



Christchurch and East Dorset Councils
delivering services together

Housing Strategy for Christchurch and East Dorset (2013 to 2016)

Consultation Draft



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Dear Consultee

March 2013

I am pleased to provide you with a copy of the draft Housing Strategy for Christchurch and East Dorset (2013 to 2016).

The document has been produced at a very testing time when present day housing demands are stretching the historic limitations of the Borough and District beyond capacity. For those with lower incomes, the ability to secure and sustain affordable forms of housing has never been more difficult and with the areas' enduring popularity for retirement, its ageing population and its household growth projections, pressures across the housing spectrum are expected to rise into the future.

Of course it is beyond the scope of a Housing Strategy to entirely solve the underlying factors that result in housing markets serving some and failing others, but with Housing, Planning and Community responsibilities, Local Authorities must ensure that operational and strategic activities are working together to meet priorities, to optimise resources, to bring about improvements and to minimise long-term risks.

With these aims in mind, the draft Housing Strategy sets out our proposed objectives for the next three years; how we intend to address them through collaborative working with our partners and how our actions can contribute to the health and well-being of local residents, and to the social and economic benefit of Christchurch and East Dorset.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts and views.

Yours sincerely



Tim Davis
Housing Development and Enabling Manager
Christchurch and East Dorset Councils

Housing Strategy Consultation Survey

Once you have considered the draft Housing Strategy for Christchurch and East Dorset, we would like you to participate in the Consultation Survey.

The survey will provide essential feedback on our proposed priorities and objectives, and includes provision for your own comments as well. We really would value your opinion and views.

The online survey can be accessed at
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/housing_consultation_2013

We would prefer you to complete the survey online but you will find a paper version at Appendix 1 (Pages 31 to 35). Having completed the survey please return it using the following Freepost Address (no stamp required):-

HOUSING CONSULTATION SURVEY
FREEPOST
Response Licence No BH575
Christchurch Borough Council
Civic Offices
Christchurch BH23 1ZZ

The closing date for the consultation survey will be 9:00 a.m. on Monday the 29th April 2013.

If you have further questions or you need any additional information please contact:-

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Chapter 1: Why have a housing strategy?

Introduction

This is the first joint Housing Strategy for the Borough of Christchurch and the District of East Dorset since the formation of the joint Housing Partnership, and represents a further step in the shared working arrangements and combined policy objectives of the two Councils.

Situated on the northern and eastern boundaries of the south-east Dorset conurbation and with areas of protected countryside and coastline, both Christchurch and East Dorset experience similar housing pressures and housing market attributes. But although the common tensions and demands have resulted in shared priorities and objectives, some characteristics and pressures vary - not surprising given that the Borough of Christchurch is frequently defined as a small and predominantly urban area with a population of 48,000, whilst much of East Dorset is rural with the majority of its 87,000 residents living within four settlements on its southernmost border. Therefore, where appropriate, this document considers each Council area in its own right, highlighting similarities and differences.

Why is a Housing Strategy important?

The role played by housing and the way it shapes communities and economies is highly complex, involving different factors and forces, both locally and externally. And although Local Authorities have limited abilities to solve underlying housing issues and market failings, they provide key front-line assistance for those in greatest need and strategic functions that can alter housing markets and demands over time:-

- Through statutory and discretionary roles, responsive housing services are offered to existing households and those facing homelessness;
- Through Development Management and Planning Policies Councils influence the scale and type of new housing developments that can be built, to address population growth and demographic change;
- With public health duties Councils ensure that people enjoy satisfactory and safe housing conditions
- Councils have duties to protect the environment and mitigate the impacts of development both locally and on climate change
- In partnership with other public sector agencies and organisations, Councils have duties to protect the most vulnerable.
- And to ensure that available resources are used to best effect, Local Authorities provide leadership and enabling roles, supporting and coordinating the work of the

many Agencies, Registered Providers and Stakeholders, involved with housing and housing services.

The quality and availability of housing also influences the health and well-being of residents and demands for other public services. Christchurch and East Dorset are fortunate to enjoy some of the highest life expectancy rates in the country, but with very high proportions of older people, and many who are capital rich, revenue poor, the strategic and prudent use of current and future housing resources will be essential.

By taking steps to achieve a more balanced housing market, the prospects for stimulating economic growth will also be improved. Areas with high housing costs and limited affordable housing options, act as a 'push' factor where living costs and risks around the available workforce can deter inward investment and encourage business relocation. Conversely areas with balanced housing markets are more likely to 'pull' economic growth, creating fewer long-term workforce risks and the potential to attract skilled workers.

With so many different strands of activity and interests to be taken into account, the Housing Strategy sets out the Councils' housing aims and priorities for the next three years. It provides a snapshot of the local and national context and a review of the latest housing evidence, whilst the local constraints and the wider challenges faced by those in need are also summarised. The document concludes with an appraisal of resources and the key strategic housing themes, before defining how priorities will be taken forward for each service area through the Action Plan (*not consultation version*).

Housing aims and the corporate plan

With cross-cutting aims and outcomes, the Housing Strategy and the Action Plan are directly connected to the housing objectives of the Corporate Plan (2012-2016), and also those more widely related to Community, Economy, Environment and Performance.

- *H1 Enabling the provision of housing appropriate to meet all needs;*
- *H2 Promoting sustainable housing development*
- *H3 Facilitating innovative approaches to housing need.*
- *C2: Improve opportunities for young people to live healthy and successful lives*

- *C4: Improve life chances for vulnerable people*
- *C5: Deliver improvements for health and well-being across the Christchurch and East Dorset Communities*
- *EC1: Create conditions for existing and new businesses to thrive*
- *EC2: Encourage thriving and welcoming town centres and a strong rural economy*
- *ENV2: Manage the conflicts between developing the built environment and protecting the natural environment*
- *ENV3: Ensure that the principles of sustainability are embedded in the conduct of the Council's business*
- *PER1: Maximise Partnership activities which maintain services and increase efficiency*
- *PER2: Ensure that Council resources are used efficiently and effectively*

These aims and those of individual annual Service Plans form an integral part of the Housing Strategy Action Plan, with its five priority themes – Housing Requirements and Sustainable Communities; Improving House Conditions; Housing Advice and Preventing Homelessness; Increasing the provision of Affordable housing, and Housing and Accommodation for vulnerable people. The Action Plan also incorporates the seven key outputs associated with the Corporate Plan Housing objectives:-

- Affordable rented housing increased as a proportion of new housing delivered
- A joint housing allocations policy and procedure introduced by 2013
- An adopted Local Development Framework, which reflects the need to supply housing in support of the economy
- Urban design codes completed by 2016
- The number of 16 and 17 year olds in bed and breakfast accommodation declining over the plan period
- A reduction in the number of people in fuel poverty
- A reduction in the number of statutory homelessness cases over the Plan period

Joined-up strategies and joint working

The role played by new and existing housing is central to the future vision of Christchurch and East Dorset, and is a cross-cutting theme that interacts with the wider social, economic and community objectives of both Councils; the health and well-being strategies of public sector agencies and organisations – in particular Health and Social Care – and the strategic aims of Social Housing providers and partners in the private sector.

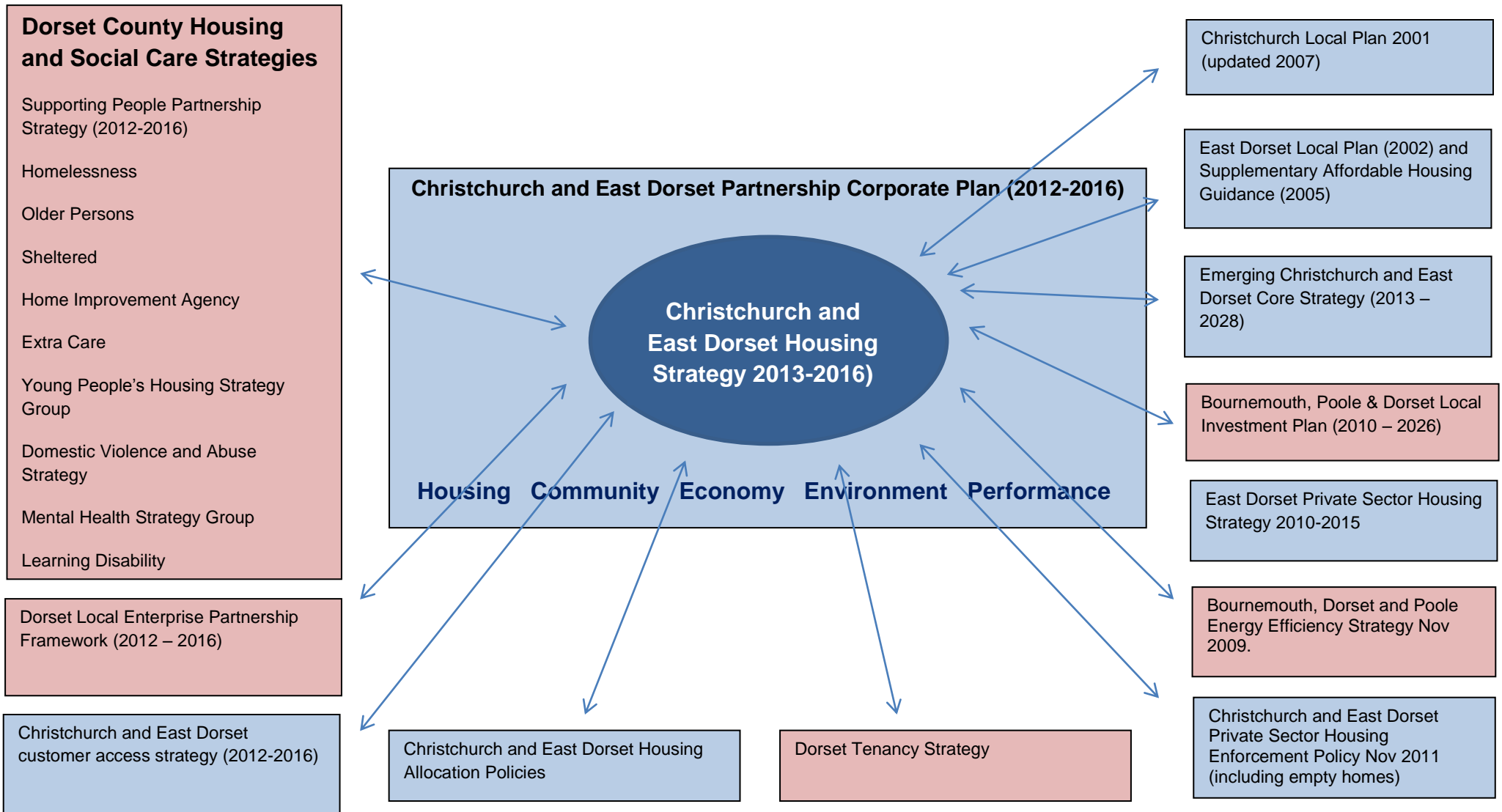
At a time when needs are increasing, public funding is being reduced and existing services are being stretched to capacity, the ability to provide more for less is crucial depending upon effective, efficient and innovative ways of using available resources. These aims can only be achieved by working strategically and in close partnership with other public and private sector organisations and companies, from Social Care and Health to private developers, social landlords and the voluntary sector. Council aims and objectives will need to inform, and be informed by, local and wider agendas including those of the Local Economic Partnership and the Homes and Communities Agency.

