

MARCH 2004 - AAT

Housing Strategy Statement 2003-2006

Getting the best for Luton

a great place to live, learn, work and have fun



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Bengali

এই তথ্য অন্যান্য সংস্করণেও সরবরাহ করা যেতে পারে। আপনি যদি বড় হরফে ছাপা, টেপ-এ রেকর্ড করা অথবা বাংলা ভাষায় অনুবাদ করা কপি চান, তাহলে এই নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করবেন (টেলিফোন)
(মিনিকম/টেক্সটফোন)

Gujarati

આ માહિતીવિગતની વ્યવસ્થા બીજી રીતે પણ થઈ શકે છે. જો તમને આ માહિતી મોટા છાપેલાં અક્ષરોમાં, ટેઈપ પર રેકૉર્ડ કરેલી અથવા ગુજરાતી ભાષામાં જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપયા ટેલિફોન કરો:
(મિનિકોમ/ટેક્સ્ટ ફોન)

Punjabi

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦੂਜੇ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਅਗਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਕਾਪੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਜਾ ਟੇਪ ਤੇ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ : ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ
ਮਿਨਿਕੋਮ / ਟੈਕਸਟ ਫੋਨ

Urdu

یہ معلومات آپ کو دوسری صورتوں میں مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ اگر آپ کو اس کی کاپی بڑے حروف میں، یا آواز کی صورت میں کیسٹ پر اُرُو زبان میں درکار ہے، تو براہ کرم اس فون نمبر منی کوم/ٹیکسٹ فون پر رابطہ کریں۔

HOUSING STRATEGY STATEMENT

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Links to other key documents: Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (*web reference/link*); *The Luton Factors 2003* (*www.*); *The Homelessness Strategy 2003* (*www.*); *The Local Plan 2003* (*www.*); *The Black & Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy* (); *The Renovations Grants Policy 2003* (*www.*).

1 Introduction

Luton is a unitary authority, situated 30 miles north of London in the south of Bedfordshire. It is a densely developed urban town, with over 70,700 households. It has a population of 182,000, nearly a third of which are under 20 years of age, and 28% of which come from non-white ethnic groups

Traditional industries of hat making and motor vehicle engineering have declined significantly in importance, but Luton remains a major employment centre with focus increasing around the airport and other service industries.

Tackling the housing problems of the Borough is recognised by the Council as being a fundamental quality of life issue for the citizens of the town. Poor housing is more than just about bricks and mortar, it has proven links to other social consequences such as poor educational attainment, poor health, social exclusion and other deprivation issues. Delivery on the housing agenda has the potential for a much greater impact.

Housing Supply/Demand Imbalance

The Housing Needs survey commissioned by the Council in 1999 predicted that during the period 1999 – 2004 there would be over 9000 emerging households, over half of which would be looking to the Council for assistance. The Town is clearly facing severe problems in terms of meeting the housing needs of local people. In the last four years we have seen:

- house prices rise steadily, which means for many people purchasing a home is no longer an option,
- the number of social housing units decline,
- the majority of properties that the Council still owns being flats,
- the numbers on the housing register rise to over 7000 households,
- there are over 1400 existing Council tenants on the Transfer list seeking a move,
- there are low numbers of properties becoming empty,
- the numbers of new social housing units provided has not kept pace with the numbers sold through the right to buy and
- there has been a large increase in cases of homelessness. Considering the average wage in Luton the cost of purchasing property is not an option for many people. (See Luton Factors for further detail information).

The survey of BME needs, also conducted in 1999 by Salford University showed a lack of larger units suitable for families particularly in the inner wards.

The current planning policies require Luton to accommodate an additional 6,200 (net) dwelling units - bedsits, flats, bungalows & houses - in the period 1991 to 2011. As at January 2003 Luton had identified land for some 4,700 of these, most of which had been built. During 2003, the main sites under construction are the former Electrolux and Croda Colloids sites, both large brown field former employment sites, but there is still a shortfall of around 1500 dwellings against the Structure plan figure. This shortfall bears no relationship to the need in Luton, and there are no significant sites remaining to be developed. Additional housing will only be possible within the Borough boundary if existing housing is redeveloped at a higher density or if employment land is redeveloped for housing, possibly resulting in a loss of employment opportunity in the town.

It has not been possible to meet these needs as there is neither sufficient land within the Town nor the financial resources available to the Council. The Council will have to look outside the Borough boundaries, working collaboratively with other authorities and to secure other financial resources to tackle these issues. The Council will need the Government's help and support to address this imbalance.

The Council, in its strategic role, is looking to maximise the use of its statutory responsibilities, be focused in the use of its discretionary powers, and to influence other agencies and stakeholders to tackle the housing problems with as wide an approach as possible.

Balancing the Housing Market

In developing its Housing strategy, the Council has demonstrated that it is seeking to balance the local housing market.

It has shown that it addresses the key components:

- Up-to-date and accurate data on Housing supply and demand
- Awareness of the condition of the Housing stock in town, both publicly and privately owned
- Effective use of the Council's local planning powers to maximise the delivery of additional affordable housing (Supplementary Planning Guidance, use of Section 106 Agreements etc)
- Working both corporately and with partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors and with neighbouring authorities to develop supportive work programmes to deliver common goals, e.g. the Sustainable Communities Plan, the Local Plan, Supporting People Strategy, Bedfordshire sub-regional housing strategy and the regional housing strategy.
- Engaging with partners, stakeholders and the wider local community on the development of the Housing Strategy
- Monitoring and reviewing the delivery and effectiveness of the strategy on an ongoing basis

Summary of Key Issues

The particular problems and issues addressed within the strategy are:

Local

- High levels of demand for housing, particularly social housing, that cannot be met from within existing resources
- Projections that the levels of demand for social housing will increase for the foreseeable future, compounding the existing demand problems
- Increasing levels of homelessness, reducing numbers of social housing properties becoming available.
- Severe shortage and high cost of suitable building land within the town.
- High levels of disrepair in private sector housing
- Meeting the decent home standard target for the Council's own housing
- Pressure to maintain the quality of service to the Council's own tenants as the stock numbers decline through the Right to Buy.
- Addressing the needs of local BME communities and achieving community cohesion
- Ensuring effective partnership working and being responsive to users
- Low level availability of supported housing for vulnerable people

Regional

New regional arrangements and the production of the regional Housing Strategy

Bedfordshire Sub region - The growing importance to all the Councils within Bedfordshire to work effectively on a sub-regional basis to tackle housing problems.

National

The challenges and opportunities for new housing and regeneration offered by the Sustainable Communities Plan launched in March 2003, by ODPM, which has identified Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis as a growth area.

Luton 2011 (see section 3, below

It is now two years since the Council adopted its Vision 2010, a series of aspirations, objectives and goals that look to tackle some of the real issues facing the Town and the people who live here, and work progresses to meet these challenges. **This has now progressed and has been developed into a meaningful set of specific targets.**

This Housing Strategy builds on the successes and achievements of the past and maps out how the Council is tackling the Boroughs housing priorities, both directly and in partnership with local people and other stakeholders.

2. Mission, Key Objectives and Priorities

The Council Mission Statement is:

Getting the best for Luton - a great place to live, learn, work and have fun

The Council's 2011 Long-Term Objectives are:

We will work in partnership with the community and local organisations to achieve a dramatic improvement in the quality of life in Luton by 2011. Building on public consultation, we have determined the key priorities for Luton to be: Deprivation, Economic Regeneration, Education, Crime, the Environment, Leisure and Health and Social Care. We have set targets for 2011 under those headings:

Deprivation	
<p>The Council believes strongly in the reduction of social exclusion and deprivation.</p> <p>Seven indicators are used by the Government to measure deprivation: Income, education, employment, health, housing, access to services and child poverty.</p> <p>To reduce deprivation all these interlinked issues must be addressed. Biscot and Dallow wards are currently in the 10% most deprived wards in England, but there are pockets of deprivation in all wards, and action will be taken to assist individuals on a needs-related basis as well as assistance for neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Our targets for 2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All wards will improve rating in Government deprivation indices• No ward will be in 10% most deprived in England• We will bring at least 60 long-term empty houses back into occupation each year• We will eliminate the use of B&B accommodation in housing the homeless, except for short-term emergencies <p>See also the targets under Economic Regeneration, Education and Health and Social Care.</p>
Economic Regeneration	
<p>The regeneration of the local economy will secure the future of Luton.</p>	<p><i>Our targets for 2011</i></p>

<p>We need to improve the built and natural environment, provide the infrastructure for business to thrive, and ensure the local workforce is well-trained and able to take up high-paying jobs available locally.</p> <p>In October 2003, Luton's claimant unemployment rate was 3%, compared to an overall East of England rate of 1.7%. However, unemployment had decreased by 1.2% in a year, compared to a 0.5% increase across the East of England as a whole. Unemployment is highest in Biscot and Dallow wards, among men, and among Black and South Asian minority ethnic groups. Compared to the East of England, a higher percentage of unemployed people are under 40 years of age, and/or have been unemployed for more than 6 months.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment level to be above the East of England average • Full implementation of the Town Centre Master Plan • To increase job density substantially <p><i>Job density is the number of filled jobs in an area divided by the working age population resident in that area</i></p> <p>See also the targets under Education and Transport and Traffic.</p>
Education	
<p>Educational attainment is a key determinant of life chances. In schools, Luton's pupils' performance overall is generally below average compared to other parts of England. This is not acceptable.</p> <p>For everyone though, education and learning opportunities are life-enriching, and the Council seeks to create a learning society in Luton, with opportunities for vocational and non-vocational learning at all ages, and a rich curriculum in local schools.</p>	<p><i>Our targets for 2011</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational achievement levels at all stages to be above the national average. • Work with Learning and Skills Council, colleges and Connexions to increase the percentage of the Luton workforce who are vocationally qualified to at least NVQ2 or equivalent • In 2011, 40% of the population will have a library card that they use on a regular basis' • Increase community use of school facilities
Crime	
<p>In a survey conducted in 2001, only 62% of people in Luton felt safe from crime. Fear of crime is a major concern expressed by Luton residents. Crime and fear of crime carry a heavy cost, not just financial, but on people's sense of well-being and their ability to go about their daily business. The Council will work through the Safer Luton Partnership to reduce crime and fear of crime, through the Youth</p>	<p><i>Our targets for 2011</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luton residents to have less fear of crime than three quarters of similar urban areas in England. • Achieve a substantial reduction in residents' concern about anti-social behaviour

Offending Team, CCTV, street lighting, car parking, anti-drugs initiatives, neighbourhood wardens, consumer protection etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of young people who are victims of crime
Environment	
A clean, tidy and green environment is a key priority for local residents.	<p><i>Our targets for 2011</i></p> <p>Over 75% of the people of Luton to be satisfied with each of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street cleansing • Parks and open spaces • Abandoned vehicles • Noise • Pollution • Maintenance of roads and pavements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greener Luton, with a significant increase in the number of trees
Leisure	
Residents, young and old, want more leisure opportunities in Luton. Luton has few performance venues and few leisure facilities for young people.	<p><i>Our targets for 2011</i></p> <p>10% more of the people of Luton are satisfied with the town's cultural and recreational facilities, including sports/leisure, theatres/concert halls, museums, libraries, parks, community facilities/amenities and open spaces</p>
Health and social care	
In common with the rest of England, Luton's major health problems are cancer, coronary heart disease, diabetes, strokes, childhood diseases and mental health problems. However, Luton also has higher than average numbers of deaths caused by respiratory disease, and through perinatal mortality. Sexual health issues, teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases are also above average. The Council can help to improve local people's health through education and outreach work, through the Environmental	<p><i>Our targets for 2011</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halve the gap between life expectancy of people in Luton and the rest of the country • Bring death rate for babies in Luton down to the national average. • Increase proportion of people misusing drugs or alcohol who receive treatment • Increase proportion of people aged over 65 and

<p>Health service and by improving local housing and reducing social exclusion. People are more vulnerable to particular diseases according to their age, gender, income and ethnicity, so efforts to improve health will be tailored to the needs of different groups.</p> <p>Social Care plays a pivotal role in protecting vulnerable people and promoting their independence. The Council will help older and vulnerable residents to live independently in their own homes should they wish, and will implement the <i>Supporting People</i> agenda. The Council will support children in its care as a good corporate parent, promoting their health and education, providing adoption and stable foster placements, and looking after their welfare when they leave care. We will co-ordinate our work to protect and support children, following the best practice in <i>Every Child Matters</i>.</p>	<p>vulnerable adults, supported by the Council to continue to live independently in their own homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 75% of young people leaving care to go into employment, education or training
<p><u>Transport</u></p> <p>It is important to reduce traffic congestion and provide adequate parking, and also to make Luton a comfortable town in which to walk or cycle.</p>	<p><i>Our targets for 2011</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase use of public transport for travel to Luton Town centre by 15% when compared to 1999 levels. • Increase walking and/or cycling as a % of total journeys in Luton

The Councils values are:

- Lifelong learning for all
- Sustainable solutions for Luton's communities
- Protect and support the vulnerable, promote independence
- Open, accessible and responsive government
- Promote equal opportunities, tackle disadvantage

- Value for money
- Value our workforce
- Active in partnerships, ready to work with others

The Corporate Priorities for 2004/05 are:

(Targets have been set under all the Luton 2011 headings and for corporate values. The key priority for 2004/05 is the Environment; other sections are arranged in the previous order used.)

