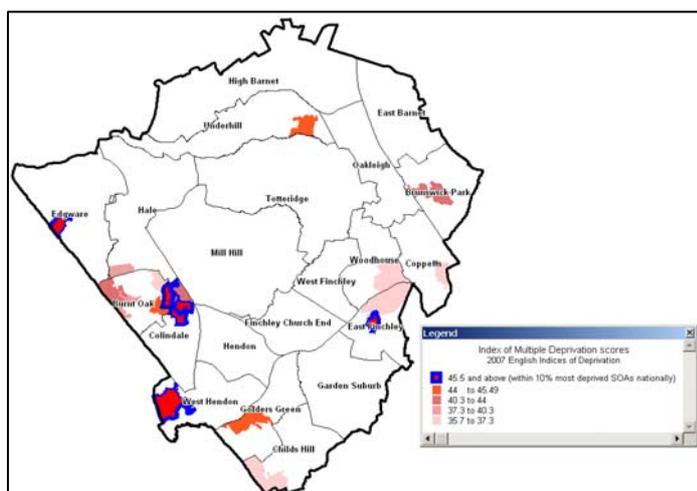
### **By 2026**

- Decent Homes standard exceeded and high quality environmental improvements completed
- Significant reduction in carbon emissions from Barnet's housing stock achieved

## 5. Promoting mixed communities

Barnet is generally a prosperous place, but with pockets of deprivation particularly in the West of the borough and on our largest council estates. Deprivation figures which were last updated in 2007 show that Barnet has 6 super output areas that are amongst the 10% most deprived in the country – as the map below shows these coincide with our largest council estates at Grahame Park, West Hendon, Stonegrove and Dollis Valley. The main themes of Barnet’s Local Area Agreement are **Driving Success** and **Tackling Disadvantage** and we want to create communities in these areas where residents have the same opportunities and access to economic success enjoyed across the borough as a whole. A key objective of the council’s strategy for these estates and other less affluent areas is regeneration which will involve the demolition and replacement of existing mono tenure social housing with more diverse mixed tenure communities.

It is important that new and existing communities feel safe. The new developments will be built to the Secure by Design<sup>16</sup> standard, which focuses on crime prevention at the design, layout and construction stages of homes and commercial premises and promotes the use of security standards for a wide range of applications and products. In addition, working with Barnet Homes, we have made use of Family Intervention Tenancies to proactively tackle some of the problems associated with a small number of families with multiple and complex social problems.



Proposed Mix of new housing on Priority Estates			
	Affordable	Private Sale	Total
Stonegrove	472	517	999
West Hendon	680	1491	2171
Grahame Park	1052	1925	2977
Dollis Valley	375	600	975

## Employment

Evidence shows that there are much higher levels of unemployment amongst working age social housing tenants with 49% claiming income support and/or Job Seekers Allowance compared to 30% in the private rented sector and 1% amongst owner occupiers. This is in spite of lower subsidised rents for council and housing association properties. Professor John Hills examined the issue of high unemployment levels amongst social tenants in his 2007 research, *Ends and means: The future roles of social housing in England*, and concluded that a number of factors probably contributed to this, including a lack of housing mobility and a culture of dependency and worklessness where there are concentrations of social housing. Professor Hills also acknowledged that the way that social housing is

<sup>16</sup> Research shows that SBD estates experience far less crime and disorder than non-SBD estates. The scheme is run by the Association of Chief Police Officers

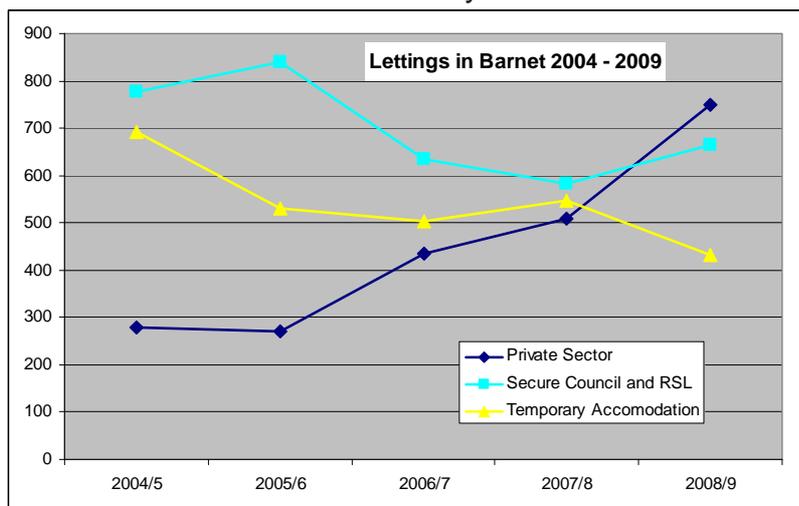
allocated leads to high concentrations of households with the greatest need, which is potentially another contributing factor to high levels of unemployment.

Barnet, in conjunction with other boroughs in the North London Housing Sub-region<sup>17</sup>, commissioned research to map the housing needs of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. This showed that employment opportunities were much more important to households that took part in the study than housing, but also that social housing was seen as the least desirable tenure, acting at best as a stepping stone to other tenures, in particular owner occupation.

In addition to our plans to create mixed communities to replace our largest council estates, we will also explore the potential for letting increased numbers of social housing units through a local allocations policy to working households on low incomes who will benefit from the subsidised rents enjoyed by council and housing association tenants. This will be progressed through a review of our allocations policy during the summer of 2010.

### Private rented sector

We have found that the Private Rented sector has had an increasingly important role in meeting housing need in Barnet, providing more homes for people approaching the council for assistance with housing than social housing in 2008/9. In addition, a great deal of the temporary accommodation we have provided for households is in the private rented sector. We have carried out analysis which shows that where we have placed households



in the private rented sector the tenancy will generally last for at least two years and in many cases much longer. 55% of tenancies during 2004/5 were still active in 2008. In addition, we have found that approximately 30% of households we have placed in private sector households are working.

For many residents, the private rented sector provides

a flexible option which is more likely to be available in an area of their own choice, for example close to a school or transport facilities. The properties are often of a high quality and indistinguishable from properties in owner occupation.

We will also work in partnership with local landlords and lettings agencies through our Private Landlords Forum to further improve the quality of private rented accommodation. The Forum has already received presentations on a range of issues, including fire safety and dealing with anti social behaviour, and landlords have been assisted with obtaining accreditation for the London Landlords Accreditation Scheme.

To further improve the quality of the private rented sector offer in Barnet, we are exploring the possibility of developing new homes in partnership with institutional investors to provide a good quality, reasonably priced product that is well managed and available on a

<sup>17</sup> Barnet, Enfield, Haringey, Islington, Camden and Westminster

longer term basis for tenants. This will also provide more choice for those who might not want to purchase their own home until later on in their housing journey.

