

Local Housing Strategy 2009 - 2014

April 2009

Housing and Community Regeneration
Communities Directorate



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol



Foreword

The Local Housing Strategy 2009-14 builds upon the progress made with the previous Local Housing Strategy adopted in 2004.

Recent milestones in the policy arena are “One Wales” in 2007, the “Essex Review” on affordable housing 2008 and the consultation on the 10-year National Homelessness Plan 2008.

This revision comes at a time when there is a major adjustment in the housing market following a 5-year period of almost unprecedented rise in residential property prices. In the County Borough prices almost doubled up to late 2007, making home ownership even less attainable for a great number of households. Homelessness continues to be a concern and a matter for all to play a part in preventing.

The private rented sector offers some hope for such households but it is the social rented sector which remains vital to the problem of good quality affordable housing.

The Council, its partners and key stakeholders have used the Welsh Assembly Government requirement for a revised Strategy as an opportunity to review and, where necessary, to refocus the key strategic priorities for housing. The Council is committed to full partnership working to deliver the key objectives of this Strategy.

The Council views this document as an interim statement of strategic intent. The Council has commissioned a full Local Housing Market Assessment and a private sector Stock Condition Survey to enable work to commence during 2009 on a completely new Local Housing Strategy with the aim to have this complete during 2010.

Housing plays a key role in improving and maintaining the quality of life, health, educational attainment and employment activity for the wellbeing of communities. It is an essential ingredient of regeneration to which the Council is fully committed.

I am pleased to present this Local Housing Strategy to all who have an interest in the future for people living in the County Borough of Bridgend.

Councillor John C. Spanswick,
Cabinet Member for Communities.

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Purpose and vision

The Local Housing Strategy sets out the current local housing situation across all tenures in Bridgend County Borough and the strategic direction for five years.

The document provides detail and evidence on a range of housing and housing related issues, with key strategic objectives and target outcomes. The key strategic objectives are outlined at the beginning of each section of this Strategy and are broken down further in the Strategy's Action Plan. Annual Operational Plans will complement this strategy and will contain mechanisms to monitor and review actions.

The Council commissioned Consultants in 2003 to develop a model for partnership working as a process of identifying, involving and consulting partners, stakeholders and service users in developing the Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009. The model remains fit for purpose and was used in conjunction with the Welsh Assembly Government Guidance 2007 on 'Preparing Local Housing Strategies' to revise the 2004-2009 document and to consult partners, stakeholders and service users in preparing this interim Strategy.

As part of the consultation process, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Citizens Panel were consulted on the draft Local Housing Strategy. Copies of the draft Local Housing Strategy were also placed in local Libraries and on the Council's website. Consultation responses were considered by the Housing Strategy Steering Group and the Strategy has been amended to reflect agreed changes.

The housing market in Bridgend County Borough is facing a number of pressures:

- Volatile house prices and relatively low local incomes have meant entry to the owner occupied sector is difficult.
- A shortage of supply of affordable housing, both intermediate and social rented. Critically, there is a shortage of supply of social rented accommodation resulting from a low turnover of Registered Social Landlord (RSL) properties and reduced housing stock because of the Right to Buy.
- High levels of homelessness and the need to use Bed & Breakfast as temporary accommodation.
- The poor condition of some privately owned and private rented accommodation.
- Demographic change to smaller households requiring a greater supply of smaller units of accommodation.
- An ageing population requiring a range of housing options.

The housing vision

“To best meet people’s housing needs by ensuring the provision of accommodation of their choice that is appropriate to the needs of each household and is safe, warm and affordable.”

This vision is complementary to the wider regeneration vision of the Council “To upgrade an area by taking a balanced approach to improving the wellbeing of communities through social, physical, cultural and economic improvements.

The overlaying principles are:

- Good quality housing provision is a key determinant of good health and wellbeing, whilst conversely poor and unsuitable housing contributes to ill health and is likely to be a factor in requiring greater levels of social care.
- A good housing service is one that responds, irrespective of housing tenure, to the needs of the community and is one that provides the opportunity for people and the community as a whole to express their need for the housing service and other housing-related services.
- The prevention of homelessness and rooflessness and other problems likely to incite these situations is fundamental to the housing vision.

Strategic framework

The strategic framework is fundamental to the development of a Local Housing Strategy and the delivery of housing provision and housing solutions. The Council cannot deliver a housing service without the full co-operation and involvement of its statutory planning partners, implementation partners including local RSLs and Voluntary Organisations.

The vision takes a positive view within the framework of strategies and policies at a national, regional and local level. At the national level, the key strategies include the Spatial Plan, Making the Connections and the National Housing Strategy that focuses the agenda on housing provision and housing solutions. The key local plans are the Community Strategy, the Unitary Development Plan (and its successor the Local Development Plan) and the Health Social Care & Wellbeing Strategy.

The newly emerging Community Strategy 2009 is to be based around 6 themes and their associated priorities and objectives, which the public, private and voluntary sector organisations will work on, in partnership, to deliver the ‘Bright Future’ vision for the County Borough:

1. Strong communities
2. Young voices
3. Proud history
4. Green places
5. Healthy living
6. New opportunities.

The corporate structure of the Council and the Community Strategy themes are put in place to ensure that all strategies, policies and service delivery are fully integrated. In the furtherance of the Local Housing Strategy it is important that all functional areas contribute and add value to other local strategies and plans. This is particularly the case with Homelessness, Private Sector Housing Renewal and Supporting People, where it is important that there is a full understanding of the contribution to be made to corporate strategies and the Community Strategy themes.

Equality Impact Assessment

The Council is committed to promoting equality and ensuring that everyone has the right to be treated fairly and with respect, and will not be discriminated against on grounds of gender, race, disability, language, belief, sexuality, age, or social status.

This Draft Local Housing Strategy has been subjected to an Equality Impact Assessment. Tai Pawb were consulted in the planning stages and participated in producing the framework for the assessment. The Operational Plan to the Strategy will include monitoring mechanisms for data collection, involvement and engagement of specific racial groups.

Key strategic objectives

A Local Housing Strategy, by setting out the long-term vision and strategic housing direction, is a significant component within the aims and objectives of the Council.

The key strategic objectives, set out at the beginning of each section, are summarised as follows:

1. Housing system & housing market

- More fully understand the local and regional housing markets.
- Assess the condition of private housing in the County Borough.

2. Affordable housing solutions

- Increase the supply of affordable housing with particular focus on the needs of smaller households.

3. Preventing and reducing homelessness

- Reduce the level of homelessness presentations.
- Increase the supply and range of temporary accommodation options.

4. Access to appropriate housing

- Ensure a range of appropriate accommodation and services for younger people.
- Ensure a range of appropriate accommodation and services for older people.
- Ensure that people with a physical disability live in a dwelling that is suitable for their needs.
- Understand the housing needs of Black and Minority Ethnic communities including Gypsy and Traveller communities, and migrant workers.
- Understand the impact on the local housing market of asylum seekers and refugees.

5. Housing related support

- To have a sound and well informed understanding of the needs of vulnerable people and of both local and regional provision.
- To provide and deliver housing related support to the most vulnerable people to enable them to maintain their independence.
- To establish clear priorities for the longer-term development of services using a fair and transparent commissioning framework and effective use of resources.

6. Housing renewal and regeneration

- Increase the supply of housing to enhance and build upon the regeneration priorities of the County Borough.
- Realise the benefits of housing renewal and regeneration and increase housing supply.
- Continue to improve the condition and suitability of private housing.

Housing system and housing market

Key strategic objectives

- More fully understand the local and regional housing markets.
- Assess the condition of private housing in the County Borough.

Housing system

The housing system plays a critical role in planning for housing as it must ensure that a sufficient supply of land is available for residential development. Local and regional housing markets inform the housing system in relation to planning for residential development, and the supply of affordable housing.

National policy

“One Wales - a progressive agenda for the Government of Wales” 2007, the Affordable Housing Task & Finish Group Report 2008, the draft National Housing Strategy 2009 and the draft Supporting People Strategy 2009 all provide a vision and a framework for the housing agenda in Wales.

“One Wales” indicates that housing in Wales is an increasingly important political priority and sets out a commitment to increase the supply of affordable housing by at least 6,500 over the period 2007-2011.

Further emphasis is given to the need for affordable housing with the requirement for Affordable Housing Delivery Statements from 2009 as an interim measure prior to the adoption of the Local Development Plan (LDP) in 2011.

One of the key messages coming out of the draft 10-year Draft National Homelessness Plan, subject to consultation until February 2009, is that the customer has to be at the centre of service delivery.

Regional setting

The challenges facing the County Borough are part of a regional dimension. The two Area Development Frameworks of the Spatial Plan for South East Wales (The Capital Network) and for Swansea Bay (Waterfront and Western Valleys) impact upon the County Borough, the former being more dominant but the latter encompassing western settlements such as Maesteg, Pyle and Porthcawl.

Bridgend Unitary Development Plan

The Bridgend Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2005 constitutes the adopted Development Plan for Bridgend County Borough.

The UDP identifies four objectives:

- The need for social progress, which recognises the needs of everyone
- The necessity for effective environmental protection
- The requirement for a prudent use of natural resources
- The importance of economic growth and employment.

The UDP identifies a dwelling requirement of 7,957 new dwellings between 2000 and 2016, namely, an annual requirement of 498 dwellings. At April 2007 3,868 of these dwellings had been built, representing almost 49% of the overall requirement. At April 2008 the draft built figure was 4,382, representing 55% of the overall requirement.

The housing requirement and resultant population forecasts of the UDP were produced using the Chelmer Population & Household Model. The Model relies upon data from official sources and contains certain key assumptions relating to household formation, migration and vacancy rates.



In the context of Development Planning, housing requirements are defined as the provision of a stock of housing of a certain size to house a given population. It must be recognised that the methodology for assessing housing requirements for the UDP differs significantly to that of Housing Needs and Market Assessments, which are reliant upon survey data, questions that explore housing aspirations and are based on expectations about household formation. Housing Needs Assessments also take account of households living in unsuitable housing, issues of affordability and homelessness.

The evidence base provided by the Local Housing Needs Assessment 2002 was key in the Affordable Housing Policy within the Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009 and the UDP.

In the context of the UDP new housing provision should offer opportunity and fairness of choice requiring housing policies to be designed to improve access to transport, jobs, shops, leisure and other facilities and vice-versa, in order to advance the Council's sustainable objectives. New sites, brown-field and under-used sites, together with improvements and conversions to existing dwellings, all contribute to achieving the UDP's sustainable aims.

This means that housing developments need to have regard to other significant land uses such as employment, leisure and transport, so that the combined impact improves the quality of life for the residents of the County Borough, both now and in the future.

Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan (LDP), like the UDP, will set out a vision and strategy for development in the County Borough up to 2021. The LDP Delivery Agreement requires the Plan to be adopted by 2011, which is within the life span of this strategy.

The LDP will have a major impact on housing provision, as it will detail, in a regional context, the housing requirement within Bridgend County Borough for the plan period. The Draft Pre-Deposit Proposal for the LDP was approved by Council for public consultation in December 2008.

The Council has chosen to pursue a regeneration led spatial strategy, which aims to focus development in the County Borough in accordance with Council's regeneration priorities. In terms of the provision of housing, both affordable and market, the LDP draft Preferred Strategy identifies a requirement of 8,100 new dwellings between 2006 and 2021, representing a build rate of 540 per annum.

The County Borough's need for affordable housing will also be addressed within the LDP and appropriate targets set.

The LDP will provide a further opportunity to consider the affordable housing policy with the benefit of a greater understanding of local housing markets gathered from the South East Wales Regional Housing Market Study 2005 and a full Local Housing Market Assessment to report in 2009.

Land availability

Local Planning Authorities must ensure that sufficient land is genuinely available or will become available to provide a 5 year supply. The Joint Housing Land Availability Study (JHLAS) monitors this requirement on an annual basis and highlights the need for action where an insufficient supply is identified. Supply is judged against the provisions of the Development Plan, and in the context of the adopted UDP, the most recently published 2007 JHLAS identified a land supply of 8.1 years. Annex 3 of the Study estimates that the future affordable housing contribution in the County Borough for the next five years will be 421 units.