Environment

- Ensure 90% of streets are of satisfactory or high cleanliness standard (PSA) (new cleansing rounds, more frequent cleansing, introducing street washing, litter education and enforcement, cleaning away drug and prostitution litter, abandoned vehicle enforcement)
- Provide a greener Luton by Planting trees, protecting trees through tree preservation orders, keeping planted areas tidy, encouraging developers and local residents to plant up areas and look after their gardens
- Increase recycling to 35% of household waste by opening second household waste and recycling centre by late spring 2004.
- Introduce “Clear Streets” policy to remove unauthorised advertising boards and signs and similar obstructions and hazards from the public highways

Deprivation

- Build 20 new homes in partnership with housing associations, and bring 50 privately owned empty homes back into occupation.
- Reduce the number of Council homes that are non-decent by 53% (1431 properties) compared to April 2001.
- Through the d4 service, assist 56 people with disabilities to gain employment or training (PSA)

Regeneration

- To improve upon the current job density* figure for Luton of 0.76 (by attracting new businesses, and helping them to source trained personnel locally)
**Job density is the number of filled jobs in an area divided by the working age population resident in that area. It assists measurement of labour demand, and so can assist in indicating the strength of the local economy, unemployment and skills shortages.*
- To work for the regeneration of Luton through:
 - Completion and publication of the Luton Local Plan
 - Securing creation of an agency to carry forward development arising from the South Midlands regional study

Leisure

- Following the conclusion of the best value review of leisure,
 - Increase Leisure Centre usage and income in 2004/5 by 10% through improved programming, facilities, communication and marketing
 - Improve the current A Card scheme in order to increase take-up by disadvantaged people by 10% during 2004/5
- Continue work with partners to establish a National Carnival Centre in Luton by 2006.

Education

- Double the number of Luton's secondary schools to have a specialism by end of academic year 2004/05.
- Continue developing integrated children's services for Luton to provide a one stop shop approach to Children's Services in 2004.
- Open Luton's first extended school and up to 2 new children's centres.
- Improve educational attainment at a faster rate than the national average at each key stage.
- Maintain current low rate of permanent exclusions in Luton schools

Crime reduction

- Achieve through intervention by the YOT a reduction in the re-offending rate of young offenders of 3% from 2003 to 2004 and 5% from 2003-5, when comparing 2003 offenders with 2002 offenders.
- Reduce number of dangerous, wrecked and abandoned vehicles on the streets enforcement action against back street garages and through impounding abandoned cars within 24 hours of notification (PSA)
- Improve community safety confidence and quality of the parks environment by introduction of Parks Wardens and improved security measures for parks and public conveniences.

Health and social care

- Develop a health improvement strategy to show how the Council will contribute to improving health in the town, to include healthy eating initiatives, reduction in use and abuse of age-restricted products, e.g. tobacco, alcohol.
- Increase by 4% the percentage of children looked after who are fostered locally
- Prepare a commissioning strategy to ensure social care provision can meet future needs (Joint Review)
- Help to achieve Supporting People strategy through:
 - Building 42 sheltered housing places, with some of these providing extra care
 - Continuing to increase the proportion of adults with disabilities, and older people enabled to live independently, through housing adaptations and equipment, provision of home care etc.

Transport and traffic

- Start on East Luton corridor and Translink
- Further reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on Luton's roads

Open, accessible government

- Ensure that the public can use ICT to conduct 90% of the transactions with the Council, for which use of this technology is possible.
- To improve customer care by transferring the following services into the Customer Service Centre:
 - Housing
 - Street Services
 - Environmental Health, pest control and licensing

Equal opportunities, tackling disadvantage

- Ensure all Council buildings open to the public are accessible for people with disabilities, (completing our 4-year programme of improvement works, improving evacuation procedures)
- Meet targets to make our workforce more representative of Luton at all levels of the organisation (minority ethnic people, men/women, people with disabilities)
- Revise Council's equalities action plans, impact assessments and training programmes to tackle discrimination on grounds of religious belief, and sexuality

Value for money

- Implement e-procurement, ensuring that most goods and services are purchased on-line from approved suppliers
- Maintain sustainable balanced revenue and capital budgets, and prudent financial planning and controls
- Establish new business partnership to restructure the Council's business processes to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of key business systems.

Valuing our workforce

- Through new HR strategy achieve:
 - Management development: increase range of courses and number of people trained under GOLD programme
 - Improved recruitment and retention, targeting services suffering particular difficulties

- An effective response to issues raised in the employee survey
- Improve internal communication, ensuring that all staff have access to *newsnow* team briefing and the opportunity to have questions answered

Active in partnerships

- Increase involvement of the community in the streetscene by introduction of a Luton Streetleader scheme (linked to Luton Pride and Neighbourhood Watch), with 50 volunteers recruited by Nov 2004
- Implement the outcome of the BVR on Community Development to provide a cost effective, community- led service, with engagement of the community in the running of community centres.

Housing and Social Services Departmental Vision and Objectives

In addition at Departmental level a service specific vision and series of objectives have been developed which underpin the Corporate objectives and the Vision 2010 goals – which in a practical way focuses the service planning process to deliver a work programme, in partnership with service users and stakeholders, to work towards achieving the 2010 Vision.

Housing and Social Services Departmental Vision

To be a modern, integrated Housing and Social Care Service that:

- plays a pivotal role in protecting vulnerable citizens;
- promotes the independence of service users;
- delivers Best Value;
- champions social inclusion and equalities;
- secures decent suitable housing for the people of Luton;

- does all this in partnership with colleagues and citizens, and
- has a national profile for its excellent service

Housing Objectives

The specific Housing objectives are referred to in detail in chapter 6 (page 29)

Monitoring user Satisfaction

Various methods are used to gauge customer satisfaction across the different services provided. The Best Value review has provided an opportunity to assess customer satisfaction against homelessness, renovation grants, asylum seeker service, allocations and the enabling function. In addition an annual tenant satisfaction survey has been completed. The quality of the repair service is also monitored (see below)

Service	Type of survey
Homelessness	User perception survey Mystery Shopper survey
Asylum Seekers	Focus groups
Renovation Grant Users	Perception surveys Post completion satisfaction surveys
Allocations	Part of large scale review of allocations process carried out
Enabling	Focus group RSL liaison meetings Feedback from disability forum
Housing Management	Postal satisfaction survey
Repairs	Post completion postal survey

Feedback from customer satisfaction surveys is evaluated by team and divisional heads of service and is fed back into the service planning process through regular one to one supervision sessions and the annual appraisal processes. The service plan process reflects on both good and poor performance locally and considers good practice elsewhere. Actual performance against targets can be found on page 47 and also in the Luton Factors.

3 Consultation Process and Community Involvement

Housing Conference & other consultation events/activities

The 6th Annual Housing Conference was attended by representatives from tenants groups, Registered Social Landlords, voluntary organisations, all of the main political parties and corporate colleagues and many other interested stakeholders.

In addition to the annual conference we have continued to build on consultation processes for previous housing strategies, making links with other consultation exercises around the Best Value Reviews and the Tenants Compact. This has been in addition to obtaining views from minority groups such as the local Race, Womens, Disability and Landlords Forums and other statutory and voluntary agencies, our RSL partners, the Housing Corporation, and the Local Strategic Partnership, the Luton Forum.

Consultation events include:

- a series of themed workshops with staff, tenants and local housing agencies on the Best Value review of the Housing (Policy & Private Sector) division
- regular reporting to the Tenants Consultative Committee on key issues
- strategy consultation with Environment & Sustainability subgroup of LSP to gain views and ownership of policies
- presentations of the draft strategy to all management teams throughout the council
- reports and presentations to RSL partners throughout the year at regular liaison meetings
- annual conference contained presentations on current practice on homeless prevention, supporting people, partnership working and impact of growth areas for Luton. Also featured practical workshop sessions on Decent Homes, meeting housing need & achieving equalities
- workshop involving tenants and other stakeholders on decent homes

Housing Scrutiny Committee

The cross party Housing Scrutiny Committee has also specifically considered and endorsed the Strategy.

Bedfordshire Sub-regional Housing Group

Luton has worked with the 3 other local authorities in Bedfordshire and partner RSLs and the Supporting People teams in developing the individual housing strategies, to increase the awareness of the challenges facing the local authorities individually and collectively, to identify opportunities for joint working and to promote the sharing of best practice. The aim is to work towards a developing a single Housing strategy for the Bedfordshire Sub-region by November 2004. The draft sub regional strategy was launched at a stakeholder event in March 2004.

Outcome of the Consultation

The themes of the consultation this year has been the Sustainable Communities Plan, achieving a balanced housing market, developing new partnerships and community cohesion:

The key contributions have included:

Consultee	Actions influenced by consultation
Housing Conference	<p>Agreement on priority actions to achieve Decent Homes</p> <p>Proposals to streamline CPO actions on empty homes - under investigation</p>
Race, Women's & Disability Forum	<p>Involvement of member of Race Advisory Forum in preparation for next BME survey & member of Disability & Access Forum in planning Housing Needs survey in 2004. (Womens Forum not currently in operation)</p>
Local Strategic Partnership	<p>LSP support the plans to produce additional units of social housing to meet identified need and recognizes the need to maintain existing stock</p> <p>Concern over the condition of private sector stock and recommendations made to promote conversion of existing redundant industrial buildings to residential – reflected in new local plan</p> <p>Identified need for enhanced provision of legal advice for people with housing problems – still actively pursuing independent housing advice service</p> <p>Agree availability of affordable housing as key indicator reflecting quality of life</p>
TCC	<p>Sought early involvement in any discussions on future management of council stock – agreed tenants friend to be employed from outset of stock options appraisal</p> <p>Promoting further involvement in the TP and strategy consultation processes from tenants from BME communities – TCC member led</p>
Other Stakeholders	<p>Commitment to continued partnership working through RSL Liaison meetings</p> <p>Development of sub regional working group to move forward on sub regional agenda</p>
Internal consultation	<p>Emphasis on provision for special needs groups within overall house building programme</p> <p>Need to reflect on new structures required within LBC to meet demands of planned Children Bill</p>

The strategy is considered by the Luton Forum (Local Strategic Partnership) directly and through its Environment & Sustainability committee. Membership of the forum is wide and the Council has representatives on the partnership board. Jephson Housing Association also sits on the Environment & Sustainability committee as a representative of the local RSL liaison group and feeds into the decision making process and reports back to RSL partners on a regular basis.

The same routes and mechanisms shown above are used for feedback on the strategy with reports back on completion of the development work in preparation for the annual update. In addition feedback on progress on agreed actions is made to relevant groups throughout the year (examples – spend on revenue and capital budgets to members, reports on repair programmes to tenants consultative committee and through newsletters, update on building programme to RSLs through liaison meetings and on grant availability to owners via the private landlords forum).

The Council's Social Inclusion scrutiny committee will also receive a mid year update on progress against the targets contained in the Action plan (*see appendix b*) and the executive portfolio holder for Environment & Housing will receive quarterly updates of progress and performance (see page 19).

4. The Luton Factors (www.luton.gov.uk ...)

The Luton Factors document which, as in previous years attempts to support and justify the Council's housing strategy with relevant information. It refers to material and data collected from various pieces of survey work (Housing Needs, BME needs, stock condition, the statutory review of homelessness etc,). This year the information has been refreshed and updated following release of data from the 2001 census.

The data contained in the Luton factors includes information on house prices, incomes and trends in the local housing market. **It is essential that the Luton Factors be viewed alongside this strategy document to understand why decisions have been made.**

This **statistical information**, accompanied by the demographic data presented, shows clearly the ongoing need for investment in the town to continue to provide and maintain good quality and well managed homes across all tenures.

The Luton Factors also contains performance data including Best Value Performance Indicators and other corporate PIs.