## **Mobility**

We recognise that the opportunities for people accessing affordable housing in other parts of the Capital are limited, and that more needs to be done to help people who need to move to another part of London. We recognise the London Mayor's intention to implement a Pan London Mobility scheme to address this issue, and will work with him to ensure that any such scheme takes account of the importance of meeting the needs of our existing residents first and is not overly prescriptive.

### **Achievements**

- Private Landlord forum established April 2008
- 50 private landlords attended landlord accreditation training organised by the council during 2008/9
- 749 homes for potentially homeless people secured in the private rented sector 2008/9
- Regeneration schemes progressed (see chapter 3 above)

### **Targets**

#### **2010- 2012**

- Landlord Forum led by landlord representatives
- 850 homes made available in the private rented sector for housing applicants in 2010/11
- Provide landlord accreditation training for up to 60 landlords a year
- New allocations policy in place by September 2010
- Institutional investment partner in place to deliver new private rented accommodation
- Set up an inspection program of all licensed houses in multiple occupation to ensure compliance with the Housing Act 2004.
- Using data available to the Council undertake a survey of houses in multiple occupation to try and locate non compliant landlords

#### **2013-2018**

- First new homes provided for private renting supported by institutional investors
- Estate regeneration schemes all underway and new homes being delivered ( see above)

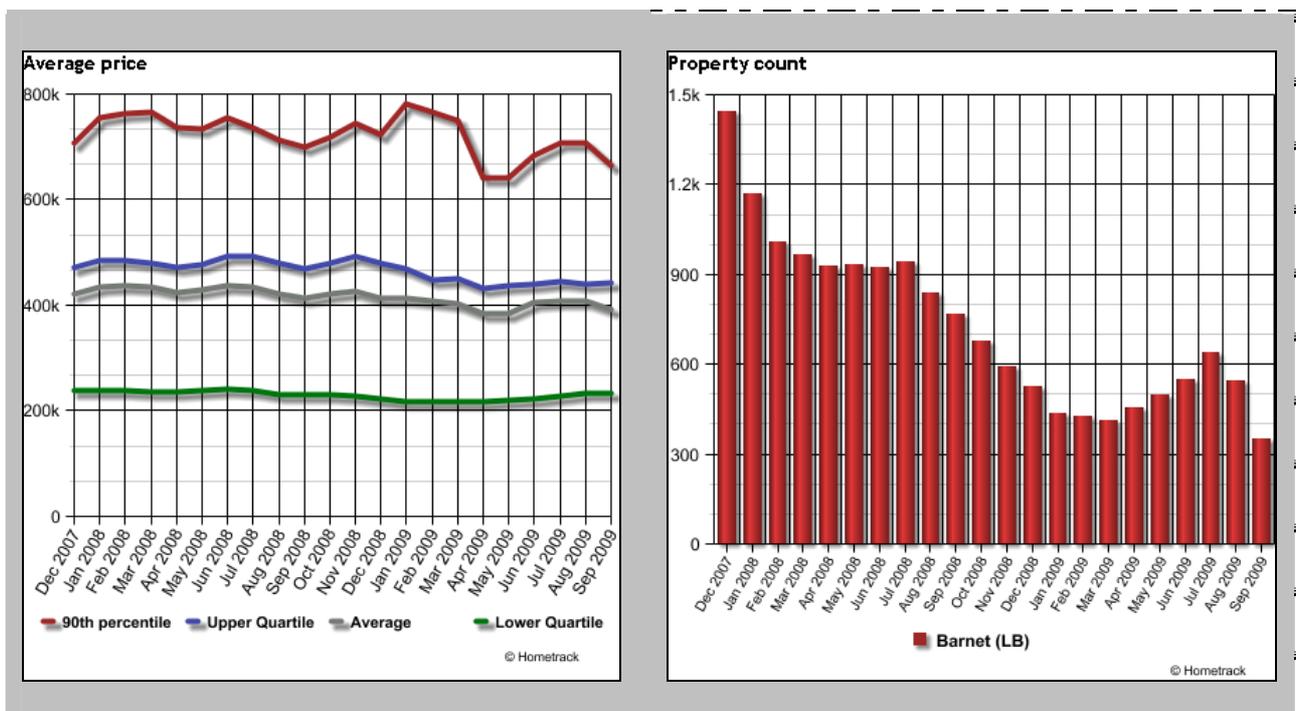
#### **By 2026**

- Large mono tenure council estates replaced with mixed tenure communities.
- Social rented and private rented sectors meeting housing need for a mixed range of low and medium income groups

## 6. Maximising the options available for those wishing to own their home

When we last reviewed our housing strategy in 2006, we identified that the majority of people aspired to own their own home. A survey carried out by Mori and the National Housing Federation showed that 90% of people think owning their own home is a good long-term investment, and the Barnet Housing Needs Survey 2006 showed that many residents aspired to becoming owner occupiers but could not afford to do so. The BME needs mapping exercise carried out on behalf of the North London Housing Sub-region in 2008 showed that home ownership is an aspiration that is shared by all communities, with social housing viewed by the majority as a stepping stone to better things, for example providing an opportunity to save money as a deposit on buying a property. This fits well with the council's view of the housing journey as a series of steps through different tenures, perhaps renting property initially and moving into homeownership later on.

Clearly, the housing journey into home ownership has become more difficult due to the housing market downturn and recession that started in 2008. Our own analysis has shown that whilst prices in Barnet have not fallen significantly, the number of properties being sold has fallen dramatically. In addition, the availability of mortgages has fallen, particularly for first time buyers as loan to value ratios have reduced, requiring larger deposits.



However, in spite of the recession, sales of low cost home ownership products have remained buoyant in Barnet, and in 2008/9 231 households were helped to become homeowners through products such as shared ownership, First Time Buyers Initiative, a local discounted market sale scheme, and a cash incentives which provide a grant for existing social housing tenants wanting to purchase a property on the open market.

Our Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance specifies that we will seek to secure at least 30% of new affordable housing as low cost home ownership. The London Mayor is also keen to increase opportunities for home ownership, and we expect that his approach to agreeing local targets for new affordable housing with each borough will

provide more flexibility around the balance between affordable rented and affordable homes for sale.

We would like to see increased the options available for social housing tenants to become home owners, for example by extending the right to acquire to all housing association tenants, and will promote this approach locally with housing associations and at a regional and national level as opportunities arise.