Land disposal

The importance for delivery of affordable housing and sustainable development is recognised by the Assembly Government, which in March 2007 issued a protocol on behalf of the National Assembly (NAW) and Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies (ASPBs). The new protocol is to help implement NAW objectives and to ensure that the local need for affordable housing is given priority in land disposal decisions taken by the NAW and ASPBs.

Whilst the protocol does not apply to local authorities, NHS Trusts, or other Government Departments with land holdings in Wales, such organisations should be aware of the clear policy message and the determination of the Assembly Government and will be encouraged to adopt similar principles through separate protocols.

The protocol requires that the Assembly Government's Housing Directorate officials be consulted for advice, who, in turn will liaise with the relevant local authorities and registered social landlords to establish housing needs and priorities, and consider a site's potential for the development of affordable housing. Where possible, sites will be brought forward as part of the Local Development Plan preparation.

Transportation

The interaction with transportation is particularly important as it can influence the location, type and scale of housing development and the means by which it is accessed. Areas well served by public transport, for instance, would assist residents in not becoming socially excluded and would be a factor in the affordability of accommodation.

The Outline of the Regional Transport Plan 2007 analyses the base position, including social exclusion. It considers various outcomes in order to ensure that designated centres as defined in the LDP benefit from an appropriate transport infrastructure and that regeneration of communities has social benefits. The location of new housing is an important consideration for transport policy.

Sustainability and energy efficiency

Sustainable development is an integral part of all housing developments and energy efficiency of homes is a national and local priority, being part of the challenge to reduce carbon emissions and to reduce fuel poverty.

The Council's Affordable Warmth Strategy brings together the many different partners involved in tackling fuel poverty and provides a strategic framework.

The majority of homes in the County Borough are privately owned. Owners may be eligible for financial assistance to undertake energy efficiency measures. RSLs own and manage significant portfolios of properties in the County Borough. They are required to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2012 including the thermal capacity of the dwellings.

The transfer of the former Council housing stock to Valleys to Coast Housing in 2003 demonstrates the Council's commitment to ensure that the housing stock meets Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2012.

The Council will continue to work in partnership with organisations such as the South East Wales Energy Efficiency Advice Centre which provide free impartial advice on energy efficiency, fuel poverty and accessing any available incentives.

Housing market

Regional Housing Market Study

The South East Wales Housing Market Study 2005 identified three housing market areas, illustrated on the plan below, that are part of cross-boundary market areas. These are the Mid Valleys, north of the M4, and around and to the south of the M4 corridor. These housing market areas broadly mirror the three zones identified within the South East Wales Area Development Framework.

South East Wales Regional Housing Market Areas



Neighbouring local authorities increasingly recognised the benefits of working together in partnerships based upon ‘functional housing market areas’, defining these as “the geographical area within which there are clear links between where people both live and work”.

The policy implications of different interventions promoted in the South East Wales Housing Market Study included:

- Strategy-focused interventions - e.g. those concerned with linkages between sectors (housing, planning, transport, economic development, etc) and with issues around land supply and the operation of the planning system.
- Property-focused interventions - e.g. stock improvement, housing renewal, development, meeting the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, etc.
- Serviced-focused interventions - e.g. changing policies within particular service areas (e.g. new policies on letting, social housing, regulating private landlords, policies on controlling crime and anti-social behaviour, etc).

Local Housing Market Assessment

A wide analysis of the housing market enables both housing need and housing demand to be considered when developing a housing strategy. The housing market in the County Borough has three main tenures but is predominantly one of owner-occupation. Volatile and high house prices are likely to result in increased demand for social rented and private rented accommodation, as well as intermediate housing for both rent and purchase, as lower income households without added capital funds are priced out of or are unable to access affordable owner occupation.

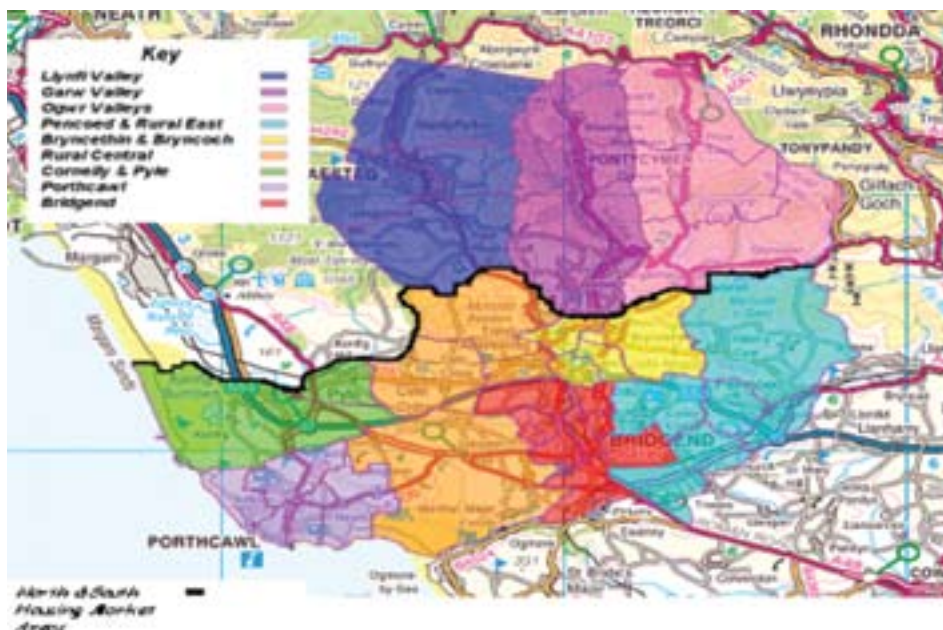
The substantial readjustment of the housing market starting in 2007 and continuing at least until 2009 may in the longer term make housing more affordable whilst the economic downturn may increase the pressure upon social rented housing.

For the purposes of the Local Housing Market Assessment the County Borough is divided into a Northern and a Southern Market. This takes account of the noticeable difference in minimum and average property prices between the Northern and Southern parts of the County Borough. These are illustrated by the map in the following section 'Affordable Housing Solutions'.

Affordability, stock condition, homelessness, supported housing and equality are key priorities within the County Borough. All contribute to the regeneration agenda within the Authority.

The Local Housing Needs Assessment 2002 provided the principal evidence base to inform the development of the Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009 and produced a model for assessing the authority's annual affordable housing requirement. To inform the revision for this interim Strategy a Local Housing Needs Assessment Update was undertaken in 2006 in line with the requirements of the Welsh Assembly's Local Housing Market Assessment Guidance (March 2006) and Preparing Local Housing Strategies 2007. The 2006 Update used a Balanced Housing Market analysis to identify a housing demand profile based on preferences rather than minimum requirements.

Bridgend County Borough Sub Areas



Source: Local Housing Needs Assessment 2006 Update

The Local Housing Needs Assessment 2006 Update reviewed and updated the information previously provided in the 2002 General Needs and Special Needs Surveys. Both surveys illustrated the range of diverse requirements to be met in order to ensure that the accommodation in which households live best meets their needs.

A full Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) and private sector Stock Condition Survey, to report in 2009, was commissioned in December 2008. The full LHMA is to provide evidence to inform the preparation of a completely new Local Housing Strategy for 2010 and the Local Development Plan in 2011. The Stock Condition Survey will further inform the preparation of the new Local Housing Strategy.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

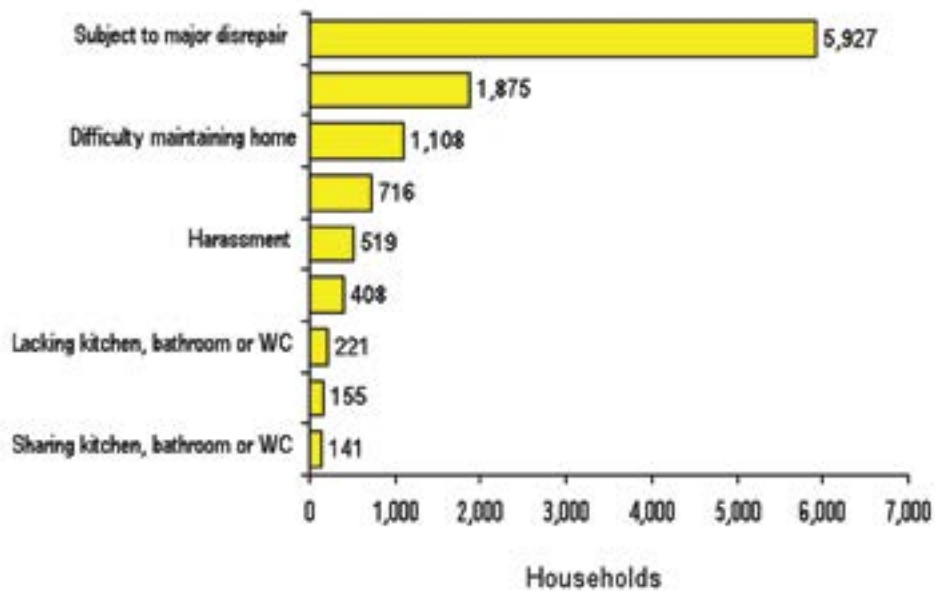
A consideration of the 2004 Regulations concluded that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was not necessary because the content of the Local Housing Strategy will not directly result in the construction of additional housing provision. The SEA required for the preparation of the LDP will address the environmental impacts of housing delivery.

Main findings

The Local Housing Needs Assessment 2006 Update identified that:

- 14.7% of all households within the County Borough are living in unsuitable housing. The main issues identified as causing unsuitability are poor health and/or mobility problems and homes needing major repairs.
- Some unsuitability can be resolved without households moving home, whilst some can only be met by households moving to another home more suited to their needs. It is estimated that 9.2% of the 14.7% households need to move to solve their housing problems.
- Of the 9.2% households who need to move, 88% cannot afford to buy or privately rent a suitable home. The 2006 Update identified that prices in the Southern Housing Market Area were notably higher than those in the Northern Area.
- A high number of households living in homes rented from Housing Associations are living in unsuitable housing. A comparison of the data from the 2002 Assessment and the 2006 Update suggests that there has been a decline in homes available from housing associations for re-letting.
- Those people who need to move home, who are living as part of another household, are potentially deemed as being homeless and form the backlog of need for the purposes of assessing housing need and young people living typically with their parents are classed as newly arising need.
- The Housing Needs Assessment Model estimates housing supply using the backlog of need plus the newly arising need. The 2006 Update identified an annual requirement of 636 affordable homes each year over the next 5 years in comparison to the estimate of 234 homes in 2002. The demand is five times more acute in the southern market area.

Summary of unsuitable housing conditions



Source: Local Housing Needs Assessment 2006 Update

- 15% of the additional affordable housing requirement could be met by intermediate housing, priced below market levels and social rents.
- The most significant shortfall of affordable housing is two bedroom homes and households most affected are single person households.

The Local Housing Needs Assessment 2006 Update for special needs households identified that:

- Special needs households are more likely to be living in unsuitable housing and a high proportion are living in the social rented sector.
- Special needs households are characterised as being older than the average age and receiving below the average income.
- Those people with a physical disability are the main category of the special needs groups living in unsuitable housing and are more likely to be in housing need.
- Households that have a member who has impaired sight/hearing or suffering from mental health problems are more likely to be living in unsuitable housing.
- Households with a member who has a learning disability are more likely to be in housing need than any other special needs households and to be living in the social rented sector.

The 2006 Update analysed Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) housing requirements and the accommodation needs of the Gypsy Traveller communities. This indicated that the BME population was 1.4% of the total. A 2006 count indicated the absence of transient Gypsies and Travellers in the County Borough.

Supply, need and demand

The 'Basic Needs Assessment Model' (BNAM) identifies a profile of affordable housing based on minimum requirements and is an estimate of the absolute need for such housing. The 'Balancing Housing Markets' (BHM) assessment looked at the whole local housing market, considering the extent to which supply and demand are 'balanced' across tenure and property size.

The BHM, in assessing the size requirements, uses information on the stated size preferences and aspirations of moving households rather than the minimum size requirements used in the assessment of need.