5 Corporate, Local, Sub-regional, Regional and National Context

The Housing Strategy has been developed to reflect the importance of links to other corporate strategies, the strategies of other agencies and links to Government initiatives. Access to decent and affordable housing is a key quality of life issue and a holistic approach is required to ensure that the needs of the community are met. Without decent housing many other initiatives are not sustainable. The influencing strategies and plans have been:

- **The Housing and Social Services Departmental Plan** has been revised and maps out the key service objectives for the period 2003 - 05.
- **The Community Plan** – The initial Community Plan for Luton, prepared by the Luton Forum, (Luton's Strategic Partnership is now being updated. Extensive consultation with the public has identified concerns which the Council has fed into the priorities in the Housing Strategy. Examples include a need for low cost housing, particularly for young people, and concerns over the condition of housing in older parts of the town. Relevant targets from the Housing Strategy have been inserted into the Community Plan. Housing issues have a high profile particularly under the themes of Quality Environment, Sustainable Communities and Healthy People, Healthy Town. In future years we anticipate that the Community Strategy will further influence the content of the Housing Strategy.
- **The Regional Housing Strategy for the East of England** – linking together local regional and sub regional priorities. This is particularly relevant to the problems facing the Town, which cannot be solved within the Borough boundaries. Meetings are now taking place with neighbouring authorities in the Bedfordshire sub region and our RSL partners, to develop common strategies. The contact extends beyond the sub-region and includes other near neighbours. The Council has recognised that solutions to some of the housing problems lie outside its own boundaries. This represents a key challenge both in terms of solutions being developed but also delivery of those solutions, through new ways of working and partnerships. Proposed changes to the allocation of funding by the Housing Corporation will encourage further joint working.
- **The Housing Corporation's Investment Strategy** - working within the Corporation's priorities to address the housing needs of the town. We continue to achieve high levels of investment from the Housing Corporation through the Approved Development Programme and have demonstrated our ability to work with partner RSLs to deliver new homes.
- **The Empty Homes Strategy** - access to renovation grants for owners of empty homes continues to prove popular and CPO action is proposed for a small number of longstanding vacant properties. Overall, targets have again been achieved. The establishment of a regional working group of empty homes officers has been successful with joint activities and shared publicity.
- **Childrens Services Plan** - recognising the emerging needs of children as they grow - particularly those coming out of care and with a need of ongoing support.

- **Bedfordshire and Luton Structure Plan and Borough of Luton Local Plan** - these identify the capacity for additional house building in Luton, and seek to ensure that development of brown field sites includes the provision of affordable [social] housing. Both Plans are under review, and the Borough Council will be seeking to increase housing allocations in the south of the County to facilitate an increased social house building programme. The Luton Local Plan, in particular, is proposing that an increased proportion of new housing development should be affordable. Public consultation on the first Deposit Draft ended in June 2003. An urban capacity study has identified the potential for a further 1370 dwellings in Luton but the identified sites will now be tested through the Local Plan Public Inquiry and the number may change. Major housing allocations will be likely to be outside Luton, so requiring the establishment of partnerships with adjoining authorities if housing to benefit Luton is to be delivered.
- **The Sustainable Communities Plan - Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy** – to meet the housing and other problems identified in Luton the Council has been working as a member of the steering group to produce this strategy, one of the Government’s growth areas in the Sustainable Communities Plan (Feb 2003). It is now out for public consultation, and amongst its proposals is the construction of over 20,000 dwellings in addition to known commitments in and around the Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis urban area by 2021.
- **The Corporate Social Inclusion Strategy** - recognising that the provision of appropriate and affordable housing is inextricably linked to promoting social inclusion, health and well-being. The principles for the introduction of a corporate debt policy have been agreed. The Local PSA target for social inclusion is providing free independent and confidential advice to tenants and local residents on Housing and Council tax benefits
- **Luton’s Affordable Warmth Strategy** - considerable work has been undertaken during the Beacon year to disseminate the good practice identified in Luton. A toolkit for all English councils has been developed in conjunction with the other Beacon Councils and this was launched in September 2003. An updated strategy has been published but this retains the original principals of partnership working. In addition, a programme of educating schoolchildren has commenced and will be developed further in the coming year through partnership working with local schools.
- **Homelessness Strategy** – the Homelessness Strategy has been completed and sets out a challenging work programme through its action plan to address the growing numbers of homelessness approaches and acceptances. The down turn in the availability of family housing has resulted in an increase in the numbers of people remaining in temporary accommodation for longer.
- **Asset Management Plan & Capital Investment Strategy (AMP)**
The Council has established a strong corporate focus to both its Asset Management Plan and Capital Investment Strategy. The Housing Strategy forms part of the Corporate Asset Management Plan

The AMP provides the foundation for the Council’s Capital Investment Strategy (CIS). A key point is that the Council has fully accepted that it is no longer sufficient to rely on traditional means of funding capital investment needs and that it is not necessary for the Council to be the sole

provider of infrastructure and assets. In relation to Housing, the focus will continue to be on working corporately to effect more productive schemes with partner RSLs and maximising the benefits of through the planning system.

Capital allocations are made using clear objective criteria taking into account national and local priorities. National priorities are met through an assessment of Government guidance from the single pot allocations for Education, Housing and Transport.

Prioritisation of capital projects is undertaken through the asset management process which gives priority to those areas of work that are supported by grant or other identified income sources. Funding for repairs to council owned housing stock is therefore dealt with as a priority as the cost of the works are met by the major repairs allowance. Spending on home renovation grants and that supporting the house building programme can only therefore be agreed up to the level of identified capital funding.

This has resulted in reductions in both these programmes from 2004/05 and options to increase this commitment are being considered including the use of prudential borrowing.

Traditionally, the Council's Capital Programme has included a provision for Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG). Officers from the Capital & Asset Management Division are working closely with Housing colleagues to assess the implications of the removal of LASHG. In the meantime, the provision remains within the Capital programme.

- **Crime and Disorder**

The Council continues to work alongside partners in Health, Police and the Safer Luton partnership to implement the Crime and Disorder strategy and seek to increase the level of investment and activity in multi-agency partnerships. The main commitments for 2002/05 focus on the reductions in:

- the number of incidents which affect the quality of peoples lives by improving community safety
- the risks faced by young people, both as a victim and as a perpetrator of crime
- the number of recorded incidents of violence and harassment against individuals
- the number of recorded incidents of burglary of homes and auto-related crime within the town
- alcohol and drug related crime and the impact of alcohol and drug misuse on families and communities in Luton

- **Communtiy Cohesion**

The report of the Communtiy Cohesion Scrutiny Panel in January 2003 recommended that the Council should develop further its policy and provision for housing by adopting an approved Landlord list, a deposit guarantee scheme, support systems for tenants whose first language is not English and by improving liaison between all Council officers who may visit local communities and individual households. (See '*Sticking Together*' document - www.luton.gov.uk/living/community/103039.html)

- **Neighbourhood Renewal**

The purpose of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund is to help local authorities in the most deprived areas focus their main expenditure programmes in order to deliver better outcomes for their most deprived communities. The Government expects to see evidence that funding from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund is being used to improve the delivery of services to the most deprived wards and neighbourhoods within the eligible areas. The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund links to the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy by funding proposals, which enable mainstream programmes to be altered so that they achieve a greater effect in the most deprived neighbourhoods. This funding not only assists the Council but also relevant partner agencies.

Four (of five) neighbourhood renewal workers have been appointed and are working with local people to ensure proposed activities and programmes match local expectation and needs.

Local Housing Markets

Luton is a compact district and it is difficult to identify major differences in housing markets by locality within the district. Careful study of the local housing market however has been a key part of the development of this strategy. The loss of social rented stock through Right to Buy sales continues to cause major concern as it has not been possible to replace these units with new provision through the enabling process. Local house prices have increased at a significantly higher rate than the South East over the past twelve months (see Table below) and this also continues to impact on the council's ability to provide new homes through the acquisition and refurbishment route and even through the purchase of street properties through RSLs. Demand for rented housing in the private sector remains high.

Clearer data on this can be found in the **Luton Factors document** which accompanies this strategy. Work on defining the varied local housing markets throughout the sub region is ongoing and will feature in the sub regional strategy.

Percentage increases in actual sales between April-June 2002 and April- June 2003, for

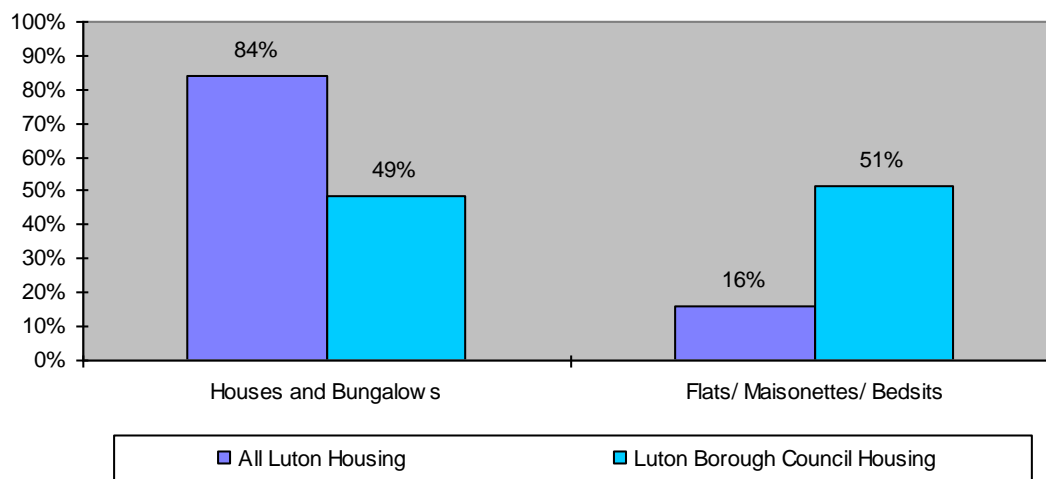
Type of Property	South East	Luton
Detached	19%	25%
Semi-Detached	24%	32%
Terraced	25%	42%
Flat / Maisonette	26%	40%

South East and Luton by Property Type

Source: Land Registry

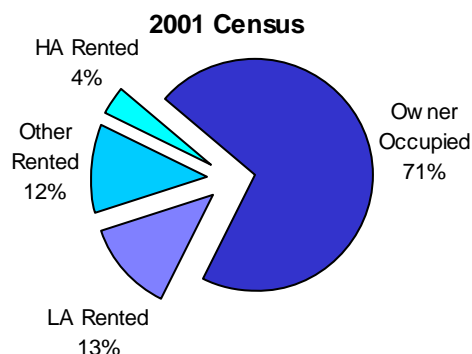
Property in Luton by type

The chart below shows the disproportionate level of flats now held in the Council stock compared to the level of flatted accommodation in the private sector



Property in Luton by tenure

Comparison with the 1991 census data shows that the stock of housing in social ownership has fallen from 18%. This confirms the councils inability to produce sufficient new homes through its enabling actions to match those lost through right to buy sales



For further information on the local housing market please see the Luton Factors document

Condition of housing stock

Condition surveys of both private and local authority stock have been carried out to reveal likely costs of improvement and renovation. In particular, work has been done to establish what works are needed to ensure the council achieves the Governments Decent Homes standards (see page 39/40). The private sector stock condition survey showed a significant number of unfit houses, mainly in the central areas. This influences the council's decisions on the need for funding for renovation grants (see page 33).

Condition of RSL owned stock is varied and it is intended to collect more detailed information on this sector over the course of the next year.

Working with Partners

There is already extensive partnership working with links to statutory agencies to ensure that we provide a quality comprehensive housing service. We are dependent on establishing, developing and maintaining working relationships with many other agencies to ensure that as many of the needs of the community are met. These partners include Registered Social Landlords, Private Sector Landlords, Hostel providers, Primary Care Group, Builders, Developers and numerous voluntary and special interest groups - this strategy recognises the value of their current and ongoing contribution.

Examples of successful partnership working

SRB – the successful bids for funding for housing schemes has revolved around partnerships with RSLs, the Luton & Dunstable Partnership, owners, builders & corporate colleagues (planning, regeneration, finance etc). They will produce additional units of social rented housing and a significant increase in the refurbishment programme through home renovation grants.

Affordable Warmth – the continuation of the joint working between two lead LBC departments and an assortment of local agencies to deliver the affordable warmth (AW) referral scheme which received a Beacon award in 2002. The AW strategy is guided and developed through a multi disciplinary steering group.