### **Achievements**

- 231 households helped in owner occupation in 2008/9:
  - New build shared ownership – 99
  - Open Market Homebuy - 42
  - Discounted Market Sale – 10
  - First Time Buyers Initiative – 63
  - Cash Incentive Scheme – 12
  - Right to Buy – 5
- Housing advice provided for those wishing to own their own home in place

### **Targets**

#### **2010- 2012**

- 500 households to be helped into home ownership
- Mortgage rescue scheme implemented
- Simpler low cost home ownership products to be developed

#### **2013-2018**

- 2000 new affordable homes for ownership to be provided

#### **By 2026**

Home ownership options available to the majority of people who want to own their home

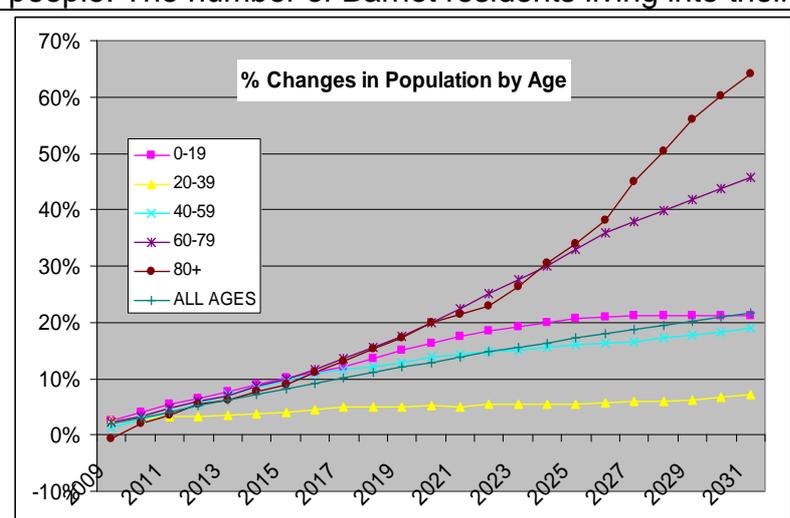
## 7. Providing housing related support options that maximise the independence of residents

As discussed in section 4. above, although Barnet is generally a prosperous place, there are pockets of deprivation and, as with any large urban area, households who are vulnerable and need support in order to live independent lives, either because of long term illness or disability or in order to cope with a short term problem, such as bereavement or setting up home for the first time.

Our approach, as described in the council's Supporting People Strategy, is to try and support people to live independently in the community wherever possible. We have tried to remove the link between specific buildings and support to achieve this, focusing on providing high quality floating support services to our most vulnerable residents when they need it.

### Older people

The population of Barnet is set to increase by approximately 60,000 people over the next 20 years, and projections show that this will include a disproportionate increase in older people. The number of Barnet residents living into their 70s and 80s is expected to



increase steadily. 60-79 year olds will increase from 48,600 to 69,300 and 80+ from 14,400 to 23,800. There will be a significant impact from this group due to the higher number of complex high-dependency conditions. About 70% of older residents own their own home, and national and local research has shown a preference among older people to remain in their own home rather than moving to specialist accommodation. In addition, using the model recommended

% Population Change by Age LB Barnet (Source ONS)

through the National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society we estimate the following housing requirements in the borough up to 25; the figures include 10% provision for people with dementia.

Range of accommodation 2008 - 2025	Surplus (+) and Deficit (-)				
	2008	2010	2015	2020	2025
Sheltered for rent	+ 282	+ 267	+ 307	+ 267	+ 152
Sheltered plus (rent or sale)	- 403	- 409	- 393	- 409	- 455
Extra care (rent or sale)	- 470	- 478	- 458	- 478	- 535
Leasehold sheltered housing	- 1028	- 1051	- 991	- 1051	- 1223
Residential care	+ 33	+ 214	+ 266	+ 214	+ 64
Nursing home care	- 15	- 29	+ 8	- 29	- 132

Our assessment shows there is an over-supply of traditional sheltered housing peaking in 2015 to just over 300 units. The council has been struggling to let some of its sheltered housing units and it is becoming evident that traditional warden services in sheltered housing are increasingly less likely to meet either the aspirations of many older residents who are leading more active lives than in the past or the social care needs of those who need person-centred support to stay living independently.

In addition, when considering a move the next generation of older people will be even more discerning and demanding in terms of the standard of housing. Research<sup>18</sup> for the private sector shows that older people considering a move have high expectations including:

- Contemporary design
- Additional space for friends and family
- Although fewer bedrooms needed more space for wheelchairs, accessible doorways, bathrooms, walk in shower
- Flat/level access
- Close to facilities

The council's consideration, subject to further consultation and analysis, is to end the link between accommodation and support by replacing the resident sheltered housing officer service and providing a visiting service through community-based teams of appropriately skilled staff. These new services would be provided on a short-term non chargeable basis and available to all residents regardless of tenure. This will help us move away from a position where 60% of the Supporting People grant we spend on support for older people is spent on less than 3% of the borough's older population.

It is also proposed that a number of existing traditional sheltered schemes are enhanced to benefit tenants with higher support needs. These 'Sheltered Plus' schemes would be those whose physical design and location are already most suited for the development of on site facilities and services for this group. These schemes might also become local hubs where appropriate neighbourhood services would be easily accessible for the wider community. Services could range from personal care, Telecare and home repairs to information about local leisure, community or employment opportunities.

**Following the outcome of a judicial review in December, the council is currently reconsidering these proposals for the future of sheltered housing and will identify a way forward during the next few months.**

A detailed appraisal is underway to identify sheltered schemes suitable to undertake pilot Sheltered Plus projects, and residents and service users will be closely involved in these projects. Some schemes may also have the capacity required for development to provide extra care housing for those with substantial needs for care and support in addition to Barnet's new developments at Wood Court and Goodwin Court.

Our extra care housing successfully accommodates younger disabled people who need to live in supported housing. We will therefore consider how we might expand provision for this group as well as for older people as we develop our proposals for Sheltered plus.

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<sup>18</sup> MORI, Visionpoint & McCarthy & Stone 2006

National research has shown the importance that older people attach to good quality housing advice, and this will be incorporated into our new floating support service and considered in a review of our housing advice contract with Threshold.

### Temporary accommodation and reducing homelessness

Although we have successfully reduced the number of people becoming homeless and those being admitted to temporary accommodation, the number of households in temporary accommodation has reduced more slowly than we would have liked from 2489 in March 2008 to 2265 in September 2009. We recognise that it is unsatisfactory that many families stay in temporary accommodation for years, and we are developing strategies for providing more permanent housing solutions. Using our own housing stock on the priority estates as temporary accommodation has proved unpopular, despite the fact it is in every other respect a home that a secure tenant might expect and is let at the same rent; we have agreed that we will let properties on a secure tenancy at Grahame Park where the property is scheduled to remain in use for the next ten years. In addition, we are considering the viability of alternative arrangements for the rest of the regeneration stock that would avoid using it as temporary accommodation, including providing applicants with a choice to rent regeneration properties as assured shorthold tenancies via an arrangement with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party<sup>19</sup> or other options in order to prevent them becoming homeless.

We are also moving away from using private sector properties, including those let under our private sector leasing scheme, as temporary accommodation, whether nightly purchased or through leasing arrangements.

We believe that this approach will help to promote independence amongst households seeking housing from the council by removing the sense that the solution provided is only temporary in nature when in fact it could last for years.

