



East Lindsey
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Housing Strategy

2005 - 2010

*'Giving everyone the
opportunity of a decent and
affordable home'*



East Lindsey District Council's (ELDC) HOUSING STRATEGY 2005-2010

'Giving everyone the opportunity of a decent and affordable home'

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East Lindsey District Council's (ELDC) HOUSING STRATEGY 2005-2010

'Giving everyone the opportunity of a decent and affordable home'

Foreword by Councillor John Upsall, Portfolio for Housing and the Built Environment



Councillor John Upsall

We cannot overstate the importance of a safe, secure and decent home to the individual. A home that people can afford, that enables them to live their life without complication or problems, is a fundamental requirement of life. It is a firm base from which people can go about their daily business, to go to work, to go to school, to raise a family, to relax and to pursue their interests. It is therefore a fundamental component of quality of life and a basis from which to maximise life opportunities.

Improving quality of life and maximising opportunity is our Authority's mission. In recognition of this and the fundamental importance of 'home' it is no accident that East Lindsey has made the promotion and development of decent and affordable housing a corporate aim and that we have four clear corporate housing objectives:

- to reduce homelessness and enable more affordable housing; and
- to improve the quality and accessibility of housing.

East Lindsey is an area of significant housing and housing related issues, which include a serious lack of affordable housing, high housing demand, high homelessness, spiralling house prices, rurality, deprivation and low income and seasonality of employment. All of these conspire to put safe, secure and decent homes beyond the reach of many.

We have already made many positive steps including over 700 more affordable homes built in partnership since 1999 and a recent significant reduction in homelessness, through robust prevention measures, however, as always there is much more to be done.

This document takes forward our corporate objectives, explaining the issues that face East Lindsey and how we intend to deal with them. This Housing Strategy sets out our plan, clearly and accountably of how we will deliver our housing services over the next 5 years.

This is how we will achieve our corporate objectives and ensure that we reach our long-term housing aim, that 'everyone has the opportunity of a decent and affordable home'.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. W. Upsall".

Councillor John Upsall
Portfolio for Housing and the Built Environment

Chapter One - Introduction

1.0 Giving everyone the opportunity of a decent and affordable home

'Home is where the heart is'

'An Englishman's home is his castle' 'Home Sweet Home'

All are certainly clichéd phrases, which between them have probably been around for centuries. However, what they do is serve to emphasise the importance that society and the individual places on 'home' at both a practical and emotional level. Practically home is a place of shelter, warmth and security, emotionally it is a place in which you can express yourself, feel safe and relaxed. Home is also the bedrock from which we engage with society and build our lives. Therefore the importance of the home extends beyond its four walls to the foundation of healthy communities and as a basis of social inclusion.

- Good quality housing improves health and the feeling of well being.
- Good housing design reduces negative impacts on the environment and makes efficient use of scarce resources.
- Good design also increases community safety and reduces crime and the fear of crime.
- Stable accommodation enables people to plan for the future and reduces the likelihood of homelessness.
- Housing in the right locations enables people to engage with community and access services, employment and education opportunities.
- Housing which is affordable to buy or rent, maintain and heat, ensures that people can access and maintain a home, reducing the likelihood of financial hardship and homelessness.

Therefore it is vitally important that ELDC influences the housing market to address the housing needs of the district. This will maximise everyone's opportunities to access housing that meets their needs and that they can consider home. Housing issues are described in more detail in Chapter 3, they include:

- massive increases in property prices making homes unaffordable to many;
- extreme demand for affordable housing;
- a lack of affordable homes;
- high incidences of homelessness;
- poor quality housing in the private sector; and
- the accessibility of housing for those with ill health, disability or special needs.

This strategy is for the residents of East Lindsey, partners, and stakeholders alike. It explains what the issues are and what we will do to improve the housing situation in the district over the next 5 years toward achieving our housing aim that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent and affordable home.



1.1 Housing within the Corporate Context

This Council's mission is 'to improve the quality of life and opportunity for all in East Lindsey' and our corporate aims to achieve this mission are to:

- Promote and develop decent and affordable housing.
- Create safer and stronger communities.
- Enable employment opportunities and access to employment.
- Encourage and develop healthy and active lifestyles.
- Improve the quality and cleanliness of our environment.

For the reasons already stated (1.0 above), our corporate housing aim is closely linked to our other corporate aims and has a clear role to play to help achieve them. Our corporate housing priority is to improve the quality of housing and enable more affordable homes.

1.2 Our Corporate Objectives/Housing Priorities

The Corporate Strategy established four interrelated corporate objectives for housing of equal importance. They are to:

- Enable more affordable homes
- Improve the quality of housing
- Improve the accessibility of housing and
- Prevent homelessness

It is the priority of the housing service to deliver these objectives, hence they become our four housing priorities.

These four objectives have been established to address the housing and related needs in the district and address issues raised in the Community Strategy, Community Needs Analysis, national and regional policy, housing needs studies, research and from consultation.

It is the priority of the housing service to deliver these objectives, hence they became our four housing priorities.

1.2.1 Enable more affordable housing

Achieving this priority will provide more high quality, rented and low cost home ownership homes to meet the varying requirements of people with a range of economic, social and special needs. We will also be achieving other housing priorities by:

- increasing housing quality - through modern construction standards;
- increasing accessibility - through providing tenure choices and affordability; and
- preventing homelessness - through increasing affordable housing opportunities.

1.2.2 Improve the quality of housing

Achieving this priority will ensure people can live in decent, good quality, and warm homes (new or existing). We will also be achieving other housing priorities by:

- increasing accessibility to better quality housing; and
- improving the quality of housing at the 'affordable end' of the private rented sector which will increase the supply of decent affordable homes.

1.2.3 Improve the accessibility of homes

Achieving this priority will ensure that housing is accessible to all and that it meets their needs, irrespective of their gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality, financial circumstances or special or specific needs. We will also be achieving other housing priorities by:

- preventing homelessness by making housing accessible to homeless clients;
- increasing the provision of affordable housing which is accessible to those with specific or special needs.

1.2.4 Prevent Homelessness

Achieving this priority will prevent people from losing their home and will provide stability and certainty of accommodation. We will be also be achieving other housing priorities by:

- making housing accessible for those who otherwise would be homeless.

Achieving our four housing priorities in partnership is our contribution to improving the quality of life and opportunity for all in East Lindsey.

1.2.5 Corporate Principles

Underpinning the delivery of these priorities is our corporate principles of:

- equality;
- leadership;
- customer service; and
- delivery (see 4.0a).

We also work to ensure that the service we offer is accessible to all, respects diversity and delivers value for money.



1.3 Working in Partnership to achieve Corporate Aims

As stated we also want to contribute to other corporate aims and are involved in a number of partnerships to further this including:

- **Housing Officer Development Group:** housing, planning, technical services, economic development, community safety, community regeneration and finance monitor housing development issues to bring forward affordable housing schemes and ensure opportunities to deliver other aims and priorities are maximised;
- **Programme Delivery Group:** housing, planning, energy efficiency, finance and Housing Portfolio Holder meet with Eastern Shires Housing Association and other external partners to deliver housing aims and pursue opportunities to achieve other corporate aims in relation to achieving the 200 homes under our own Housing Capital Programme;

- **Crime Reduction Partnerships:** we attend subgroups with the Community Safety Officer including Domestic Violence Forum, Youth Action Group and Drugs and Alcohol Action Group, to deliver housing related outcomes.

We are also working with:

- Sport and Leisure to distribute discount cards giving access to sports facilities to homeless households receiving housing support;
- Council Tax to identify empty properties;
- Economic Development over construction training on the coast; and
- the Arts Development Officer for creative methods of consultation.

1.4 Housing aim and priorities within the Corporate Context

The table (opposite) illustrates the relationship between our four housing priorities and the corporate aims of this Authority and how we can help achieve them. It also illustrates our contribution to the Community Strategy action plan aims.