There are inevitably some households who have a demand for affordable housing but under the needs assessment would not be considered as needing such housing.

The 2006 BNAM identified the needs shortfall as greater for smaller households, particularly those who only require one bedroom, noting that the figures are based on a strict bedroom standard and take no account of household size preferences.

The 2006 BHM methodology suggests a significant shortfall in affordable housing of all sizes of accommodation, most notably two bedroom homes.

The Local Housing Strategy is required to consider these and other requirements and to be realistic about the setting of strategic objectives and priorities.

The Local Housing Market Assessment to report in 2009 will provide more in-depth market information both locally and regionally, and for both spatial plan areas to which the County Borough is cuspic, namely South East Wales (The Capital Network) and Swansea Bay (Waterfront and Western Valleys). At the same time a private sector Stock Condition Survey provide information on the condition of the housing stock throughout the County Borough.

Planned actions

- Undertake a full Local Housing Market Assessment.
- Undertake a private sector Stock Condition Survey.
- Encourage private owners and landlords to access energy efficiency schemes and to undertake the necessary improvements.
- Promote and monitor activity in the social rented sector.

Affordable housing solutions

Key strategic objective

- Increase the supply of affordable housing, with particular focus on the needs of smaller households.

The Council is committed to providing more affordable housing in a choice of tenures, types, sizes and locations that accord with the principles of sustainability to meet local needs.

Affordable Housing is usefully defined within Technical Advice Note (TAN) 2: Planning and Affordable Housing (2006) as:

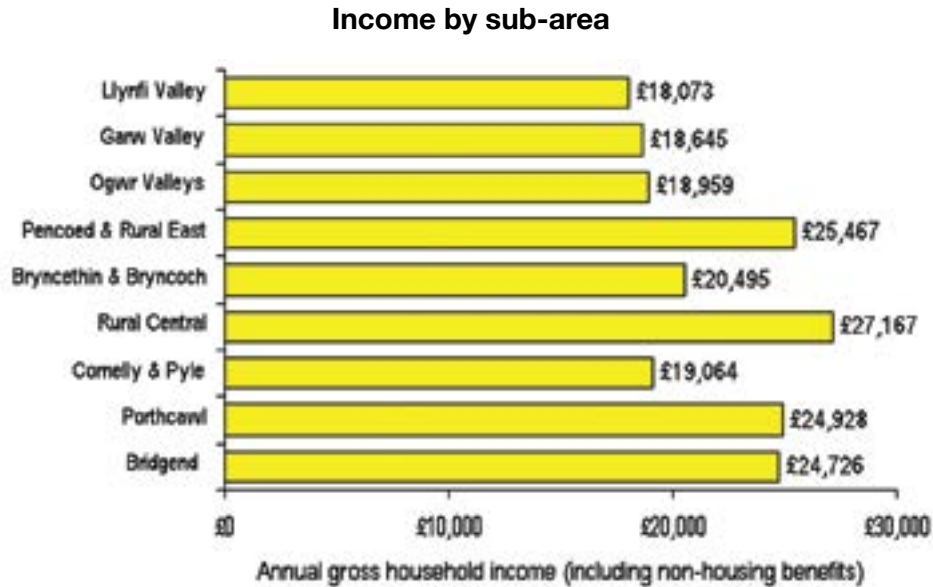
“Housing where there are secure mechanisms in place to ensure that it is accessible to those who cannot afford market housing, both on first occupation and for subsequent occupiers affordable housing includes:

- social rented housing; and
- intermediate housing.”



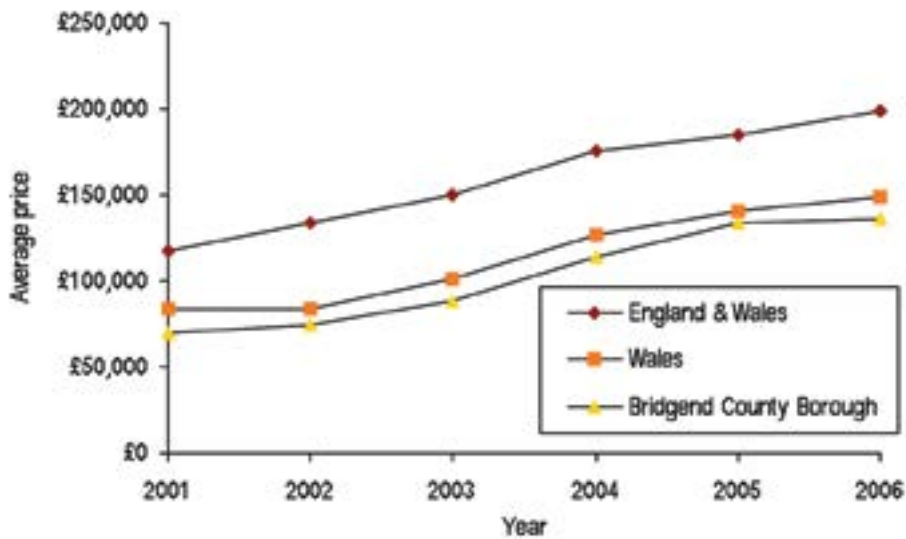
Affordability

The Welsh Assembly Government in 2006 defined affordability using a 2.9 multiplier for dual earners and 3.5 for single earners. The Local Housing Needs Assessment 2006 Update indicated that in the County Borough dual earning households were likely to be able to afford the one and two bedroom properties, more so in the Northern rather than the Southern Market Area, but not single earner households. The 2006 Update suggested that over the prior four years there had been an estimated increase in income levels of around 15% whilst average property prices increased by 93%.



Source: Local Housing Needs Assessment 2006 Update

Land Registry price changes 2001 - 2006 (2nd quarter)



Source: Local Housing Needs Assessment 2006 Update
HM Land Registry Data

Minimum & average property prices in Bridgend County Borough (as of September 2006)



Source: Local Housing Needs Assessment 2006 Update
Survey of Estate Agents

The Balancing Housing Market analysis identified a significant shortfall in affordable housing of all sizes of accommodation. In the owner occupied sector the main shortfall is for two bedroom homes; there is a surplus of three bedroom accommodation. The information also suggests that because many households do not aspire to the private rented sector, there is a potential surplus, but it is important to note that this sector is likely to take up the shortfall of owner occupied dwellings so in reality these properties will not be vacant.

The impact of this is an increasing pressure upon the social and private rented markets and a requirement to expand affordable housing solutions.

Affordable Housing Policy

National Policy

The national vision for Wales in “Better Homes for People in Wales” 2001 is that everyone should have the opportunity to live in good quality affordable housing; be able to choose where they live and whether buying or renting is the best for them and their families. The priority to be placed upon the delivery of affordable housing has been supplemented by “One Wales” 2007 which indicates that housing in Wales is an increasingly important political priority and sets out a commitment to increase the supply of affordable housing by at least 6,500 over the period 2007-2011. The Affordable Housing Task & Finish Group Report 2008 chaired by the Deputy Minister places further emphasis on the need for affordable housing, as does the requirement in 2009 for Affordable Housing Delivery Statements as an interim between the UDP and the LDP, and the Deputy Minister for Housing announcement in December 2008 of additional funding for the provision of more affordable housing.

The Wales Spatial Plan adopted in November 2004 highlights these objectives for affordable housing.

The Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement (01/2006) - Housing states that a community’s need for affordable housing is a material planning consideration, which must be taken into account in formulating development plan policies. Technical Advice Note 2 (TAN 2) - Planning and Affordable Housing provides practical guidance on the role of the planning system in delivering such housing.

In addition, the “Affordable Housing Toolkit”, also published in June 2006 by the Welsh Assembly Government, provides practical advice to enable local authorities and their partners to maximise the supply of affordable housing.

Local Affordable Housing Policy

The Council has an adopted Affordable Housing Policy within the Unitary Development Plan 2005, Policy H7, which requires that where a local need is demonstrated, the Council will expect an appropriate element of 'affordable housing' on suitable sites capable of accommodating 15 or more units or exceeding 0.5 hectares in size. This policy is reinforced by Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), adopted in 2007. The SPG applies an affordable housing contribution of 30% and 15% within the Southern and Northern Housing Market areas respectively, as illustrated on the map below.



Source: Affordable Housing SPG 2007

The Local Development Plan (LDP), as the successor to the Unitary Development Plan UDP, will similarly play a significant role in providing a framework for the delivery of affordable housing within the County Borough. As is the case with the UDP, mechanisms will need to be in place to ensure that the LDP secures affordable housing through, for example, the use of planning obligations such as Section 106 Agreements.

The LDP will be required to set an affordable housing target and this will be evidenced by the LHMA 2009. The 2006 evidence for the County Borough identifies a 5-year affordable housing requirement of 636 units per annum. This compares to an annual average house build rate over the past 5 years of 'market' and affordable housing of just over 500 units. It is therefore evident that the planning system alone cannot fulfil all of the affordable housing requirements of the County Borough. In the context of the LDP a build rate of 540 dwellings per annum is proposed in the Draft Pre-Deposit Proposals approved for consultation in December 2008.

A full Local Housing Market Assessment, to report in 2009, is an essential evidence base to the LDP in support of the Affordable Housing Policy.

The LDP sub-areas within the Draft Pre-Deposit Proposals are illustrated on the map below.



Source: Pre-Deposit LDP Proposals 2008

Social rented housing

It is recognised that effective housing management is important to ensure that the supply of affordable housing meets local need and contributes to the sustainability of communities.

In 2006-07 the Council undertook a comprehensive review of its Housing Allocation Scheme and agreed a Community Housing & Wellbeing Protocol with the four local RSLs with substantial stock holdings in the County Borough. The strong relationship between the Council and its RSL partners seeks to ensure that the housing needs of people in the County Borough are met through strategic partnership arrangements, including the Bridgend Housing Partnership.

The Partnership is developing a Common Housing Register to replace the present separate waiting lists and so provide those in housing need with a simple mechanism for maximising their opportunity to secure social housing. The diversity of allocation policies will continue and will enable the separate landlords to preserve their unique identities and promote diversity of service provision.

The Council is committed as a housing enabler to working with its RSL partners in making the best use of social housing stock and to monitor the allocation of social housing through nomination agreements. A Nominations Partnership facilitates a consistent and collaborative approach to the effective allocation of social housing stock in the County Borough.

The Common Inclusions Partnership provides consistency in the allocation of social housing and promotes collaborative solutions to support sustainable communities and social inclusion.

The Bridgend Accessible Homes Project, matching disabled applicants to adapted dwellings, is described more fully in the chapter on Access to Appropriate Housing.

The sustainability of communities is dependent on a number of other key elements and the Council will continue to work with the Community Safety Partnership and its RSL partners to develop effective policies, consistent with the principles of the 'Wales Housing Management Standard for Anti-Social Behaviour' to provide a comprehensive and effective response to anti-social behaviour issues.

Tenants have an important part to play in the management of their homes and communities and the Council is committed to continue to work with its RSL partners to promote the expectations of the National Tenant Participation Strategy. It is also recognised that tenants should have access to good and effective support and advice services to sustain their tenancies. The Council will ensure that anti-poverty and debt strategies to help keep tenants in their homes and prevent homelessness are promoted.

The Welsh Housing Quality Standard is on target to be met by all RSLs in the County Borough by 2012, much of which is the direct result of housing stock transfer and the improvement programme of Valleys to Coast Housing. The economic development and regeneration opportunities that can be achieved in partnership with local RSLs are being realised.

There is, however, a reduced turnover of social rented housing stock following the property and estate improvements stemming from housing stock transfer and from on-going Right to Buy sales and wider market pressures.

The Social Housing Grant (SHG) programme funding from Welsh Assembly Government to the RSLs, in response to the Authority's strategic housing priorities, is critical to the continuing supply of new good quality affordable housing. In the 6 years to March 2008 the programme funded 262 completed homes for rent with a further 307 in the pipeline up until March 2011.

Two key priorities for the funding programme in the years 2008-10 are temporary accommodation in the form of a Direct Access facility and Move-On accommodation and an alternative to Bed & Breakfast usage. The programming of approved schemes requires regular monitoring.