### Young people

Our evidence base shows that whilst homelessness has fallen in Barnet, the numbers of young people under 25 becoming homeless has not reduced significantly within this. We are carrying out a strategic review of existing housing and support services for young people, which include mediation, a crashpad scheme, a supported lodgings scheme and resources for education. The review will focus on early intervention and prevention, and also consider the appropriateness of some of the existing accommodation used for housing young people. Members of the council's Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee have also carried out a targeted piece of work on housing and young people in Barnet which will feed into this important area of work.

For those households with the highest support needs, for example young people leaving care and 16-17 year olds, we will develop accommodation pathways using our hostels as temporary accommodation, but providing support to clients to help them achieve more permanent solutions in the longer term.

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<sup>19</sup> Subject to the agreement of the Secretary of State

## Physical impairment

We recognise the importance of the physical environment, particularly homes, in ensuring that people with physical disabilities are not disadvantaged. The 2006 Housing Needs Survey estimated that there are about 18000 households in the borough that contain at least one person with a recognised support need, and that the greatest need amongst these households was for wide range of adaptations and improvements to the home. A level access shower unit and a lift/stair lift are the most commonly required. These findings are repeated in our 2009 audit of social care users, covering some of Barnet's neediest residents. Just one in every five Barnet people receiving community-based social services also have adaptations or equipment, compared to an average of more than the average of one in every three people across outer London boroughs

We have responded to these findings by increasing the amount of money available for adaptations and putting in place measures to improve the speed at which they are provided. This has seen waiting times for major adaptations reduce from an average of 46 weeks in 2007/9, to 25 weeks in 2008/9, and to 15 weeks since April 2009. We have also successfully bid to CLG for Minor Repairs & Adaptations grant funding of £185,000 for 2009/10 and 2010/11 to deliver Handyperson services, targeted particularly to elderly people ready to leave hospital for whom a little practical help may be all that's needed to ensure the move back home is safe and timely

Finally, for new homes in Barnet, local planning guidance will seek to ensure that new residential developments meet the Lifetime Homes and Lifetime Neighbourhood standards<sup>20</sup> to provide accessible and adaptable accommodation for everyone, from young families to older people and individuals with a temporary or permanent physical impairment. It is also a planning requirement that 10% of new homes will be fully wheelchair accessible.

## Rough Sleepers

Arrangements are in place to provide support for rough sleepers through London Street Rescue, who will attempt to establish contact with any rough sleepers sighted in the borough and help them access accommodation. The evidence suggests that in common with other outer London boroughs, very little rough sleeping occurs in Barnet. For example, only one case out of 205 habitual rough sleepers identified by the CLG in London, only one came from Barnet, and we have successfully placed this individual in residential care. The *Street Doctor* approach we took in this instance is being widely adopted across London.

We recognise the importance of working with boroughs in central London to take responsibility for those sleeping rough in the central areas of the city who originate in Barnet, and we have signed up to the national *reconnections* protocol.

We also support facilities for those at risk of rough sleeping in the borough, such as Homeless Action in Barnet, who provide day facilities and access to medical facilities and

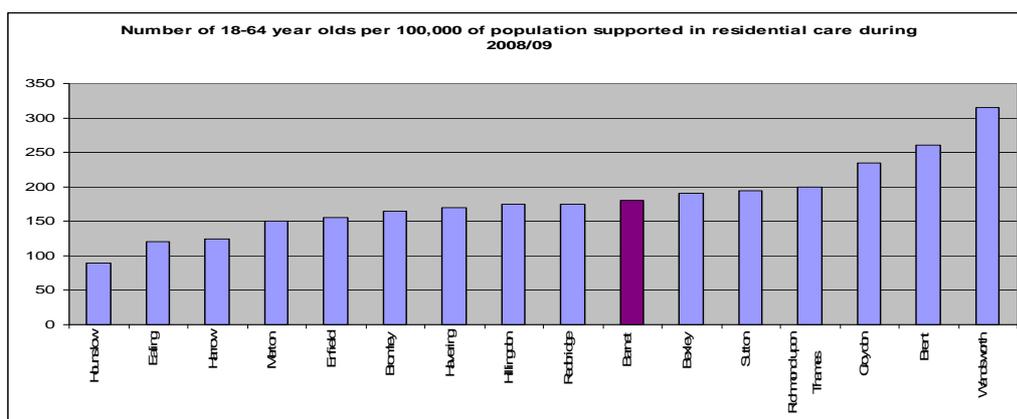
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<sup>20</sup> Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society – Communities & Local Government Feb 08

hostel accommodation, and a emergency night shelter scheme operated by local churches during the winter.

## Learning disabilities and mental health

Our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment published in 2009 shows that while Barnet has been successful in reducing the rate of admission to residential care, the numbers of people living in this kind of accommodation remains relatively high within our LA comparator group. We know that some residents have unrealised capabilities and aspirations for more independent living and we are making sure these are recognised in Barnet's Housing Strategy. Putting People First means that people should be able to choose the right combination of housing and support solutions that will work best for each individual.



Housing, health and social services are working together to develop joint packages of housing and support for people especially for people with challenging behaviours and complex needs High cost residential placements are no longer the answer. In response, the council has set an ambitious target for the numbers of people moving to independent housing as an alternative to residential care, and a large-scale project is in place to bring together commissioners and practitioners to achieve it

The project is expanding the range of specialist supported housing for people with higher support needs, and setting quality standards for accommodation, facilities and management. New, purpose-designed housing is in the pipeline, developed with HCA funding, and we will commission RSL partners to bid for further funding to replace expensive private sector supported housing provision on which Barnet partly relies at present and in consultation with residents to upgrade or re-provide the remaining 'group home' stock and similar HMOs comprising bedsits with shared facilities.

Our move-on strategy includes creation of attractive independent housing options for people choosing to step down from specialist housing schemes after a period of enablement support, helping to ensure optimum use of the specialist stock. Local research shows that the accelerated pathways to the mainstream social housing stock are under-used, reflecting preferences for particular housing types and locations for which there is much better supply offered in the private rented sector. The success of Barnet's Foundation service evidences the benefits of partnership with private landlords in enabling access for people with challenging support needs but who do not need on-site services.

We have also been successful in using Barnet's over-supply of mainstream sheltered housing to provide good quality housing solutions for some younger people with social care needs, with flexible support provided by homecare and floating support services, and we will make use of the opportunities for re-designation of schemes in consultation with residents and providers in order to widen access for people who would most benefit from the quality and particular design of much of this housing stock

## Gypsies and travellers

A London-wide assessment of need for residential pitches found there are approximately 60 households from the gypsy and traveller communities living in conventional housing in Barnet and that there is no minimum requirement for providing pitches in the borough, but a potential need for 13 pitches based on households who would prefer to live on a gypsies and travellers site. The London Mayor has proposed that Barnet should provide 16 pitches based on this survey in his draft London Plan, and the council will seek to agree a final target with the Mayor based on evidence of need. This will be taken forward through Barnet's Local Development Framework.