New Wolds Housing Trust: Trusthorpe

Housing Aim:

‘Giving Everyone the Opportunity of a Decent and Affordable Home’

Housing Priorities for Action (Our Corporate Strategy Housing Objectives)

1. Prevent Homelessness	2. Enable more affordable homes	3. Improve the quality of housing	4. Improve the accessibility of housing
Opportunity to address Corporate Aims			
<p><u>Develop Healthy Lifestyles</u> Preventing street homelessness prevents associated ill health & social exclusion.</p> <p>Maximising income reduces poverty, enabling funds for healthier lifestyles.</p> <p>Reducing B&B for families improves health, social and educational development.</p> <p><u>Create Safer Stronger Communities</u> Working with MAPPP ensures those who are a potential threat are managed and supervised.</p> <p>Working with Health and Social Care ensures those vulnerable are protected.</p> <p><u>Enable access to employment</u> Housing Support provides ‘life skills’ training & enables access to further education.</p> <p>A home is fundamental to securing employment opportunity.</p> <p>Main developments will be in the larger settlements where there are more employment opportunities.</p>	<p><u>Enable access to employment</u> Incorporates training for local young people to gain skills and qualifications as part of the construction process.</p> <p>Maximise the use of local labour and skills as part of the construction process.</p> <p><u>Improve quality and cleanliness of our environment</u> High quality housing design of new build improves the appearance of the environment</p> <p>High quality accommodation reduces fuel bills increasing affordability and reducing resource usages.</p> <p>Potential to reuse and remodel existing poor quality or vacant properties.</p> <p><u>Create Safer Stronger Communities</u> Improved community safety through security design features And appropriate liaison with other agencies such as the police.</p>	<p><u>Develop Healthy Lifestyles</u> Reducing numbers in poor housing reduces levels of associated illness and diseases.</p> <p>Improving quality in design and construction addresses fuel poverty which causes cold related illness and winter deaths.</p> <p><u>Improve quality and cleanliness of our environment</u> Tackling empty properties removes the eyesore/nuisance of rundown properties. Maximising the use of existing property conserves resources and safeguards land. Well designed housing developments include open space provision.</p> <p><u>Create Safer Stronger Communities</u> Handyman service enables access to the Safe at Homes security grants for those vulnerable due to domestic violence.</p> <p>Tackling empty properties reduces the opportunity for vandalism and improves community safety.</p>	<p><u>Create Safer Stronger Communities</u> Working with Health and Social Care ensures those vulnerable have access to decent, secure and affordable housing.</p> <p>The appropriate provision of accommodation for those with challenging needs e.g. drug use and alcohol ensures / improves wider community safety.</p> <p><u>Enable access to employment</u> Ensuring the most vulnerable has access to a decent home makes accessing & maintaining employment less difficult</p>
ELDC Housing priority contribution to relevant Community Strategy Housing Objective			
<p>Ensure the housing stock is access to all</p> <p>Provide appropriate housing advice and support for all</p>	<p>Ensure availability of housing to meet demand</p> <p>Increase the provision of affordable housing</p> <p>Ensure the housing stock is access to all</p>	<p>Improve the quality, condition and resource efficiency of all housing</p>	<p>Ensure the housing stock is access to all</p>
Contribution to Other Community Strategy Theme Groups aims			
<p>Community Safety</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing</p>	<p>Employment and life long learning</p> <p>Community Safety</p> <p>Leisure and Culture</p> <p>Community Development and regeneration</p>	<p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>Community Safety</p> <p>Community Development and Regeneration</p>	<p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>Community Safety</p> <p>Employment and Life Long Learning</p>

1.5 Our Housing Strategy Process

This document has been produced after extensive housing and related research into the needs of East Lindsey. We have also undertaken consultation with stakeholders and partners (fully listed in Appendix I) and a review of national, regional, local and corporate policies and strategies, which affect housing delivery. The document is structured as follows.

Chapters Two and Three examine national, regional and local policies and housing needs and related needs in East Lindsey. Highlighting the issues we need to address and informing us what direction ELDC housing policy should be taking.

Chapter Four defines what we are currently doing and what we have already achieved, highlighting areas where further action is required which will further inform the direction of ELDC housing policy.

Chapter Five reviews what targets we have achieved and what is outstanding.

Chapters Six examines our options for further action and what realistically can be achieved. The action plan defines the action we will take having considered our options.

'As the largest RSL in East Lindsey, Linx Homes supports the District Council in producing a considered and clear strategy which will address the housing needs of the communities we serve.' – Jack Whyman, Director of Operations, Linx Homes

Case study

The Icboyun family first moved to this country from Turkey, staying with friends and family. Hatice had the appropriate paperwork to allow her "leave to remain", but Ali didn't. They married in 2001 and their daughter Bahar was born in Boston in 2002.

In 2003, they found themselves with nowhere to live and approached the council for assistance. Due to the situation with Ali's immigration papers, we were only able to provide emergency and temporary accommodation for Hatice and her daughter.

A housing support worker, was appointed to the family and she worked very hard to ensure that the family were guided through the process of getting a home. She ensured all the immigration and benefit papers were in order until an offer of permanent accommodation was made to the family and then helped Bahar gain a nursery place near their new home and arranged for Hatice to attend a college course to better her English.

This family no longer require housing support, but they know that if they do, it is only a telephone call away.



Chapter Two - The National, Regional and Local Housing Environment

2.0 Introduction

The delivery of a high quality housing service at the district level is not undertaken or achieved in isolation. For a housing service to be truly effective it must understand the wider environment, which it is directed and influenced by and work in partnership with others to tackle the key issues. Broadly the delivery of housing at the local level is informed by four tiers:

1. National policy legislation and direction from Government.
2. Regional and sub regional policy.
3. Local needs and issues, within the county and district.
4. Corporate aims.

2.1 National Policy Framework

Effectively the thrust of Government housing and related policy can be summarised by two main interrelated themes:

- the creation of sustainable communities; and
- quality and choice in housing provision for all.

Sustainable communities are vibrant, diverse, socially inclusive places where people want to live and will continue to want to live (a fuller definition can be found in the glossary). Sustainable communities cannot exist without affordable, decent homes for all, but are more than just affordable housing. Equally people will not generally want to live in housing that is not located in sustainable communities.

The Sustainable Communities Plan 2003 set the national framework in 2003 to deliver sustainable communities. This has recently been cemented by three 5-year plans, published in early 2005; Sustainable Communities - 'Homes for All'; Sustainable Communities - 'People Places and Prosperity' and Sustainable Communities - 'Settled Homes: Changing lives'. The main themes of these publications are to create vibrant places where people want to live; and specifically in relation to housing:-

- More affordable housing.
- Extend opportunities for home ownership.
- Increase accessibility of housing including rural housing and key workers.
- Decent homes in decent neighbourhoods.
- Deal with empty homes.
- Prevent and reduce homelessness.

Specifically in relation to housing quality and choice the 2002 Spending Review reaffirmed the obligation upon social housing providers to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010 and extended it to increase the proportion of private sector housing in decent condition occupied by vulnerable groups. The Housing Act 2004 sets out further housing



Signing the ELDC/ESHA Housing Partnership Agreement.

quality, provision and accessibility obligations including:

- a Housing Health and Safety Rating System to replace fitness standards and rank a property in relation to the risk of the most vulnerable person that could potentially occupy it;
- mandatory licensing of larger HMOs and powers to extend the requirement;
- local authority management of empty properties;
- right to buy changes include extending the qualifying period and the sale discount re payment period;
- social housing grant that can be paid to non RSL organisations; and
- protection from eviction for mobile home tenants and gypsies and the requirement to consider traveller's needs when reviewing housing issues.



2.2 Regional Policy

The ODPM published a series of regional sustainable communities plans. 'Sustainable Communities in the East Midlands: Building for the Future' is the regional framework for the East Midlands. The 2004-2010 Regional Housing Strategy, (published by the Regional Housing Board) took these issues forward after consultation with sub-regional organisations.