Research – shared input and outcomes from local and sub regional research work to inform local strategies as well as the developing sub regional programme. Locally the corporate Research & Information Forum provides good quality base data which provides reliable demographic data and information on which the Councils various strategic documents are based. Other examples of shared research work demonstrate the benefits of partnership working. These include:

- research resulting in a common approach and shared definition across all Bedfordshire Councils to Key Workers
- joint working with local & County Supporting People teams on Needs Mapping with Luton University
- involvement in steering group to direct development of new center for local homelessness charity NOAH (Council making land available for new project)
- contribution to research into needs of Irish Community in Luton

Sub regional strategy development – see separate paragraph (page 28)

Homelessness - cross authority working group established to consider trends and develop best practice and uniform approaches to common issues. Multi disciplinary steering group moving local homelessness strategy forward.

Home Improvement Agency – joint bid for funding from all Bedfordshire councils

Access to other sources of funding (see Chapter 8 Resourcing the Strategy)

Bids for SRB resources have been made to extend the renovation grants programme in the Housing Plus areas during 2003/04 and beyond in subsequent years.

An acquisition scheme is also proposed for the Biscot ward utilising SRB funding although this has yet to receive formal approval.

Energy grants have been obtained to supplement the public sector energy efficiency programmes working towards meeting HECA targets.

Grants from ODPM and the B&B Unit to support homelessness prevention and the implementation of the new Homelessness Act 2002.

Further development of the strategy

The strategy is a constantly evolving document and is subject to annual review, both of its major objectives and the actions identified. Measurements of achievements against performance targets are carried out through the year internally at departmental management team level.

The table below provides a timetable for review and update over the next year.

When	Action	By
February-04	Achieve fit for purpose standard	
March-04	Agree programme for review/update of strategy	Management Team
June-04	Awayday with key stakeholders to assess progress and direction of strategy	Key stakeholders
June/July – 04	Report to Scrutiny committee	Head of Housing
July-04	Customer satisfaction survey to be completed	Policy & Strategy Manager
September-04	Annual housing conference	All stakeholders
September – 04	Review with portfolio holder for Environment & Housing	Head of Housing
October-04	Update action plan following conference	Management Team
November – 04	Report to Executive	Head of Housing
November-04	Submit updated action plan to Govt. Office for assessment	Head of Housing

6 The Council's Housing Objectives

The Council has assessed the work needed to address the main issues and has attempted to prioritise these but sees little difference in importance between the seven objectives identified. It is vital that our own stock is maintained to a high standard to ensure efforts to reach Decent Homes standards are met. Housing need and homelessness levels dictate a continuing need to support the house building programme in partnership with RSLs. This is done through an ongoing dialogue with the Housing Corporation as well as more obvious assistance with funding and release of land. The condition of the private sector stock means that the council's commitment to the home renovation grants programme must be maintained to combat dereliction and unfitness.

The following tables show where action has been agreed (✓) and where decisions have been taken to defer or reject action with reasons for those decisions stated where appropriate

Housing Objective 1

- ***We will maximise the availability of good quality affordable, fit, decent, safe, and secure housing for the people of the Town***

OPTIONS SUMMARY

✓	Deferred/Rejected
Carry out further general Housing needs assessment alongside those of Key workers, BME Communities, Special Needs groups and Rough Sleeping	
Review the system of allocating social housing	
Undertake a feasibility exercise regarding the establishment of a Joint Housing register and to further explore choice based lettings with RSL partners	
Improve liaison arrangements with RSLs, particularly around management issues	
Increase rigour of monitoring nomination agreements between LBC and partners RSLs to ensure maximum take up of nominations	
Continue to support LASHG and the disposal of land to RSLs to provide new development sites. Ensure revenue funding for supported schemes	Build new Council Housing – obvious financial benefits of existing routes and good working practice with partner RSLs & Housing

available through Supporting People programme.	Corporation Promote Purchase & Repair and Refurbishment schemes with partner RSLs as experience has shown that these no longer work in Luton because of financial constraints.
Work more closely with the other authorities in Bedfordshire Move forward on draft plans and identify possible site to develop special needs housing scheme with neighbouring council to meet shared needs of client group	Build/acquire new affordable housing outside the Borough Boundaries – deferred at present, pending the considerations around the Communities Plan.
Take advantage of new discretionary power made available to support Private Sector renewal via the RRO Maximise the opportunities that private sector housing offers to increase the supply of affordable housing. Continue to support the grants programme, increased financial support for DFGs, supporting the Empty Homes strategy, introducing accredited Landlords Scheme	Defer consideration of the declaration of renewal areas or group repair schemes, pending the completion of the stock condition survey in 2005/6
Bid for resources for a Home Improvement Agency jointly with the other Bedfordshire councils	
Sustainable Communities Plan Issues Start preparations, through sub regional partners and RSLs to position Council for development of additional social housing units in growth area north of Luton. Support the growth areas identified within the Communities Plan and support the establishment of the local delivery vehicle for the Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis Growth Area Seek opportunities for the identification of early wins for new housing sites Contribute to the preparation of the local development framework for the	

Growth Area	
Implement the actions within the Homelessness Strategy – reducing use of B & B, use of Private Sector leasing, increased emphasis on prevention through appointment of homelessness prevention officer (see separate homelessness strategy)	
Create new working group on S106 agreements	
Develop database of all social housing stock in the town	
Use of compulsory purchase orders (CPO) to bring empty homes back into use	

Housing Needs

The existing Housing Needs Survey will come to the end of its useful life in 2004, and plans are currently being developed to undertake a new survey in 2004/5, which will analyse and assess general housing need, the requirements for special housing needs, the needs of BME communities, key worker needs and the increasing pressure from homeless households.

The next Housing Needs survey will be co-ordinated with other authorities in Bedfordshire to ensure that a countywide picture of need is formulated. Funding for this has been secured as part of the Councils planned growth for 2004/05 and contributions will be sought from RSL partners and the Housing Corporation.

The need for additional housing units is based on the 1999 survey (Fordham) which produced the following summary:

Need situation 1999 - 2004			
	Non-LA h'holds	LA h'holds	TOTAL
Current need	5,611	942	6,553
Projected need	7,152	-	7,152
TOTAL NEED	12,763	942	13,705

Supply	4,450	-	4,450
NET NEED	8,313	942	9,255

The survey made it clear that this does not mean that by 2004 there will be a total of 9,255 households in need or that this number of new homes needs to be built. Some households will resolve their problems in other ways (eg moving out of the area), and some housing need can be met in household's current accommodation. It concluded however that a total of 4,500 additional affordable dwellings might be required to meet the need in full **by 2004**. Since 1999 delivery of new affordable housing has been restricted by availability of land and finance which has resulted in an annual supply of less than 100 new homes. The forthcoming updated needs survey will help clarify the current position.

A robust analysis of housing needs is included in the **Luton Factors** document which accompanies and supports this strategy.

The Homelessness Strategy has been produced in partnership with the voluntary sector, RSLs and other statutory partnerships. It maps out a series of detailed actions to address the problems currently being experienced (*see Homelessness Strategy*). The last 12 months has seen a significant reduction in the use of B & B and the expansion of Private Sector leasing. The first Homelessness Prevention Officer has been appointed.

A further street count to establish levels of rough sleeping was carried out in February but this revealed similar levels to those found in 1997. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the findings understates the levels of rough sleeping and work continues with homelessness agencies to establish a more realistic measure of the problem **and to consider the hidden homeless problem within the town.**

Private Sector Renewal

(See Renovations Grant Policy Statement and Luton Factor 2003 www.Luton.gov.uk)

There are over 60,000 properties in the Private Sector housing stock in the Town. The Private House Condition Survey undertaken in 2000/01 identified over 3300 unfit properties concentrated in the inner wards, with a potential demand on the grants budget of £15m. Plans are already being developed to undertake a new survey in 2005/6, with the preparatory work taking place during 2004/5. As part of the joint working within the Bedfordshire housing sub-region, there will be a sharing of survey methodologies used by the other Bedfordshire authorities to develop a countywide picture of the condition of the private sector housing stock. The survey will also assess the potential for Group Repair Schemes and renewal areas.

See **Luton Factors** for further detail

The Council recognises that the Private Sector does offer the opportunity to provide affordable housing in the Town, by :

- Reducing the levels of unfitnes
- Using the Empty Homes grants

- Using the private rented sector both for prevention of homelessness and
- Using temporary accommodation for homelessness households

The Council has continued to invest heavily in the private sector housing stock during 2003/4 – this year's grant budget being £2.9m. However due to corporate budget pressures the council has reduced the levels of financial support for 2004/05 and for subsequent years to £2m pa. The emphasis for the programme will be meeting the Councils statutory responsibilities in relation to DFGs. The remainder of the budget is currently under review. In tandem with this review, feasibility work is being carried out to introduce loans, equity release schemes and other financial products to compensate for this reduction.

We have been successful in securing £1m from SRB to boost the renovation grant programme over a five-year period. These funds are being used to expand the size of the Council's target Housing plus area.

This level of investment will not be enough to keep pace with demand and the options of loans and equity release schemes will be evaluated as a service of additional investment. The waiting list for grants currently stands at 1600 applications, which equates to a minimum 4 year wait.

However ultimately owners are responsible for the maintenance of their own properties and we will endeavour to support people by offering advice and guidance on how to maintain their own properties.

The aims of the Council's strategy for Private Sector Housing are to:

- Continue to maintain support to the grants programme
- Target renovation grants in the Housing Plus area of the Town
- Achieve a full 30 year life for properties receiving renovation grants
- Develop a Landlord accreditation scheme
- Use the Landlords Forum as a consultation mechanism
- Have a risk based system of regular inspection of Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Develop loan options to grants using the scope provided within the Regulatory Reform Order

Promote Independence by maximising the opportunities for people receiving DFGs to remain in their own home

Use the renovation grants to bring empty properties back into use and let to people in need of housing

Continue to achieve upper quartile performance for BVPI 62 – Numbers of unfit properties

Achieve 100% spend of the grants budgets each financial year

Evaluate the potential for Group Repair Schemes and/or renewal areas (*See Action Plan – Appendix b) for targets*)

Regulatory Reform Order

Following the Regulatory Reform Order the Council has confirmed its existing grants policy with some minor amendments and published it in July 2003 in accordance with Government guidance. The various loan options available are currently being evaluated. Preliminary research indicates that there is support from grant applicants for the introduction of loans, equity release schemes etc.

Disabled Facilities Grants

Increasing numbers of complex requests for DFG adaptations to properties, has had a knock-on effect on the grant programme, with less money being available for Renovation and Home Repair Grants. In recognition of the increasing complexities of individual schemes, the Council has increased the discretionary limit to £25000, above the mandatory level of £25000 to enable more clients to take advantage of DFG and remain living independently at home.

Renovation Grants

The Stock Condition survey of 2000 identified the highest levels of information, including on unfitness, in the central areas of the Town. The policy continues to target full renovation grants in this area of the Town. The Best Value Review is challenging this approach. However, the increasing costs of DFG continues to limit the amount of investment that can be made in Renovation Grants.

Home Repair Grants

The Council continues to make available the discretionary Home Repair Grants up to the maximum of £5000.

The funding from the Health Action Zone scheme programme to identify those applicants on the Grants waiting list who met certain health related criteria came to an end in March 2003. Recognising the value of this project these grants have now been mainstreamed into the grant policy and system. This scheme offers a "quick fix" Home Repairs Grant to deal with their most pressing item of disrepair to help keep their properties wind, watertight and safe, until such time as the Council are able to deal with any remaining disrepair with a Renovation Grant.

Empty Properties

Bringing empty units of accommodation back into residential use continues to be a priority for the Council and an Empty Homes Grant scheme has been introduced as part of its strategy. These are Renovation Grants, which are given to return empty units of accommodation to residential use, and as such are discretionary. They are available to owners of empty properties and are subject to nomination rights for tenancies being granted to the Council, for a five year period from completion of the works.

Private Sector Stock Condition

The Private Sector Stock condition survey is due for updating in 2005/06 & preparatory work on this will commence in 2004/05.

Luton Home Improvement Agency

The Council operates an in-house Agency to assist the over-60s and the disabled through the grant process. The fee for this service is calculated at 10% of the cost of the works, although there is a flat rate of £200 for the Home Repairs Grants. It is a popular service and the Agency fee itself is recycled to offset staffing costs. The Agency assists at all stages of the grant process and has links with a number of external organisations and will, where appropriate; refer applicants to those organisations for further assistance.

The Best Value Review is specifically evaluating the option of developing a Home Improvement Agency via the Supporting People initiative. The evaluation will consider the possibility of a sub-regional initiative with a H.I.A, working across Bedfordshire.