### Achievements

- Extra care sheltered housing schemes implemented at Goodwin Court and Wood Court providing 102 homes for older residents
- Handy persons scheme implemented 2009
- Waiting times for major adaptations reduced from 46 weeks to 15 weeks since 2007/8
- Admissions to temporary accommodation and homelessness acceptances have reduced
- Housing association lease direct scheme in place – Nov 2009
- Move on (from residential care) project for people with learning disabilities and mental health problems established
- We committed £1.4 million to funding major adaptations in the private and registered social landlord sector with 121 disabled residents able to remain living independently in their own homes as a result

### Targets

#### 2010- 2012

- Identify way forward for support arrangements in sheltered housing that takes account of the outcome of a judicial review in December 2009
- Complete review of delivery of adaptations across all tenures
- Complete review of assisted alarm service
- Learning disabilities and mental health housing pathways officer in post
- New floating support service in place Summer 2010
- Use of temporary accommodation reduced to 1944 by March 2011 and to 1800 by March 2012
- Homelessness acceptances reduced to less than 230 during 2010/11
- Letting of accommodation on regeneration estates as assured tenancies to economically active households
- 60 people with learning disabilities or mental health problems move from residential care to more independent accommodation
- Strategic review of housing & support services for young people completed and

commissioning priorities updated

- Accommodation pathway for young people in place
- Fully commit the disabled facilities grant budget to provide major adaptations for disabled residents in the private and registered social landlord sectors

**2013-2018**

- New arrangements for sheltered housing in place.
- Additional extra care units provided
- Temporary accommodation only being used as a short term option for homeless households.

**By 2026**

- People with support needs have the same access as other people to all housing tenures, options and the range and type of accommodation

## 8. Providing excellent value services that exceed residents expectations

The council has recognised that the change in economic circumstances following the global recession means that providers of public services will need to demonstrate that they are providing services that are more efficient but increasingly driven by and focused on the needs of customers.

### Future Shape

The council has embarked on a programme of work to transform the way that it provides services and the relationship with the customer. The Future Shape programme has three key ambitions:

- a different relationship with citizens
- a one public sector approach – working with our partners across the borough
- a relentless drive for efficiency.

This approach will see the council exploring a range of options to deliver public services in the borough and developing a better understanding of its citizens so that services can be provided in a way that is more tailored to the needs of individuals.

### Barnet Homes

The council has already created an arms length management organisation (ALMO) Barnet Homes as a vehicle for delivery of housing management and investment services for its 11,000 council tenants and 4000 council leaseholders. Barnet Homes has succeeded in securing 2\* outcomes from Audit Commission inspections in 2004 and 2008, and is close to completing an £189m investment programme in the stock. However, although tenant satisfaction initially improved when the ALMO was established in 2004, it has since remained static. In addition, leaseholder satisfaction needs to improve significantly. The council has agreed actions with Barnet Homes to improve both tenant and leaseholder satisfaction.

The council views Barnet Homes as a potential vehicle for providing additional services on its' behalf, as well as extending its role as a provider of housing related services, and we will explore options for progressing this through the Future Shape programme.

The council has agreed the following priorities with Barnet Homes:

- To deliver excellent services for all our customers
- To make the best use of resources by providing value for money services and developing new business
- To manage regeneration estates successfully

During 2010/11, local service standards will be developed in consultation with tenants and leaseholders.

### Housing Needs

The council's Housing Service is currently undertaking a major review of the way that it provides its services based around the experience of the customer, with the aim of

improving the customer journey by focusing on activities that add value from their point of view and driving out wasteful elements of the service. For example, we currently maintain an open housing register which anyone can join regardless of their circumstances. Our review has shown that although the list has swollen to an unmanageable 17,000 households, relatively few of these are actually in need and even fewer will ever succeed in bidding successfully for a council or housing association property. This means that we waste a lot of resources in maintaining a list of people who do not really need the council's help.

We have also found that the housing application process is too complicated, with clients having to make numerous visits before we are able to tell them whether they will receive any assistance from the council and a complicated housing points system which is difficult to keep up to date.

To address the problems identified by the housing service review, we will develop a simpler and more user friendly system, and which will include a review of our housing allocations policy to make it more transparent.

### **Housing associations**

The council also has responsibility as a local leader for ensuring that all service providers in the borough are providing high quality and excellent value services, and will work closely with other housing organisations, such as housing associations and providers of housing related support services to ensure that this is the case.

We carry out regular monitoring of the performance of local housing associations, and work with them to improve standards through the Barnet Housing Association Liaison Group.

In 2008, a review of housing association performance was carried out by councillors through the overview and scrutiny process.

#### **Achievements**

- New customer service centre provided at Colindale Library
- Satisfaction amongst council tenants improved from 67% to 71% between 2004 and 2006
- Barnet Homes secured 2 Stars following audit commission inspections in 2004 and 2008
- Systems review to improve customer experience for users of housing service underway

#### **Targets**

##### **2010- 2012**

- New Housing Allocations Policy in place September 2010
- Local service standards developed for council tenants and leaseholders and in place by April 2011
- New customer service centre provided in East of Borough
- Tenant satisfaction increased to 73 % in 2010 satisfaction survey
- Leaseholder satisfaction increased from 31% to 38 % BY 2011
- Actions from systems review of housing service in place

**2013-2018**

- Tenant satisfaction increased to 75 % in 2012 and 78 % in 2014 satisfaction surveys

**By 2026**

- Barnet recognised as amongst the best in terms of quality and value in the country with high satisfaction ratings amongst our customers

## 9. Borough investment plan

As part of our Single Conversation with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the council has produced a draft Borough Investment Plan (BIP). This sets out how we will work with the HCA to deliver the investment priorities identified in our Housing Strategy. Discussions with the HCA are ongoing, but we expect to finalise the details of the plan during 2010 and will lead to a Borough Investment Agreement between the council and the HCA setting out in more detail how the HCA will support Barnet's ambitions in terms of housing growth and the necessary infrastructure required.

The BIP sets out the case for investing in Barnet, including the popularity of the borough as a place to live, the scale of the opportunity for growth with the 4<sup>th</sup> largest housing growth targets in London, with the potential to deliver 28,000 new homes by 2026, the strength of the local housing market and our capacity and readiness to deliver.