Private rented housing

The private rented sector is an important source of affordable housing, albeit the scale in the County Borough is small compared with other local authority areas at approximately 8% of the overall housing stock, with only 5.5% of the 59,500 households living in private rented accommodation (2006 Update).

The role that the private rented sector can play in the provision of affordable housing is being developed as part of the prevention agenda in dealing with potential homelessness. A private sector Landlords' Forum is in place, there is a private sector lettings scheme run by a managing agent and a leasing scheme operated by an RSL. This overall approach seeks to increase the supply of good quality, well managed affordable accommodation in the private sector.

Intermediate housing

Intermediate housing is defined as housing where prices or rents are above those of social rented housing but below housing market prices or below market rents.

The intermediate sector includes properties in a range of tenure types such as Homebuy, equity sharing and private affordable rented. A small portfolio of intermediate housing had been provided prior to the Affordable Housing Policy in the UDP. The provision by way of Section 106 Agreements continues to be small.

The Council is working with the RSLs to explore innovative ways of providing affordable housing products secured without grant funding.

Such properties are targeted at local people who are unable to buy or rent a property on the open market.

The Council is developing a common housing register for residents wishing to enter into home ownership by way of the intermediate housing market.

Private house builders

The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (AHSPG) states that the preference is for developers to provide the required proportion of affordable housing in on-site developments and for schemes to be developed that do not require the use of Social Housing Grant (SHG).

The AHSPG includes a fall-back position of monetary payments in lieu of on-site provision, if all on-site and off-site opportunities have been examined and have been found not to be economically viable or appropriate.

Planned actions

- Fully implement the 'Affordable Housing' Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 2007.
- Employ an Affordable Housing Enabler to work with strategic partners and RSLs.
- Work with strategic partners and RSLs to develop SHG bids.
- Work with strategic partners, particularly Development, RSLs and developers to deliver Intermediate Housing.
- Increase the use of private rented accommodation.
- Develop a common housing register with RSLs for Social Rented and Intermediate Housing.

Preventing and reducing homelessness

Key strategic objectives

- Reduce the level of homelessness presentations.
- Increase the supply and range of temporary accommodation options.

Preventing homelessness is a key priority for the Council because being homeless or threatened with homelessness can severely affect a person's quality of life and it is a key area of interaction between housing and health.

Homelessness covers a broad variety of housing circumstances including temporary and insecure accommodation, staying with friends and family, and squatting. Rooflessness or sleeping rough is one of the most extreme forms of housing need.

Accommodation is not only a basic human requirement but also a crucial component of everyday life. Its location, economic costs, physical qualities and the quality of the local environment all have a significant impact upon the life chances of the occupants. Any person who is without a home is significantly disadvantaged in terms of access to services.

Homelessness is seldom solely a housing problem but is very often a complex issue. Many who experience homelessness have multiple problems linked to other factors such as:

- unemployment, the insecurity of short-term employment contracts, the high number of part time jobs, the inability to secure or maintain employment;
- relationship breakdown, family conflicts, leaving care, lack of the necessary life skills and support;
- debt and poverty;
- lack of basic skills and educational achievement;
- higher levels of stress and poorer health, higher levels of physical and mental illness, mental health problems and substance and alcohol abuse, and a greater risk of contracting infectious diseases as a consequence of their housing circumstances.

Improving the health of homeless households and vulnerable groups by ensuring access to general medical services and care services is a priority for Welsh Assembly Government, to be in place by 2009, and delivered in partnership by the Local Health Board, the Council and relevant support agencies.

Supporting People throughout Wales is strategically linked to the National and Local Homelessness Strategies because of the issue of support to vulnerable persons to sustain their accommodation. Supporting People is also about promoting the ability of people to live independently and to achieve this, a large number of vulnerable people require support.

A range of voluntary agencies offer support and valuable services to homeless people in the County Borough.

Local Homelessness Strategy

The 2006 Review of the Local Homelessness Strategy identified the major areas for future action to meet the strategic priorities set out in the then National Homelessness Strategy. In late 2008 WAG issued a consultation on a new 10-year National Homelessness Plan.

The Review was initiated with an independent 'critical friend review' with recommendations including the need to:

- Re-focus homelessness services on prevention, wherever possible, which was likely to require a review of the existing staffing levels and structures, training initiatives aimed at developing the skills base and budgetary provision.
- Increasing the supply and use of temporary accommodation e.g. direct access, leasing schemes.
- Increasing the supply of both social rented and intermediate affordable housing, and ensuring greater access to private sector rented housing.

The change agenda focuses on the provision of a range of temporary accommodation in order to eliminate the need to use Bed & Breakfast accommodation.

The Bridgend Housing Forum, formerly the Homelessness Forum, brings together a range of statutory and non-statutory agencies that deliver services to the residents of the County Borough. The Forum seeks to maximise the opportunities afforded to the clients of the organisations and to all those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and to ensure that services and resources are used to the best effect.

Evidence and incidence

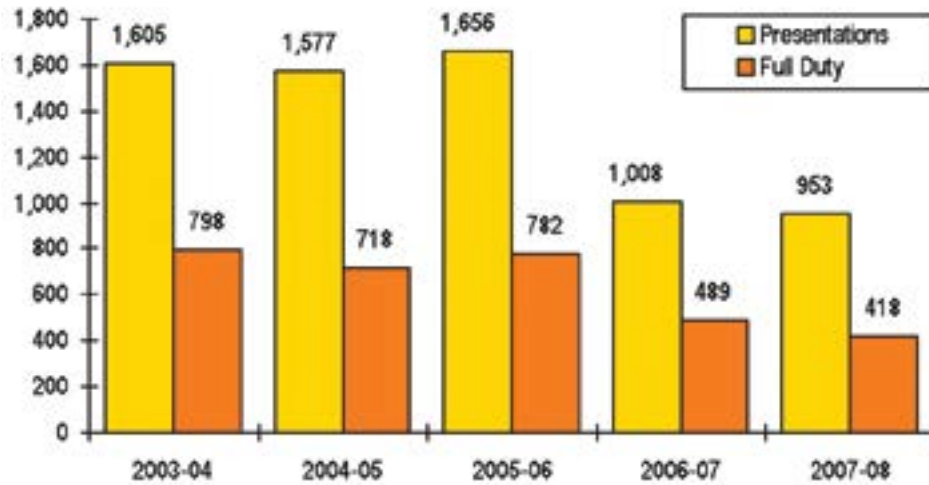
Bridgend had the highest level of homelessness applications by population in Wales in 2005/6. This was reduced by 37% in 2006/07 and a further 5% in 2007/08, but increased in 2008/09.

The evidence reveals a wide range of causes of homelessness. The main causes are from loss of rented accommodation, parents/friends unwilling to accommodate and breakdown of relationship with partner often involving violence.

Affordability of home ownership has been an issue for much of the decade with rising prices until late in 2007. Large scale and more sudden adjustments in the housing market, such as during 2008 and 2009, make this situation more challenging when increases in mortgage repossessions come at a time of reduced mortgage take up. This places great pressure upon the rented sector as persons who would have taken the first step into home ownership are unable to do so. Combine this with little growth in the rented sector and the availability of accommodation becomes very restricted.

The significant use of Bed & Breakfast (B&B) started toward the end of 2004/05, increased steeply in 2006/07 and again in 2008/09. An increase in the use of B&B and other forms of more acceptable temporary accommodation will be influenced by economic and housing market conditions.

**Number of Homeless Presentations Received
2003-04 to 2007-08**



Source: Bridgend County Borough Council 2008

The focus

The primary aim of the homelessness service is to prevent and to make available to households a range of housing options. A key element of prevention work is to ensure that the customer seeks early advice.

A key message coming out of the most recent 10-year Draft National Homelessness Plan, subject to consultation until February 2009, is that the customer be at the centre of service delivery.

The perception over a number of years has been that the Homelessness Service, be it called the “Housing Advice Service” or the “Housing Options Team”, is a service to be contacted only at the time of crisis, rather than a service that is accessed ‘out of crisis’ and is a point of first contact / early advice. In such an ‘out of crisis’ scenario the service is required to deliver a response that is personal and specific, rather than deliver the same response to all irrespective of personal circumstances and needs.

A high awareness and a positive perception of the homelessness service are key to the delivery of an effective service. There is a continuing need to extend awareness and to offer a full prevention focused service centred on the customers needs.

Further investment in preventative services is required to ensure a downward trend, especially against a national trend of significantly increasing mortgage repossession cases and more cautious lending for house purchases.

The importance of the private rented sector is fully recognised. Partnerships with private landlords, and promotional opportunities such as regular Landlord Fayres, continue to strengthen in order to provide an acceptable, affordability and secure alternative to social rented accommodation and to the use of all forms of temporary accommodation, but particularly the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation.

Projects and initiatives

Examples of projects and initiatives aimed at tackling homelessness include:

- Bond Scheme to support access to the private rented sector
- Breakfast Run and Solutions centre
- Landlord Forum established in 2008 with partners, including the Wallich.
- Lettings Agency, operated by the Wallich from April 2007, offering a link between the homeless or potentially homeless to private landlord accommodation;
- Bi-monthly meetings at Parc Prison to prevent homelessness upon release;
- Mortgage Rescue Scheme operated by Hafod Housing Association.

Young people

Homelessness amongst young persons is a particular concern, especially for 16 -17 year olds.

There are areas to be targeted to ensure a reduction in the number of young persons from becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness. Different approaches are required depending on the young person's personal circumstances. This includes making sure that through publicity and working in the community the correct and relevant information reaches young people before they reach the point of homelessness or threatened with homelessness. Awareness sessions held in schools and colleges are being expanded and information provided directly to young people to clarify the 'myths and legends' that lead young persons to believe that it is easy to access and maintain their own accommodation is to be reviewed.

Young persons aged 16-21 having problems within the family arrangements should be able to access mediation services that may enable the family to successfully maintain the current housing situation or at least to keep the family ties if they do need to access supported accommodation.

Those young persons who have benefited from supported accommodation and who are ready to move on to more permanent accommodation may require a support package to ensure that the transition is smooth between the supported accommodation and independent living. Such support packages are the remit of the Move-On Panel.

Ex-offenders

Another area of concern is the incidence of homelessness among ex-offenders on release from prison. This group make up a high percentage of those occupying B&B accommodation and who occupy this temporary accommodation for the longer periods. There is a general reluctance by all landlords to offer accommodation to this group so the Council is seeking to put in place appropriate support services.

Service development

Brynmenyn Homelessness Unit offers a valuable service by minimising the need to allocate families with dependent children in inappropriate bed and breakfast accommodation. A proposal to expand the facilities at the Unit is to be explored.

The Supporting Families Steering Group with Parc Prison and the All Wales Youth Offending Accommodation Forum are within the brief of the Homeless Prevention Officer which aim to reduce the numbers of ex-offenders re-offending on their release by ensuring they have adequate support to maintain their accommodation.

Shelter Cymru receive funding from the Council to provide a Housing Advice Service to contribute to the prevention agenda. Shelter provides independent specialist housing advice and assistance.

In response to an identified shortage in the supply of move-on accommodation for vulnerable persons the Housing Forum established a Move-On Panel in 2008.

There are two new schemes in the pipeline as part of the homelessness service development that will include access for young people:

- A debt partnership between the Council, Citizens Advice Board, Credit Union and local RSLs to assist existing tenants with debt issues.
- 17 units of direct access emergency temporary accommodation and 12 units of temporary move-on accommodation by Hafod Care Housing Association as an alternative to B&B.
- 6 units of supported accommodation that is to offer temporary accommodation as an alternative to B&B. (BABBA: Bridgend Alternative to B&B Accommodation).

The Council will continue to work with partners to improve responding to and preventing domestic abuse, hate crime and harassment of people on equality grounds, including disability, race, gender or sexual orientation.

The role of the Homelessness Champion, undertaken by a Cabinet Member, promotes homelessness issues throughout the County Borough.

Planned actions

- Review policies and procedures with a focus on prevention, early intervention and support.
- Implement the proposals in the Council's 2nd Stage Review of staffing structures.
- Education awareness sessions at secondary schools.
- Increase access to mediation services.
- Achieve final approval for 17 units of direct access emergency accommodation.
- Evaluate the pilot private sector leasing scheme.
- Explore the provision of additional hostel accommodation for homeless households.