Such steps are the only way to ensure that current resources are used to best effect, whilst optimising future resources through enabling and preventative activities.

Living in good quality housing is known to improve the health and prospects of residents; and building appropriate market and affordable homes will address housing needs as well as contributing to local economic growth and housing market recovery. Whilst steps to balance the profiles of the existing housing stock and to apply Tenancy Strategies in the social housing sector, will create more scope for sustainable and mixed communities in the long term.

It will only be possible to optimise these important outcomes and to reduce housing pressures, if private and public partners work strategically toward common priorities.

Interrelationships of Local & Sub-regional Policies and Strategies with the Housing Strategy



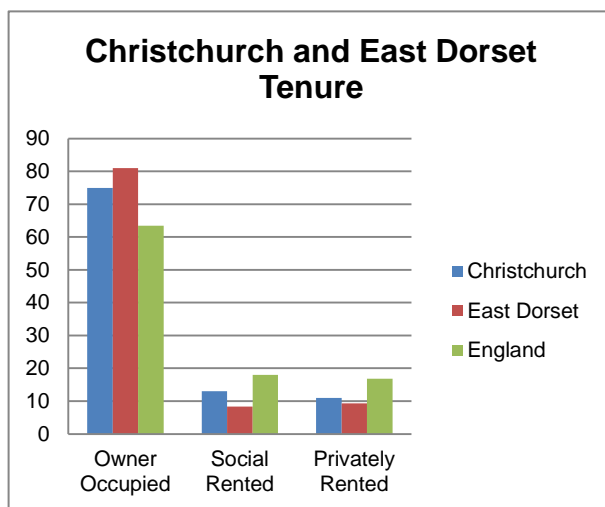
Chapter 2: Housing in Christchurch and East Dorset

Setting the scene

Adjoining Bournemouth and Poole, the housing markets of Christchurch and East Dorset have been extensively influenced by the growth of the conurbation, providing desirable suburbs for those who wish to live outside the main urban areas and an attractive destination for those seeking a retirement home in the most accessible parts of Dorset. Extensive building and development activity in both areas since the mid-1960's have inevitably optimised these attributes, thereby contributing to a number of common housing and demographic characteristics, as well as significant levels of commuting and traffic congestion in and out of the urban centres.

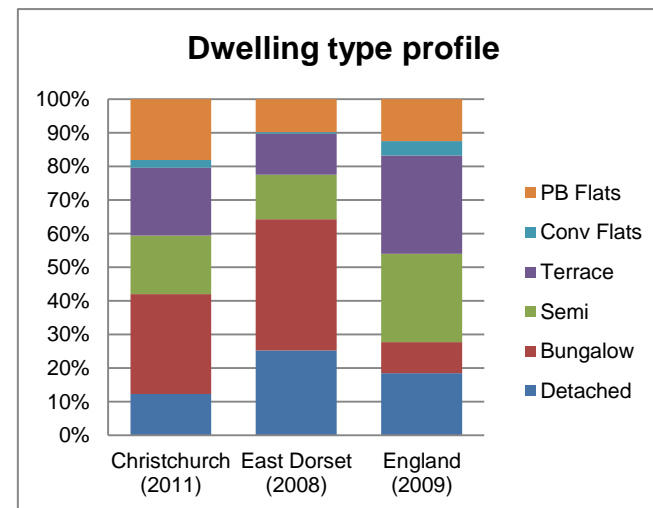
The growth of both housing markets has been influenced by the dual effects of the beautiful natural environment with its many protected areas of greenbelt, nature conservation and landscape designations, heath-land and flood zones. On the one hand factors that increase the desirability of living on the outer edge of the conurbation, but on the other imposing severe constraints on the capacity for future growth. Inevitably these dynamics have also shaped the bulk of housing built over the past 50 years contributing to today's dysfunctional housing market dominated by high value homes, an under-developed private rented sector and lack of more affordable housing.

With development activity extensively geared towards retirement and in-migration markets, the housing stock and demographic profiles of Christchurch and East Dorset are now significantly out of kilter with English averages. Many communities, especially those in the rural areas of East Dorset have been progressively undermined as younger people cannot access or afford market housing, and major concerns have arisen for age related services and long-term economies, as



the older population concentrates still further and the available work-force shrinks over the next twenty years.

Having been shaped by the demand for in-migration and suburban living, housing growth in both Christchurch and East Dorset has resulted in exceptionally high levels of owner-occupation and a private rented sector that is approximately half the size of the national average. In East Dorset exceptionally high proportions of detached houses and especially bungalows are in direct contrast with a chronic shortage of terraced housing. Factors that contribute to making East Dorset one of the least affordable places to live outside London with an 11.77 lower quartile income to house price ratio in 2011 (Christchurch's ratio was 9.56)

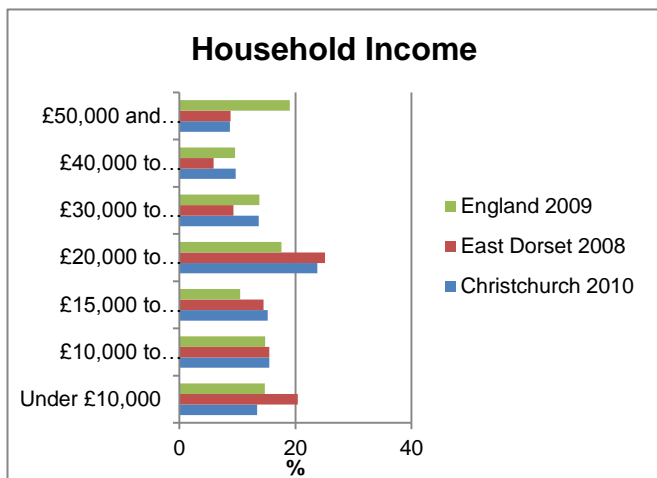


In line with the national picture, the housing markets of Christchurch and East Dorset have been significantly affected by the prolonged market failure and recession. But whilst houses prices have fallen and the number of sales have reduced proportionately with other parts of the country, values have been more stable than those in the urban centres of Bournemouth and Poole. Evidence that supports the sustained popularity of Eastern Dorset for retirement, the very limited supply of new-build opportunities, and in-migration from higher value areas of England.

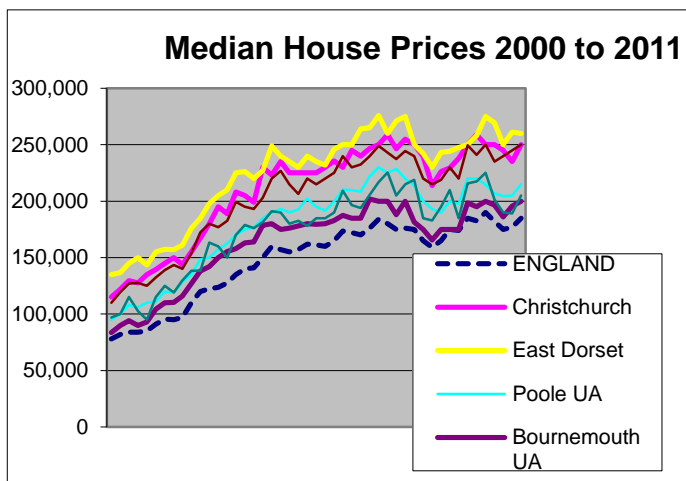
Current pressures

Beyond the wider impacts of the current housing market, the present stock and demographic profiles of Eastern Dorset continue to create additional pressures on local housing resources, especially from those in housing need and from older and vulnerable people.

With exceptionally low levels of social housing and a very small privately rented sector, opportunities to secure affordable housing solutions in Christchurch and East Dorset are highly constrained. For the majority, open market housing is beyond their reach, privately rented accommodation has become extremely costly and difficult to secure, and the diminishing number of vacancies that arise in the social housing stock are either prioritised for the most in-need or restricted to occupation by older people. As pressures rise, over-crowding is increasingly being reported in both the private rented and social housing sectors, whilst bed and breakfast accommodation and temporary housing for those faced with homelessness has to be sourced from outside the area.

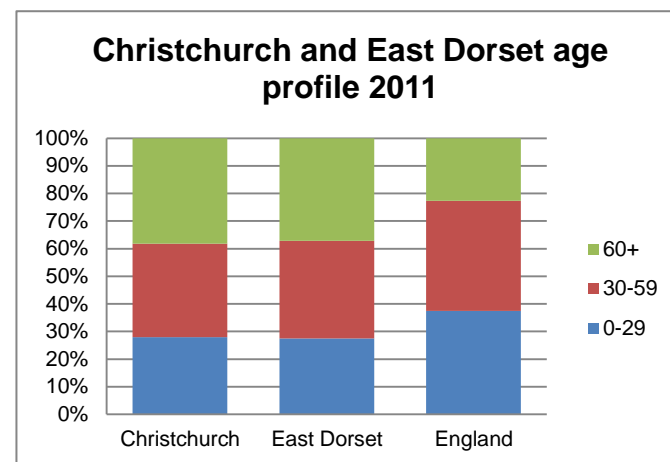


Particular difficulties have been experienced by young adults as increasing demands, changes in housing benefit and fewer willing landlords have made it difficult to secure private rented accommodation. And despite new provision being made for the client group in Christchurch and East Dorset, growing demand continues to exceed supply.