The strategy identifies the housing issues in the East Midlands. These are the need to:-

- improve housing quality to meet the Decent Homes Standard;
- construct more affordable homes where needed;
- improve neighbourhoods in decline and ensure the construction industry can deliver improvements;
- ensure housing provided meets a wide range of needs, particularly for those that are vulnerable;
- ensuring housing policy is joined up with social economic and environmental agendas; and
- reduce and prevent homelessness.

"East Lindsey District Council have a clear vision which enables its partners to contribute effectively to all of the Districts corporate objectives" New Wolds Housing Trust

2.3 Sub Regional/County Level

As a strong advocate of joint working East Lindsey was involved in formulating the Sub-regional Housing Action Plan, which defines the county priorities arising from the Regional Housing Strategy 2004-2010 issues. These are:

- increasing affordable housing supply;
- improving housing quality;
- fully understanding housing needs of the district including diversity;
- ensuring housing and economic development is compatible
- older persons needs are understood
- homelessness is reduced; and
- that any skills gaps in the construction industry are understood.



Skegness Clock Tower

We also represent the Lincolnshire Housing forum at the Regional Housing Market Assessment (HMA) Steering group. This is an important regional and sub regional venture aimed at assisting:

- Sub Regional Planning
- Promotion at Best Practice and Joint working across Lincolnshire
- Improved resource allocation from the region to the sub regions, and
- Improve understanding of housing needs across the region

East Lindsey is the only Lincolnshire authority involved in this HMA steering group and is committed to assisting the process through to successful implementation across Lincolnshire and the region.

Regional Homeless Forum

As previously stated ELDC chair the Lincolnshire Homelessness strategy group that has already been identified by GOEM for the good practice it demonstrates in partnership working. ELDC have been asked by GOEM to sit on the Regional Homelessness steering group. The Council are the only local housing authority on this group and are in partnership with GOEM and other partners actively developing the process by which a regional homelessness strategy can be developed that will influence the Regional housing strategy.

2.3.1 Supporting People in Lincolnshire

This programme plays a vital role in supporting people to maintain and remain in their home. It is a major

"East Lindsey District Council Housing constantly demonstrates excellent practice, in working together with other organisations, such as Police, Probation and Health services to provide public protection of the highest quality" Tony Eyres MAPPP Manager



Linx Homes: Elizabeth Court Extra Care Scheme

component to achieve housing accessibility and the reduction of homelessness. ELDC will chair the Supporting People Commission Body in 2005, and is a member of the Core Strategy Group. We will work in partnership to deliver the best possible housing support services for the people of Lincolnshire.

- The Supporting People Strategy 2005-2010.

We welcome the production of the strategy, which plans and prioritises the delivery of the Supporting People Programme to provide high quality supported accommodation services for vulnerable people. Following consultation the document prioritises the following client groups.

- Young People
- Homeless People
- Domestic Violence
- Older Persons
- People with Mental Health Problems
- Physical and Sensory disabilities

The immediate areas for action are to develop move on services, focus on substance misuse, ensure quality, choice and value for money and increase diversity.

2.3.2 The Health Agenda

There is a strong relationship between housing and health. The quality of housing and the housing environment has the potential to impact positively or negatively on the occupants' physical and mental health. We can make a positive impact on the East Lindsey PCT's strategy to address health inequalities by promoting affordable warmth, tackling housing quality particularly cold, dampness and increasing the provision of affordable housing.

2.3.3 Local Public Service Agreements

We are partners in the Lincolnshire LPSA, which has two themes of sustaining communities and economic sustainability. The LPSA has twelve targets under these themes. We are working directly to deliver targets in relation to reducing hospital admissions as a result of falls and assisting older persons to live independently through disabled facility adaptations and new build affordable housing. We can also assist in the delivery of targets in relation to skills training and sustaining employment through construction training local procurement of labour and materials (which will stimulate the local economy) as part of our housing capital programme.

2.4 Corporate Level

Since the publication of our last Housing Strategy there have been significant developments in identifying and addressing both corporate and East Lindsey community issues. The Local Strategic Partnership has been set up and a Community Strategy published. East Lindsey has also published its Corporate Strategy.

2.4.1 The East Lindsey Community Strategy

This was published in 2004 and is the product of extensive consultation with 100 organisations and partners involved in its development. The strategy plans over a 15-year term the actions needed to make East Lindsey a better place to live, work and visit. The document's development has focused very much on a 'bottom up' approach with issues and priorities being brought forward from the community level. Housing was highlighted as a clear community priority.

The housing vision is to 'achieve and maintain a balanced sustainable housing market, which meets the current and future needs of the population of East Lindsey'

The housing aims are:

- to ensure the availability of housing to meet need;
- to increase the provision of affordable housing;
- to ensure appropriate housing stock is accessible to all;
- to improve the quality, condition and resource efficiency of all housing; and
- to provide appropriate housing advice and support for all.

ELDC has worked closely in the formulation of the Community Strategy housing action plan and continues to work closely with the LSP to deliver these housing and related aims.

The Community Strategy action plan targets 600 more affordable homes to be complete by December 2008. We are the lead organisation to deliver this in partnership with RSLs

2.4.2 The Corporate Strategy and Corporate Delivery Framework

The Corporate Strategy defines ELDC's mission, aims and priorities (see 1.1). The document is our plan to deliver national, regional and local priorities informed by extensive research into the needs of the district and the Community Strategy.

The delivery framework for the actions within the Corporate Strategy are set out in the Delivery Plan. This covers our performance management framework from Community

and Corporate Strategies to strategic and service planning and finally individual staff performance appraisals. This maintains a link, called the 'golden thread' from the community strategy to each individual's contribution to achieving corporate and community targets

This housing strategy sits with this framework at the strategic plan level between the delivery plan and individual service business plans (SBP). SBPs are our annual service planning and performance target setting. The Housing SPB is linked to the



Housing Strategy by shared targets and a specific SBP target to achieve a minimum of 80% of our housing strategy targets in the first year, rising to 100% in 3 years.

2.4.3 ELDC Local Plan 2007-2012

Planning is a principal partner in the delivery of affordable housing. We work closely with them to deliver our planned affordable housing programme. The Local Plan is currently being revised and is forecast for adoption in 2007. This is a key document for housing delivery both in terms of planned numbers of homes and the land use policies to deliver affordable homes. Based on current structure plan targets (2001-2021) the Local Plan aims to provide a balanced supply of housing and to allocate land for a further 5 years beyond adoption date for market housing at 520 homes per annum (subject to fluctuations in the market) and Regional Planning Guidance 8 indicates that 25% of homes should be affordable.

We have revised our Section 106 policy to increase the proportion of affordable homes on private developments to up to 30% in recognition of the extreme need in East Lindsey. (See 4.1.3)

2.4.4 ELDC Economic Development Strategy

Our draft Economic Development Strategy 2005-2010's aim is that "East Lindsey in 2020 will be a place that business and residents do not want to leave because of the quality of life and opportunity. It will also be a place that business and people want to visit and move to because of its combination of high quality living and dynamic economic activity."

There is an important link between housing and economic development. If we can increase personal wealth through economic development we can address deprivation and reduce demand for affordable housing. Household income is also linked to quality of life and the ability to afford and maintain a home a key component of that. If we can improve income potentially more people will be able to exercise greater housing choices and access the open market.

Key economic development priorities include, increasing skills, increasing quality tourism related employment, and the continual improvement of land and infrastructure to support economic development, with priority in Louth, Skegness and Horncastle – all of which are priority housing locations.

The lack of construction skills and employment is an area of concern for housing and joint working with economic development is discussed under 4.1.4 'employment opportunities'.

We are also liaising with economic development over key worker housing provision and sharing plans for housing/economic development activities in the district to ensure affordable housing is available to people wishing to take up employment in the district.