Access to appropriate housing

Key strategic objectives

- Ensure a range of appropriate accommodation and services for younger people.
- Ensure a range of appropriate accommodation and services for older people.
- Ensure that people with a physical disability and people with learning disabilities live in a dwelling that is suitable for their needs.
- Understand the housing needs of Black and Minority Ethnic communities including Gypsy and Traveller communities, and migrant workers.
- Understand the impact on the local housing market of asylum seekers and refugees.

Understanding and responding to the needs of particular groups is the key to equality of access to housing and support. Some groups in society for reasons of culture, ethnic origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, lifestyle and history may have particular housing requirements and may be vulnerable for a range of reasons and situations.

Consideration will be given to the needs of the homeless and of particular vulnerable groups where housing related support is required; to older people; to people with a disability; to people of black and minority ethnic origin, including Gypsies and Travellers, asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers.

Young people

“All children and young people should be able to be safe in their own home and the communities in which they live” is Core Aim 6 of the Children & Young People’s Plan 2008-11.

The aspiration in the County Borough is to ensure that all children and young people have a safe home and community which supports both their physical and emotional wellbeing, and in doing so protects them from becoming victims of crime or accidents and protects them from suffering the consequences of domestic abuse, substance misuse, anti social behaviour or homelessness.

The home, be this with family, within the care of the Local Authority or within the Secure Estate, and the community, provide an environment where the physical and emotional wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured and developed.

When young people are allocated permanent accommodation and, if young people are to successfully maintain their accommodation, there needs to be appropriate support when required.

Leaving home is a gradual process for the majority of young people with the opportunity to return for short or longer periods of time. The average age of those leaving home is 24, but research has evidenced that young people leaving care often have to make accelerated transitions placing them at greater risk of homelessness and hardship. There are a number of reasons why care leaver’s transition to independent living is difficult:

- The young age at which care leavers are expected to make this transition
- The range of appropriate accommodation and the support available to care leavers
- The quality of planning and preparation received by care leavers.

Those leaving care are a diverse group of young people with different support needs and differing levels of practical and emotional capability for independent living. These individuals need support from the moment of leaving care in order to prevent them becoming homeless.

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 placed a duty on local authorities to help care leavers to settle into independent living by assessing and meeting their care and support requirements through the use of Personal Advisers and Pathway Plans. In particular, attention needs to be paid to the employment, education and training needs of those care leavers who are considered to be eligible under the Act.

Corporate parenting

Leaving care is not a single event for young people and they have to make a number of transitions before they can support themselves and live independently in a home of their own. The protocol between the Council's Housing Group and the Looked-After Children Section ensures that vulnerable young people receive appropriate support.

The Council addresses the needs of its care leavers through its Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee and the involvement of young people. The Council's emerging Corporate Parenting Policy outlines how it is to meet its responsibilities to looked after children and young people leaving care.

Housing Need Audit of Young People

A 2006 Housing Need Audit for the Young Peoples Partnership under Core Aim 6 identified the then level of provision.

The two SAFE (Support, Advice, Family mediation and Empowerment) House Projects continue to provide accommodation, including one direct access bed, for 13 young people aged 16 and 17 as a short-term assessment and supported housing project as an alternative to staying in inappropriate B&B accommodation with little or no support.

Family Mediation works with young people aged 15 to 17 and their families to try and resolve problems and help families stay together, or if a young person is unable to return or stay at home, work with the family to ensure they have family support when they are living independently.

'Yellow' offers eight bed spaces in Maesteg to help 16 to 25 year old people in housing need to find and keep accommodation by offering support and training in partnership with other services and providers of accommodation.

Work in schools targets 15-18 year olds with a programme on housing options, homelessness and other housing related options.

The 2006 Audit also identified that young people can have difficulties in accessing benefits advice. Information needs to be presented in a user-friendly manner, making it easier to understand what authorities are requesting. Young people need to know how to go about accessing help and benefits before they require it, rather than having to find out when they are in need. A short, accessible guide, giving young people information on, for example, the identification documents they will need to have (birth certificate, NI number) could be a supplement to the Canllaw Online information pack being given to every Welsh school leaver in 2006.

The Audit suggested that the accommodation offered to young people needs to be suitable for the young person, to take account of individual circumstances and be in a safe environment.

Overall, the Audit identified a lack of emergency accommodation, especially for vulnerable young people at high risk, and a shortage of appropriate affordable housing and so a reliance on temporary accommodation.

Older people

'Never Too Old', the joint local 5 year Strategy for Older People, reviewed in 2006, links with the strategic objectives within the National Service Framework objectives covering health and social care and the Strategy for Older People in Wales, which looks at the wider determinants of wellbeing. The local Strategy provides a focus for the development of health and social care services and for addressing issues of social exclusion and ageism, and for ensuring that older people are able to maintain their independence and remain living in their own homes.

The Strategy for Older People in Wales emphasises the importance of supporting older people to remain living independently in their own communities in suitable and safe environments where services and basic needs are organised around them and are responsive to their needs.

The Strategy for Older People in Wales identifies older people as aged 50 and over. However, the National Service Framework that relates to Health and Social Care recognises older people as being aged 60 years and over. Increasing age usually comes with increasing dependency therefore it is crucial to ensure the promotion of housing options for older people are as plentiful as possible. Local services are based on need and not chronological age in an attempt to eradicate age discrimination.



Extra Care Housing

A 2008 Analysis of Demand quantified the current and future demand for Extra Care Housing and the implications for residential care provision and suggested that there was a reasonable range of accommodation provision within the County Borough with the exception of Extra Care Housing. The projections showed that approximately up to 200 places in Extra Care Housing would be sustainable. The analysis noted that:

- An estimated 67% increase in the over 65 population of Bridgend from 27,200 to 45,600 is forecast for the period 2007 to 2030.
- There is to be an estimated 10% increase in the numbers of older people between 2001 and 2020 requiring residential, nursing home, and other intensive services. This is based on assumptions used in the Welsh Assembly Government Wales Care Strategy Group Report, including improvements in the health of the population and increased life expectancy, such that morbidity in the older population will not increase as rapidly as the growth in the older people population, and therefore there would not be a proportionate increase in the numbers entering residential care.

It is also assumed that with the development of home care services and the increase in numbers of owner occupiers that demand for residential care will not increase at the same rate as that of the over 65 population.

- There was a reduction in residential and nursing placements of 21% from April 2005 to March 2008 with average occupancy in Council owned residential care homes for older people at 89%.
- The largest reduction in placements was in Independent Residential placements.
- An estimated 25% of people going into residential care homes could be diverted if there were to be Extra Care Housing options.

Extra Care Housing is designed to offer an alternative for older people who are at risk of losing their independence, particularly those likely to enter residential care. It provides flexible care to support independence and social inclusion. It is first and foremost a housing scheme, with care and health services available. It enables the provision of effective joint working between housing, health and adult social care staff.

In response to these changing needs and demands RSLs are re-modelling some sheltered housing schemes and the Council is re-modelling some residential care provision in order to contribute fully to the joint local Strategy for Older People and the Council's commitment to re-model adult social care services. The Council has secured funding for Extra Care Housing through Social Housing Grant and is working closely with RSL partners and the Local Health Board to ensure an appropriate supply of Extra Care Housing.

Physically disabled people

The LHMA 2006 Update estimated there to be 9,322 with one or more members in an identified special needs group with households containing someone with a physical disability as the predominant group.

Bridgend County Borough's Health and Social Care Disability Strategy for people with physical and sensory needs was developed in 2005. A Coalition for Disabled People was launched in January 2006. The Coalition is involved in the planning of services for disabled people.

The Council operates two schemes in partnership with Bridgend County Care and Repair Agency to fast-track stairlifts and showers to disabled people in the County Borough. The timely provision of adaptations enables disabled people to remain living independently in their own homes by making the dwellings more accessible and suitable for their needs.

The Bridgend Accessible Homes Project matches disabled applicants to an adapted social property that meets their needs. The scheme ensures a more efficient and effective use of social housing stock and provides better access to those in need of an adapted home.

Dwellings identified by RSLs to be included in the Register are generally purpose-built or substantially adapted but other suitable dwellings, such as a ground floor flats, can be used.

People with learning disabilities

The 1983 Welsh Mental Handicap Strategy sought to enable people with learning disabilities to enjoy the full range of life opportunities and choices, have positive identities and roles in their families and communities, exercise choice and develop independence, self respect and self fulfilment. It articulated three principles to guide the way people with learning disabilities are supported. People with learning disabilities should have:

- The right to an ordinary pattern of life within the community
- The right to be treated as an individual; and
- The right to additional help and support in developing their maximum potential.

These principles were confirmed in the 1994 guidance.

The Assembly Government's endorsement of the continuing relevance of these principles is expressed in Section 7 of its "Learning Disability Strategy Document" 2004, which reiterates the 1983 Strategy and under the Community Living heading presents the following service principles:

- Subject to the outcomes of the assessment of needs, people with a learning disability, including people with complex and challenging needs, should normally be able to have the option to live in the community independent of the family home including having their own tenancy.
- Accommodation arrangements should facilitate access to the local and wider community and the development of support networks for the individual should be encouraged.
- People of all ages should receive services and support commensurate with their needs to enable them to live independently in their own homes or with their families. This will include people with complex or challenging needs.

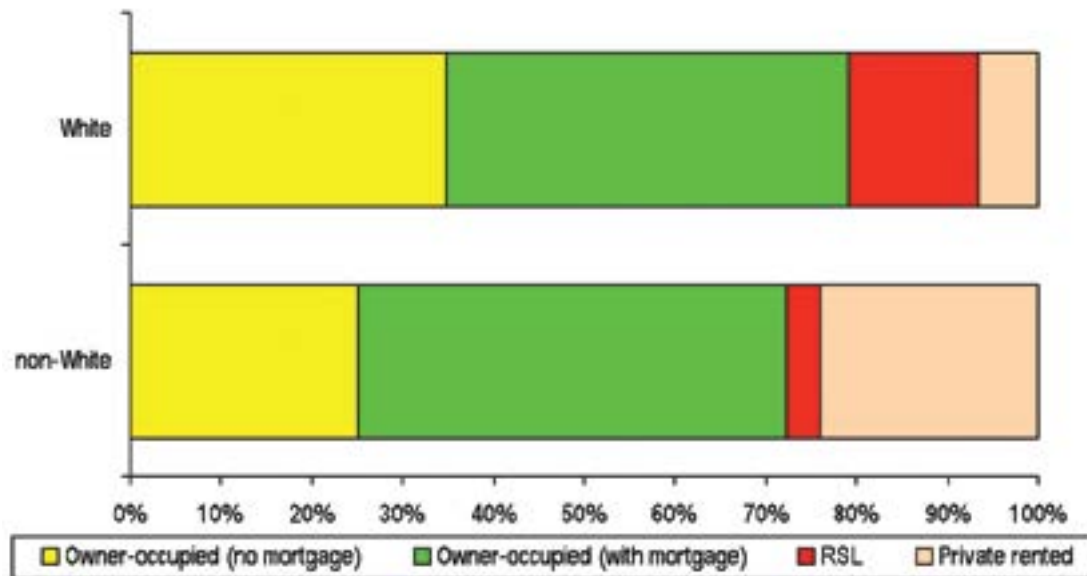
Black and Minority Ethnic groups

The Local Housing Needs Assessment 2006 Update confirmed Bridgend County Borough Council has a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population of 1.4%, of which 0.9% is non-white, and that 14.7% of all BME households are living in unsuitable housing.

Whilst 1.4% is considered a relatively small number in comparison to some Welsh local authorities, it is important to ensure that black and minority ethnic individuals have equal access to housing and that their needs are reflected in all policies and strategies with a housing relevance.

A BME Housing Partnership was established in 2004 to ensure that Bridgend County Borough Council's BME Housing Strategy Action Plan was implemented and reviewed. The Partnership consists of officers from BCBC including the Corporate Equalities Officer, local RSL representatives, Valleys Race Equality Council, Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations, South Wales Police and Valleys to Coast Housing.