New Partnerships

With the growing recognition that the private sector does offer the opportunity to supply affordable housing, the Council will explore new partnerships with Private Sector Landlords and RSLs to increase the supply of affordable fit housing

BVPI 62

We remain in the upper quartile of performance achieving 100% spend on the grants budget

Customer Satisfaction

Continuous customer satisfaction testing, and the consultation from the Best Value Review shows high levels of satisfaction for the current service and the existing Grants Policy.

Sustainable Communities Plan

Following the announcements of the growth areas recommended in the 'Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future' there is a clear need to ensure that sub regional activities are directed to get the maximum benefit for the town and its partners from the Communities plan. Bedfordshire sub regional group established to consider common issues, discuss joint working possibilities and to be prepared for proposed growth area north of Luton so that the housing built is sustainable, meets local needs and provides good quality homes to attract and retain key workers.

Regional/Sub Regional Issues

Discussions continue to take place with neighbouring authorities to look at options for more substantial social housing development outside the borough in which the Council will have a stake. A sub regional strategy statement has been agreed by all four authorities and partner RSLs which feeds into the regional housing strategy. In addition agreement has been reached with the other sub regional partners to:

- consult stakeholders across Bedfordshire on the Sub-regional strategy (March 2004)
- work more closely and collaboratively on the development of the individual housing strategies - aim to develop a fit for purpose sub regional housing strategy in the next 2 years
- work towards the sharing of data and intelligence in relation to the housing needs of the sub region, key worker housing, public and private sector stock condition, homelessness and market trends
- to identify cross boundary opportunities for partnership developments

Specific examples of existing cross boundary projects that will be progressed further include:

- joint work on key worker housing needs assessment with South beds DC
- a common approach to housing needs survey to ensure that data secured will reveal the Bedfordshire picture as well as the local issues (brief for needs survey being developed jointly with South Beds DC)
- appointment of shared post to support the sub regional group and to move forward the development of the emerging sub regional action plan (post funded by all Bedfordshire Councils and partner RSLs)
- countywide group considering BME housing issues and strategy (all four housing authorities and RSL partners)

Planning Powers

The establishment of a working group to consider the best use of S106 planning agreements for the Council will lead to the development of Supplementary Planning Guidance that will clarify the position for developers wishing to build in the town.

A planning and housing initiative to pull together officers from all key disciplines to consider how the provision of social housing can be extended to meet identified need has had clear benefits and has fed into the review of the local plan. This recommends a reduction in the thresholds and increase in the levels of provision of social housing on new schemes.

Review of the Allocation of Council Housing

The review of the allocation system is well advanced. Following preliminary consultation a draft scheme has been developed and further consultation is under way with a planned implementation in 2004/05. The Council's Executive has asked for a feasibility exercise to be undertaken into establishing a joint Housing Register with RSL partners **and work on this has commenced.**

The Enabling Role

Whilst the enabling programme with our RSL Partners delivers new social housing which to some extent compensates for the loss of properties purchased through the Right to Buy Scheme, the numbers of new social housing units provided continues to fall significantly short of the properties lost each year. Nevertheless the enabling programme provides a vital and important source of additional high quality social housing in the town. The Enabling role can only be successful if suitable sites can be assembled for development and detailed work continue in this area. We have seen a period of time where intensive activity has resulted in a number of high quality developments coming forward which have involved the use of brown field sites, former garage sites and the release of sites formally occupied by an elderly person home to provide housing for larger families, homeless families, shared ownership and frail elders. However these in the main are fairly small areas and the shortage of larger sites for new social housing development continues to cause concern. The only realistic short - medium term possibility that will assist the council in meeting housing need is for out of borough development in partnership with neighbouring authorities and discussions are ongoing in this area. The current partnership arrangements with seven RSLs is due for review within the next twelve months.

One of the most significant impacts of the rise in house prices is the loss of the acquisition and repair scheme in the inner wards of Biscot and Dallow, areas of considerable housing need, low levels of social rented provision and high levels of recorded deprivation. Lobbying the Housing Minister and the Housing Corporation has failed to achieve any positive benefits **but it is hoped that this can be resumed following the relaxation of local authority funding and the availability of SRB finance.**

A database of RSL stock is being developed and this will help inform future research into housing needs. It will also reflect the RSL stock position in respect of the decent homes standards.

The Council is looking to develop a more proactive role in monitoring and overseeing the performance of its RSL partners in the management, maintenance and allocation of their stock in the town. The levels of nominations with each RSL is also to be reviewed to ensure maximum use is made of the stock.

Homelessness

Numbers of homeless approaches and acceptances continue to be high and details of these broken down by cause in the Luton Factors (page XX). Bed & breakfast accommodation is now used only for emergency placements and time spent in such housing is minimised through the use of leased properties. Prevention of homelessness is seen to be crucial and considerable success has been achieved in this area following the appointment of a homeless prevention officer. The Homelessness Strategy gives greater detail on the issues and on what measures the Council is taking to address these.

Corporate Action Schools

The Council has developed a corporate working group to respond to issues facing schools, recognising that housing and other services can impact on the educational attainment of children. In practical terms protocols are being developed:

- to ensure links between homeless families and the school welfare services,
- information exchanges between the Asylum Seekers Team and local schools about the particular needs of asylum seekers in the town etc.

We have been successful with a bid for resources under the 2nd phase Starter Home Initiative, and we have also developed an assisted housing scheme for teachers.

A thematic Ofsted inspection of the Local Education Authority (LEA) in 2002 examined how housing policies have impacted on the educational agenda. The Ofsted report makes a number of points relating to the allocation of social housing and the support given to existing ethnic minority tenants and these will be considered as part of the ongoing review of the allocation policy and in conjunction with further reviews of best housing management practice.

Housing Objective 2

- *We will manage and maintain the Council's Housing stock in a way that is sensitive and responsive to our tenants, but is also efficient, equitable and economic*

OPTIONS SUMMARY

✓	Deferred/Rejected
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Stock option appraisal to be undertaken in 2004/5 (to complete by July 2005)	Large scale Stock Transfer, PFI and ALMO last considered in 2000/1 when the results of the analysis of the financial options was inconclusive and there was no tenant support for change. Will be further reviewed following further option appraisal in 2004/5
Consult tenants on stock options – agreed to appoint tenants friend at earliest opportunity and to continue appropriate dialogue and ensure tenant groups kept informed of activities but delay any further structured consultation until further options appraisal process agreed	
Ongoing review of the strategy for achieving and maintaining the decent homes standard	
Appointment of Decent Homes Co-ordinator	
Using the One Stop Shop and Call Centre for housing service	
Greater attention to be given to energy efficiency of council stock following appointment of dedicated, trained officer	
Extend activities against anti social behaviour by enlarging the team tackling this and to pursue further ASBOs where appropriate	

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan

The Council still owns and manages over 8,900 homes and the Business Plan strives to balance the HRA over a period of 30 years and should be viewed in conjunction with this document. (*see HRA Business Plan*)

The HRA Business Plan has been revised and updated reflects:

- On the requirements to carry out a stock option appraisal by July 2005
- issues arising from the Best Value Reviews of Landlord Services and maps progress against the action and Improvement Plans;
- the results of the Stock Survey showing low levels of catch up repairs, totaling £3.5m, which can be funded over 5 years;
- the requirements of meeting the Decent Homes Standard for the entire local authority stock by 2010;
- that the Council will need to spend just over £153m over the next 30 years on future major works
- the impact of rent restructuring against the background of declining stock and
- the introduction of the Supported People Initiative.

Stock Condition

The Councils stock is varied but has benefited greatly from significant levels of investment over the years and is in relatively good condition. The last stock condition survey revealed that levels of catch up repairs is less than many other councils and we plan to deal with all of these repairs

within five years. The key priorities identified through the survey were Window replacement, Heating upgrades, Kitchens and Bathroom refurbishment and these mirror the established priority areas within our Planned Maintenance Programmes and our Decent Homes Strategy.

Stock Management and Ownership Options

The Council is to embark on a programme of consultation to address the Governments requirements for a full stock option appraisal by July 2005. This process will be fully inclusive to ensure that the appraisal is both robust and transparent, allowing informed decisions to be made. All stock ownership/management options are to be evaluated, large scale and partial stock transfer, retaining ownership, arms length companies and PFI. Tenants will be provided with the necessary tools and independent support to ensure full participation in this exercise.

Decent Homes Strategy

The 2001 Stock Condition Survey has been updated and analysed to ascertain the extent of non-decency within public sector stock. The original base position of 2681 has been reduced to 1073 in line with the Government target of a 33% reduction by 2004. The future direction of the maintenance programme has been redefined to deliver the 2010 target for decent homes compliance.

Under Occupation

Review of allocations policy recommends increased priority for those under occupying homes and a budget of £50k is available annually to assist and encourage moves into smaller accommodation. Levels of under-occupation to be addressed within next housing needs survey.

Nuisance and Racial Harassment

A Tenancy Enforcement Team is now established within Landlord Services where it co-ordinates and targets action by the area teams against nuisance and anti social behaviour on Council Estates. The Team also deals with the more serious cases of nuisance and anti social behaviour on a casework basis. It is also responsible for the development of clear policies and procedures for dealing with nuisance and anti social behaviour. Enhanced monitoring and the revision of procedures are also within the teams remit for 2003/6.

E Government

The Council is developing a One Stop Shop and Call Centre, both to be operational by early 2004. Housing Services are seen as a significant service area to be included in the first tranche of services to be delivered and we are involving our tenants in the proposed changes so that they are aware of the way in which

their services will be delivered in different ways in future years. We shall be reviewing the business processes within our back office operations with a view to implementing Data Image Processing and Workflow technologies to improve efficiency and information flows.

Housing Objective 3

- *We will get the most out of being one department, maximising service delivery opportunities, appreciating each others different roles and responsibilities within an overarching culture of co-operation & customer care*

OPTIONS SUMMARY

✓	Deferred/Rejected
Continue to support schemes that promote independent living eg the Applegrove redevelopment sheltered housing scheme for frail elders	
Develop a joint adaptations team	Retain existing structure for assessing and implementing adaptations – operational benefits gained through joint working outweigh practical and organisational difficulties
Identify housing solutions to meet special needs requirements (to include housing for clients with learning disabilities, physical and sensory disabilities and those with mental health problems)	
Improve strategic communication by improving the links between the Supporting People Strategy, the Homelessness Strategy and Housing Strategy & Business Plan	
Link the SP needs mapping exercise to the planned Housing Needs Survey	

Services for Older People

We are:

- jointly developing a range of sheltered and support services, which maximise the opportunity for people to have their social care needs met in their own homes as far as possible.
- providing intensive homecare to sheltered schemes at appropriate levels.

- Progressing the review of the future use of the three remaining elderly persons homes to insure the best long term housing solutions are available to our elderly residents, engaging with all stakeholders.
- developing an older persons strategy

Services for People with Disabilities

The provision of appropriate specialist housing is fundamentally linked to our mid-long term performance prospects in relation to a number of PAF/BVPIs pertinent to Physical/Sensory Disability, Mental Health and Learning Disability services.

We are:

- expanding supported housing services which offer tenancy status to service users as an alternative to residential care, particularly looking to develop new tenancies for people with mental health problems and learning disabilities.
- developing innovative supported housing schemes enabling young disabled adults to live in dispersed housing networks throughout the town.
- working to support tenants with children who have special need/disabilities
- negotiating the joint provision of a small unit for people with physical disabilities with a neighbouring council

Services for Children & Young People

We are:

- providing tenancies for care leavers via a quota system.
- in partnership with one of our RSLs providing a life skills flat, to enable young people leaving care to develop their independent life skills in a safe and managed environment.
- working towards government targets relating to supported accommodation for lone parents under 18.
- have appointed a homelessness prevention worker to work jointly with the Homeless Persons Team.
- amending the Allocations Policy to provide for some tenancies for foster carers.
- **Preparing for the changes necessary to meet the challenges contained in the Children Bill**

- Working to assess demand for housing from young unsupported mothers to inform future provision of appropriate housing
-

Adaptations

The adaptations working group has been actively exploring the options to achieve a more effective and efficient approach to disabled adaptations across both the private and public housing sectors. To date the following measures have either been taken or are subject to consultation:

- eligibility criteria – a comprehensive protocol setting out the criteria against which the need for adaptations has been implemented.
- organisational issues – options for creating an integrated team structure to deal with both private and public sector adaptations have been developed.