At national and international level, the tensions associated with funding future care for an ageing generation from a shrinking working age population are well known. Across Dorset County, with an

above-average age population, problems will be acute however, the situation in Christchurch and East Dorset will be extreme. In the 2011 Census, Christchurch had a greater proportion of residents above 65 years of age (29.7%) than any other English or Welsh local authority area, and at 27.9% East Dorset ranked 6th in the same table. Over the next 20 years, as the proportion of over 75 year olds double, Social Care, Health and Housing Agencies will experience huge demands. Housing services that help older people enjoy healthy and safe lives at home and that reduce pressures on other public sector agencies will be critically important. Home Improvement Agency services which assist elderly residents get the support they need to live independently and comfortably in their own homes for as long as they can, are not surprisingly under increasing demand.



The need to plan for the needs of older households in the future has never been greater, ensuring that new housing is better designed to include features that meet the needs of older people, such as improved access and walk-in showers.

The consequences of changes in national policy and legislation

The aims and objectives of national housing policy were set out in Central Government's housing strategy "Laying the Foundation: a housing strategy for England", published in November 2011. This key document - connecting to many recent changes in legislation and welfare reform - emphasised the urgent need to facilitate recovery in the housing market and to increase the supply of all types of housing to buy and rent. Where new housing is built, it should be high quality and sustainable, creating desirable communities of energy efficient and well-designed homes. Priorities and resources are to support recovery in the housing market, helping to facilitate aspirations for home ownership and growth in the private rented sector, whilst changes in social housing policy will make it more flexible, optimising its use for struggling households. Measures protecting vulnerable people and tackling the causes of homelessness are to remain in place, and new

powers will enable local housing authorities to meet their statutory obligations through privately rented accommodation.

Driven by both ideological and financial imperatives, the multiple changes in policy and legislation continue to impact across the housing sector. To address the failings of the housing market and the lowest levels of house building since the 1920's, Central Government has introduced a new, simplified planning framework and taken subsequent steps to overcome development barriers; the Localism Act has increased ways that communities can influence local housing policies and local growth. New measures and fiscal policies have been introduced to increase the private rented sector, whilst the challenges of mortgage lending and aspirations for home-ownership have been helped through Government backed guarantees and shared-equity models.

It has been possible for the Government to drastically reduce funding for Social Housing by introducing a new tenure model made viable through higher levels of private borrowing and rents at up to 80% of open market value. Forming part of a new social housing framework, the model has also been accompanied by new flexible tenancies removing the right to lifetime occupation, thereby creating prospects for the better use of housing in the future.

However coupled with new Housing Benefit restrictions and contractual delivery and funding arrangements with the Homes and Communities Agency, the new model has significantly increased risks for Social Housing Providers and their business plans. New and significant financial considerations have been created for tenants and the need for joint Tenancy Strategies between Local Housing Authorities and Registered Providers, to ensure the best match of people and housing opportunities.

The substantial changes in housing policy and cuts in public funding have made it even more important to have effective and joined-up working arrangements between the agencies and service providers who support local people in housing need. Collaborative working arrangements with neighbouring Councils and Registered Providers must ensure that risks are minimised and that available resources are used to best effect through common approaches to new national policy requirements – thereby preventing “reinvented wheels”. However with relentless changes in policy and practice, and downward pressures on staff capacity, there is some concern that the existing networks and shared strategies across Dorset may struggle to retain their effectiveness.

Housing Benefit and Welfare Reform

In March 2012 the Welfare Reform Act received Royal Assent. Legislating for the biggest changes to the Welfare System for over 60 years, the Act introduces a wide range of reforms to deliver commitments made in the Coalition Agreement and the Queens Speech to make the Benefits and Tax Credit systems fairer and simpler by creating the right incentives to get more people into work, by protecting the most vulnerable in our society and by delivering fairness to those claiming benefit and to the tax payer. For Housing/Council Tax Benefit the Act introduces:-

- **The Benefits Cap from April 2013** (national roll-out will start during the summer of 2013). The cap will apply to the combined income for working age people from the main out-of-work benefits, plus Housing Benefit, Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit. The cap will be £500 per week for couples and lone parents and £350 per week for single adults. There are exceptions, but for customers above the cap a deduction will be applied to their Housing Benefit. In Christchurch and East Dorset 32 households have been identified as being potentially affected by the cap.
- **Housing Benefit size criteria restrictions** (“Bedroom Tax”) for working age Social Rented Sector claimants from April 2013. Those considered to be under-occupying their accommodation will see a reduction in their Housing Benefit calculated by a reduction of either 14% of the total eligible rent for under-occupying by one bedroom or 25% of the total eligible rent for under-occupying by two bedrooms or more. The Councils have identified 318 customers so far who are likely to be affected by this reform.
- **Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans to be abolished** from April 2013 for general living expenses which form part of the discretionary Social Fund – to be replaced with a new local provision by Dorset County Council.
- **Council Tax Benefit is abolished** from April 2013. Instead Councils have been asked to develop their own localised Council Tax Support scheme with 10% less funding.
- **Introduction of Universal Credit from October 2013** will lead to a further round of major changes for households supported by Housing Benefit (2,935 in Christchurch and 3,484 in East Dorset in August 2012) with further risk and operational consequences for housing providers, support services and agencies involved with guiding and assisting those in housing need including the council’s housing service.

Christchurch and East Dorset: Key Facts and Figures

		Christchurch	East Dorset
Hectares:	Although East Dorset is nearly 7 times larger than the Borough of Christchurch, only 7% is urban against approximately 30% of Christchurch.	5,169 Ha	35,411 Ha
Total households:	Just under 60,000 households across the Partnership area (census 2011)	21,500	37,600
Long term empty homes:	Approximately 600 (House Condition Surveys of 2008 and 2012)	350	240
Current population:	Across the joint area is just below 135,000 (census 2011)	47,700	87,200
Current older population:	Population over 65 years of age approaching 30% (DCC 2012)	29.5%	27.8%
Population growth by 2031:	Significant growth predicted (DCC 2012)	17.8%	10.7%
Older population growth:	By 2031 the 65+ years of age population will grow by approximately 40% (DCC 2012)	39%	43%
Very old age population growth:	Highly significant prediction, suggesting a very substantial increase in frail elderly and those needing care and support by 2031 (DCC 2012)	56%	80%
Annual Shortage of Affordable Housing:	758 homes per annum across the Partnership area (SHMA Update 2012)	332 pa	426 pa
The Housing Registers:	Combined 5,474 households are registered (January 1 st 2013)	2,350	3,124
Number of social housing vacancies	Local Authority allocations to existing social housing stock (2011/12)	154	181
House prices:	Average (median) house price for the joint area circa £250,000 (CLG 2011)	£246,250	£255,000
Size of Private Rented Sector:	The proportion of privately rented households (English average 16.8%) (EHS)	11%	9.3%
Average Income:	Median household income (Household Survey data SHMA Update 2012)	£23,612	£25,451
Private rents:	2 bedroom rents 3 bedroom rents (Household Survey Data SHMA Update 2012)	£680 pcm £895 pcm	£725 pcm £900 pcm
New-build completion rates:	Annual average (2006 to 2011) (Source: Dorsetforyou data)	125 pa	127 pa
The proportion of bungalows and detached houses:	Detached houses and bungalows make-up nearly 70% of the housing stock in East Dorset (SHMA Update), compared to the 26% of the national average (2009 EHS)	46%	70%
Internal migration growth	Over the past decade 84,300 people have moved into Christchurch and East Dorset from other parts of England and Wales; 70,500 have moved out (ONS migration data)	+5,900	+7,900
The number of households with a disabled resident	Over 10,000 households (1 in 6) across Christchurch and East Dorset include a family member with some form of disability (House Condition Surveys 2009 & 2012)	4,500	5,600

Chapter 3: Enabling housing growth and sustainable communities

Primary service aim:

To ensure that an adequate supply of suitable sites in sustainable locations are available to meet housing and economic growth requirements, and that residential developments appropriately address local housing needs and demands, and create high quality neighbourhoods which enhance the towns and villages they are located within.

The Current Context

Having seen the 'top-down' centralised system of target setting removed, the Councils of Christchurch and East Dorset have new obligations to assess housing growth, and to ensure that plans are in place to meet future requirements. After a decade of constrained activity and downward pressure on house building, these new obligations and the evidence of predicted household growth have presented both a challenge and an opportunity for the Councils. On the one hand helping to redress imbalances in the housing market and to facilitate economic growth, but doing so in ways that are supported by adequate infrastructure and that do not compromise the environment sensitivities of green belt, heathland and flood areas.

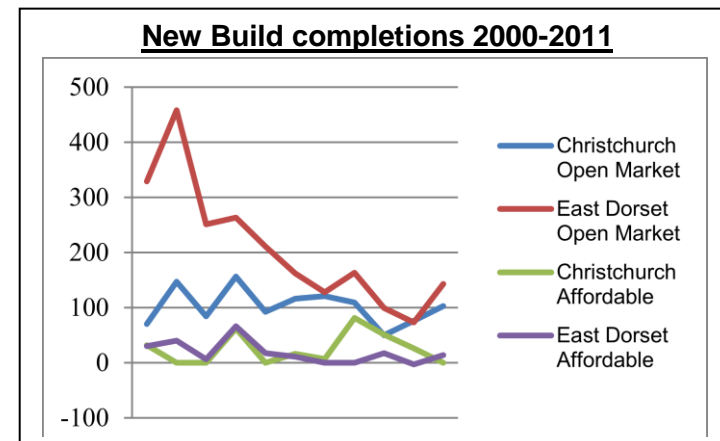
At national and local levels, the importance of house building to meet the demands of a growing population and to facilitate economic recovery is recognised. The latter is Central Government's top priority and has been directly linked to the contribution that the construction industry makes to Gross Domestic Product. At the local level a new era of carefully managed house building will also provide the scope for both Councils to increase the provision of urgently needed affordable housing, and the provision of more appropriate market housing to meet local demands - measures that will help to create mixed communities, addressing some of the long term work-force and economic risks of an extremely popular retirement area with a rapidly ageing population.