Our approach to investment recognises that changed economic situation will require new and innovative solutions. Our approach to working with our partners to deliver our plans will include:

- A focus on place shaping outcomes
- Aligned strategies and investment
- Coordinating and lobbying external stakeholders
- Attracting high quality partners and investment
- Ensuring a fair allocation of funding
- Advice and expertise
- Innovative delivery models

The BIP sets out our priorities for investment in some detail, and these are summarised below, but not exhaustively:

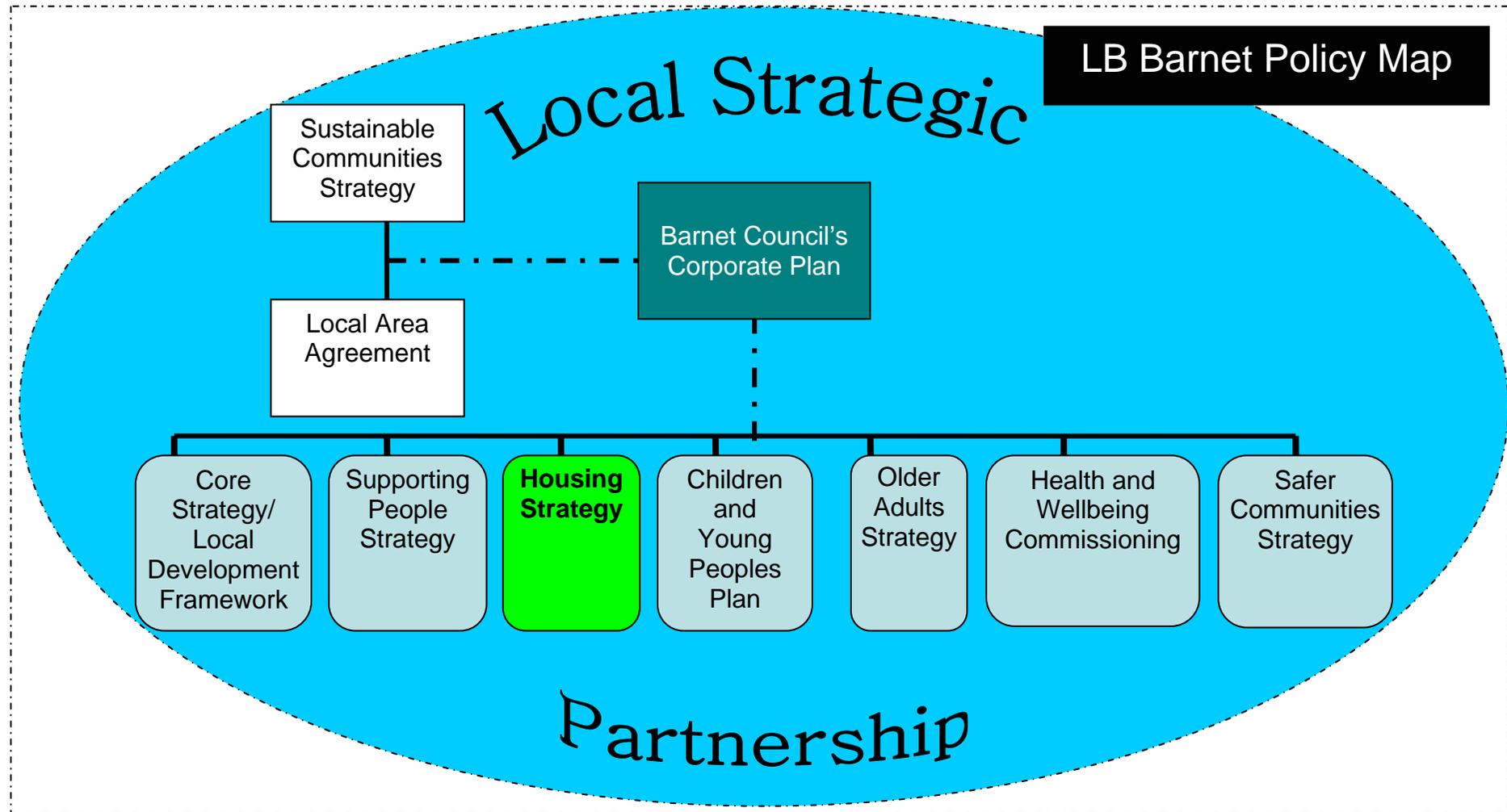
Area	Scale
Brent Cross/Cricklewood	One of the largest developments in London – 7,500 homes, 27,000 jobs in a new commercial district, schools, a health centre, parks and open spaces, highway and transport improvements
Colindale	Over 1,000 new jobs and 10,000 homes over 10 years through a range of mixed use and development schemes, with social and transport infrastructure investment, retail space and student homes
Mill Hill East	2,000 new homes and 500 jobs by 2016, school and community Hub, new high street
West Hendon	2,171 homes, new town square, improved transport links, community facilities, economic and social regeneration
Grahame Park	3,000 new homes, major infrastructure improvements, extensive community facilities
Stonegrove /Spur Road	999 new homes, City Academy, Church and early years centre, improved open spaces, roads, health, education and training
Dollis Valley	1,000 new homes, high quality design and construction, improved community facilities and open space, improved transport and access

Granville Road	3 tower blocks to be refurbished with redevelopment of lower rise blocks to provide 100-150 new homes
Council housing	Barnet Homes led investment programme in council homes following completion of Decent Homes programme in 2010
Local Asset Backed Vehicle	Considering appropriateness of LABV approach for Granville Road, Town Centres and wider borough plans
A5/A406	Linear place-shaping improving urban realm and transport links to enable appropriate development.

## Appendix 1 -Housing Strategy alignment with corporate plan priorities

Corporate plan priority	How the housing strategy will contribute to this
<p><b>Better services with less money</b>                      We expect to have significantly less money from central government. We will continue to drive costs out of the Council through transforming our internal organisation. We know our partners across Barnet are often best placed to deliver complex services, so we will work with and support them by freeing up resources. Expenditure will be moved to funding prevention models where we know there is a clear cost benefit with the aspiration that our reducing resources can be shared to benefit more people rather than focusing on a few as we do currently. We will focus on improving and streamlining our customers' access and assessment services so residents find them easier to use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our review of the housing service will embed continuous customer focused improvements in service delivery.</li> <li>• The council views Barnet Homes as a potential vehicle for providing additional services on its' behalf, as well as extending its role as a provider of housing related services, and we will explore options for progressing this through the Future Shape programme</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sharing opportunities and sharing responsibilities</b>                      Everyone should be able to share in Barnet's success but we recognise that some people need more support than others to achieve this. Working with residents and partners we aim to ensure that every child can reach their potential and that adults in need of support are confident to live independently. Drawing on the expertise of our diverse communities we seek to promote health and reduce crime and other inequalities. We want Barnet residents to take a lead role in shaping the opportunities we provide. As a community leader we pledge to provide appropriate support. Only by sharing a collective vision is it possible for the borough to remain an attractive and successful place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Settled accommodation provides an important foundation for educational achievement; by reducing the use of temporary accommodation and providing more housing choices, the housing strategy will help to ensure that more children are housed in settled homes.</li> <li>• By reducing homelessness amongst young people, and providing improved support to those that do need our help will contribute to improved outcomes.</li> <li>• By creating mixed communities through regeneration and a local lettings policy we will seek to reduce concentrations of households that are not working</li> <li>• Reductions in the use of temporary accommodation will promote independence</li> <li>• A new floating support service will help more people to live independent lives</li> <li>• Removal of links between support and fixed locations, will help more people to live independently in the community</li> <li>• Improvements in our adaptations service will be maintained so more people can remain in their home.</li> </ul>
<p><b>A successful London suburb</b>                      We want Barnet to continue to be a successful, prosperous place which people want to live in. We will ensure that the borough is clean and safe, preserve green spaces provide excellent educational provision and facilitate housing choices that support residents' aspirations. We believe that good access to health and employment opportunities for all will help the borough to remain cohesive and at ease with its growing diversity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regeneration of largest council estates and areas with highest levels of deprivation will provide successful mixed communities in most deprived areas and design out crime.</li> <li>• The Three strands approach will ensure that housing growth in Barnet is sustainable and does not impact adversely on the successful suburban environment.</li> <li>• Improving energy efficiency of the housing stock</li> <li>• Barnet Homes will continue to maintain high standards of cleanliness on council housing estates.</li> <li>• Improvements to the existing housing stock will reduce health problems associated with poor housing.</li> <li>• Major new developments will be designed to encourage healthier lifestyles, including promotion of walking and cycling.</li> </ul>