Key Issues for the strategy to take forward from the national regional and local agenda in relation to our housing priorities

Enable More Affordable Housing

- The role of housing in the provision of sustainable communities
- More affordable housing and decent homes in decent neighbourhoods
- Understanding housing needs and housing markets at the regional and local level
- Incorporate sustainable development principles into development
- Make best use of land opportunities

Improve the Quality of Housing

- Decent homes in the social sector
- Delivering decent homes in private sector occupied by vulnerable groups
- Improvements to the quality of housing including empty homes
- Robust monitoring and enforcement of standards in the private sector

Improve the Accessibility of Housing

- Accessibility and security of housing particularly to vulnerable groups
- Accessibility to housing for all including specific and special needs groups and rural housing

Prevent Homelessness

- Prevention of homelessness

Case study

Rachel used to own her home with a partner, but after a two year period of trouble within the relationship, she had to leave quickly, without taking any of her possessions with her.

She stayed with her parents but found this untenable and was worried that the relationship would be damaged.

She was off work sick, and her confidence was at an all time low as she experienced the homelessness investigation process. She felt that there was little else that could go wrong and struggled to see beyond the circumstances she found herself in.

A housing support worker was assigned to help her.

The support worker began to provide guidance through the process, offering reassurance and proactive advice on how to approach the next stage. Rachel's confidence kicked back in and she took control of her surroundings to ensure the people she shared with kept to the same standards as her own.

After 3 months, she desperately needed her own home and was beginning to fall back into despair. A suitable property became available and Rachel said "I began to feel hope again". She was helped to access the community fund for carpets and furniture, whilst being introduced to the furniture recycling organisation, Renew. They found her some spare garden equipment and Rachel's desire to cultivate the garden at her new home came to fruition.

Rachel felt that being allocated an appropriate staff member allowed her to build up trust in the working relationship and it was important that this person remained the same. She felt that the support worker actually empathised with the issues that were affecting her. Rachel now works part time and step by step is taking herself back up to where she started, but this time with all her independence and self esteem intact and the respect of her parents who can see how far she has come.



Chapter Three - Housing Markets and Housing Need in East Lindsey

3.1 Introduction

Understanding our housing and related needs in East Lindsey is vitally important to deliver appropriate housing services. We commissioned the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) to undertake a district housing need assessment in 1999 and update in 2003. We also undertook a Private Sector Stock Condition Survey in 2003 and are will be inviting tenders for a new stock condition survey and needs assessment by December 2005. We also monitor housing data on a quarterly basis, including land registry information on house prices, changes to the housing register and demand for social housing and rental data. This information is kept on electronic data bases for interpretation and comparison.

A detailed assessment of the housing needs and housing markets is provided in the supporting document 'Housing Needs in East Lindsey 2005'. This document provides detailed information on

- Population including size, age profiles, ethnicity, migration and health
- Economy
- Deprivation
- Housing including the housing market, house prices, affordability and access, first time buyers and key workers
- Social/Affordable housing including demand, housing register and lettings
- Private Sector stock condition
- Private rented housing including rent levels, affordability
- Homelessness

This chapter only provides a summary of the main points and issues, which affect East Lindsey and which are the reason for our four housing priorities to address these needs.

3.2 An Overview of East Lindsey

Geographically ELDC is one of the largest local authorities in the United Kingdom. Its population of 130,500 is spread across a geographical area of at some 700 sq miles. There is much to point to a high quality of life in East Lindsey. It is a rural district with scenic market towns and varied and picturesque countryside including fens and the Wolds (an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). East Lindsey is also a coastal district and has nearly all the tourist coastline in Lincolnshire. Our largest town has a population under 18,000 and there is limited congestion on our roads. East Lindsey is often summarised as offering "a more relaxed pace of life".

However to those on low incomes, the vulnerable and disadvantaged there is a stark contrast to this idyll

- East Lindsey's size and rurality, coupled with a dispersed population creates enormous transport issues and the lack of public transport can lead to serious social isolation.



Rural Housing -
Wainfleet All Saints

- Mobility and access to employment, services and facilities are serious issues due to the size of the district.
- The tourist coastline is an area of low paid, seasonal work and has areas of extreme deprivation
- The lack of infrastructure and remoteness of the district mean there are few major employers.

3.3 Summary of Key Housing and Related Issues in East Lindsey

3.3.1 Population

East Lindsey can be summarised as having an increasing and ageing population. We have the highest percentage proportion of people over 65 in the East Midlands. In all age ranges over 50 we exceed national and regional averages and in all age ranges under 50 we are below. We also have the lowest percentages of people under 24 in Lincolnshire.

In-migration to the district has increased our population by 111% since 1991, above both national and regional averages and this growth is estimated to continue (we have the 3rd highest growth forecast in Lincolnshire). Much of this migration is by retiring older persons and those with health issues rather than by younger persons, as there are limited employment opportunities.

We have the 3rd highest incidents of 'limiting long-term illness' in the region, which is particularly concentrated on the coast. There are also higher rates of premature death than county or regional averages, which is indicative of poor health.

Our population is predominantly classed as 'white British'; our BME population has increased but is still relatively minimal at 1.3%.

3.3.2 Economy

East Lindsey can be summarised as having a relatively low skill, low wage economy with below national averages for those in full time employment, and higher levels of economic inactivity (due to high rates of retirement and those looking after permanently sick or disabled) than the national average.

Income is the second lowest wage in the county and in both 2000 and 2004 assessments of deprivation we have areas in the top percentages of deprivation, which are particularly concentrated on the coast.



3.3.3 Housing Needs

● House Prices and the Housing Market

House prices have increased dramatically in East Lindsey over the last 5 years, by around 128%, which has caused serious affordability problems. Affordability of housing is linked to income. If 3 to 3.5 times average income is taken as an agreed level of affordability, East Lindsey's prices are significantly in excess of the affordability level. Wages for the same period have only increased by 10% and currently the average house price is 8 times average income.

Sutton on Sea

House prices increases have not been fuelled by local people. Consultation with local estate agents in 2003 indicated that as much as 65% of house purchases were being made by people from outside the district. Therefore home purchase is now beyond the means of many on local incomes. It is estimated, (CURS 2003) that up to 70% of newly formed households in East Lindsey, cannot afford the market and indications are that key workers, who are working in a relatively well paid sectors within the district may now be struggling to access the market.

- **Extremely High Affordable Housing Demand**

East Lindsey is a district of high affordable housing need. We have no significant low demand issues in the district and the housing register now has over 5000 applications for a limited supply of affordable housing. This demand has increased dramatically in recent years and is continuing to rise.

The highest demand areas within the district are Skegness (34% of those on the housing register), Louth (14%) and Mablethorpe (11%). Demand is high for all property types to rent, with the exception of some traditional bedsit/rural older persons accommodation.

- **Undersupply of affordable housing**

East Lindsey has the lowest percentage of social housing stock (at nearly 11%) in Lincolnshire. It is also well below the England average of 19%. East Lindsey has the highest percentage of occupation in the private housing sector in Lincolnshire approaching 90% (74% owner occupation and 15% private sector rented)

East Lindsey has 6228 RSL affordable homes. On average around 500 of these homes become available for letting/re-letting annually. Between 1999-2005 we have completed 700 more affordable homes and a further 650 are planned between now and 2009. However on average in the region of 60 affordable homes per annum have been lost through right to buy. Therefore the net gain of affordable housing is considerably less, and opportunities to be accommodated from the housing register limited.



Spilsby

Annual Re-lets / Lettings	500
Rent Assist Scheme	150
Ave. planned affordable homes to 2009 650 divided by 4 years =	163
TOTAL Letting Opportunities Per Annum	813

The high and medium need levels of the Housing Register constitute about 1724 (May 05). Therefore in spite of a significant new build programme it would take more than two years to address the needs of the two highest bands of the housing register, if no one else applied, and this does not include the needs of the low and very low need households. If we aim to reduce waiting times as per Appendix Ia we need to increase supply by 331 affordable homes per annum.

Therefore we have a serious shortfall of affordable housing and further increasing the supply of affordable housing is vital. CURS highlighted the need for additional affordable housing development in their 2003 study as well as the need to broaden tenure choices and look at how best the existing housing stock can be utilised and remodelled. These processes should be linked to sustainability factors and demand.