Core Strategy progress

The emerging Core Strategy for Christchurch and East Dorset has been updated to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and identifies a requirement for 8,200 new dwellings over the 15 year plan period. To meet the household growth requirements identified in the SHMA, the Core Strategy makes provision for 4,800 homes within the existing urban areas and a further 3,400 as new neighbourhoods (2,400 dwellings within East Dorset and 995 dwellings on green-field developments in Christchurch).

New neighbourhoods and urban extension

In accordance with the Core Strategy settlement hierarchy, the proposed new neighbourhoods and urban extension will be provided in areas that provide the best access to services, facilities and employment.



What is the Core Strategy?

The Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy sets out the planning strategy for Christchurch Borough and East Dorset District over the next 15 years to 2028.

Working within an agreed strategic vision, it sets out how much, what type, where and how development should take place and how this should be catered for.

Key sites and scales of development have been carefully considered to minimise impacts on the natural environment and to take account of protected heath-land and flood zones – less than 0.5% of the south-east Dorset Green Belt is to be lost. Other measures, including the provision of infrastructure and requirements for Suitable Alternative Natural Green spaces (SANGs) will offset the impact of development associated with the newly proposed site allocations and development within the existing urban areas.

Viability, Standards and mixed communities

The need to “get builders building” and to deliver housing growth is recognised, and will be supported by a positive presumption in favour of sustainable development and consideration of such matters as viability (subject to evidence). However, developments and the new neighbourhoods will equally be required to meet the vision of the draft Core Strategy and the requirements of the SHMA, resulting in high quality sustainable communities with appropriate housing mixes. New policy proposals will seek greater proportions of affordable housing, removing thresholds and seeking up to 50% affordable housing on greenfield sites and up to 40% affordable housing on brownfield sites.

Through the Core Strategy both Councils will seek to ensure that future new developments are both physically and socially sustainable, creating desirable places to live and homes that enhance the health and well-being of residents, and where types and tenures of housing are integrated and tenure blind.

With the existing housing stock disproportionately skewed towards higher value houses and bungalows, and with an under provision of affordable homes and private rented accommodation, new developments will be required to positively contribute to a long-term balanced housing market in which high quality homes address the needs and demands of the local area. Developments will be expected to create a greater range of opportunities for owner-occupation and investment as well as affordable housing, achieving densities of at least 30 dwellings per hectare, having regard to the character of the area.

Reflecting the importance of decent flexible housing that is affordable to heat and has minimal carbon emissions, the Council’s planning policies and influence will also be used to prevent very small poorly designed living spaces and to encourage highly energy efficient homes.

Key Housing Objectives (2013 to 2016):-

1. To adopt the Core Strategy and associated Policies to underpin the 15 year housing requirement
2. To secure a minimum of 35% all new-build completions for affordable housing
3. To work positively and proactively with developers, landowners and agents to ensure that opportunities for development result in high quality, sustainable and deliverable schemes
4. To ensure that appropriate new development proposals achieve densities of at least 30 homes per hectare, incorporating mixed communities of market and affordable homes to meet local needs and demands
5. To maintain up to date sources of housing growth and housing market evidence, and strategic housing land availability assessments

Proposed new neighbourhoods for Christchurch and East Dorset (subject to the Core Strategy)

	Homes
Urban Extension, Christchurch	950
South of Burton village	45
Stone Lane, Wimborne	90
Cuthbury & St Margarets, Wimborne	220
Cranborne Road, Wimborne	600
Leigh Road South, Wimborne	350
Lockyer’s School, Corfe Mullen	250
Holmwood Hse, Ferndown	110
Coppins, Ferndown	30
East of New Road, West Parley	320
West of New Road, West Parley	200
North West Verwood	230

Projected Household Growth 2011 to 2031

(SHMA update 2012)

	2011	2031	Growth	Annual
Christchurch	21,920	26,921	+19.9%	219
East Dorset	37,943	44,657	+17.7%	336

Chapter 4: Increasing the provision of affordable housing

Primary service aim:

To optimise the delivery of affordable housing for people in need and with a local connection to Christchurch and East Dorset, through the most effective use of Council resources, policies and influence, and those of partners in the public and private sectors.

The past and present context

Following the transfer of Council-owned homes to newly formed Housing Associations during the 1990's, a surge of activity saw the largest growth in affordable housing in Christchurch and East Dorset since the days of local authority house building in the 1960s and 1970s. However over the last decade the level of new provision has progressively fallen despite both Councils having affordable housing planning policies and enabling activities in place.

Compounded by the constraints of the housing stock profile, high local house prices and low average incomes, national housing research in the early and mid-2000s confirmed both Council areas as having some of the worst affordability ratios outside London. During the intervening years the position for local people in housing need has only worsened, with the credit crunch undermining the housing and mortgage markets, and the new demands for private rented accommodation squeezing out all but the most affluent. And as larger scale sites for new development had already run short by the mid-2000s, Eastern Dorset could not benefit from a housing delivery 'lag' post 2007. Indeed most recent new-build schemes have been very small scale and aimed at retirement or executive markets. Between 2009 and 2012 only 649 homes were completed across the joint area with a net gain of only 105 affordable homes.

The unresolved scale of need and the on-going affordability problems were highlighted in the SHMA Update (2012). Taking savings and income into account, the report confirmed that between 17% and 20% of households in the area could not afford open market housing costs without some form of subsidy, whilst the 'absolute' annual affordable housing shortfall across the joint area was estimated at 758 homes each year (Government formula). By contrast the anticipated delivery of affordable housing is unlikely to exceed 221 affordable homes each year over the life of the Core Strategy (based upon 40% of the overall housing growth requirement).

Social and Economic drivers

Growing concerns about the long-term impact of the ageing population and the future workforce, have added a new momentum to the case for affordable housing as well as the provision of appropriate market housing. Ensuring that younger workers have access to affordable housing as well as those in greater need will meet economic as well as social imperatives, creating mixed communities and a diverse work-force. Coupled with growth in the private rented sector, more affordable housing will help to create a more balanced housing market, acting as a 'pull' factor for inward investment, instead of the 'push' factors associated with dysfunctional housing markets, where housing cost and work-force issues risk undermining existing businesses and deterring new growth.

Affordable Housing: Key findings from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2012 update)			
		Christchurch	East Dorset
• Affordable housing shortfall (CLG method)		332pa	426pa
• Projected total housing growth requirement (excluding void allowance)		218pa	336pa
• Potential affordable housing delivery at 40%		87pa	134pa
• Proportion of 1& 2 bed affordable homes		71%	60%
• Proportion of 3&4 bed affordable homes		29%	40%

See Appendix 1 for the Christchurch and East Dorset Affordable Housing Development Programme (not consultation)

Steps to enable more affordable housing

In response to the corporate priority associated with affordable housing, renewed steps have been taken to ensure that available resources are used to maximum effect; that policies and opportunities are optimised through housing, planning and community leadership roles, and that effective collaborative working is undertaken with Registered Providers and other private and public sector partners. Key areas of activity include:-

- Implementing effective Planning Policies to maximise the provision of affordable homes over the next 15 years
- Working with the housing service to address the needs of **people with a local connection**
- Corporate working to optimise systems and services connected to affordable housing enabling
- Supporting Parish Councils to enable affordable **housing schemes in rural areas**
- Developing **innovative new approaches** and models for affordable housing
- Investigating and leading affordable housing opportunities using **Council owned land and assets**
- **Working with the Homes and Communities Agency and Registered Providers** with land and assets in the area
- Optimising the **use of Council funding** and other financial resources available through public sector bodies
- **Negotiating with Developers and Housing Providers** to ensure that new schemes result in high quality affordable housing that meets identified needs for rent and home-ownership.

Barriers and challenges

As the need for affordable housing has continued to rise over the last 5 years, so too have the challenges to delivery. Central Government's inability to continue funding social rented housing at previous levels, and changed national housing priorities have led to the introduction of the new Affordable Rent model, with fixed term tenancies and rents at up to 80% of market value. Coupled with new risks arising from welfare reform and under-occupancy, the ability to deliver conventional Rented and Home Ownership developments outside urban areas and planning-led schemes has become extremely difficult. These factors will need to be addressed through new forms of delivery and subsidy mechanisms, especially for rural schemes where costs can be higher and greater levels of flexibility will be essential to prioritise and ensure that local 'need' imperatives are met.

In Christchurch and East Dorset the ability to deliver material numbers of affordable homes will depend upon robust but flexible planning policies that optimise the underlying strength of the housing market, and collaborative working with local Housing Providers to unlock land and redevelopment opportunities. And where funds arise these may be necessary to enable rural schemes, which in themselves, may need to be delivered using new delivery vehicles like Community Land Trusts.

Key Housing Objectives (2013 to 2016):-

- 1 Working with Partners and Stakeholders, to ensure that all opportunities to enable affordable housing through influence, policies and resources are considered and optimised.
- 2 To adopt and implement new Planning Policies in the Core Strategy and Supplementary Planning Documents, maximising delivery and securing at least 35% of new-build completions for affordable housing.
- 3 To identify and advance at least four rural affordable housing schemes in partnership with Parish Councils
- 4 To achieve high quality 'tenure blind' affordable housing developments that meet needs identified in the SHMA and that deliver an overall balance of 70% homes for rent and 30% for Intermediate Affordable Housing
- 5 To explore and exploit new vehicles to facilitate affordable housing delivery

Rural Homes built at Hinton Martell (2011)
(Spectrum Housing)



New build homes at Wimborne (2010
(Synergy Housing))



New Affordable Homes
commence at Bronte Avenue,
Christchurch (2012) (Raglan
Housing Association)



Chapter 5: Decent homes and housing conditions

Primary service aim:

To ensure that safe, secure and energy-efficient housing enhances the health and well-being of residents, and to improve conditions where necessary through advice, financial support or enforcement activities.

The existing housing stock

New developments will play a key role in meeting household growth and shaping the future of Christchurch and East Dorset but the importance of the existing housing stock should not be overlooked or underestimated. Of the 62,000 dwellings across the joint area only 6% were built during the last decade.

Although the majority of today's homes were built after 1965 and are deemed to be 'modern', an estimated 12,500 fall below the Decent Homes Standard. But with 70% of failures related to inadequate heating and insulation, and with 10,000 households having at least one resident with some form of disability or long-term illness, housing conditions play a major part in the health and well-being of local residents and especially those who are vulnerable.

The Council's role

With legislative duties to safeguard the interests of residents living in unsatisfactory and unsuitable housing, the Councils' Private Sector Housing Team use a range of enabling and enforcement activities to improve conditions and to support and protect tenants and owners, particularly those at greatest risk.