Appendix 2 – Map of Barnet’s Key Strategies



## **Appendix 3 Summary of Equalities Impact Assessment**

Our equalities impact assessment focuses on a number of key questions to identify where equalities risks are likely to occur. This approach aims to determine the levels of risks to communities and to the Council, where policies will have a positive impact on some groups and where there is a risk of a potentially detrimental effect on others. Where risks have been identified we further action needed has been identified.

### **1. Are there differential service outcomes for the different communities using our services?**

Vulnerable and disadvantaged people including some BME groups and older people are more likely to live in the west of the borough. Some ethnic minority groups appear to be making different choices about their housing options. Women are more likely to move to the private rented sector. The shortage of affordable housing particularly larger family homes has a greater impact on people from some minority ethnic groups who are more likely to experience homelessness. Older people living in the private sector need support and assistance to maintain their homes.

#### **Actions:**

- Carry out further research into the reasons why some households reject housing options provided and what housing arrangements these households are making
- Carry out research into the housing needs of the Lesbian Gay Bi sexual and Transgender communities in Barnet.
- Ensure that the housing support needs of travellers in conventional accommodation are assessed and monitored.

### **2. If so, what measures will be put in place to re-dress these differences?**

Much of the new housing supply will be delivered through the regeneration of areas mainly in the west of the borough. It will include larger family homes and will meet the lifetime homes standard and 5% will be fully wheelchair accessible.

#### **Actions:**

- The strategy provides the overarching priorities and individual initiatives and programmes will be subject to separate EIA; for example: the options for older persons housing set out in the strategy which will also be subject to separate consultation with residents. This will include consideration of the impact across all equality strands but in particular disability.
- Proposals for private renting and other initiatives will be subject to separate EIA.
- Complete EIA for review of housing applications process and the allocations policy.
- Research the reasons why certain groups appear to be making different choices about their housing options.
- Our approach to low cost home ownership (LCHO) needs to take more account of the needs of minority groups.
- Use community networks to distribute information on LCHO.
- Information on the decent homes scheme and fuel poverty initiatives should be in appropriate formats and accessible to all.
- Research into Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) should include equalities monitoring (landlords and residents) to inform future publicity and targeting of information.

### 3. What will be the impact of delivery of any proposed new services or functions on satisfaction ratings amongst different groups of residents?

A key objective of the strategy is to provide excellent value services that exceed residents' expectations; there are ambitious targets to increase tenant and leaseholder satisfaction. There are risks that some groups will be less satisfied and that there will be challenges in meeting this objective.

**Actions:**

- Tenant and leaseholder satisfaction targets should be produced for the main equality strands.
- Satisfaction data should be analysed by the main equality strands.
- Ensure wide community representation in consultation on proposals to develop local lettings policies.

### 4. Does the proposal enhance Barnet's reputation as a good place to work and live?

It is important to housing providers, partners and residents to know that the Council has an up to date and forward thinking strategy which has been developed in the context of the London Housing Strategy, the (draft) London Plan and the Council's modernisation programme. A key objective of the strategy is to promote mixed communities which will enhance Barnet's reputation as a place where want to live and where people get on.

### 5. Will members of Barnet's diverse communities feel more confident about the council and the manner in which it conducts its business?

The strategy is built on a sound assessment of the current housing market in Barnet and a good knowledge of the housing experiences of most of our communities. Completion of the impact assessment and actions should help to increase confidence as well as ensuring broad resident representation from all sections of the community so that information is circulated and residents have an opportunity to comment and contribute.

**Actions:**

- Provide progress updates on the strategy and the targets
- Monitor representation on regeneration and consultative groups

### 6. How will the new proposals enable the council to promote good relations between different communities?

A key objective of the strategy is to promote mixed communities through diverse mixed tenure developments. It shows the diversity of housing needs in the borough but the similarity of aspirations between communities. The strategy shows how the housing stock can be used to meet needs at different stages of the housing journey and proposals to meet the housing needs of vulnerable residents.

**Actions:**

- Make information available to all residents on the range of options and the housing support services that are in the borough.

### 7. How have residents with different needs been consulted on the anticipated impact of this proposal? How have any comments influenced the final proposal?

The draft strategy was consulted on early in 2010; this included publication of the document on the Council's website and through presentations to a wide range of community organisations and the Citizens Panel. It was also the main theme of the Council's housing conference in October 2009. See Appendix 4 for the outcome of the consultation and how it has influenced the final document.

## Appendix 4 – Consultation

We consult and engage regularly with our residents and other stakeholders in the borough about housing issues at our annual Housing Conference and through other channels, such as the Private Landlord's Forum and the Barnet Housing Association Liaison Group. In addition, to oversee the review of the Housing Strategy, we established a Local Housing Partnership (LHP) chaired by the Cabinet Member for Housing Regeneration, and attended by key stakeholders, including resident, private landlord, housing association, voluntary sector and developer representatives. The LHP considered the evidence base that supports the housing strategy and helped the council identify its key priorities.

A formal consultation was carried out during January and February 2010, which included publication of the draft Housing Strategy on the council's website, along with an interactive survey. In addition, presentations about the housing strategy were made to a variety of groups, including the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board, Barnet Homes Resident's Hub and the Older Adults Network.

A Citizens Panel event was also held during February 2010, attended by a representative group of Barnet residents who were asked about the short and medium term housing priorities which they felt were important. During this event two key issues emerged around the supply of affordable homes, and the need to ensure that the council allocates housing fairly including providing opportunities for those employed in low paid work to access social housing.