Special Needs Housing

We are:

- Currently exploring how service derived evidence and the direct influence of disability services could contribute to effecting real change e.g. the provision of safe and appropriate housing, constructed to better standards and with input from the specialist disability services, as part of the wider prevention agenda.
- In partnership with Disability Services forging links between the development of accessible specialist housing and the parallel creation of accessible community, day care and health related resources.
- Continuing to implement the objectives originally set out in the Luton Joint Investment Plan – Welfare to Work, and subsequently echoed in the recent Best Value Review of Disability Services. The key objectives identified against the housing agenda mirror those emerging from the Best Value analysis and underpinned the review recommendations.
- Via the Community Independence Team and 'd4' – the supported employment service, focusing on housing needs as a key element of the assessment and rehabilitation process.
- Continuing to develop schemes for clients with special needs:
 - Marshall Road – five flats with communal facilities and support for clients with mental health problems

- Electrolux – six flats for clients with learning disabilities and a range of units designed specifically for families with a disabled member

Supporting People

Supporting People is a programme designed to enhance other Strategic objectives in Housing, Social Care and Health by providing housing related support for a range of vulnerable users in all housing tenures. The programme provides a strategic focus for the prevention agenda in Luton especially for Older people, Drug and Alcohol users, users of mental health services and physically disabled adults. The programme will increase the levels of community based support to older and disabled adults, this will include an option appraised around the creation of a Home Improvement Agency and the further development of community alarms systems for Older People and the disabled.

To ensure user choice in provision of services by encouraging small voluntary sector providers particularly those meeting the needs of BME communities, and the most marginalised user groups. To establish links with the Council approach to Homelessness, and particularly those groups in priority need with complex support needs. This will entail using private sector landlord's as accommodation providers in many cases. To ensure that all providers of supporting services are paid on time and correctly.

We are currently conducting a needs mapping exercise using external consultants.

Housing Objective 4

- *We will empower users in the planning, provision and the monitoring of services, using consultation effectively to reshape services and continue to work in partnership with service users and carers*

✓
Continue to support and expand the tenant consultation structure
Review the Tenants Compact
Continue to expand and improve the level and quality of consultation on key strategies and decisions
Integrate LBC & RSL TP structures wherever possible to offer seamless service to tenants

Tenant Participation and Involvement

The Council has developed very comprehensive tenant structures, the elected Tenants Consultative Committee, 4 Area Tenant Panels, 15 Tenants and Residents Groups, now also including a BME Tenants and Residents Group. The Tenant Compact continues to be a living working document, with a group of tenants monitoring, reviewing and updating the Compact on a regular basis. The elections for the second Tenants Consultative Committee, (TCC) were held and a full training programme provided to ensure that representatives can participate fully in this important role.

The Council has for several years delegated budgets, initially to the Tenants Committee and subsequently to the Tenant Panels which has allowed the community to focus resources on specific projects, as part of the continuing tenant involvement within the context of the HRA Business Plan. The budgets have been recently reviewed and increased with formal approval processes to ensure that funds are appropriately directed.

During the course of 2002/3 tenants and other stakeholders have been involved and consulted on the following:

- The new One Stop Shop and call service
- The review of allocations system
- The quality of the services to homeless clients
- The Services to asylum seekers
- Housing Renovation Grants applicants and clients
- Achieving the Decent Homes standard

Housing Objective 5

- *We will promote innovative and imaginative approaches to service delivery by developing partnerships across the Department, corporately, with voluntary organisations, users and the wider community and with partner agencies using Health Act flexibilities and other partnership arrangements*

✓
Develop internal cross departmental group to promote provision of social housing and to maximise opportunities

Strengthen existing process for identifying housing priority special needs groups to involve all stakeholders

Extend range and coverage of joint assessment processes

Health Act Flexibility

We are continuing to explore the opportunities for greater joint working and integration between Housing and Social Services and partners in Health to deliver joined up services that use our resources to best effect and deliver maximum benefits to our customers. An example of this is the assessment process for accessing frail elderly sheltered housing and the provision of intermediate care and support to frail elders within our extra care housing stock through an integrated Home Care/Warden Services.

The establishment of a joint equipment store for people with physical disabilities or sensory impairment needing specialised aids has been finalised this year with funding from this Council, Bedfordshire County Council, three local PCTs, two hospital trusts and the local community trust. This is based in Bedford and is managed by Huntleigh National Care.

Housing Objective 6

- ***We are committed to the improvement of service quality and efficiency, and to the reduction of costs through our programme of Best Value Reviews; underpinned by a robust performance management framework for the whole department***

OPTIONS SUMMARY

✓	Deferred/Rejected
Complete the Best Value Review of the Housing (Strategy and Private Sector) Division	Ignore findings of BV reviews – Council committed to continuous improvement across all services
Continue with the implementation and Improvement Plan for the Landlord Services and Rent Arrears Best Value Reviews	
Continue to develop the performance framework & respond quickly to anomalies and trends when identified	
Implement and share areas of good and best practice with subregional colleagues	

Best Value Review

A review of the entire Housing (Strategy and Private Sector) Division is now well under way & is due for completion during the latter part of 2003. The Service Areas to be included in the review are: -

- Housing Strategy and Policy
- Empty Homes
- Enabling
- Affordable Warmth
- Asylum Seekers
- Private Sector Housing, including Renewals, Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) and the regulatory responsibilities under the Public Health Act, Internal Agency Service
- Housing Needs including Homelessness, Housing Advice, the Housing Register and Allocations.

The Rent Arrears Best Value Review was completed in 2002 and received a 1 star rating with a 'will definitely deliver significant improvements' from the Housing Inspectorate. The Rent Arrears action and improvement plan is already delivering service improvements. The target is to work towards achieving performance at upper quartile levels by April 2005. The reviews in relation to voids management and landlord services have also been completed in July 2002 and an Action and Improvement plan has been developed and is being implemented.

The Housing Inspectorate has recently completed the best value review of the landlord service and has awarded it two stars with promising prospects for improvement.

The recent Best Value reviews of Disability and Mental Health services highlight a comprehensive shared agenda/targets with housing – the creation of accessible specialist accommodation being inherently linked to the promoting independence agenda and more specifically proposed moves to further develop links between soon to be reconfigured day services, the community independence team and supported employment. The objectives identified in the draft review document are consistent with those set out in the JIP Welfare to Work.

Performance Management

A comprehensive performance management reporting structure has been in place for some time and continues to be refined to reflect new pressures and performance issues, particularly around BV PI's and financial management. [The table below shows the councils performance and targets against Best Value Performance Indicators. Further details and explanations can be found in the Luton Factors](#)

BVPI Description	Performance 2001/02	Performance 2002/03	Target 2003/04	Target 2004/05 (provisional)
BVPI 62 Proportion of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished as a direct result of action by the local authority	6.98%	6.10%	6.5%	6.7%
BVPI 63 Energy efficiency – the average SAP rating of local authority owned dwellings	58	59	60	60
BVPI 64 Number of private sector vacant dwellings brought back to occupation as a direct result of action by the local authority	4.6%	62	63	64
BVPI 66a Local authority rent collection and arrears: proportion of rent collected	96.1%	96.0%	97%	98%
BVPI 74 (i) Satisfaction of Black and Minority Ethnic tenants of council housing with the overall service provided by their landlord	New in 2002	67%	69%	71%
BVPI 74 (ii) Satisfaction of non-black and minority ethnic tenants of council housing with the overall service provided by their landlord	New in 2002	79%	80%	81%
BVPI 164 Does the authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality's code of Practice in rented housing?	New Definition 2002	Yes		N/A
BVPI 183 (i) The average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (weeks)	New in 2002	18	6	4
BVPI 183 (ii) The average length of stay in hostel accommodation	New in 2002	23	22	21
BVPI 184a The proportion of LA Homes				

which were non-decent at 1 April 2002	New in 2002	13.81%		
BVPI 184b The change in proportion of non-decent LA homes between 1 April 2002 and April 2003	New in 2002	14.99%	16.5%	20%
BVPI 185 The percentage of responsive (but not emergency) repairs during 2002/03, for which the authority both made and kept an appointment	New in 2002	0%		To be incorporated into new term contract
BVPI 176 The number of domestic violence refuge places per 10,000 population which are provided or supported by the authority.	0.32	0.337	0.35	Under review

Housing Objective 7

- ***Embracing the diversity of the community we serve, we will adopt the "Equality Standard For Local Government", follow the guidance on community cohesion and deliver comprehensive equality impact assessment driving improvements and positive change in employment and service delivery;***

✓
Achieve Level 4 of the new Equalities Standard
Develop the BME Housing Strategy
Work with BME community and other ethnic and minority groups to develop inclusive and sensitive strategies
Develop the countywide group to refresh data on BME housing needs

Equalities

Luton has a diverse cultural population; it is therefore essential that the services we provide reflect the needs of the differing ethnic groups that live in the town. (see Luton Factors)

Equalities Standards

An internal quality audit has been undertaken corporately, which has identified the Council being at indicator level 3 of the CRE Standard. The Departmental objective will be to work over the next 12 months to achieve level 4 within the new Equalities Standards for Local Government. In particular work is progressing on meeting the new requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2002.

BME Housing Strategy

Recognising the particular needs of Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in the town a BME Housing Strategy which we are producing through cross disciplinary and multi agency working.

(See developing BME Housing Strategy)

Community Cohesion

A joint working group, which considers housing issues, has been established. The recently published guidance on Community Cohesion will be used to evaluate current policies and practices. The Council has been subject to the first thematic cross cutting Ofsted on equalities. The draft report states *'Community members recognise the recent work of the (Councils) chief executive in developing links with different communities as part of the corporate approach to community cohesion, as a move in the right direction.'*

The Community Cohesion working group endorsed the action proposed to reduce unfitness levels in the town and to bring empty properties back into use.

7 Resourcing the Strategy

The Council invests roughly £10 million per year in Housing from its Capital Programme. This represents 30% of its total Capital Programme, which includes Schools and Highways.

The three highest priority areas of expenditure are the maintenance of its own stock (8900 dwellings), Private Sector Repair and Improvement Grants and funding new Housing Developments through Local Authority Social Housing Grant.

The table below shows the plan for capital spending on Housing over the next three years:

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Housing Associations							
New Developments – LA funded	805	1,829	405	405	405	405	405
ADP funded*	(6,655)	(3,000)	(4,000)	(3,500)	(3,500)	(3,500)	(3,500)
Housing General Fund							
Private Sector Repair/Improvement	2,931	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Gypsy Caravan Site	748	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Revenue Account							
Major Repairs to Housing Stock	6,628	6,214	6,221	6,244	6,244	6,244	6,244
Other HRA (Cash Incentive, etc)	489	200	200	200	200	3	0
TOTAL	11,601	10,243	8,826	8,849	8,849	8,652	8,649

* ADP funding – actual for current year and 2004/06 estimates based on bids made for subsequent years

This will be resourced as follows:

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Housing Associations							
Approved Development Programme	6,655	3,000	4,000	(3,500)	(3,500)	(3,500)	(3,500)

Luton Borough Council – General Fund							
Capital Receipts	716	1,560	83	344	344	344	344
Supported Borrowing	2,237	1,654	1,623	1,623	1,623	1,623	1,623
Revenue Contributions (General Fund)	27						
Grants (inc DFGS)	891	438	438	438	438	438	438
Single Regeneration Budget	538	177	261	0	0	0	0
Health Action Funding	75	0	0	0	0	0	0
Luton Borough Council – Housing Revenue Account							
Major Repairs Allowance	5,864	5,870	5,877	5,900	5,900	5,900	5,900
Supported Borrowing		344	344	344	344	344	344
Capital Grants	103						
Revenue Contributions	1,150	200	200	200	200	3	0
TOTAL	11,601	10,243	8,826	8,849	8,849	8,652	8,649

The HRA Business Plan shows that the Major Repairs Allowance will provide sufficient resources to bring the stock up to the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. Other Housing Revenue Account Capital Expenditure is funded through Revenue Contributions.

The General Fund Programme is approved by the Council's Executive, which prioritises its capital schemes according to a range of criteria. These criteria include statutory responsibilities, the Council's aims and objectives and the availability of grant funding or third party contributions to schemes. The programme is funded through a combination of borrowing, capital grants, useable capital receipts and contributions from the Single Regeneration Budget.

Spending on maintenance and management – the council's three year HRA projection shows a commitment to tie expenditure on maintenance of its stock to the level of grant and allowances received. In common with many other authorities Luton continues to spend in excess of its management allowances but has put concrete plans in place to bring down the cost of management and significant progress is being made in this area. (*see also Business Plan*)

Revenue funding on areas other than on council management of stock is as follows:

	2002/03 Actual	2003/04 Budget	2004/05 Budget
Renovation Grants for Private Sector Housing	2890227	2731090	2922250
Homelessness	828698	1027280	1319510
Housing Development	137136	154630	263480
Services Shared by the Community	814375	861680	580150
TOTAL	4670436	4774680	5085390

Other expenditure on Housing in the town is funded as follows:

Housing Corporation Funding

Approved Development Programme

One of the Councils key priorities is to attempt to meet demand for social rented housing. The stock of this type of housing is falling whilst need remains high (see Luton Factors). The Council works with a number of partner and specialist RSLs to provide more housing and seeks to maximise the provision through bids to the Housing Corporation for funding under the ADP.