Key factors affecting housing conditions in Christchurch and East Dorset:-

- Very high levels of home-ownership, often without mortgages and frequently occupied by asset rich-cash poor, older residents lacking the revenue to adapt or sometimes maintain properties
- High demand for a highly constrained social rented sector with the dual demands of many older and more vulnerable residents needing adaptations, but also an acute under-supply of accommodation resulting in over-crowding with very limited scope for rehousing
- High demand for limited numbers of privately rented homes, driving up rents and contributing to over-crowding and poorer standards in the lower quartiles.
- Households across both areas having lower than national average incomes with greater than average numbers claiming one or more benefits – a trend that is closely aligned to age, tenure and vulnerability attributes in both social and privately rented sectors
- Households with a disabled member, including the frail elderly, having the lowest of all incomes - in Christchurch 810 households with a disabled resident had a household income below £10,000 per annum whilst approximately 2,700 households in East Dorset had the same financial constraints (House Condition Surveys 2008 and 2012).

What is a 'Decent Home'?

- ✓ It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing
- ✓ It is in a reasonable state of repair
- ✓ It has reasonably modern facilities and services
- ✓ It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

A Decent Home: Definition and Guidance for implementation.
DCLG June 2006

Housing Stock Statistics

	Christchurch	East Dorset
Number of non-decent homes	4,490	8,700
Proportion of non-decent privately rented homes	39%	56%
Number of households in fuel poverty	3181 (14.9%)	5098 (13.7%)
The cost to remedy non-decent homes	£17.3M	£29.4M

Estimates from the 2008 and 2012 House Condition Surveys and DECC Fuel Poverty Statistics 2012

Improving the private rented sector

The private rented sector has historically played a vital role for people in housing need, providing homes for those who cannot afford to buy or who want flexibility, and for households who cannot access subsidised social housing. And although many landlords have now improved the standards historically associated with the sector, poor housing conditions and increasing incidents of over-crowding continue to require intervention by the Councils. When identified, the Private Sector Team aim to ensure that repairs or improvements are carried out by Landlords (social or private) where appropriate working towards satisfactory solutions with Landlords and tenants.

As a sub-element of the sector, Houses in Multiple Occupation (bedsits) provide an essential source of affordable accommodation but one that creates continual risks for both residents and Councils. An estimated 24 dwellings in Christchurch are occupied by multiple households, with only two falling into the higher risk licensable category; a total of 30 HMOs have been estimated in East Dorset, with three licensed. With significantly below average numbers of HMOs in Christchurch and East Dorset, both Councils face lower associated risks, but the shortage is compounding the difficulties for newly forming households; those who are unable to afford self-contained accommodation, and for the increasing number of people who are being affected by Housing Benefit restrictions.

Energy Efficiency – Greener Homes

With increasing energy costs, fuel poverty, cold related deaths and the need to reduce carbon emissions, it is essential that the energy efficiency of the existing housing stock is improved. Using enabling, advisory and sign-posting services, the Private Sector Housing Team works with a range of partners to maximise the take-up of efficiency measures and reduce energy use through behavioural change.

Empty homes

With renewal and regeneration responsibilities the Private Sector Housing Team also seek to minimise the number of long-term empty homes using a combination of encouragement and enforcement. Latest estimates indicate that approaching 600 homes across the joint area have been empty for six months or longer, with a substantially lower proportion in East Dorset (0.6% of the total stock) than Christchurch (1.5%). Resources continue to be targeted at tackling very long-term vacant properties and those affecting the environment or neighbouring residents, either visually or physically.

Key Housing Objectives (2013 to 2016):-

- 1 To ensure that households have access to quality advice and support to improve their homes.
- 2 To work with owners, landlords, letting agents and tenants to raise standards in housing.
- 3 To work with partners to improve the energy efficiency of the existing housing stock and reduce fuel poverty.
- 4 To maximise the use of the existing housing stock.

The importance of decent, safe and secure housing conditions

- Appropriate and decent housing improves health and well-being
- Living within good quality and suitable housing enhances individual prospects and potential
- Providing adaptations and facilities for people with sensory or physical disabilities, enable residents to enjoy more independent lives
- Proactive and preventative housing improvements reduce the demand for other public services
- Energy efficiency improvements not only improve health, but reduce energy costs, fuel poverty and carbon emissions

Chapter 6: Housing advice and preventing homelessness

Primary service aim:

To provide high quality housing advice and assistance, where available resources are optimised to meet housing need and prevent homelessness.

'Front line' Housing Services

Councils have statutory obligations to help people who are homeless or who are facing homelessness, providing housing advice and varying levels of assistance depending upon individual circumstances. These 'front-line' services and the operation of the Housing Registers remain a core housing activity in Christchurch and East Dorset.

In line with national policy and the Dorset Homelessness Strategy, the joint housing team works with families and individuals to prevent homelessness wherever possible, and this remains a priority objective for both Councils. Through preventative activities and a proactive approach the Councils aim to minimise the use of temporary housing in bed and breakfast and hostel accommodation to assist homeless households.

Increasing demand and decreasing supply

Recessionary factors continue to create financial uncertainty for those in need, however acute supply-side constraints have resulted in fewer housing opportunities in the social and greater difficulties securing privately rented sectors – the latter having a particularly marked impact on younger people and larger families.

Recent changes in national housing policy and proposed changes in welfare reform nationally are likely to impose further pressures on the service, raising demand and reducing opportunities. In turn creating the risk of escalating costs as households are forced to stay longer in temporary accommodation, and less satisfactory solutions as people have to be housed in neighbouring areas. Most people who are homeless are offered the chance to find private rented housing as there are a small number of social homes available. However for many clients the only affordable housing might be available outside the Council's boundaries. We are working with partners in Poole and Dorset to reduce rough sleeping and assist single homeless clients through the 'No Second Night Out' initiative.

With lower than average household incomes and some of the most expensive housing outside London, the demand for affordable rented housing in Christchurch and East Dorset has already become exceptionally challenging. However new housing and welfare policies are compounding the limitations of the highly constrained social and private rented sectors, reducing disposable household incomes and making affordable housing and re-housing options even more difficult to find.

Homelessness and Prevention (2011/12)

	Christchurch	East Dorset
Homelessness Decisions	10	40
Homelessness Acceptances	17	10
Prevented Homelessness	340	339
Total households placed into bed and breakfast	47	32
Households in Temporary accommodation at 31/3/12	8	12

Housing Register (January 2013)

	Christchurch	East Dorset
Total registered households	2,300	3,100
As a % of total households	10.7%	8.3%
Total 1 bedroom need (%)	1,389 (60%)	1,668 (54%)
Total 2 bedroom need (%)	587 (25%)	843 (27%)
Total 3 bedroom need (%)	299 (13%)	492 (16%)
Total 4 bedroom need (%)	55 (2%)	115 (4%)
<i>Defined Local Connection</i>	1,780	
<i>'Gold' band households</i>		380

The Housing Register and social housing re-lets

As the inability to secure affordable housing has increased, so the Christchurch and East Dorset Housing Registers have grown. Over 2,300 households are currently seeking social housing in Christchurch, whilst 3,100 households are registered with East Dorset (January 2013)

Operational pressures and strategic aims

With a diversity of operational demands and financial pressures being managed by the joint Housing Service, it is necessary to work within a structured framework and service plan, in which strategic and day to day aims are monitored and taken forward. However recent national changes in housing policy and welfare reform have created unplanned demands on the Housing Service and their work with partners to accommodate the numerous policy and practice revisions created by the new legislation and local freedoms. These include Housing Benefit, the Affordable Rent model, Fixed-Term Tenancies, Tenancy Strategies and Allocation Policies

Nonetheless a revised staffing structure from generic to specialist teams is being implemented to help meet the primary service aim of providing high quality housing advice and assistance, where available resources are optimised to meet housing need and prevent homelessness.

But with many aspects of the Councils Housing Service connected to the performance and support of others, meeting the primary service aim will rely upon the Councils' ability to work closely with a wide range of external organisations and agencies. Highly effective partnership working, especially with landlords and neighbouring local authorities, will ensure that financial and housing resources are optimised, that economies of scale are achieved, that systems are efficient and targeted, and that shared policies are developed jointly, albeit with individual tailoring.

Through the joint Dorset Homelessness Strategy many public and private sector organisations have already worked closely with the six District and Boroughs of Dorset over the last four years to address homelessness and priority housing needs. The countywide strategy is now due for renewal but with diminishing resources and an increased emphasis on localism, a new context will be needed reflecting the highly constrained operating environment that now exists.

Balancing local interests with the benefits offered by economies of scale, future resources will have to be even more carefully prioritised and tailored to best serve those in greatest need – forming part of a new operating environment and culture in which the permanence of a social home for life can no longer be taken for granted, and with reliance on other housing tenures.

Key Housing Objectives (2013-2016):-

- 1/. Prevent homelessness and enable early, effective and accessible housing advisory services
- 2/. Working in partnership to make the best use of existing social housing stock, including the revision of Council Allocation Policies
- 3/. Improve access to privately rented housing and develop relationships with new and existing landlords to sustain tenancies
- 4/. Evaluate the use of all forms of temporary accommodation and to assess future requirements
- 5/. Improved analysis of our client base to identify any trends and future resource requirements
- 6/. Working in partnership to maximise capacity and to ensure 'every contact counts'



2012: Previously empty properties now providing 7 homes in Highcliffe (Christchurch Borough Council & East Boro Housing Trust)

Chapter 7: Housing and accommodation for vulnerable people

Primary service aim:

To support the elderly, vulnerable and disabled people to live in comfort and security in their own homes

Assisting vulnerable people

Meeting the needs of vulnerable people within our communities is a corporate priority, impacting on all aspects of the Councils statutory and discretionary housing services, however, the demands are immense. The latest housing surveys in Christchurch and East Dorset have indicated that as many as 10,000 households include a family member with some form of disability, and of course many people may be 'able-bodied' but vulnerable, including households on low incomes, those suffering from mental illness, learning disabilities, leaving care, substance misuse, fleeing domestic violence or being at risk by falling into a minority group.

In Christchurch and East Dorset it might be expected that the frail elderly population would have a major impact on the number of households with a disabled resident, however a significant number of such households have not yet reached retirement - in Christchurch alone, nearly 60% are headed by people under 65 years of age.