- **Decent Homes in the Social Rented Sector**

From information provided by our RSL partners approximately 660 (11%) of our affordable housing stock does not meet the decent homes standards. The majority of RSL partners have relatively new stock in the district and meeting the standard is not a major issue. Linx Homes (as the stock transfer company) have the largest number of stock (and the largest proportion of older stock). From information provided at least 43% of the 660 homes have been improved to meet the standard by 2004/5. All our partners have confirmed that they are on target to meet the decent homes standard in all their housing stock by 2010. See Appendix IIa.

- **Private Sector Housing Issues and Housing Quality Issues**

Private sector rented housing at 16% is significantly above the national average (of 12%) and the highest in Lincolnshire.

We undertook a private sector stock condition survey in 2002/03 by taking a representative sample of house types and tenures across the district, which showed that in the region of 2.5% of our total housing stock is unfit. This equates to nearly 1500 properties. At an estimated average grant cost £7847 per property the total cost to make fit is potentially over £11.7 million. The principal causes of unfitness disrepair, dampness, poor quality kitchen and bathroom fittings and condensation.

CURS 2003, highlighted the need for East Lindsey to address housing quality issues.

- **Empty Homes**



At April 1 2005 we had 1478 empty properties in the district. This figure excludes holiday/second homes for which we now charge 90% of full Council Tax, but are not directly targeted by the authority for reuse as they contribute to the tourist economy in the district. Of the 1478, 1020 have been empty for over 6 months (which we prioritise our attention on because many properties go back into use within the 6 month period without our intervention) and of these at least 500 are

empty for reasons which the authority does not prioritise for action, eg probate, property being repaired, owners in hospital or care etc.

The remaining 624 properties have been contacted by the authority with an offer of advice and assistance.

3.3.4 Homelessness

Homelessness is a major issue in East Lindsey. In 2003-04 we had 1296 homelessness claims, of which 320 we accepted a full duty to. We have been able to significantly reduce the number of homelessness claims in 2004/05 to 426, 205 we accepted a duty to, but this has only been possible with the implementation of a homelessness prevention tool kit (see 4.4.2). This aims to offer those potentially threatened with homelessness a range of options to prevent loss of the home or to find alternatives.

Homelessness remains a major issue in East Lindsey, the attraction of the coast means many present themselves as homeless here and the high proportion of households accommodated in the private sector with limited security (including the seasonally employed who reside in holiday caravans) are major causes of homelessness, along with parents and relatives no longer prepared to accommodate young people.

3.3.5 Special Needs and Specific Groups

The housing needs and issues facing particular client groups are detailed in our supplementary 'Special Needs and Specific Groups' document. This covers the needs of a range of groups, which are briefly summarised below:

- **Black and Minority Ethnic Communities**

There is limited information about this client group who represent only 2% of our population.

- **Mental Health Needs**

This client group has a range of housing needs including supported accommodation and move on.

- **Domestic Violence Victims**

There is a need for additional dispersed refuge places in East Lindsey.

- **Older Persons**

Are a significant client group with a range of needs including accommodation and support to remain independent.

- **Physical Disability**

There are a significant proportion of people on our housing register who indicate they have some form of physical disability.

- **Drug, Alcohol and Multiple Problems**

From consultation, accommodation provision specifically to support clients with these issues is required.

- **Prison Leavers**

Move on accommodation and support for

prison leavers is identified as an issue

- **European Workers**

There are limited approaches to the authority from this client group

- **Rough Sleepers**

Current estimates are that East Lindsey has less than 10 rough sleepers.

- **HIV and AIDs**

There is limited statistical information on the extent of needs for this client group.

- **Teenage Parents**

There is a range of accommodation and support needs for this group.

- **Travellers**

There is limited information on the housing needs of this group.

- **Learning Disabilities**

This client group has a range of housing needs including supported accommodation and move on.

- **Young People**

This client group has a range of housing needs including advice, support, supported accommodation and move on.

3.4 Summary of Housing Markets in East Lindsey

DTZ consulting publishing Identifying the Sub-Regional Housing Markets of the East Midland in January 2005. We have subdivided the two markets they identified in East Lindsey (the coast and the western section affected by Lincoln) into

- The tourist coastline and the towns within this area.
- The Inland Towns.
- Rural Markets

3.4.1 Tourist Coastline

- The coast can be characterised by a high ageing population with particularly high percentages of retired persons (over 40% in Sutton on Sea) who are attracted to migrate to the coast for 'retirement by the sea'.
- There are significant housing quality issues here, with a high proportion of poor quality accommodation and HMOs.

- There is extreme affordable housing demand on the coast arising from high numbers of homelessness presentations, seasonal employment and limited economic opportunities.

3.4.2 Rural Areas

- East Lindsey is a rural authority. It is classed as 'remoter rural' (ONS 2001) and has approximately 191 parishes spread over the 700 square miles. 91% of our communities have a population of less than 1000 and only 8 communities have a population in excess of 3000 (above the Housing Corporation definition of rural)
- There are significant rural affordability problems and rural remoteness issues.
- Housing need in these communities, range from significant in the larger more sustainable settlements, such as Splisby and Burgh Le Marsh, to moderate or low in the smaller communities.
- Hidden housing needs are an issue as many do not apply to the housing register as they do not see any opportunity of being re housed in their village.
- Land opportunities for development of housing are limited particularly in smaller settlements where there are no housing allocations.

3.4.3 Inland Towns

- East Lindsey has the inland towns, Louth, Horncastle, Spilsby, the Wainfleet All Saints, Wragby and Alford. These are service centres, which provide a higher level of services and facilities for the town and for the surrounding rural areas. Of these towns demand is greatest in Louth and Horncastle.
- Open market housing development and affordable housing demand is generally higher in these locations than the surrounding villages.
- Due to sustainability criteria there are more housing land allocations in the market towns than in rural areas. These present opportunities to deliver affordable housing through Section 106 planning obligations.

3.5 Conclusions/Future Trends

Whilst house prices have steadied they are not forecast to drop dramatically. Income levels are well below the 3.5 times to average house price affordability ratio and unlikely to increase dramatically. Therefore it is vital we provide alternative and low cost home ownership options if people are to afford and access housing. The undersupply of affordable housing will further diminish without investment to increase provision and replace those lost through right to buy.

With such a high reliance upon the private rented sector housing quality issues will need to be addressed through grants and enforcement, to meet decent homes and safety standards. Homelessness has only been reduced through a robust intervention by the authority, the underlying factors which cause homelessness are an ongoing threat, which require continued robust action.

East Lindsey's population is forecast to grow, due in migration, many of whom are elderly or retiring on limited income or with health issues, which places continued pressure on housing and related services to ensure housing is accessible to those with a range of needs. Therefore our housing priorities are targeted to address these needs.

Chapter Four - Delivering the Housing Service - Achieving our Housing Priorities



4.0 Introduction

This chapter describes what we are currently doing to address the national, regional and local housing needs highlighted in previous chapters. It also highlights issues we need to address or develop further.

ELDC has retained a strong housing function post housing stock transfer in 1999. Indeed it has expanded to provide a robust housing service comprising teams responsible for:

- Homelessness, housing advice and support;
- Housing strategy and development;
- Housing benefits; and
- Private sector housing regeneration.

All of which work together to provide a comprehensive service to provide more affordable homes, improve the accessibility and quality of housing and to prevent homelessness. To reflect this joint working, this chapter is presented under our four housing priorities rather than specific teams headings. It should also be noted that in making this division we are not consigning each priority to its own silo. We fully appreciate the interrelationship of our priorities.

Under each housing priority is the key housing objective. This objective is broken down into its main components and the chapter illustrates how we are delivering each component part and what more needs to be done.

a) A high quality housing service

Underpinning all our housing activities are the corporate principles.