In 2003/04 the programme consisted of four schemes of different sizes which will produce a further 121 homes at a cost (in terms of public subsidy) of £6.6m. This results in a total spend of approximately £14.5m on the provision of additional housing units which include a small element of shared ownership properties in accordance with the current housing needs survey.

Further bids will be made to the Corporation this year, assuming an annual bidding opportunity exists and work is progressing jointly with other sub regional partners to be prepared for the Corporations change to regional allocations.

Challenge Fund

Despite finding at least one good scheme, with an RSL partner in place, the Council was disappointed to fail in its bid for funding through the Challenge Fund. Further attempts will be made for additional funding as and when possible.

Starter Homes Initiative

The Council has worked with Bedfordshire Pilgrims HA over the last two years to access SHI funding for Key Workers housing (teachers in this instance). The £10,000 Capital injection into house purchase has enabled the Council to retain key staff in a shortage area. Further work is underway to identify the extent of key Worker housing needs across the southern half of the sub region and this will inform future bids.

Local Authority Social Housing Grant

The Council has traditionally supported additional housing provision through an annual £1m LASHG programme and has agreed in principle to continue to support a programme this year despite the Governments alterations to the LASHG funding regime. Apart from old and ongoing commitments the Council has agreed to support two small infill schemes in 2003/04 (costing £1m in public subsidy) although this and subsequent decisions may be dependent on the outcome of the transitional funding arrangements. **The council will look to develop schemes through the partnering route where TCI no longer works locally. This particularly relates to acquisition and refurbishment schemes where new build cannot be achieved due to land shortages.**

Single Regeneration Budget

There are two identified schemes that will benefit from SRB funding over the coming year(s). The first is an approved project and provides additional funding for the Councils home renovation grant budget and allows a further £1m to be committed to this programme over a five year period. The second initially was a programme to extend and supplement an existing RSL acquisition and refurbishment scheme in the Biscot & Dallow wards but due to increases in house prices has now been altered to a new build scheme on Council owned land in the Biscot ward. This is awaiting formal assessment by the LDP, the SRB management agency, and also EEDA. This will require £1.8m SRB funding and will produce approximately 30 new homes.

ODPM funding

Funding has been secured from the ODPM to recruit additional staff to deal with the increasing issue of homelessness in the town.

Planning Gain

Social housing has been secured on several sites using planning powers although in **two cases (Caddington Road & John Street)** a commuted sum has been agreed in principle where the location and type of properties proposed did not meet identified housing need. **These sites will provide a further £508k to aid future social housing provision in the town. The two schemes were considered unsuitable for social housing provision due to location and/or property type.** This **(commuted sum payments)** is not a route that will be followed generally however as onsite provision offers more realistic opportunities to meet housing need.

New Deal for Communities

Initial funding proposals contain recommendations for the redevelopment **or refurbishment** of the Purley Centre, a poorly designed 6 storey block of flats which is suffering from severe management problems, and for the refurbishment of the tower block flats on the Marsh farm estate although these are still subject to the outcomes of the master planning exercise and subsequent value for money assessments.

8. Appendices

a) ACTION PLAN REVIEW 2002/2005

Objective	Tasks / Issues	Progress
1. Community Leadership	Develop BME housing strategy	Further work done but strategy not yet complete
	Equality impact assessments to be done (to meet requirements of Race Relations Amendment Act)	To be completed as part of BV reviews
2. Best Value Authority	Implement BV action plan for Landlord services	ongoing
3. Best Managed Council	Spend £5.3m to achieve decent homes targets	✓ figure exceeded
	Achieve SAP rating of 59 for LA stock	✓
	Review housing allocation policy	✓ new policy agreed following consultation
	Develop proposals for refurbishment of tower blocks and Purley Centre at marsh Farm through New Deal for Communities	To be included in NDC central area planning exercise
	Integrate tenant consultation into Area committee structures	ongoing
4. Healthy Financial Position	Maintain levels of funding for renovations programme	✓ £2.9m funding levels maintained for 2003/04
	Review position on future ownership and management of stock	Further consultation with tenants. Further stock options appraisals to be carried out.
	Maximise ADP spend on new social housing	✓ £6.6m allocation for 2003/04
	Utilise alternative funding sources to meet demands	✓ £186 SRB spend on renovation grants X housing acquisition and refurbishment programme failed due to increases in house prices which breached Housing Corporation cost indicators – new build scheme being pursued in its place
5. Promoting Lifelong Learning, Education and Inclusion and Social Care	Develop specific strategic documents around homelessness and BME issues	✓ Homelessness strategy prepared following extensive consultation and joint working with statutory and voluntary agencies ✓ further work done to develop the councils BME housing strategy ✓ links between housing strategy and local strategic partnership strengthened. RSL rep

		now on LSP working group	
	Commission new Housing Needs Survey	Scheduled for 2004/05	
	Commission specific research into homelessness	✓ external consultant engaged and report due	
	Review trends in local housing market	✓ quarterly review of house price changes	
	Review of the Structure Plan and Local Plan	✓ local plan draft on deposit – greater weight proposed for provision of affordable housing	
	Update findings of private sector stock condition	Further full survey planned for 2005	
	Target of 100 new units to be provided (80 via ADP & 20 funded locally)	LA SHG continuing	
	Bring back 50 empty homes into use	✓ 62 properties brought back into use	
	Rewrite affordable warmth strategy	✓ done	
	Develop homelessness strategy	✓ done following extensive consultation and multi agency working	
	Supporting People	✓ strategy prepared ✓ payments to service providers achieved by 1 st April 2003	
	Develop frail elderly sheltered scheme for Applefrove (former EPH)	✓ partner RSL selected, Housing Corporation and Supporting People funding secured and construction in progress	
	Increase number of frail elderly accessing sheltered housing	✓ single assessment procedure agreed and in place	
	Maintain quota of tenancies for care leavers	✓	
	Provide supported accommodation for young lone parents	X scheme agreed with RSL partner but site not yet identified	
6. Active Partner	Develop Sub regional issues	✓ positive approach from all four authorities. Sub regional housing statement agreed and released. Strategy to follow	
	Investigate ways of providing an independent housing advice service	Still seeking funding source	
	Complete re election of Tenants Committee	✓	
7. Resources 2002-03		2002/03	
		£000	
		Actual	Budget
	Social Housing Grant	952	2,687
		✓ Budget spent on Private Sector renovation and major repairs to housing stock. X Underspend on LASHG due to site compilation problems and to uncertainty about	

	Private Sector Repair/Improvement	2,968	2,951	financing after loss of LASHG repayments (now resolved) and on other HRA budget reflecting reduced demands for some services (cash incentive scheme and incentive transfers primarily). Balance of LASHG budget to be carried forward for spend in future years.
	Gypsy Caravan Site			
	Major Repairs to Housing Stock	6,148	6,218	
	Other HRA (Cash Incentive, etc)	273	612	
	Other Housing G.F	0	21	
	TOTAL	10,341	12,489	

b) Action Plan for 2003 – 2006 – Key Tasks

The action plan shown here feeds into individual work and team plans – these are monitored throughout the year in regular scheduled supervision sessions with line managers who in turn use team meetings and one to one supervision with appropriate staff to ensure the programme is maintained. The action plan is also monitored quarterly by the departmental management team and progress will be reported to elected members throughout the year.

Specific targets, which have BVPI requirements, are monitored through the departmental and corporate process throughout the year and anomalies or noticeable trends are highlighted to allow for remediation where possible.

Housing Objective	Tasks	Actions/Targets			Corporate Objectives & Values	Links to 2010 vision	Resource Implication 2003/04	Lead Officer
		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06				
1. We will maximise the availability of good quality affordable, fit, decent, safe, and secure housing for the people of the Town	Housing Strategy – Housing Strategy submitted to the Government office in by the end of 2003	Achieve fit for purpose	Review Action Plan and Targets	Review Action Plan and Targets	Effective Management of Resources Regeneration & Environment Community Leadership & Cohesion	Deprivation	Design and print costs £15k	Policy and Strategy Manager

	Develop the Sub-regional housing Strategy	<p>a) Complete the consultation of the 1st Bedfordshire Regional Housing Strategy</p> <p>b) To share Housing Strategy objectives</p>	<p>To jointly commission a robust sub-regional housing market analysis</p> <p>To agree a 3 year development programme</p>	Produce a Housing Strategy for the Bedfordshire sub-region	Regeneration & environment	Deprivation	Additional resources required – yet to be identified	Head of Housing
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Housing Objective	Tasks	Actions/Targets			Corporate Objectives & Values	Links to 2010 vision	Resource Implication 2003/04	Lead Officer
		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06				
	Assessment of Housing Need	Compete key worker survey Undertake the Housing Needs, BME & special Needs survey – linking with the other authorities in Bedfordshire	Complete the HN survey Bid for funding for Key Worker housing schemes	Bid for funding for Key Worker housing schemes	Effective Management of Resources Regeneration & Environment Community Leadership & Cohesion	Deprivation, Economic Regeneration, Education	Consultancy costs £50k for the Housing Needs Survey (assuming the project is undertaken jointly with South Beds District Council)	Research Officer
	Homelessness Implement the Homelessness Strategy for the Town (see Homeless Strategy for the detail Action Plan)	Strategy in place for July 2003 – Implementing the Action Plan on an ongoing basis	Review Action Plan and Targets	Review Action Plan and Targets	Effective Management of Resources	Deprivation	£900K Temporary Accommodation Costs £126K for SLAs with Voluntary Organisations providing support £96K from the ODPM and the B&B unit to the provision of homeless services	Housing Needs Manager

Housing Objective	Tasks	Actions/Targets			Corporate Objectives & Values	Links to 2010 vision	Resource Implication 2003/04	Lead Officer
		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06				
	LPSA Deliver the LPSA for homelessness – to reduce the use of B&B			No Family in B&B for more than 4 weeks by 31 st March 2006	Effective Management of Resources	Deprivation	£104,000 funding from the OPDM in 2003/04 to support the achievement of the LPSA	Housing Needs Manager
	Maximising the Supply of Affordable Housing Deliver the ADP and LASHG building programmes in conjunction with Capital and Asset Management	Target of 5 new sites being identified for development in future. Target for 80 new units of social housing being provided during 2003/4	5 sites 80 dwellings	5 Sites 80 dwellings	Effective Management of Resources Regeneration & Environment	Deprivation	Circa £5m annual public subsidy (LA & Housing Corporation)	Policy and Strategy Manager

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the joint commissioning arrangements with our RSL development partners in partnership with the authorities in the Bedfordshire sub region 		Agree sub regional partners		Effective Management of Resources Regeneration & Environment	Deprivation, Environment	Achieved within existing resources	Policy and Strategy Manager
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Housing Objective	Tasks	Actions/Targets			Corporate Objectives & Values	Links to 2010 vision	Resource Implication 2003/04	Lead Officer
		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06				
	Empty Homes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish new targets for releasing empty homes 	60 empty properties released by March 2004	60	60	Effective Management of Resources	Environment	Target of £100k from the Renovation grant programme to fund the refurbishment of empty homes. £3k promotional fund	Empty Homes Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Options around the use of compulsory purchase powers 	March 2003 – thereafter ongoing	Review progress and impact of CPO programme		Effective Management of Resources	Environment	Capital costs to be identified	Empty Homes Officer

Housing Objective	Tasks	Actions/Targets			Corporate Objectives & Values	Links to 2010 vision	Resource Implication 2003/04	Lead Officer
		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06				
	Impact of the Sustainable Communities Plan Establish local delivery vehicle for the Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis Growth Area Identify opportunities for the identification of early wins for new housing sites Contribute to the preparation of the local development framework for Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis Growth Area		Delivery vehicle in place by January 2005	Sites identified New local development framework in place	Regeneration and Environment	Economic Regeneration/ Environment/ Deprivation	Resource requirements still to be quantified	Head of Planning
	Planning issues S106 Agreement,	Supplementary Planning Guidance to be produced			Regeneration and Environment	Economic Regeneration/ Environment/ Deprivation	Achieved from within existing resources	Strategic Planning Manager