Local research has confirmed that older people, disabled people and people on low incomes are more likely to be living in a home which is in need of significant repairs or adaptations. And with the demographic make-up of Christchurch and East Dorset, a significantly proportion of these households are also likely to be facing fuel poverty, extreme cold (a category 1 hazard), poor conditions in pre-1919 stock or poor conditions in the private rented sector.

In addition households with a frail elderly person or registered disabled resident frequently have lower gross incomes – in Christchurch 18% of households with a disabled resident had a household income below £10,000 per annum, compared to 11.8% of able-bodied households.

2012: 3 new homes for people with learning disabilities (East Boro Housing Trust)



Options and solutions

To address the many different levels of vulnerability, client groups, and financial capacity, a diverse range of solutions and advisory services are necessary. Fairly minor improvements to existing housing conditions are sometimes enough to help people to maintain and enjoy independent lives, however, other circumstances call for long-term solutions involving shared housing or support services, extra care accommodation for those who are frail or need increasing access to care, or bespoke wheelchair accessible housing, capable of transforming the lives of individuals or families with severe disabilities.

With far reaching consequences on health and well-being, operational and strategic housing activities for vulnerable people are increasingly being developed and delivered in partnership with Health and Social Care Agencies. In Dorset one of the key partnership services is the Dorset Home Service, a home improvement agency providing assistance and where necessary acting on behalf of residents – offering a unique range of services that focus on optimising the physical environment rather than purely on the support needs of the service user. Both councils also fund an outreach service for those facing domestic violence.

Targeted strategies and coordinated services also operate across Dorset to support the different 'vulnerable' client groups under the auspices of Dorset County Council. Themed multi-agency housing panels now operate across the county to discuss in-partnership housing solutions and to assess requirements for supported housing only.



The Dorset Home Service

Assistance provided by the Dorset Home Service

(see a full summary at appendix 1)

- Holistic support service for vulnerable people
- Carrying out improvements and adaptations
- Help applying for grants and loans
- Handyperson service tackling small jobs

Housing Options advice and guidance

www.dorsetforyou.com

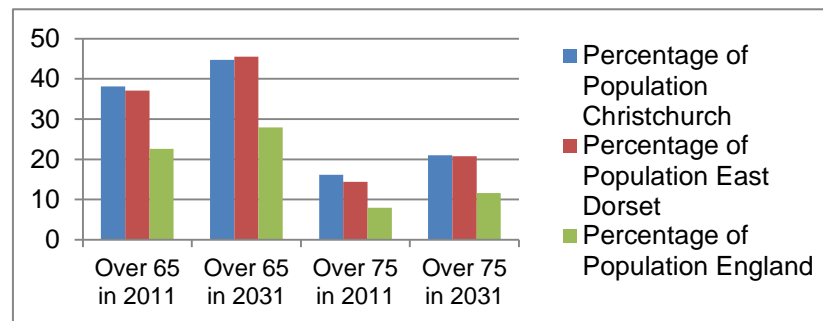
An overarching commissioning group coordinates supported housing provision and ‘floating’ support services at strategic level, and continually looks for ways to improve efficiency and effectiveness and to bridge gaps in provision. Whilst local demands for new specialist and supported housing continue to be taken forward through the Council’s housing enabling and activities, and newly proposed planning policies.

Meeting needs in Christchurch and East Dorset

Across Eastern Dorset public sector resources to assist frail older people and those with dementia are under continual pressure but other priorities and gaps in provision have also been identified, including housing services for younger people faced with homelessness (16 to 24 years of age) and housing for people with learning disabilities.

Over the past three years additional services have been provided for younger vulnerable people and people with learning disabilities in Christchurch and East Dorset, however, ever growing levels of youth homelessness continues to stretch available resources – consequences that are undoubtedly connected to the constrained employment opportunities for unskilled and unqualified younger people (so-called ‘NEETS’), and the limited availability of affordable shared housing accommodation within Council boundaries, for individuals who rely upon Housing Benefit to support their rent.

During 2013 joint research being undertaken across Dorset will help to confirm the need for additional pitches (both permanent and transit), for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people. As required by the Housing Act (2004), the study will enable the formation of a coordinated strategy to meet the future housing needs of the known community – in the 2011 Census 171 individuals in East Dorset and 48 individuals in Christchurch identified themselves as usually resident “White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller.



The impact of an ageing population

At a time when public funding is being reduced and capacity stretched, service commissioners and providers in both Christchurch and East Dorset are facing the acute long-term challenges of an ageing population. Both areas already have significantly above average numbers of people over 60 years old (38% compared to 23% nationally) and approaching twice the average number of people over 75. Current projections suggest that by 2031 these sectors will have deeply concentrated with the 60 – 74 age range growing by up to 25%, and the 75+ group growing by more than 50%. These changes will result in very high demands for housing and support services, especially from those who are frail. Joint working with the Health Authority, Social Care and Registered Providers will become ever more important. Effective activities and strategies must ensure that current funding and support services are used to best effect, whilst longer-term health and well-being measures must be implemented to reduce and ideally prevent future ‘front line’ consequences on health and resources.

Housing services for vulnerable people

In line with public health and cross agency strategies, measures implemented by both Councils will seek to promote and support independent living and where feasible, help people remain in their own homes or attain a settled home. Move on arrangements are important to ensure the best use of supported and specialist accommodation and to enable some clients to gain independence. Primary assessment and support from the Dorset Home Service will offer advice and minor works assistance to older and vulnerable people. And in addition to any statutory rights, those with resources and assets will be helped to facilitate self-improvements, whilst those on low incomes and ‘passport’ benefits will have access to disabled facility grants and other grant based measures to improve house conditions and reduce fuel poverty.

Key Housing Objectives (2013 to 2016):-

- 1 To work with partners to improve access to client focused services and advice
- 2 To reduce duplication and maximise the use of locally available supported and specialised housing, accommodation and support services
- 3 To ensure that households in need of support can live with the maximum level of independence, health and well-being in their chosen home.
- 4 Ensure that vulnerable people have good quality housing suitable for their needs

Chapter 8: Resourcing housing services and the housing strategy

Introduction

The challenges facing local authorities in setting their budgets and adjusting to national policy changes are daunting. Throughout this Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) the Councils have faced significant cuts to formula grant. Following 28% cuts in the 2010 CSR, local government funding is set to fall by around £445m in 2014/15. This coupled with the changes regarding the Localisation of Council Tax and the Retention of Business Rates where greater financial risk exposure for the Councils will result, makes this a very challenging time for the Councils. It is generally recognised that councils have managed the cuts so far by maximising efficiencies and redesigning services. With further cuts on the horizon, this will be impossible to repeat and impacts on the local frontline services that residents rely on and value are inevitable.

The funding pressures that the Councils face and will continue to face are significant but are at present forecast to be managed through a wide combination of measures. The Councils have done much to secure their financial positions with joint services savings forecast to contribute over £1m. The medium term financial strategy process allows the Councils to think forward over a 3/5 year time period, taking account of both the immediate and longer term needs of the Councils and the communities they serve. Clearly, the ability to make informed financial decisions is of particular importance at times of great uncertainty and downward pressures in available resourcing.

The Councils have now established a robust process to support the rolling development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. This will stand the Councils in good stead in future years during a time of sustained and unprecedented turmoil and volatility. Despite the pressures being faced the Councils remain ambitious and are planning to exploit opportunities to support growth in the area and housing remains a priority in the Corporate Plan. Housing is not just an end in itself; it is important in supporting a thriving mixed community, housing employees who will drive our economy in the future, catering for the needs of an ageing population and protecting the quality of life for vulnerable people.

The Partnership Plan and Operating Model sets out how the partnership seeks to operate in the future. With this in mind the Councils need to ensure their financial plan looks beyond an annual cycle. Whilst the opportunity exists to identify financial headroom in the next couple of years this is unlikely to be the position in the longer term.

With limited revenue and capital funding, tensions will inevitably exist between competing corporate priorities and the Councils will need to face some challenging decisions. The Councils need to articulate their commitment to the housing priority and this Strategy helps to identify specific areas of work within that theme.

Private Sector Housing (including Dorset Home Service)

In addition to the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants for which the Councils receive Government funding, the Councils have for a number of years financed a range of discretionary grants and loan assistance plus additional services to support independent living, funded by a combination of regionally allocated resources and

Council revenue. The assistance provided was targeted at vulnerable households in non-decent property and households in homes requiring energy efficiency improvements.

Private Sector Housing Expenditure (£000's) & Outputs (Units)								
	CBC				EDDC			
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Housing Capital Resources								
Disabled Facilities Grants	286 (67)	296 (69)	341 (85)		430 (88)	571 (99)	401 (94)	
Private Sector Grants/Loans	46 (81)	94 (120)	83 (143)		220 (230)	87 (132)	73 (24)	nil

The Regional funding for the grant and loan assistance ceased finished in 2010/11 and assistance offered since then has only been possible because of unspent allocations from previous years. The level of unspent allocation in Christchurch from previous years enabled a full assistance programme to be operated during 2011/12 but expenditure on assistance in East Dorset in 2011/12 was limited to cover assistance approved in 2010/11 and not expended in that year.

Private Sector Housing Assistance 2011/12				
	CBC		EDDC	
Assistance type	£000	Output (units)	£000	Output (units)
Home Repair Loan	21	7	nil	nil
Safe and Secure Grant	12	15	8	12
Warmfront Top Up Grant	4	2	5	2
Insulation Grants	42	116	nil	nil
Park Home Grant	nil	nil	60	10
Additional services	CBC		EDDC	
Home Improvement Agency	13	107 new clients	30	198 new clients
Handyvan service	10	385	(Included in above)	804
Housing Options Service	Nil (£6k in 2012/13)	nil	(Included above)	15 new clients

Housing Enabling & New Development

Given the overall financial position of the Councils, and the constraints of the mid-term financial strategy, there will be severe limitations on the Councils ability to contribute new capital expenditure to affordable housing from revenue in the future. However, earmarked resources continue to be held in the Capital Programme for affordable housing provision in both Christchurch and East Dorset. During the life of the Housing Strategy, these funds are likely to be augmented through planning-led commuted-sum contributions (in lieu of onsite provision) and the possible disposal of appropriate assets, where Councillors chose to designate receipts towards new affordable housing provision.