Tenure and ethnicity



Source: Bridgend County Borough - Housing Needs Assessment 2006 Update

Gypsies and Travellers

The Local Housing Needs Assessment 2006 Update analysed relevant strategies and policies at a local and national level for Gypsies and Travellers.

The July 2006 Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count (Wales) recorded that there were no caravans in the County Borough. However this did not take account of any transient Gypsies and Travellers. Evidence also showed there had been no transient Gypsies and Travellers recorded as temporarily camping in the County Borough.

The Gypsy and Traveller Policy Group established in 2005 consists of representatives from the Council's Public Protection, Housing & Community Regeneration and Chief Executive sections, the Community Safety Partnership and South Wales Police. The Policy Group terms of reference include mechanisms for involvement and engagement of partners, stakeholders and Gypsies and Travellers to ensure their needs are reflected in Council strategies and policies and in the delivery of housing services.

An authorised site situated in Neath Port Talbot on Bridgend County Borough Council's border is the home for approximately 30 settled Irish Traveller families. The site is managed by Neath Port Talbot Council and the Gypsy Council for Wales. There is evidence of cross-border working in relation to health, education and child protection. The Gypsy and Traveller Policy Group is considering options including the sharing of sites. A small authorised site for six caravans, between Pencoed and Heol-y-Cyw, opened in 2008.

Asylum seekers and refugees

Asylum seekers or people from abroad who are subject to immigration control under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 do not qualify for housing through homelessness and are not entitled to housing through the Council's housing register, unless re-qualified by regulations. Asylum seekers who present themselves to the Council for housing are given housing advice and assistance and are signposted to the National Asylum Seekers Service.

The Local Housing Market Assessment 2009 will further research the needs of Asylum Seekers and the impact on the County Borough. The Council works closely with its partners through the Bridgend Equalities Forum and the Minority Ethnic Housing Partnership to ensure Asylum Seekers receive the appropriate advice and assistance required, including translation.

A person who has refugee status and is eligible for housing in the County Borough in accordance with legislation and regulation will have equal access to housing that is suitable for their needs. They will be required to complete a housing registration form that will inform the Council of their housing and support needs.

Migrant workers

Suitable housing options need to be considered for migrant workers and their families. Evidence shows that migrant workers prefer to rent privately or buy, rather than seek social rented accommodation, and many migrant workers are living in tied accommodation. For example, there is a Polish community in the County Borough, particularly in and around the seaside town of Porthcawl, and a Filipino community in the town of Bridgend working primarily in the health sector. Growth of these ethnic groups will be monitored and reviewed annually.

Migrant workers who are not subject to immigration control or the homelessness and asylum legislation have equality of access to housing through the Council's allocations and nominations scheme.

Planned actions

- Expand the provision of supported accommodation to which younger people have access by completing the BABBA scheme.
- Expand the provision of Extra Care Housing as part of a wider range of options for elderly persons.
- Equip homes with Telecare sensors and equipment.
- Evaluate the Accessible Homes Register for Social Rented accommodation.
- Review the future funding of the Accessible Homes Register.
- Review Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy.
- Continue to train and develop staff to be able to provide appropriate advice and assistance to all racial groups.
- Work with Partners to engage and involve Black and Minority Ethnic people, Gypsy Travellers and Migrant workers
- Undertake an impact assessment and include within the Local Housing Market Assessment 2009.

Housing related support

Key strategic objectives

- To have a sound and well informed understanding of the needs of vulnerable people and of both local and regional provision.
- To provide and deliver housing related support to the most vulnerable people to enable them to maintain their independence.
- To establish clear priorities for the longer-term development of services using a fair and transparent commissioning framework and effective use of resources.

The Supporting People funding programme provides housing related support to some of the most vulnerable people in our community and in so doing makes a vital contribution to the Council's priority themes, the overarching aims of the Community Strategy and the Health, Social Care and Well-Being agenda.

The Supporting People vision is one of appropriate, timely and responsive housing related support accessible to all who need help to achieve or sustain independent living in the community, irrespective of race, religion, disability, gender or age.

Supporting People is a programme of funding for which services are commissioned to provide housing related support that is fit for purpose. The programme complements the prevention agenda and sits seamlessly alongside other public services to ensure a holistic package of support is delivered which strives towards securing the most positive outcomes for the service user in terms of maximising their independence.

Supporting People funded services make an invaluable contribution towards achieving local and national policy objectives, particularly in relation to community safety, health, social care and wellbeing, preventing and reducing homelessness, social inclusion and reducing delayed hospital discharge.

The 2006 study for the Welsh Assembly Government by Matrix Research and Consultancy modelled the savings to the public purse and grouped these into thematic areas, with the findings by thematic area given as a percentage of the total calculated savings. The costed benefits of independent living accounted for 34%, health benefits 26%, homelessness benefits 21%, crime prevention 18% and social care 1%. The homelessness theme covers benefits in relation to securing and maintaining stable accommodation, and includes the cost of tenancy failures, use of temporary accommodation and the benefits of avoiding homelessness and rough sleeping.

The programme funds the housing related support costs for schemes such as hostels and refuges, and supported accommodation, in order to support a wide range of client groups such as young people, the homeless, people fleeing domestic violence, ex-offenders, people with mental health issues, people with learning difficulties and the elderly.

Housing related support is not 'care' and does not include domestic, therapeutic, medical or personal care services. Housing related support focuses on providing information, emotional support, helping with skills development, goal setting and promoting self help.

Evidence and incidence

The client groups eligible to receive a Supporting People service are:

- Persons fleeing domestic violence
- People with learning disabilities
- People with mental health problems
- People suffering from alcohol dependency
- People suffering from drug dependency
- Refugees
- People with a physical disability who require support (including sensory impairment)
- Young single homeless people who require support and young people leaving care
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless or potentially homeless people who require support
- People with chronic illness including AIDS, AIDS related conditions or who are HIV positive
- Vulnerable single parents who require support
- Older people
- Vulnerable families.

The Information Needs Mapping Exercise (INAM) is a key tool for getting data about the identified needs for services. The information contained in the Supporting People Operational Plan 2007-08 provided a profile for the County Borough which is summarised below.

The homeless or potentially homeless client group was the largest of all the lead needs within the INAM profile. There were 1,563 (41%) who stated that homelessness or potential homelessness was the lead need, with a further 430 identifying it as an area needing support. Together this represented 52% of all areas needing support.

The number of vulnerable young persons presenting with accommodation issues was significantly high and was the second highest area of support need. This category and that of vulnerable families, when considered as one, made up 10.6% of all support need issues. Numerically, when taken as one, this was the second highest support need and only just behind domestic abuse. Domestic abuse was the third highest area of support need.

In the County Borough the imbalance between stated need and supply is the greatest for vulnerable single parent families and vulnerable two parent families. A lack of provision is also evident for the needs/client groups of people suffering from alcohol dependency and drug dependency. New provision for drug issues was opened in 2007, but no provision is planned specifically for alcohol dependency. Equally no provision is planned for people with a physical disability who require support, ex-offenders, people with chronic illness or refugees.

Strategic planning

The Supporting People programme aims to deliver high quality and strategically planned housing related support services which are needs led, cost effective, reliable and complement existing care and other specialist support services

The programme has a partnership approach, bringing housing, social services, probation and health and community safety together as joint commissioners, to improve the quality, quantity and a range of housing related support services in a coordinated and planned way, working closely with service users and providers of supported housing related services.

Supporting People is a preventative strategy and programme which seeks to provide housing support that enables people, either to develop or maintain the skills to continue living in their own home. As such it makes a positive contribution to key corporate strategies, including:

- Bridgend County Borough Community Strategy
- Health, Social Care & Well-Being Strategy
- Local Development Plan
- Bridgend County Borough Regeneration Strategy
- Children & Young People Framework Partnership
- Local Housing Strategy (incorporating Local Homelessness Strategy and BME Housing Strategy)
- Strategy for Older People in Wales
- Community Safety Strategy (including Youth Offending, Domestic Abuse, Anti-Social Behaviour and Drug and Alcohol Strategies)
- Bridgend Carer's Strategy
- Protecting Vulnerable Children & Adults

These strategies also assist in steering the strategic planning process of Supporting People services.

Supporting People will continue to increase the contribution to other local and regional strategic planning fora in order to coordinate the provision of housing related support as one of a range of preventative interventions for vulnerable people.

The Supporting People Operational Plan (SPOP) 2006 (for 2007-08) identifies priorities and gaps in housing related support service provision. The main elements from the SPOP are identified within the Local Housing Strategy. Subsequent SPOPs will outline the strategic priorities for housing related support services for the future in order to compliment the strategic objectives within the Local Housing Strategy.

The Supporting People Planning Group (SPPG) is responsible for the commissioning and planning of Supporting People services and oversees the development of the SPOP. The group has senior management representation on an inter-professional basis including Housing, Local Health Board, Probation, Youth Offending Service, Community Safety, Social Services and a voluntary sector advocate. The SPPG further strengthens the collaborative approach to the provision and delivery of housing related support services in Bridgend.

Housing related support providers are key partners in the strategic planning of Supporting People services. The Homelessness and Supporting People Forum provides a structured contribution into the planning framework for Supporting People. The forum is not only a successful consultation vehicle but was crucial in providing information on unmet support needs and gaps in services. Effective partnerships with support providers increase ownership of planning outcomes and sign-up to developments within housing related support.

Cross boundary issues

Working with Supporting People needs mapping mechanisms of other local authorities across South Wales and other regional strategic drivers, it has been identified that people who are most likely to have cross boundary needs include:

- People and children experiencing domestic abuse
- Young people who have experienced abuse
- Ex-offenders
- People with mental ill-health and dementia
- Homeless people who have multiple needs
- Refugees
- Settled gypsies and travellers
- Migrant worker families
- Substance misusers or those post detoxification.
- Vulnerable women with complex needs including substance misuse.

A number of these service users have a need to access services beyond the County Borough and similarly, some service users within other local authority areas have a need or wish to access services within the County Borough.

Some services are of such a nature that they require a 'catchment area' greater than one local authority border area, thus requiring co-operation across authorities in terms of commissioning and administration. To enable increased cross border planning, the Bridgend Supporting People team are actively engaged with South Wales Regional Supporting People Planning Group and the South Wales Supporting People Information Network. These forums facilitate the exchange of information on unmet support need and an analysis of regional gaps in service. Housing related support providers also contribute to identifying cross border support needs.

Some people may need to move for reasons of personal safety, e.g. someone fleeing domestic abuse. Others may be leaving an institution such as a prison, psychiatric hospital or children's home and need to make a fresh start because of difficulties in their previous area of residence. People suffering with mental health problems or older people with dementia may need support in their own home to ensure they are safe and secure or may need to move for safety reasons to a more secure environment, such as supported accommodation, sheltered accommodation, extra-care housing or residential/EMI care.

A Women's Cross Boundary Scheme in support of women with substance misuse and domestic abuse issues was established during 2007. The scheme provides 14 units of housing related support across the three local authority areas of Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea.

There are support issues in relation to cross-boundary working between Child Protection, Police, Education and Health in relation to settled gypsy and traveller communities and families of migrant workers. Considering the growing population of these particular racial groups there is a greater need to work together to ensure their housing and support needs are identified, assessed and provided for.

Opportunities for additional service provision are limited due to the current lack of growth in Supporting People funding. However, there is scope for considering, where appropriate, the remodelling or re-commissioning of housing related support services to best meet identified strategic need.

Capital and revenue

The strategic link between the Supporting People Programme and the capital Social Housing Grant (SHG) programme is essential for specific supported housing projects.

Examples of the importance of the link between capital and revenue funding are the Vesta Project for persons recovering from substance misuse, the Second Stage Women's Aid Refuge and the BABBA scheme of temporary accommodation. All required the forward planning of SHG to enable RSLs to provide the newly built schemes and the forward planning for the support capacity including revenue funding from the Supporting People programme.

The Supporting People programme will explore commissioning with other sources of capital and/or revenue and seek to reduce barriers to commissioning future support services.