- **Equality** We offer our services in a fair and unbiased manner. We endeavour to ensure our services are available to all without discrimination. We are making ongoing service improvements to ensure diversity is addressed and the service continues to be accessible to all.
- **Leadership** We take our strategic enabling role seriously. This strategy sets out the priorities for our district and we will enable, encourage and support all our partners to achieve these priorities.
- **Delivery** We are clearly targeting ourselves to deliver our housing priorities and wider corporate aims.
- **Customers** We respect our customers and have consulted them in the production of this strategy. We also undertake ongoing surveys to ensure that they are satisfied with the services they receive.



4.1 Housing Priority: Enabling more affordable homes

Key Objective

Increasing the sustainable development of high quality, affordable housing, which addresses demand, makes best use of available resources, encourages innovation and ensures that added value is incorporated, to achieve this and other housing and corporate objectives.

Key components of the objective.

- Increasing the amount of high quality affordable housing.
- Sustainable development to meet demand.
- Making best use of resources.
- Encouraging innovation.
- Adding value and achieving other objectives.

The first HCP scheme underway, Spilsby

4.1.1 Introduction

Since 1999 East Lindsey has delivered over 700 new affordable homes in partnership with the Housing Corporation, Regional Housing Board and Registered Social Landlords in the district. A further 200 more affordable homes are currently under construction (and 200 more planned. (see below at a). Whilst this is a fantastic achievement around 305 homes have been purchased under Right to Buy over the same period and the social housing sector remains at about half the England average. With our housing register and house prices rising we must increase the amount of affordable homes in the district.

a) ELDC Housing Capital Programme

In recognition of this extreme need for affordable housing ELDC decided to fund its own housing capital programme (HCP) in partnership with Eastern Shires Housing Association (ESHA).

Members elected to allocate £4million to a housing programme over four years in 2004. In order to secure best value from this allocation we invited all our partner RSLs to bid for this funding, in as innovative way as they liked. We also made it clear that housing was one of five corporate aims and the ability to demonstrate how all aims could be achieved would be a significant advantage.

ESHA secured the allocated and will deliver 200 affordable homes by November 2008 in a variety of locations throughout the district. They will comprise 120 rented homes and 80 shared ownership and will be provided at an average grant of £20,000. The partnership is quite innovative in that it does not exclude other RSLs, who can work in partnership with ESHA, who will develop and transfer the homes to them, and added value not just the number of homes a required outcome (see 4.1.4)

We have formulated the Programme Delivery Group (PDG) to enable and monitor programme delivery comprising housing, planning, finance, RSL Officers, land consultants and the Rural Housing Enabler.

We are also liaising with the Housing Corporation about utilising the £4million to

stimulate additional funding for more affordable housing in the district.

The success of the programme will not only be assessed by the delivery of 200 homes but also by the added value and contribution to other corporate aims. The PDG is working to achieve local procurement of labour and materials, employment training of construction workers, community safety benefits, clean environments, reduction in waste and healthier lifestyle outcomes. (see 4.1.4)

4.1.2 More affordable housing in sustainable locations to address demand

We do not want to provide housing where there is insufficient demand or in unsustainable locations with few facilities where inhabitants would experience social isolation. Utilising information from the CURS studies and the housing register we seek to provide affordable housing where need is proven in quantities appropriate to the level of need.

As part of the Local Plan process the Council has adopted a hierarchy of settlements; towns, service villages, core villages and small villages depending on size and the level of services. Affordable housing development is primarily being targeted at the proportionately larger settlements (towns, service and core villages) where services and facilities are more readily available.

a) Rural Housing

ELDC is rural district, with a significant proportion of the population residing in smaller communities. Whilst these communities could be considered unsustainable we do not believe this should be a barrier to further affordable housing development if there are proven rural housing needs. We accept that local people expressing a need for housing in their existing community do so based on the level of existing service provision available to them. This was a clear message, which arose from consultation with Parish Councils at Area Committees and is something we have a responsibility to address.

Therefore small-scale (generally between 4-10 homes) rural housing developments will be delivered in communities where there is a proven need and land and funding can be secured. To assist us to deliver rural housing we continue to support the Rural Housing Enabler Project, with the Government Office, West Lindsey District Council and a number of Housing Associations. This is a vital to evidence need and find sites in rural communities. There is an additional benefit of community engagement and consultation through liaison with Parish Councils and the housing need survey process, which goes to all households in a parish being surveyed. We are therefore concerned that Government funding for the Rural Enabler Projects ceases in March 2006 and are actively working with the group to look at how long term funding can be secured.



Lincolnshire Rural Housing Association Homes, Spilsby

'A lot more goes into creating a home, more than bricks and mortar and all involved need to be mindful and strive for the best, not just what is good enough. Would I like this? is a good criteria' – Consultation Response



Spout Yard Louth

We are also a member of the East Midlands Rural Affairs Forum, which is enormously beneficial in sharing good practice and raising issues in affordable housing delivery

b) Meeting Demand/Expanding choice

Rented housing continues to be the major thrust of our affordable housing development programme as the primary need. However having monitored the housing market and consulted with Area Committees, which are keen to address the lack of housing to buy. We are placing increasing priority on expanding tenure choices through low cost home ownership options. This also compliments recent government policies. We have funded an increasing proportion of shared ownership housing and set up a specific shared ownership register following consultation with our RSL partners (who felt some applicants may be deterred from applying on the general housing register.) Broadening tenure choice also has the additional benefit of creating more balanced communities. We therefore will seek an element of shared ownership on all affordable housing schemes of 10 or more units.

We also will be investigating alternative options for housing occupation beyond shared ownership, (such as mutual home ownership schemes and housing cooperatives) and researching whether specific groups such as key workers can still afford the housing market.

4.1.3 Making best use of resources

Resources are limited; therefore we are obliged to make best use of those available, in order that we achieve the highest number and best quality homes possible. Of these resources land and funding are of primary importance.

a) ELDC funding for more homes

Our own housing capital programme (HCP) has allocated £4 million to grant fund the delivery 200 homes in partnership with ESHA and will stimulate a total investment in ELDC of around £16 million. We also intend to use this capital expenditure to stimulate further investment in East Lindsey, primarily from the Housing Corporation and potentially through the investigation of other funding opportunities.

b) Working with Housing Corporation

i) The Housing Corporation's AHP 2006-08 Pre-Prospectus document, defines their principle for investment in affordable housing in reaction to Government objectives. They are:

- High quality affordable homes in sustainable communities
- Growth areas and housing market renewal
- Address the number of households in overcrowded or temporary accommodation
- Tackle poor housing condition
- Provide a range of low cost home ownership options
- Achieve best value in investment

The Housing Corporation is looking to deliver a number of housing types including, affordable rented homes, low cost home ownership, key worker accommodation, rural

housing and supported housing.

These principles and housing products are highly relevant to the housing issues in East Lindsey, and we consider them to be a sound basis for joint working to maximise investment in affordable housing in East Lindsey.

We consider that funding our own £4 million HCP is an important opportunity for the Housing Corporation to get best value from sharing resources. As we move increasingly into a funding environment where value for money is paramount, we believe that it is vital the Housing Corporation demonstrate to ELDC and ultimately all other authorities that there is a real financial advantage (and absolutely no financial disadvantage) in having an HCP if they want to stimulate investment by district councils in affordable housing. This will only be achieved if the Housing Corporation demonstrate that having an HCP attracts more AHP funding than would have been secured without one. Therefore we want to work with the Housing Corporation to secure an allocation in excess of 186 homes, and have put an indicative minimum target of 200 homes in the action plan. However the need in the district means we will endeavour to secure a larger allocation than this.



Linx Homes: Park Avenue, Louth under construction

c) Land

Land is a vitally important resource in the delivery of housing and planning a vitally important partner. ELDC housing has a close working relationship with the Planning Department to ensure that affordable housing is delivered through the planning process. The primary source of land for affordable housing other than the open market, (which can prevent affordable housing development if the asking price is too high), is through Section 106 obligations on private developers and through the exceptions policy.

ii) Section 106s

There is a limited amount of land for housing that can be allocated for housing in the district. This is set by the Lincolnshire Structure Plan, which distributes the county housing allocation amongst the districts. In line with the CURS 2003 study recommendation to make best use of land planning policies and as a direct response to the increasing need for affordable housing East Lindsey revised its supplementary planning guidance on the provision of affordable housing on private developments in February 2005. This increases the obligation on developers to provide free serviced land for affordable housing to a maximum 30% of the overall site depending on the level of housing need.