Homelessness Prevention

Housing advice, homelessness services and administration of the Christchurch and East Dorset Housing Registers is provided by the joint Housing Partnership. To enhance efficiency and effectiveness, the existing service was restructured from a generic approach to specialist teams in 2012 to better address the primary aim of providing high quality advice and assistance and optimising resources to meet housing need and prevent homelessness.

Indicative Housing Development and Enabling Programme (£000s)						
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Total
Christchurch	98.2	632.4	98.1	98.1	12.3	840.9
Existing Commitments						
Avon view, Bronte Avenue, Christchurch						123
East Dorset	330	100				430
Existing Commitments						
Flights, Wimborne						250

In addition to the Council's own revenue funding (approaching £400,000 in 2012/13), the service continues to benefit from ring-fenced CLG financial support for homelessness costs. The Councils received approximately £142,000 in the current financial year (£71,470 to Christchurch and £71,050 to East Dorset for 2012/13). Expenditure includes financial support for the Domestic Violence project; gross homelessness costs; preventative costs; removals and storage; rent in advance & deposits; and support costs. Where possible, costs associated with the service are recouped through client contributions, Housing Benefit, and recharges associated with the rent in advance and deposit scheme.

Chapter 9: Priority themes for the Housing Strategy 2013 -2016

With highly constrained housing markets, an ageing population and major shortfalls of affordable housing, a very strong case could be made for additional housing resources across Christchurch and East Dorset.

However, with no increased capacity coming from the private sector, and downward pressure on all sources of public spending, agencies in the statutory and voluntary sectors are already having to prioritise resources for the most needy. And pressures are only expected to grow over time as more households struggle to maintain their existing housing, more people age and fall into 'at-risk' categories, and affordable housing options for those in need and newly forming households become impossible to find.

It will not be possible to meet all of these demands, making a prioritised housing strategy essential with an agreed set of actions and principles.

These aims must not only address the way that financial resources are spent, but the effective way that housing services are delivered, and that housing organisations are working together to achieve shared objectives.

Having looked across the spectrum as a whole, encompassing the housing activities of the Council and its many Partners, the following themes were identified as the most important drivers for the success of the Housing Strategy – seven drivers that must underpin all aspects of activity and decision making if maximum needs are to be met.

Ensuring that housing services and resources are optimised

Over time it is anticipated that the housing markets of Christchurch and East Dorset will recover and that more affordable and appropriate market homes will come forward, however, with its major constraints and underlying characteristics, coupled with downward pressure on all forms of public spending, demands on housing services are forecast to grow rather diminish.

Steps must therefore continue to ensure that housing services and the housing stock are optimised through highly efficient working, both internally and with external agencies and partners. Effective policies, improvements in systems and the use of technology must be exploited to remove unproductive time and overly bureaucratic activities, thereby ensuring that every pound of public money achieves 100% efficiency.

Key connections to Corporate Plan Objectives: H1, H3, C5, PER1, PER2

Taking all opportunities to maximise the delivery of affordable housing

Neither Christchurch nor East Dorset directly provide housing any longer, but both Council's should play essential 'enabling' roles, facilitating new affordable housing across Eastern Dorset.

Through operational, policy and leadership activities, opportunities arise to increase the provision of affordable housing. And although recent changes in national policy and funding have introduced new challenges, scope still exists to optimise delivery through Council owned land and assets, through the application of positive and progressive housing and planning policies, through work with communities and with local stakeholders, and providers in the public and private sectors.

Increasing the provision of affordable housing makes an immediate impact for those in housing need, on the demand for housing services, whilst also contributing to wider social, community and economic objectives. Often involving complex delivery chains and many different internal and external factors, coordinated enabling activities ensure that Council resources and influence are optimised to best effect.

Key connections to Corporate Plan Objectives: H1, H3, EC1, ENV3, PER1

Ensuring that resources continue to support both operational and strategic activities

One of the greatest challenges facing local authorities and other public sector agencies involved with housing is balancing operational demands with long-term strategies, at a time when current funding is being pared back to the minimum and when services are already at capacity. However unless adequate resources are reserved and invested in preventative and strategic activities, increased public sector costs will be incurred whilst additional pressures will be placed on 'front-line' responsive services, as they struggle to balance rising demand with diminishing resources.

Given the demographic make-up of Christchurch and East Dorset and the limitations of its already dysfunctional housing market and stock profile, maintaining a strategic range of activities will be essential.

Key connections to Corporate Plan Objectives: H2, C2, C4, C5, EC1, PER1, PER2

Effective collaborative working with private, public sector and voluntary sector partners

As internal moves are made to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Council housing services, steps must also be taken to work positively and collaboratively with external partners and stakeholders, especially social housing providers, neighbouring local authorities and private sector developers. Joint working creates opportunities to save resources by producing common strategies and policies, and to effectively tailor activities through better understandings of the agendas, priorities and risks being faced by private and public sector partners. Shared strategic aims and objectives make it possible to optimise interests, maximising outcomes for residents and communities, and reducing the chances of unintended consequences and gaps in provision.

However effective collaborative working relies upon strong corporate leadership where activities in the field are driven by shared high level organisation commitments. On-going investment is therefore required at a number of different levels to develop and sustain shared activities and to ensure that the common interests and the strategic-fit between organisations are maintained.

Key connections to Corporate Plan Objectives: H1, H3, C5, EC2, PER1, PER2

Helping to facilitate housing market recovery

In itself recovery in the housing market and house building activity will not address the underlying need for affordable housing in Christchurch and East Dorset, however combined with new planning measures both will provide an essential catalyst to improved conditions, as well as renewing confidence in the local economy and long-term employment prospects.

As a result of new planning proposals the Councils of Christchurch and East Dorset have committed to maximise the number of affordable homes that new developments provide, through on-site or financial contributions. Subject to development viability, emerging planning policies will seek to secure up to 50% affordable housing on greenfield land and up to 40% on brownfield sites.

Newly proposed planning policies will also seek to ensure that future developments include 'appropriate' market housing of a size and type that better addresses local housing demand, in turn contributing to a more balanced housing market and the long-term economic interests of having mixed communities and a mixed workforce.

Key connections to Corporate Plan Objectives: H1, H2, C5, EC1, EC2, ENV2, ENV3, PER1, PER2

Encouraging growth and improvements in the private rented sector

At the present time many would-be home owners who are unable to obtain mortgages also lack confidence in the property market. Many aspire to homes of their own but have had no choice but to rent privately, affecting the historic profile of the sector and its essential role for those who seek mobility, have very low incomes, or who are transitional.

In an already under-developed and constrained sector, recovery in the owner-occupied sector will create opportunities to free-up the limited amount of privately rented stock in the area for those with greater housing needs.

Through the Housing Advice and Private Sector Housing Teams, both Councils already work closely to create increased opportunities to meet housing needs in the Private Rented Sector and to encourage good standards. Future corporate, planning, housing and enabling activities must take opportunities to facilitate growth within the sector, creating steps to assist those who may not have the opportunity to benefit from subsidised affordable housing and who cannot access or afford open market home ownership.

Key Connections to Corporate Plan Objectives: H1, H3, C2, C4, EC1

Supporting people to live independently in the comfort and security of their homes.

Home ownership is overwhelmingly the preferred tenure in both council areas and most people who own their homes are comfortable and well housed. Living in good housing is known to improve the health and prospects of residents. However, with lower than average household incomes, above average proportions of elderly and disabled residents living in Christchurch and East Dorset, the provision of support services to help them maintain healthy independent living in their own homes is critically important.

A plethora of excellent support services provided by the Councils and a wide range of agencies currently exist but for many these can be confusing and often difficult to access. In a climate of increasing demand and reducing resources it is essential that these services are both effective and affordable.

Proposals to integrate housing related support services across the County through the provision of a single point of access and co-located multidisciplinary teams are being developed with partners. It is intended that these services will be more client focused, improve access, reduce duplication and importantly in the current financial climate, ensure the sustainability of services by maximising the use of resources.

Key connections to Corporate Plan Objectives: H1, C2, C4, C5, PER1

Glossary

Affordable Housing: Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market (NPPF). Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and house prices.

Affordable Rent: Government approved model of affordable rented housing provided by Registered Providers at up to 80% of market rent (including service charges). Let to households who are eligible for social rented housing (NPPF).

Allocation Policy: Formally adopted Council housing policy defining

Appropriate Market Housing: Market housing (for rent or sale) of a type and size that meets local need and/or demand

Balanced Housing Market: A housing market in which the housing stock and tenure mix is capable of addressing the emergent needs and demands of existing and newly forming households seeking accommodation.

Category 1 Hazard: An identified hazard resulting from a health and safety risk assessment that is at high risk of being injurious to health, e.g. excess cold, and for which the Local Authority has a duty to take action.

CIL: Acronym – Community Infrastructure Levy. A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area (NPPF).

Community Land Trust: A legally constituted non-profit making body that owns and manages land, protected for community interest and benefit

Core Strategy: is the key document that forms part of the Local Development Framework and sets out the overarching policy framework for developing Christchurch and East Dorset over the next 15 years

Decent Homes Standard: Definition introduced by Government in which homes must meet minimum statutory standards, be in a reasonable state of repair, have reasonably modern facilities and services, and provide reasonable thermal comfort.

Dorset Home Service: Home improvement agency operating across the Dorset County Council areas, provides assistance and where necessary acts for vulnerable residents needing home aids or adaptations to live independently.

Dorset Homelessness Strategy: Jointly produced strategic document adopted in 2008 to meet statutory duties. Sets out a common approach for the six Local Housing Authorities, tackling and preventing homelessness across Dorset

Fixed Term Tenancies: Newly enabled form of Housing Association Tenancy from April 2012, generally limiting tenancies to a maximum of 5 years.

Floating Support Services: Where support workers can visit homes to provide practical help and support with housing related issues to help people maintain their accommodation and live independently in their communities.

Fuel Poverty: Government classification for households needing to spend more than 10% of their household income to achieve adequate levels of warmth in their homes and to meet their other energy needs.

Homes and Communities Agency: Non-departmental Government body that funds new affordable housing in England and regulates Registered Providers

House in Multiple Occupation: A building, or part of a building, which is occupied by more than one household, in which more than one household shares an amenity, such as a bathroom, toilet or cooking facilities

Intermediate Affordable Housing: Homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels. Includes shared equity, shared-ownership, low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing (NPPF). (But explicitly excludes low cost market housing).