Supply shortages

A shortage in the supply of move-on accommodation for vulnerable people is identified within the SPOP as a key concern for some client groups in the County Borough. In response to this identified shortage the Housing Forum established a Move-On Panel in 2008. A greater range of supply and support packages is required in order to make best use of the 'front line' services.

The lack of provision is evident for the needs/client groups of people with substance misuse problems. An accommodation based supported housing provision for former drug users, was opened early in 2007, but there is no provision specifically for alcohol dependency. Equally, no provision exists for people with a physical disability who require support, ex-offenders or people with chronic illness or refugees.

The accommodation priorities for 2007-08 and 2008-09 are for young and/or single homeless persons with proposals submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government as part of the SHG programme to provide accommodation for both direct access and supported temporary accommodation.

Supporting People Development

There are some significant challenges for the Supporting People programme including:

- Supporting People funding redistribution
- Potential handover of Supporting People Revenue Grant (SPRG) used for temporary housing related support services
- Strategic drivers within the Welsh Assembly Government's Housing Related Support Strategy
- Increasing the focus on the prevention agenda across Health, Adult Social Care, Housing and Community Safety
- Increased collaborative working, both locally and on a regional basis to increase beneficial outcomes.

The Council will continue to demonstrate an increasingly clear and logical structure for the administration of Supporting People and provide an enhanced joined-up approach to the planning of support services for our most vulnerable citizens.

Planned actions

- Expand current Individual Needs Assessment Mechanism to a Needs Mapping Exercise involving all service providers.
- Service provider input into planning process via planning day.
- Input into Supporting People Planning Process from strategic partners.
- Evaluate priorities and explore options for reconfiguration of housing support.
- Develop a common supported housing register.
- Agree a commissioning framework for Supporting People.
- Increase corporate understanding of the importance of Supporting People via elected members and increased involvement in local planning groups.

Housing renewal and regeneration

Key strategic objectives

- Increase the supply of housing to enhance and build upon the regeneration priorities of the County Borough.
- Realise the benefits of regeneration and increase housing supply.
- Continue to improve the condition and suitability of private housing.

Sustainable communities

The Draft Pre-Deposit Proposal for the LDP includes objectives to spread prosperity and opportunity through regeneration and to create safe, healthy and inclusive communities. The regeneration-led spatial strategy proposed in the LDP will require the Council to focus new development, including residential development, across the County Borough in accordance with its regeneration priorities.

This will necessitate directing development to those areas currently the subject of area based regeneration strategies and other priority areas where regeneration and investment is needed to address an identified and acknowledged decline in the social, economic and physical environment and provide much needed new development and facilities. In this respect new market and affordable housing can act as catalysts or drivers for regeneration and provide the opportunity for wider community benefits secured by means of planning agreements.



Housing renewal

The quality and condition of existing housing is central to the Council's housing and regeneration strategies.

Privately owned housing represents the vast majority of dwellings within the County Borough, of which in 2006 78.9% was owner occupied and 6.8% privately rented.

The Regulatory Reform Order 2002 and the Housing Act 2004 introduced major changes in the way local authorities are required and encouraged to deal with properties in the private sector. These include the approach taken by each local authority on the provision of grants and the development of alternatives such as equity release; a new hazard based rating system that targets hazards in the home; and the licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

The Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2003 recognises that poor housing is a determinant of ill health and that good quality housing is central to people's quality of life and wellbeing. The Policy targets assistance to those most in need, particularly the disabled, elderly and vulnerable, to enable them to continue to live independently in their own homes.

The designation of housing renewal areas supports wider community wellbeing and regeneration initiatives. It also helps to stimulate the local and regional economies.

Investment

The Council's General Capital Fund (GCF) five-year forward allocation to deliver on the grant assistance element within Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy to persons in most need is £3M per year to 2011-12.

In 2008 the approval of further discretionary grants not linked to Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) was stopped because of budgetary pressures, due to increased referral rates for mandatory DFGs coupled with building cost inflation. This was shortly followed by an Assembly announcement that the maximum award level of a DFG was being increased. The above pressures required that Renovation and Home Repair Grants were not to be awarded and as such signalled a reduction in activity supporting the improvement of housing conditions in the private sector across the County Borough.

A wide ranging review of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy will report in 2009 in order to assess the impact of this changing pattern of demand on available resources, with pressure to allocate resources to the needs of the disabled and the elderly expected to continue to increase.

The Council is to explore equity release in order to supplement or offer an alternative to grant assistance, with a view to developing packages to enable older owner-occupiers who are 'cash poor and property rich' to access funding to adapt and repair their homes. Welsh Assembly Government encouraged two pilots, one in North Wales and one in South Wales, with good practice to assist non-participant local authorities like Bridgend.

The first Housing Renewal Area for the County Borough was declared in 2006. The Council receives Specific Capital Grant funding from the Welsh Assembly Government to fund the renewal area. This funding is subject to annual bids to the Welsh Assembly. The Council was awarded £1M in 2009/10. If the investment remains at this level the life-span of this renewal area could be as long as 15 years.

Innovation

The Council is embracing the opportunities offered by the 2002 Regulatory Reform Order to assist disabled and older people to remain in their own homes. Without this provision these households would probably have had to move to meet their needs.

The Council's fast-track scheme to provide stair-lifts was introduced in 2003 and extended with the Bathing Grant scheme in 2006 to minimise waiting times for installation. The schemes are operated in a partnership between the Council's Occupational Therapist and Housing Renewal Services and Bridgend County Care & Repair Agency.



Upon completion of a review and evaluation of the Bathing Grant Scheme in 2009, the fast-tracking principles may be extended to other smaller aids and adaptations such as grab rails and ramps.

Telecare Services and Assistive Technology provide significant opportunities to support older, vulnerable people to continue to live independently in their own homes. The Council has developed a Telecare Strategy with partners and have commissioned Bridgend County Care & Repair Agency to assist with the distribution and provision and installation of telecare products.

The effective matching of disabled people to suitably adapted properties, through the Bridgend Accessible Homes Project introduced in 2007, enables the Council and RSLs to target their budgets more effectively.

Regulatory framework

The Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) 2006, is the approach used to identify hazards and assess the risks that may affect the well-being of people within their homes.

The Housing Act 2004 introduced new licensing requirements for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). All high risk HMOs are assessed and landlords are issued with 5 year licenses where appropriate.

There are a number of licensed caravan sites in the County Borough, mostly centred on the seaside town of Porthcawl. These are typically holiday caravan sites but a few sites are residential. Caravan flows are monitored to assess the need for future provision.

Concerns in 2008 about a large number of homes being empty for long periods, as experienced in some parts of Wales, was not mirrored in the County Borough. A 2006 Survey identified 182 homes that were classed as long-term problematic empty homes and this number subsequently decreased in 2007 and 2008.

A long-term problematic empty home is defined as being empty for 6 months or longer, and usually derelict, severely neglected and/or in need of substantial repair. They can be a major concern, represent a wasted property and a missed opportunity, and can blight streets and communities. These properties may be within declared or potential housing renewal areas, may be eligible for discretionary grant funding, but ultimately may require enforcement action to remedy their lack of use.

The Enforced Sales Procedure is a process by which the Council brings about the sale of a privately owned house. It is used as means to 'sell on' long-term vacant properties to a new owner in circumstances where the present owner is either unwilling or unable to deal with the condition of the property.

The large scale adjustments to the housing market in 2007-2009 may increase the numbers of non-problematic empty homes across the County Borough and not be restricted to those areas traditionally associated with higher levels of empty homes.



Housing Renewal Areas

A potential Housing Renewal Area (HRA) is identified by analysing indicators of deprivation and confirmed by a Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment (NRA).

In 2005 the Caerau Ward, consisting of Nantyffyllon and Caerau, was identified as in greatest need and declared the first HRA in 2006. The Council continues to explore the need and opportunities for the declaration of additional Housing Renewal Areas.

The general approach is to target those properties in need of renovation and improvement taking a 'worst first' scenario. Contractors are required to support the local skills agenda and to employ local skilled labour where possible.

Housing Renewal Areas are implemented in such a way as to support community development and are coordinated with environmental projects. For example, the improvement of former industrial land for the benefit of the community; the extension of community routes to enhance the development of healthy and safe routes to the planned new primary and secondary schools.

Complementary to the Caerau HRA is the Valleys to Coast Housing Improvement Programme designed to address key improvement issues on former Council estates, two of which are in Caerau, and the 10-year Environmental Master Plan steered by the Authority and Valleys to Coast Housing,

Other regeneration initiatives

The Construction Skills Centre, Caerau, is an example of a response to the regeneration activity being undertaken following Council housing stock transfer in 2003 and to the shortage of a local construction skills workforce.



Town centre regeneration provides opportunities for 'living in the town' initiatives, particularly in Bridgend, Maesteg and Porthcawl town centres, and to a lesser extent the other commercial centres in the County Borough, where spaces on upper floors above retail and commercial premises remain vacant. This includes opportunities to realise residential accommodation within mixed use redevelopment schemes within these town centres.

The Council will continue to explore options to create additional housing and a mixed use in the larger settlements that will sustain economic, physical and social regeneration.

Social regeneration

The coordination of regeneration activities, such as a Housing Renewal Area, offers the opportunity for greater community development and community sustainability.



Convergence Funding and its associated programme is the follow-on from the Objective 1 Programme and will run until 2013. It provides a funding opportunity for organisations to work together to complete the transition of Welsh regions into competitive economies. A typical funding opportunity may be for environmental improvements to public and community facilities alongside area renewal activity.

Partnerships with agencies such as Bridgend County Care & Repair Agency are examples of working together to achieve social regeneration. The Agency offers a 'handholding' service to assist vulnerable people who require higher levels of support and assists the Council by providing a variety of rapid response preventative services of small repairs and adaptations to make homes safe and more suitable places in which to live. The Agency is a key partner in delivering mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants and smaller aids and adaptations.

The overall aim of such regeneration activities is to improve the social and physical environment, the health and wellbeing of its residents, ensuring they are safe, warm and secure.

Communities First

The Communities First programme is aimed at reducing poverty and developing community capacity in the more disadvantaged areas of the County Borough. The presence of Communities First in Housing Renewal Areas can provide a social networking, liaison, consultation and expertise infrastructure that is complementary to the housing renewal activities which will help encourage local involvement in the physical regeneration of their community. The Caerau Housing Renewal Area has the benefit of the Communities First presence.

The Communities First programme links closely with other partners, stakeholders and voluntary organisations, such as the Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations, the Credit Union and various societies and neighbourhood groups to promote social and physical regeneration. The 'Communities First' programme can secure additional funding and support from a range of sources.

Planned Actions

- Direct housing activity, both new build and renovation, to areas subject to regeneration activities.
- Undertake works to upward of 40 dwellings per annum in the Caerau Housing Renewal Area.
- Declare two additional Housing Renewal Areas.
- Implement the Enforced Sales Scheme for problematic empty homes.
- Implement the Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing Scheme.
- Introduce a pilot 'Equity Release' scheme.
- Review the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy in the context of the increasing demand for Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants.

Concluding observations

Suitable housing is fundamental to society and at a national level there is a firm understanding that housing is core to the health, wellbeing and social inclusion agenda. This interim Local Housing Strategy takes account of the National Housing Strategy and seeks to support the regeneration of communities, to set out the framework for meeting housing need and the needs of specific groups, to encourage sustainable home ownership and provide quality homes.

This interim Local Housing Strategy draws upon the correlation between unsuitable housing conditions and poor health together with the strategic importance of housing in the broader social policy agenda. It is consistent with the newly emerging Community Strategy 2009 which is to be based around six themes and their associated priorities and objectives.

The Strategy has a particularly important interface with the Local Development Plan, the Regeneration Strategy and the Health Social Care Wellbeing Strategy.

In its role as strategic housing enabler, the Council will monitor and report upon all actions and outcomes in pursuit of the strategic objectives in the Local Housing Strategy. The Local Housing Annual Operational Plans provide the means for regular monitoring of progress, both as part of the Council's performance management review arrangements and with external planning and implementation partners.