Planning Guidance is also expected in the summer allowing the lowering of site thresholds where the obligation to provide affordable housing arises, from 25 dwellings /1 hectare sites to 15 dwellings/0.5 hectare and in rural areas, sites of more than 4 dwellings. The draft Local Plan includes polices to ensure that we are able to use these lower thresholds.

Section 106s are an important mechanism for delivering more affordable housing, particularly as our RSL partners are requested to bid to us for the sites to ensure that we secure maximum value for money from the process. This process has achieved rented housing and shared ownership developments and nil grant and in some cases additional units off site.

To ensure social integration of the affordable housing our normal requirement is on-site provision and we utilise the private developer designs whenever possible. We also require the housing to be 'pepper-potted' throughout the site, rather than in one single location.

The anticipated number of affordable housing units delivered through Section 106s is shown at 6.7.

iii) Exception Policy

This policy enables planning permission to be granted for affordable housing where normal private development would not. We welcome its retention in the revision of PPG3 as a mechanism to deliver affordable housing where need is proven and land opportunities not available. The exception policy is defined in the Local Plan and is an important mechanism to deliver affordable housing in rural locations as section 106s on allocated land alone will not bring forward sufficient land to meet affordable housing demand.

iv) Public Bodies/Land Owners

With the increasing concern about the affordability of housing for key workers we intend to approach public bodies and private employers who hold land for the opportunity to deliver key worker housing in partnership on land owned by them, where need is proven.

v) ELDC Land Assets

East Lindsey District Council has limited land left that is suitable for further affordable housing development. Working in partnership with our Technical Services Department and Planning we have identified the remaining sites that we consider most suitable for further affordable housing development. Larger sites will be sold with a 30% affordable housing quota obligation and where there is no social housing demand the proceeds from land sales will be used to fund additional development elsewhere in the district.

In the next 4 years we forecast the potential delivery of:

- 40 plots as Section 106 opportunities on sites in Sutton on Sea, Woodhall Spa and Tetney;
- 15 homes in Friskney and Halton Hologate; and
- 40 plots subject to evidence of need on exception sites in Ingoldmells, Marshchapel and Saltfleet and possibly South Reston.

d) Making best use of existing housing stock

The CURS study update highlighted the need to consider making best use of existing stock. Approximately one third of our current affordable housing stock is 3-bedroom family accommodation, the vast majority of which being traditional post war 'council housing'. In view of the age of this 3-bedroom accommodation it is likely that many families homes are now occupied by older couples and single persons. We would like to investigate in partnership with RSLs the age profiles and occupancy rates of their 3 bedroom accommodation and whether construction of one and two bedroom bungalows would be attractive to occupants of these homes, as a means to free their current homes for family occupation. We also support the endeavours of our RSL partners in making best use of their bedsit accommodation.

4.1.4 Encouraging innovation/adding value

We have always welcomed innovation in housing development in the district and are

proud of the high quality housing that has been delivered through our LASHG housing partnership which set greater construction standards than the Housing Corporation's Scheme Development Standards. We also look forward to innovative schemes being delivered through the current and future AHP programme and our own Housing Capital Programme.



New Wolds Housing Trust Homes:
Spout Yard, Louth

We do recognise the potential financial burden that this places on our RSL partners but they and we both recognise the importance of evolution and innovation in housing development.

We are keen to deliver greater energy and resource efficiency in housing, more modern methods of construction and are keen to evaluate the potential for alternative forms of housing delivery, such as mutual home ownership schemes, self build and training schemes.

a) Concept statements- working with communities

The Countryside Agency introduced the principle of concept statements, which are designed to ensure that maximum quality is delivered on development sites through an examination of the sites assets and potential. Crucial to quality is the process of consultation with stakeholders and the general public.

We recognise the benefit of this in delivering high quality sustainable housing development and are working with ESHA to ensure all schemes delivered through our capital programme undertake an initial site concept statement. We have also worked with planning to undertake a concept statement for a large site in Winthorpe, Skegness, looking at what could be delivered on site.

b) Achieving wider aims- adding value

We have already described how housing is a principle component of quality of life, which directly links with other corporate aims, and priorities of East Lindsey (see Chapter 1).

We are therefore keen to ensure that outcomes from housing development include added value in relation to:

- **Sport and leisure provision and healthier lifestyles**

We are keen to explore opportunities for joint working, possibly through attracting play facilities and appropriate green space on larger affordable housing developments. Under local public service agreements, Sport and Leisure have made a commitment to assist in reducing falls and hospital admissions for older persons through fitness and independent living and have highlighted the value of 'community space' in housing developments, where group activities can be undertaken. We will look at the feasibility of this as part of larger affordable housing developments (20+ units)

- **Employment opportunities**

i) At a recent Prince of Wales Affordable Rural Housing Initiative conference the comment was made that the average age of a construction site worker is 48 years old. Lack of construction skills is also an identified sub regional issue.

We therefore need to ensure that young people are attracted into construction work and receive good quality training.

We are working in partnership with economic development, the Coastal Action Zone, Lincolnshire Enterprise and the Learning Skills Council to examine the need for further training provision in the district related to the building industry and aim to achieve appropriate additional training provision including a training centre and linked self build scheme offering on site training.

As part of our capital housing programme we are monitoring the progress of construction industry trainees and apprentices and will be encouraging all our partner RSLs to maximize training outputs. We are also encouraging local procurement of labour and materials in construction and the involvement of local communities in the delivery of housing.

- **Reduction in crime and increasing community safety**

Crime reduction and community safety is addressed by the Housing Corporation's Scheme Development Standards and through architectural liaison officers/secure by design accreditation. But there may be wider potential we would like to further explore. Fear of burglary and crime is a key concern to residents - we will be exploring the potential for funding/initiatives that could help address these issues. We also will be working closely with Community Safety Partnership to maximise crime reduction outcomes as part of the housing programme.

- **Improve the quality of our environment**

We aim to deliver improvements to our environment through high quality housing design and site layouts, reusing empty homes and through the use of sustainable development principals, which endeavours to minimalise the impact on resource usage in both construction and home occupation. At a practical level we will also publicise recycling initiatives to new tenants through joint working with our Waste Recycling Section.

"East Lindsey District Council and the Eastern Shires Housing Group have developed a strong partnership approach to programme delivery based on mutual trust and a genuine desire to provide high quality, affordable homes for local people." Eastern Shires Housing Group



Louth

Challenges for Strategy Period: Enabling more affordable homes

Increasing Sustainable Development of More affordable housing

Attracting additional resources into ELDC.

Ongoing understanding of demand for housing, the provision of the right homes in the right place - having regard to sustainability issues.

Broadening tenure choices and the availability of housing for existing and emerging needs groups e.g. key workers and the BME population.

Best Use of Resources

Ensuring land is available and funding opportunities for further development are maximised.

Encouraging Innovation

Encouraging innovation in development against cost issues examining alternatives - and funding sources to ensure a continued development programme to address housing need.

Adding Value

Achieving other corporate aims and priorities as part of the development process.

4.2 Housing Priority: Improving the quality of housing

Key objective

To provide safe, secure, resource efficient and decent homes across tenures by providing high quality new build housing, improving the quality of homes in the private sector and regulating and enforcing legislative quality standards.



Key components of the objective.

- Decent Homes in the public and private sector through
 - the quality of new build housing;
 - improving private sector housing quality through grants and enforcement; and
 - reusing empty homes.
- Resource/energy efficiency.