Housing Objective	Tasks	Actions/Targets			Corporate Objectives & Values	Links to 2010 vision	Resource Implication	Lead Officer
		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06				
	Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate options around equity release scheme. Develop an approved landlord scheme Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 	Options evaluated and developed during 2003/4	Loans Scheme in place Scheme in place by March 2004 Undertake preparatory work for the survey	Review outcomes of changes Advertise and promote approved landlord status Carry out survey review Private Sector renewal policy	Effective Management of Resources	Deprivation/ Environment	£90K over 2 years	Environmental Health Manager Environmental Health Manager Environmental Health Manager

Housing Objective	Tasks	Actions/Targets			Corporate Objectives & Values	Links to 2010 vision	Resource Implication	Lead Officer
		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06				
	Agency Service Provide Home Improvement Agency Service and maximise	Output and income received - income to assist at least 170 clients and achieve income of £110K	Income to assist at least 170 clients and achieve income of £120K	Income to assist at least 170 clients and achieve income of £120K	Improving Educational Attainment and social care Effective Management of Resources	Deprivation	£120k income per annum	Environmental Health Manager
	Energy Conservation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To contribute to fulfilment of Councils obligations under Home Energy Conservation 	To provide at least: 3 Energy Efficiency Awareness Course to LBC employees 1 Energy Efficiency Awareness Course for health practitioners 1 refresher Energy Efficiency Awareness training course	Review success of awareness training and target groups (to include schools)	Continue with programme	Regeneration	Deprivation, Health Improvement	Consultancy work support (£2k estimate)	Policy and Strategy Manager

Housing Objective	Tasks	Actions/Targets			Corporate Objectives & Values	Links to 2010 vision	Resource Implication	Lead Officer
		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06				
	Allocation Policy	Complete the consultation and obtain approval to the new policy	Implement the new policy Complete the feasibility of establishing a joint Housing Register		Effective Management of Resources	Deprivation	To be met from existing resources	Heads of Housing

Housing Objective	Tasks	Actions/Targets			Corporate Objectives & Values	Links to 2010 vision	Resource Implication	Lead Officer
		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06				
2. We will manage and maintain the Council's Housing stock in a way that is sensitive and responsive to our tenants, but is also efficient, equitable and economic (see the Housing Revenue Account Business for the detail of the management of the housing stock)	Undertake Stock Options Appraisal	Commence March 2004	Complete Appraisal, seek views of all stakeholders	Consider options and agree future management of stock	Effective Management of Resources Regeneration & Environment	Deprivation	£140k – £180k costs to HRA; £20K costs to the General Fund to carry out appraisal	Head of Landlord Services
	Meet Decent Homes Standards and targets (see the HRA Business Plan for full details)	Target of 1522 properties non decent	Target of 1250 properties non decent	Target of 815 properties non decent	Regeneration and the Environment	Environment, Health Improvement	See the HRA Business Plan	Principal Maintenance Manager

Housing Objective	Tasks	Actions/Targets			Corporate Objectives & Values	Links to 2010 vision	Resource Implication	Lead Officer
		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06				
3. We will get the most out of being one department, maximising the service delivery opportunities, appreciating each others different roles and responsibilities within an overarching culture of co-operation and customer care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Asylum Seekers Strategy 		Strategy in place by March 2004		Effective Management of Resources	Deprivation, Health Improvement	Achieved from within existing resources	Asylum Seekers Team Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a Building Programme that reflects the housing needs of different client groups e.g. people with learning difficulties mobility problems and the requirements of the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy 	Complete Applegrove Frail Elder Scheme	Develop Elder Person Strategy				£2.2m for Applegrove from ADP	Policy and Strategy Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting people 	Review community alarm provision	Undertake a review of the elderly persons homes					Service Manager

Housing Objective	Tasks	Actions/Targets			Corporate Objectives & Values	Links to 2010 vision	Resource Implication	Lead Officer
		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06				
4. We will empower users in the planning, provision and the monitoring of services, using consultation effectively to reshape services and continue to work in partnership with service users and carers	<p>Review Tenant Participation Structure and Strategy and Tenant Compact.</p> <p>Aim to integrate Council and RSL TP structures.</p> <p>Improve the level and involvement of consultation in relation to key strategies</p>	<p>Produce revised strategy for consultation</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Complete new strategy</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Community Leadership and Cohesion</p> <p>Transforming Customer</p>	<p>Deprivation Environment</p>	<p>Achieve existing resources</p>	<p>Tenant Participation Officer</p>

Housing Objective	Tasks	Actions/Targets			Corporate Objectives & Values	Links to 2010 vision	Resource Implication	Lead Officer
		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06				
5. We will promote innovative and imaginative approaches to service delivery by developing partnerships across the Department, corporately, with voluntary organisations, users and the wider community and with partner agencies using Health Act flexibilities and other partnership arrangements	Develop the Joint Adaptations Team integrated into Private Sector Housing	Team in place by March 2004			Transforming Customer Services	Deprivation	Additional office costs	Environmental Health Manager
	Aim to develop a partnership with South Beds for a special needs housing scheme for Luton /Bedfordshire		Scheme and Site identified				Resources to be identified	Policy and Strategy Manager
	The Housing Needs survey will include Special Housing Needs	Supporting People complete needs mapping exercise	Agree special needs housing priorities					Supporting People Manager

Housing Objective	Tasks	Actions/Targets			Corporate Objectives & Values	Links to 2010 vision	Resource Implication	Lead Officer
		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06				
6. We are committed to the improvement of service quality and efficiency, and to the reduction of costs through our programme of Best Value Reviews; underpinned by a robust performance management framework for the whole department	Complete the Best Value Review for the Housing Strategy & Private Sector Division	April 2004	Implement Action & Improvement Plan	Implement Action & Improvement Plan	Effective Management Resources	Deprivation, Environment, Health Improvement	Resources yet to be identified	Head of Housing
	Landlord Services Best Value Review – (See the BVR Action for the detail of the service improvement plans)	Ongoing Inspection of the Action & Improvement Plan	Ongoing Inspection of the Action & Improvement Plan	Ongoing Inspection of the Action & Improvement Plan			Resourced within existing budgets	Head of Landlord Services
	Implement and share areas of good and best practice with Sub-regional colleagues	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing				

Housing Objective	Tasks	Actions/Targets			Corporate Objectives & Values	Links to 2010 vision	Resource Implication	Lead Officer
		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06				
7. Embracing the diversity of the community we serve, we will adopt the "Equality Standard For Local Government", follow the guidance on community cohesion and deliver comprehensive equality impact assessment driving improvements and positive change in employment and service delivery;	Achieve Level 4 of the generic equalities standard	Aim to reach Level 4 by March 2004			Community and Leadership and Cohesion	Deprivation	Achieved from within existing resources	Equalities Officer
	Complete Equalities Impact assessments	All assessments complete						
	Develop a BME Housing Strategy		Strategy in place					

c) Sub Regional Strategy Statement

Housing Sub Regional Strategy for Bedfordshire

Vision

To work together as the Bedfordshire sub-region to promote and secure housing solutions for people in need, and deliver a difference.

Sub-regional identity

The Bedfordshire sub-region, made up of its four constituent councils, faces major housing demands. Not only is there pressure from within the county, but we are also sandwiched between areas of high growth and investment - Milton Keynes and Northampton to the north and west, and London and Cambridge to the South and East.

Within the sub-region there are extremes. Bedfordshire contains both pockets of extremely deprived communities, and some of the wealthiest households in the country.

The sub-region is characterised by excellent transport infrastructure; road, rail and air links are all prevalent within Bedfordshire.

It has been accepted that solutions cannot solely be delivered through isolated strategies based on District Council boundaries. There is now, for the first time, a commitment to working together to deliver a wider strategy. We recognise that the initial proposals in this document are part of an ongoing development process that will have to be realistic and pragmatic at this stage.

Key Areas/Issues for the Sub Region

Housing supply

- Significant constraints about meeting housing supply across the sub-region in terms of land and resource availability

Housing demand

- Surrounded by areas of high cost, high demand and high growth - proximity to London Commuter Belt, house prices continuing to increase but TCI bandings not reflective of this
- High levels of demand also apparent across the sub-region
- Homelessness is an issue across the whole of the sub-region, but particular stress is felt within Bedford and Luton

- BME issues gaining prominence within the sub-region, as the Bedfordshire Accommodation Study progresses. There are particular issues relating to diversity (Bedford) and concentration (Luton) of BME communities.
- There is also a growing need for key worker accommodation

Special needs of vulnerable people

- The Supporting People strategies will act as a catalyst for developing localised and sub-regional responses to supported housing needs

Resources

- There is a shortage of land for development that may require us to work together to identify opportunities for cross-boundary working
- The decline of LASHG has serious consequences for the sub-region in that we are becoming increasingly dependent on attracting ADP resources to meet sub-regional needs

Urban/rural housing needs

- There is no uniformity of housing across the sub-region. There is a contrast between high-density urban areas and rural communities. Inward migration is continuing to create barriers to affordable housing for many people.

Sustainability/regeneration

- There are key issues in terms of transport and community infrastructure in some parts of the sub-region.
- People continuing to want to live in the same community, both now and in the future
- Impetus for regeneration, predominantly (but not exclusively) targeted at the urban areas

Stock condition

- A universal commitment to achieving the Decent Homes Standard across the sub-region
- Evidence of large pockets of unfitness across older properties in the sub-region, with insufficient resources to address the issue

Empowerment

- Within the sub-region partners are committed to empowerment on a number of levels. Developing Local Strategic Partnerships across the sub-region are presenting an opportunity to empower and regenerate communities. The landlord authorities have also developed tenant participation mechanisms to ensure that residents are driving housing related initiatives and improvements.

Objectives

1. To deliver affordable housing to meet demand based on a robust sub-regional market analysis.
2. To improve the range of housing options and services for vulnerable people.
3. To eliminate poor housing conditions across all tenures.

4. To work jointly to identify sub-regional housing pressures.
5. To promote the Bedfordshire sub-region and influence others in delivering our vision.
6. To secure maximum resources for the sub-region.

Initial Solutions

1. To establish meaningful sub-regional consultation mechanisms for all key stakeholder groups (including Elected Members, RSLs, private landlords, tenants, employers, statutory and voluntary agencies) to influence this strategy and subsequent updates by March 2003.
2. To jointly commission a robust sub-regional housing market analysis during 2003/04.
3. To build political links by promoting this sub-regional housing strategy in Summer 2003, and identify opportunities to further develop partnership working.
4. To agree a prioritised three-year programme by April 2004.

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e) Glossary of Terms

<p>ADP – Approved Development Plan ALMO – Arms Length Management Organisation AMP – Asset Management Plan ASBO – Anti – Social Behaviour Order</p> <p>BME – Black and Minority Ethnic BV – Best Value BVPI – Best Value Performance Indicators BVPP – Best Value Performance Plan BVR – Best Value Review</p> <p>CIS – Capital Investment Strategy CIT – Community Independence Team CPA – Comprehensive Performance Assessment CPO – Compulsory Purchase Order CRE – Commission for Racial Equality</p> <p>DFG – Disabled Facility Grant</p> <p>EEDA – East of England Development Agency EFQM – European Foundation Quality Model</p> <p>GRC – Grant Rate Calculator</p> <p>HA – Housing Association HAZ – Health Action Zone HC – Housing Corporation HECA – Home Energy Conservation Act (1985)</p>	<p>HIA – Housing Improvement Agency HIMP – Health Improvement Modernisation Programme HMO – Houses in Multiple Occupation HMRF – Housing Market Renewal Fund HR – Human Resources HRA – Housing Revenue Account HRABP – Housing Revenue Account Business Plan HRG – Home Repairs Grants H & SS – Housing and Social Services HSSA – Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix</p> <p>IIP – Investor in People</p> <p>JIP – Joint Investment Programme</p> <p>LASHG – Local Authority Social Housing Grant LBC – Luton Borough Council LDP – Luton Dunstable Partnership LEA – Local Education Authority LNRS – Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy LPSA – Local Public Service Agreement LSPs – Local Strategic Partnerships LSVT – Large Scale Voluntary Transfer</p> <p>MRA – Major Repairs Allowance</p> <p>NRF – Neighbourhood Renewal Fund</p>	<p>ODPM – Office of the Deputy Prime Minister</p> <p>PAF – Project Appraisal Form PFI – Private Finance Initiative PI – Performance Indicator</p> <p>RSG – Revenue Support Grant RSL – Registered Social Landlords RTB – Right to Buy</p> <p>SBDC – South Bedfordshire District Council SHI – Starter Homes Initiative SLA – Service Level Agreement SP – Supporting People SRB – Single Regeneration Budget</p> <p>TARA – Tenants and Residents Association TCC – Tenants Consultative Committee TCI – Total Cost Indicator TUPE – Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment</p>
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f) Executive Strategy

A separate, brief, summary document has been prepared and is available to interested parties