93% of respondents to the web based survey supported the council's overarching ambition for the housing strategy "Providing housing choices that meet the needs and aspirations of Barnet residents". When asked to rank the priorities in the draft housing strategy, *Increasing housing supply, including family sized homes, to improve the range of housing choices and opportunities available to residents* and *Improving the condition and sustainability of the existing housing stock* rated as the most important objectives.

The final draft housing strategy has been adjusted in a number of ways to take account of the responses received to the consultation, including:

- A recognition that the council will support an extension of opportunities for housing association tenants to buy their homes
- An acknowledgment that the birth rate has increased more than had been previously anticipated, which will need to be factored into our plans for growth
- That the council will review its allocations policy during the summer of 2010 to include opportunities for people who are working or training to access rented affordable housing
- Acknowledgement of role that letting private sector property has in reducing empty homes in Barnet.

## Appendix 5 – Action Plan

### Targets

#### Increasing housing supply, including family sized homes, to improve the range of housing choices and opportunities available to residents

##### 2010- 2012

- Net housing supply increased by 1388 between April 2010 and March 2011 as part of our Local Area Agreement to increase net housing supply by 3506 between April 2008 and March 2011
- Net housing supply increased by 1400 between April 2011 and March 2012
- 70% of net increase in housing supply to be suitable for families<sup>21</sup>
- 495 affordable homes in 2010/11 as part of our Local Area Agreement commitment to deliver 1160 affordable homes between April 2008 and March 2011
- 700 affordable homes provided between April 2011 and March 2012
- Continue to work with Government on a pilot TIF project in Colindale
- Develop the. Barnet Finance Plan on a wider borough infrastructure basis to support Barnet's continuing growth and regeneration
- Local Development Framework Core Strategy in place during 2011
- Complete affordable housing viability study June 2010
- Borough Investment Plan in place by March 2010
- Borough Investment Agreement in place by March 2011
- New Homes<sup>22</sup> delivered on regeneration schemes and through strategic development
  - Colindale (inc Grahame Park) - 551
  - West Hendon - 173
  - Stonegrove/Spur Road – 214
  - Mill Hill East - 180
- Development partner in place for regeneration of Dollis Valley
- 87 *trade downs* in 2010/11
- 220 overcrowded households re-housed in 2010/11

##### 2013-2018

- Net housing supply increased by 12000 between April 2012 and March 2018
- 5000 affordable homes provided between April 2012 and March 2018
- New Homes<sup>23</sup> delivered through regeneration and strategic development
  - Colindale (inc Grahame Park) - 5887
  - West Hendon - 630
  - Stonegrove/Spur Road – 155
  - Mill Hill East – 1264
  - Dollis Valley 250
  - Brent Cross Cricklewood – 1138
  - North London Business Park - 250

##### By 2026

- 31,000<sup>24</sup> new homes provided including an appropriate mix of tenures
- Regeneration of Stonegrove, Grahame Park, West Hendon and Dollis Valley

<sup>21</sup> This means at least 2 bedrooms

<sup>22</sup> Net

<sup>23</sup> Net

<sup>24</sup> Including vacant units being brought back into used, non self contained units such as student housing and small windfall sites.

completed

- Brent Cross Cricklewood completed to provide 7,500 homes and a new town centre

### **Improving the condition and sustainability of the existing housing stock**

#### **2010- 2012**

- Complete decent homes standard for council homes by December 2010
- Investment strategy for council housing stock in place by Autumn 2011
- In the private sector 135 owner-occupied homes occupied by vulnerable households brought up to the decent homes standard plus 21 brought up to the thermal comfort standard and 123 with serious (category 1) health and safety
- Review the financial options offered to assist home owners in maintaining their homes
- Thirty properties returned to residential use annually following Council involvement
- Initiate compulsory purchase action on six empty properties annually
- Provide cross tenure advice on ways to reduce carbon emissions

#### **2013-2018**

- Decent Homes standard maintained and exceeded

#### **By 2026**

- Decent Homes standard exceeded and high quality environmental improvements completed
- Significant reduction in carbon emissions from Barnet's Housing stock achieved

### **Promoting mixed communities**

#### **2010- 2012**

- Landlord Forum led by landlord representatives
- 850 homes made available in the private rented sector for housing applicants in 2010/11
- Provide landlord accreditation training for up to 60 landlords a year
- New allocations policy in place by September 2010
- Institutional investment partner in place to deliver new private rented accommodation
- Set up an inspection program of all licensed houses in multiple occupation to ensure compliance with the Housing Act 2004.
- Using data available to the Council undertake a survey of houses in multiple occupation to try and locate non compliant landlords

#### **2013-2018**

- First new homes provided for private renting supported by institutional investors
- Estate regeneration schemes all underway and new homes being delivered ( see above)

#### **By 2026**

- Large mono tenure council estates replaced with mixed tenure communities.
- Social rented and private rented sectors meeting housing need for a mixed range of low and medium income groups

### **Maximising the options available for those wishing to own their home**

### **2010- 2012**

- 500 households to be helped into home ownership
- Mortgage rescue scheme implemented
- Simpler low cost home ownership products to be developed

### **2013-2018**

- 2000 new affordable homes for ownership to be provided

### **By 2026**

Home ownership options available to the majority of people who want to own their home

## **Providing housing related support options that maximise the independence of residents**

### **2010- 2012**

- Implement new support arrangements for sheltered housing residents (subject to review following the outcome of a judicial review in December 2009)
- Complete review of Home Improvement Agency ( including Care and Repair) arrangements in Barnet
- Complete review of assisted alarm service
- Learning disabilities and mental health housing pathways officer in post
- New floating support service in place Summer 2010
- Use of temporary accommodation reduced to 1944 by March 2011 and to 1800 by March 2012
- Homelessness acceptances reduced to less than 230 during 2010/11
- 60 people with learning disabilities or mental health problems move from residential care to more independent accommodation
- Strategic review of housing & support services for young people completed and commissioning priorities updated
- Accommodation pathway for young people in place
- Fully commit the disabled facilities grant budget to provide major adaptations for disabled residents in the private and registered social landlord sectors

### **2013-2018**

- Sheltered Plus arrangements in place.
- Additional extra care units provided
- Temporary accommodation only being used as a short term option for homeless households.

### **By 2026**

- People with support needs have the same access as other people to all housing tenures, options and the range and type of accommodation

## **Providing excellent value services that exceed residents expectations**

- New Housing Allocations Policy in place September 2010
- Local service standards developed for council tenants and leaseholders and in place by April 2011
- New customer service centre provided in East of Borough

- Tenant satisfaction increased to 73 % in 2010 satisfaction survey
- Leaseholder satisfaction increased from 31% to 38 % BY 2011
- Actions from systems review of housing service in place

**2013-2018**

- Tenant satisfaction increased to 75 % in 2012 and 78 % in 2014 satisfaction surveys

**By 2026**

Barnet recognised as amongst the best in terms of quality and value in the country with high satisfaction ratings amongst our customers

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