The development and delivery of the key objectives within this interim Local Housing Strategy relies strongly upon existing good working relationships and partnerships and seeks to build upon these across a range of service activities.

Strategic objectives and target outcomes

Key strategic objectives 1 Housing system and housing market

Strategic objectives	Planned actions	Target / Desired outcome	Responsibility	Method of measurement	Resource implications
More fully understand the local and regional housing markets.	Undertake a full Local Housing Market Assessment.	2009: To establish housing need and demand and to understand local and regional housing markets.	Housing & Community Regeneration + Development	Completion of Local Housing Market Assessment.	Requirement of circa £150k Local Authority capital funding to undertake both the Market Assessment and the Stock Condition Survey.
Assess the condition of private and social rented housing in the County Borough.	Undertake a private sector Stock Condition Survey	2009: To inform investment targets, including assisting in identifying future Housing Renewal Areas.	Housing & Community Regeneration + Consultation with Public Protection	Completion of Stock Condition Survey.	
	Encourage private owners and landlords to access energy efficiency schemes and to undertake the necessary improvements.	2009-14: An annual increase in the take-up by owner-occupiers and landlords.	Housing & Community Regeneration + BCBC Energy Manager	Number of enquiries and HEES grant take-up.	HEES take-up by owner occupiers. Monitoring take-up
	Promote and monitor activity in the social rented sector.	2009-12: An annual increase in the SAP Ratings to meet Welsh Housing Quality Standards by 2012.	Housing & Community Regeneration + Registered Social Landlords	The number of properties improved annually to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. Reported through the Bridgend Housing Partnership	Registered Social Landlord development and maintenance programme funding.

Key strategic objectives 2 Affordable housing solutions

Strategic objectives	Planned actions	Target / Desired outcome	Responsibility	Method of measurement	Resource implications
Increase the supply of affordable housing, with particular focus on the needs of smaller households.	Fully implement the 'Affordable Housing' Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 2007.	To apply the SPG targets at 50% Southern and 15% Northern market areas, for all new developments within the policy thresholds.	Housing & Community Regeneration + Development	Percentage of new developments meeting the target.	SHG, Registered Social Landlord Private Finance, Land Owner/ Developer contributions.
	Employ an Affordable Housing Enabler to work with strategic partners and RSLs.	2009 - 2010. Additional units of affordable housing	Housing & Community Regeneration	Numbers provided per annum.	Bid to WAG for Social Housing Management Grant at 50% matched Local Authority funding.
	Work with strategic partners and RSLs to develop SHG bids.	2009 - 2014. Provide an average of 70 new Social Rented homes per annum.	Housing & Community Regeneration + Registered Social Landlords	Numbers provided per annum.	Generally requires SHG, by way of annual bid to WAG.
	Work with strategic partners, particularly Development, RSLs and Developers to deliver Intermediate Housing.	2009 - 2014. Provide an average of 10 new Intermediate Housing units per annum.	Housing & Community Regeneration	Numbers provided per annum.	Requires Developers to provide subsidy and possibly the Council to reduce capital receipts if selling Council owned land.
	Increase the use of private rented accommodation.	2009 - 2014: Increase by 20 units per annum.	Housing & Community Regeneration	Numbers provided per annum.	Staff capacity.
	Develop a common housing register with RSLs for Social Rented and Intermediate Housing.	2010: Greater access to affordable housing, greater matching of suitability for those in need and more convenience of applicants.	Housing & Community Regeneration + Registered Social Landlords	Establishments of the two registers.	RSL capacity. Bid to WAG for Social Housing Management Grant, with Local Authority and 4 Registered Social Landlord partners requiring a 50% matched funding.

Key strategic objectives 3 Preventing and reducing homelessness

Strategic objectives	Planned actions	Target / Desired outcome	Responsibility	Method of measurement	Resource implications
Reduce the level of homelessness acceptances.	Review policies and procedures with a focus on prevention, early intervention and support.	2009-12: An annual reduction in the number of households accepted as homeless.	Housing & Community Regeneration	Monthly and annual monitoring.	Spend to Save requirement.
	Implement the proposals in the Councils 2nd Stage Review of staffing structures.	2009: Increased prevention activity and a reduction in the numbers presenting as homeless.	Housing & Community Regeneration	Monthly and annual monitoring.	The Councils 2nd Stage Review of staffing structures.
	Education awareness sessions at secondary schools.	8 sessions per annum.	Housing & Community Regeneration	Numbers undertaken.	Staff capacity.
Increase the supply of temporary accommodation options	Increase access to mediation services.	Sustainable solutions and conflict resolution.	Housing & Community Regeneration	Numbers accessing mediation services.	Staff and agency capacities.
	Achieve final approval for 17 units of direct access emergency accommodation.	2010: Contain the use of B&B for homeless families with children, except in emergencies. Contain the general use of B&B and replace by other forms of temporary and permanent accommodation.	Housing & Community Regeneration + Registered Social Landlords	Monitoring by support agency and Housing & Community Regeneration.	SHG and Registered Social Landlord Private Finance.
	Evaluate the pilot private sector leasing scheme.			Numbers provided per annum.	SHG and Registered Social Landlord Private Finance. Staff capacity. Cost neutral.
	Explore the provision of additional hostel accommodation for homeless households.				Additional number of units of hostel accommodation provided.

Key strategic objectives 4 Access to appropriate housing

Strategic objectives	Planned actions	Target / Desired outcome	Responsibility	Method of measurement	Resource implications
Ensure a range of appropriate accommodation and services for younger people.	Expand the provision of supported accommodation to which younger people have access.	2009: 6 units at BABBA.	Housing & Community Regeneration	Numbers provided	SHG bids to WAG
Ensure a range of appropriate accommodation and services for older people.	Expand the provision of Extra Care Housing as part of a wider range of options for elderly persons. Equip homes with Telecare sensors and equipment.	2012: Provide two Extra Care Housing schemes.	Housing & Community Regeneration + Adult Social Care	Numbers provided	SHG bid to WAG and recycled budgets within Adult Social Care.
	Evaluate the Accessible Homes Register for Social Rented accommodation. Review the future funding of the Register.	2009: 500 homes. 2009: Better matching of adapted social rented homes to applicants with specific requirements.	Adult Social Care Housing & Community Regeneration + Registered Social Landlords	Numbers equipped Numbers matched per annum.	WAG Telecare Capital Grant 2006-07 and 2007-08. Funding replacement for Social Housing Management Grant.

Key strategic objectives 4 Access to appropriate housing (continued)

Strategic objectives	Planned actions	Target / Desired outcome	Responsibility	Method of measurement	Resource implications
Understand the housing needs of BME communities, Gypsy and Traveller communities, and Migrant Workers.	Continue to train and develop staff to be able to provide appropriate advice and assistance to all racial groups. Work with Partners to engage and involve Black and Minority Ethnic people, Gypsy Travellers and Migrant Workers.	2009: Equal access to information on housing options, advice and assistance. 2009-10 At least 2 events to understand the access needs of these particular racial groups and engage and involve them in planning for housing.	Housing & Community Regeneration + Registered Social Landlords Housing & Community Regeneration	Training courses undertaken and the numbers housed in appropriate accommodation. Numbers attending events. To be monitored through the Annual Operational Plan.	Staff capacity and appropriate funding to commission research. Staff time and funding for Events.
Understand the impact on the local housing market of Asylum Seekers and Refugees.	Undertake an impact assessment and include within the Local Housing Market Assessment 2009.	2009: Understand the access needs of refugees and asylum seekers including language and housing requirements.	Housing & Community Regeneration	Information from the impact assessment and Local Housing Market Assessment. To be monitored through the Annual Operational Plan	Staff capacity.

Key strategic objectives 5 Housing related support

Strategic objectives	Planned actions	Target / Desired outcome	Responsibility	Method of measurement	Resource implications
To have a sound and well informed understanding of the needs of vulnerable people and local/regional provision.	Expand current Individual Needs Assessment Mechanism to a Needs Mapping Exercise involving all service providers.	2010	Supporting People Team + Supporting People Planning Group	Increase in Needs Mapping Information	Increase in staff time taken to facilitate expansion. Impact on Supporting People team staff capacity.
	Service provider input into planning process via planning day.	2009	Supporting People Team + Service Providers	Increased in Needs gathering information. Provider Feedback on SPOP	Resourcing of Homelessness & Supporting People Forum meetings (facilities, refreshments etc)
To provide and deliver housing related support to the most vulnerable people to enable them to maintain their independence.	Input into SP Planning Process from strategic partners.	2009	Supporting People Team + Supporting People Planning Group	Outlined in Gap Analysis. Increased reference to SP in other strategies.	Time taken for partners to make contributions. Housing & Community Regeneration & SP Staff time.
	Evaluate priorities and explore options for reconfiguration of housing support.	2010: A more balanced distribution of housing related support for all client groups.	Supporting People Planning Group	Needs & Supply Mapping for Supporting People. Gap Analysis	Redistribution of existing Supporting People funding resources to strategically identified vulnerable service user groups.

Key strategic objectives 5 Housing related support (continued)

Strategic objectives	Planned actions	Target / Desired outcome	Responsibility	Method of measurement	Resource implications
	Develop a common supported housing register.	2010: Greater access and matching of suitability of accommodation options for young and/or single homeless persons	Housing & Community Regeneration + Adult Social Care + Registered Social Landlords + Support Providers	Numbers housed per annum.	Housing & Community Regeneration, Adult Social Care and Registered Social Landlord capacity, bid for Social Housing Management Grant with Local Authority and 4 Registered Social Landlord partner matched funding.
To establish clear priorities for the longer-term development of services using a fair and transparent commissioning framework and effective use of resources.	Agree a commissioning framework for SP	2009	Supporting People Team + Supporting People Planning Group + Adult Social Care	Commissioning Framework produced.	Housing & Community Regeneration and Supporting People Staff time taken in the exercise.
	Increase corporate understanding of the importance of Supporting People via elected members and increased involvement in local planning groups.	2009	Supporting People Team + Elected Members + Strategic Planning Groups	Elected members involvement in Planning Process. Elected Member Scrutiny and Cabinet sign off. Increased reference to SP in other strategies.	Housing & Community Regeneration Supporting People Staff increase in time to exercise.

Key strategic objectives 6 Housing renewal and regeneration

Strategic objectives	Planned actions	Target / Desired outcome	Responsibility	Method of measurement	Resource implications
Increase the supply of housing to enhance and build upon the regeneration priorities of the County Borough.	Direct housing activity, both new build and renovation, to areas subject to regeneration activities.	Sustainable communities.	Housing & Community Regeneration + Physical Regeneration + Development	Level of activity of both new build and renovation.	Bids for regeneration funding and staff capacity.
Realise the benefits of housing renewal and regeneration, and increase the housing supply.	Undertake works to upward of 40 dwellings per annum in Caerau HRA.	To complete the Caerau HRA in a 10-12 year period.	Housing & Community Regeneration	Numbers completed per annum.	Bids to WAG for Specific Capital Grant (SCG).
	Declare 2 additional housing renewal areas.	2011 and 2013.	Housing & Community Regeneration	Numbers declared.	Bids to WAG for Specific Capital Grant (SCG).
	Implement the Enforced Sales Scheme for problematic empty homes.	2009: Identify budget capacity and priority properties.	Public Protection	Numbers completed per annum as percentage of all problematic empties.	Staff capacity.

Key strategic objectives 6 Housing renewal and regeneration (continued)

Strategic objectives	Planned actions	Target / Desired outcome	Responsibility	Method of measurement	Resource implications
Continue to improve the condition and suitability of private housing.	Implement the HMO Licensing Scheme.	2009: Licence 30 high risk HMO dwellings.	Public Protection	Numbers completed per annum.	Staff capacity.
	Introduce a pilot 'Equity Release' scheme.	2011: Implemented and evaluated Pilot to enable full programme.	Housing & Community Regeneration	Outcome of evaluation.	Cost of consultants
	Review the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy in the context of the increasing demand for Mandatory DFGs.	2009: To adjust the Policy in response to increasing demand and the budgetary pressures.	Housing & Community Regeneration + Adult Social Care	Numbers completed and average cost of DFG.	Additional capital budget requirement.