Local Connection: Being connected to an area (District, Borough or Parish within it) through current or past residence, close family or work (defined).

Local Development Framework: The suite of statutory and supporting strategic Planning documents that guide the development of a given area.

Local Enterprise Partnership: New localised sub-regional bodies comprising Local Authority and Business Partners formed to promote economic growth, prioritise and inform investments in local roads, building and facilities in their areas. Established by Government in 2010

Localism Act: Wide ranging Act reaching royal assent in 2011, primarily enabling local powers and local policy choices through key changes in planning, housing and community empowerment legislation.

National Planning Policy Framework: New set overarching and simplified planning principles introduced by Government in 2012 to replace previous Planning Policy Statements.

NEETs: Acronym – “Not in Education, Employment or Training”

New Neighbourhoods: Key development site proposals for East Dorset (10 in total) to provide approximately 2,400 new dwellings

Neighbourhood Plans: Plans prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004)

Registered Provider: Housing providers, both profit and non-profit making, registered with the Homes and Communities Agency to provide Social Housing. Frequently Housing Association but can incorporate other legally constituted bodies.

Rural Exception Sites: Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where land would not usually be permitted for housing – must seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who have a local connection

SHMA (and SHMA Update) Acronym – Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Comprehensive source of housing market evidence, both market and affordable. Commonly informed by Housing Need and Demand Survey data and other housing related datasets.

Social Rented Housing: Owned and let by Local Authorities, or Registered Providers (or other approved bodies) at guideline target rents, determined through the national rent regime (NPPF).

Statutory Homelessness: is where a Local Housing Authority has defined a household as homeless within the terms of homelessness legislation. If they are found to be in priority need and are not ‘intentionally’ homeless, then the local authority will have a duty to offer accommodation

Suitable Alternative Natural Green-space (SANG): Green space of a type and scale that mitigates for the potential impact of development on protected heathland.

Supplementary Planning Documents: Documents which add further detail to the policies of the Local Plan. Can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as affordable housing delivery or design.

Tenancy Strategy: New duty upon Local Housing Authorities (under the Localism Act 2011) to produce a strategic policy document setting out how it and partner Registered Providers will work together to implement the new tenancy framework in the local area.

Tenure Blind: Descriptive term used to ensure that housing designs for market and affordable housing within new developments do not result in visual differences.

Urban Design Codes: A set of illustrative design rules and requirements which may instruct and advise on the physical development of a site or area

Urban Extension: The key proposed development site for the Borough of Christchurch, to provide approximately 950 dwellings

Housing Strategy Consultation Survey

Question 1: Enabling Housing Growth and Sustainable Communities Please rank the five proposed housing objectives associated with meeting this primary housing aim (where 1 is your top priority)	Rank (1 to 5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To adopt the Core Strategy and associated Policies to underpin the 15 year housing requirement 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To secure a minimum of 35% all new-build completions for affordable housing 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work positively and proactively with developers, landowners and agents to ensure that opportunities for development result in high quality, sustainable and deliverable schemes 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that appropriate new development proposals achieve densities of at least 30 homes per hectare, incorporating mixed communities of market and affordable homes to meet local needs and demands 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain up to date sources of housing growth and housing market evidence (including strategic housing land availability assessments) 	
Please tell us your comments about our objectives under this theme. Do you support all of the proposals? Do you consider that we have missed any priorities or opportunities? (More space on page 35).	

Question 2: Increasing the provision of Affordable Housing Please rank the five proposed housing objectives associated with meeting this primary housing aim (where 1 is your top priority)	Rank (1 to 5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Partners and Stakeholders to ensure that all opportunities to enable affordable housing through influence, policies and resources are considered and optimised 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To adopt and implement new Planning Policies in the Core Strategy and Supplementary Planning Documents, maximising delivery and securing at least 35% of new-build completions for affordable housing 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify and advance at least four rural affordable housing schemes in partnership with Parish Councils 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To achieve high quality 'tenure blind' affordable housing developments that meet needs identified in the SHMA and that deliver an overall balance of 70% homes for rent and 30% for Intermediate Affordable Housing 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore and exploit new vehicles to facilitate affordable housing delivery 	
Please tell us your comments about our objectives under this theme. Do you support all of the proposals? Do you consider that we have missed any priorities or opportunities? (More space on page 35).	

Question 3: Decent homes and housing conditions

Please rank the four proposed housing objectives associated with meeting this primary housing aim (where 1 is your top priority)

Rank (1 to 4)

- To ensure that households have access to quality advice and support to improve their homes
- To work with owners, landlords, letting agents and tenants to raise standards in housing
- To work with partners to improve the energy efficiency of the existing housing stock and reduce fuel poverty
- To maximise the use of the existing housing stock (including bringing empty homes back into use)

Please tell us your comments about our objectives under this theme. Do you support all of the proposals? Do you consider that we have missed any priorities or opportunities? (More space on page 35).

Question 4: Housing advice and preventing homelessness

Please rank the five proposed housing objectives associated with meeting this primary housing aim (where 1 is your top priority)

Rank (1 to 6)

- Prevent homelessness and enable early, effective and accessible housing advisory services
- Working in partnership to make the best use of existing social housing stock, including the revision of Council Allocation Policies
- Improve access to privately rented housing and develop relationships with new and existing landlords to sustain tenancies
- Evaluate the use of all forms of temporary accommodation and to assess future requirements
- Improved analysis of our client base to identify any trends and future resource requirements
- Working in partnership to maximise capacity and to ensure 'every contact counts'

Please tell us your comments about our objectives under this theme. Do you support all of the proposals? Do you consider that we have missed any priorities or opportunities? (More space on page 35).

Question 5: Housing and accommodation for vulnerable people	Rank (1 to 4)
<p>Please rank the five proposed housing objectives associated with meeting this primary housing aim (where 1 is your top priority)</p> <p>Please tick one box for each objective listed below. Of any objectives you support, please rank them <u>where 1 is your top priority</u></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work with partners to improve access to client focused services and advice 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce duplication and maximise the use of locally available supported and specialised housing, accommodation and support services 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that households in need of support can live with the maximum level of independence, health and well-being in their chosen home 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that vulnerable people have good quality housing suitable for their needs 	
<p>Please tell us your comments about our objectives under this theme. Do you support all of the proposals? Do you consider that we have missed any priorities or opportunities? (More space on page 35).</p>	

Question 6: Priority Themes for the Housing Strategy 2013 - 2016	Rank your first, second, third and fourth priorities only
<p>What do you consider to be the most important priority themes for the next three years?</p> <p>From the list of priorities below, please identify and rank <u>the four</u> you consider to be most important <u>where 1 is your top priority</u></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that housing services and resource are optimised 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking all opportunities to maximise the delivery of affordable housing 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting people to live independently in the comfort and security of their homes 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that resources continue to support both operational and strategic activities 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective collaborative working with private, public sector and voluntary sector partners 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helping to facilitate housing market recovery 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging growth and improvements in the private rented sector 	
<p>Something else we have missed? Please define.....(more space on page 35)</p>	

Part A: Essential information about you

We welcome your participation in this survey but to analyse responses and to prevent duplication we require the following information (Under the Data Protection Act 1998 personal information provided by you will not be published or passed to any third party).

Your Name Your address

Postcode

If you are responding for a business or organisation (including Parish and Town Councils) please confirm **Organisation/body** **Position**

I am responding as a resident of the Borough of Christchurch
I am a Borough Councillor for Christchurch

I am responding as a resident of East Dorset
I am a District Councillor for East Dorset

Part B: Optional information about you. The information you supply will help us to analyse the results of this consultation and to ensure that we understand the views of different people. Responses to these questions will remain confidential. Individuals will not be identified and personal details will not be published

Are you?	Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Please tick all that apply	Please tell us your ethnic origin	What is your sexual orientation?
Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – Physical impairment such as difficulty using arms or mobility issues which may mean using a wheelchair or crutches <input type="checkbox"/>	Arab <input type="checkbox"/>	Bisexual <input type="checkbox"/>
Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – Sensory impairment such as being blind or having a visual impairment or being deaf or having a hearing impairment or having both hearing and visual impairments <input type="checkbox"/>	Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/>	Gay man <input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – Mental health condition, such as depression, anxiety or schizophrenia <input type="checkbox"/>	Asian/Asian British – Chinese <input type="checkbox"/>	Gay woman/Lesbian <input type="checkbox"/>
How old are you?	Yes – dementia or memory loss <input type="checkbox"/>	Asian/Asian British – Indian <input type="checkbox"/>	Heterosexual <input type="checkbox"/>
16-18 <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – Learning disability/difficulty (such as Down’s Syndrome, dyslexia, dysphasia) or cognitive impairment (such as autism spectrum disorder) <input type="checkbox"/>	Asian/Asian British – Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
19-24 <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy <input type="checkbox"/>	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – African <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>
25-44 <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>	What is your religion/belief?
45-60 <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Buddhist <input type="checkbox"/>
61-70 <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>	Gypsy or Traveller <input type="checkbox"/>	Christian <input type="checkbox"/>
71-84 <input type="checkbox"/>		Mixed/multiple ethnic group – Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Hindu <input type="checkbox"/>
85 and over <input type="checkbox"/>		Mixed/multiple ethnic group – white & Asian <input type="checkbox"/>	Jewish <input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>		Mixed/multiple ethnic group – White & Black African <input type="checkbox"/>	Muslim <input type="checkbox"/>
		Mixed/multiple ethnic group – White & Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>	Sikh <input type="checkbox"/>
		White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British <input type="checkbox"/>	Any other religion <input type="checkbox"/>
		White – Other <input type="checkbox"/>	No religion <input type="checkbox"/>
		White Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Do you identify as a transgender person?
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
			No <input type="checkbox"/>
			Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>

Space for any additional comments or observations you would like to make:-

If you have completed a paper version of the Housing Strategy Consultation Survey, please return to the following address (no stamp needed)

Housing Strategy Consultation

FREEPOST, Response Licence No. BH575

Christchurch Borough Council

Civic Offices, Christchurch

BH23 1ZZ

**CONSULTATION SURVEY CLOSING DATE
AND TIME**

9:00 a.m. MONDAY 29th APRIL 2013