4.2.1 Introduction

ELDC has major housing quality issues. Improving the quality of housing covers the whole housing market from ensuring existing RSL and private sector stock meet decent homes standards to ensuring that the provision of new build housing is of the highest possible quality. Quality also relates to factors such as warmth and affordability of heating.

4.2.2 Quality in new build

Generally the quality of new build housing is heavily regulated and quality is ensured through both the planning process and building regulations. In addition to this, the Housing Corporation's Scheme Development Standards (SDS) regulate quality of affordable housing provided by RSLs. In recognition of this quality standard SDS is a requirement of ELDC's Housing Capital programme, and we encourage our RSL partners to achieve additional quality in the delivery of affordable housing. For example we grant funded Lincolnshire Rural Housing Associations scheme at Franklin Gardens Spilsby, which has delivered very highly rated energy efficient and resource efficient housing and grey water recycling as part of a Wolds Housing Trust scheme in Horncastle.

4.2.3 Improving quality in the private sector (and social rented sector)

Fundamental to ensuring housing quality is that people's current home is a safe, secure environment, which is in good condition and does not adversely affect health. This is



Linx Homes bungalow in Wainfleet

achieved through the provision of housing renewal grants and enforcement action against those that do not meet obligations placed on them by regulations.

As a Large Scale Voluntary Transfer Authority we do not hold our own stock, therefore the Decent Homes Standard does not directly impact on us as a housing provider. However we do liaise with our RSL partners who advise they are on target to meet the standard. To address the delivery of Decent Homes in the private sector we have a number of grant and enforcement activities.

a) Housing renewal grants

Following the Regulatory Reform Order of 2002 East Lindsey took the view that it was important to allocate considerable resources (£1.05 million 2004-06) to a range of discretionary housing renewal grants to improve housing condition. We have an active policy of assisting householders with the cost of improving and maintaining their home to address fitness, decency, security and energy standards, thereby improving the quality of the home to its occupants.

In order to target these grants at the most deprived areas and vulnerable households to meet Decent Homes Standard Obligations, the grant is means tested. A summary of the available grants is listed at Appendix II. We completed 46 renewal grants in 2004/5 to address housing condition issues for vulnerable households.

We are targeting ourselves to achieve significant improvements to private sector housing and intend to deliver 120 improvement grants and take 260 enforcement actions in the next two years.

b) Housing enforcement

Housing enforcement actions fall into two main areas:

(i) Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)

ELDC has a high number of HMOs particularly on the coast, where many are frequently of poor quality. The mandatory licensing scheme under the Housing Act 2004 is welcomed, to improve the quality of this type of housing. We will also consider whether we can extend this to a voluntary scheme for smaller HMOs.

We will also look at opportunities for cross boundary working with Boston Borough, South Holland and South Kesteven District Councils for licensing of housing occupied by agricultural workers.

(ii) Single occupied dwellings

We receive a high number of complaints relating to disrepair, condensation and lack of affordable and controllable heating systems from tenants in the private rented sector. All complaints are investigated within three days, except gas safety (which is same day) and appropriate advice to tenants and landlords is given. If a property is unfit or in poor repair, appropriate enforcement action is taken.

Statistical analysis of our enforcement work show that the majority of problems are reported in Skegness and along the coastal strip, where housing there are high incidents of deprivation, concentrations of poor quality housing and housing inappropriate for full time occupancy.

We take a proactive role in the private sector landlord's forum, (which we initiated and which meets quarterly to discuss the wide range of issues affecting landlords) to educate and advise them of changes in legislation, and involve other agencies that can assist in improving standards of management and housing conditions.

In situations where no statutory enforcement action can be taken we give advice to both landlord and tenant.

c) Empty homes

ELDC is a member of the East Midlands Empty Property Forum and we produced our Empty Homes Strategy in 2003. We recognise that fact that empty homes are a wasted resource, potentially detract from the visual quality of our environment and can be a magnet for anti social behaviour.

To date we have employed a wide range of activities to stimulate the re use of empty homes from publicity and advice, rent assist schemes, leasing arrangements with private sector and RSL landlords and the purchase of empty properties by RSL partners. We also offer an empty property grant to owners to encourage reuse as affordable housing.

Unfortunately consultation with empty property owners found that they considered grant



Victoria Road, Mablethorpe. An example of a once empty property being brought into use

levels were insufficient and with too many conditions. Equally RSL partners site the difficulty of purchasing suitable empty properties within current AHP grant limits. Therefore in order to address these issues we will monitor the revised empty property grant's effectiveness, explore best practice and re-consult with empty property owners. We have had considerable success under the rent assist scheme and are targeting ourselves to achieve 265 vacant dwellings, brought back into use, over the next two years.

d) Promoting resource/energy efficiency

(i) Introduction

Fundamental to housing quality is energy efficiency and the ability of occupants to keep warm. Under the Home Energy Conservation Act, 1995 (HECA) we seek to promote and encourage energy efficiency measures.

Not only is energy efficiency an environmental issue but those on a low income may be fuel poor and struggle to heat their homes. This is not only a comfort issue but cold homes can cause health problems and in some cases death.

(ii) Affordable Warmth Strategy

In 2005 the Council will be updating its 2002 'Strategy for Delivering Affordable Warmth in East Lindsey' (which has ascertained that 13.9% of households (8350) may be living in fuel poverty) to reduce fuel poverty and associated health related problems. The strategy will raise awareness of the issues and further investigates needs.

(iii) Grants and discount schemes

Referring people to grants and discount schemes for energy efficiency improvements is a major step to delivering affordable warmth and alleviating fuel poverty. These include the Government's 'Warm Front' Scheme that provides grants for eligible households. By using carefully targeted mail-shots in September 2003 and December 2004 we greatly increased the number of households who received assistance and over £2.3 million in Government funding has been attracted into East Lindsey since June 2000

To assist those who are not eligible for a full grant but who would in reality struggle to find money for the cost of works the Council has been able to offer Warm Front Top-up grants from January 2005. If a contribution is still required in rented properties, the landlord is being asked to pay the difference, rather than the tenant. We are also publicising other discounted insulation and energy efficiency schemes run by energy providers to help the residents of East Lindsey.

(iv) Partnerships - reaching out to the public

The Affordable Warmth Strategy recognises the need to forge partnerships, both within the Council and with external bodies to publicise energy efficiency. We provide training to appropriate frontline staff and establish referral mechanisms. We give presentations to other advice providers such as Citizens Advice Bureau, Age Concern and attend public forums such as the Older People's Forum. We are



working toward all parish councils receiving a presentation and 40 presentations will have been undertaken by September 2005. We also use a variety of methods including radio and press releases to provide information to the general public.

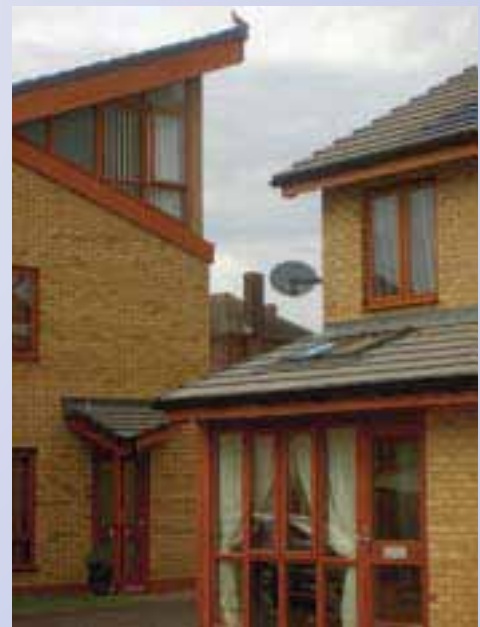
(v) Lincolnshire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre

The Lincolnshire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (EEAC) is based at ELDC and provides free, expert energy advice to over 500,000 households throughout Lincolnshire, in partnership with the Lincolnshire authorities including North and North East Lincolnshire. The centre provides general information and advice as well as a free, personalised and impartial Home Energy Report on the most cost-effective ways to save energy in the home. It also provides information on the availability of grants and special offers in the local area for the installation of energy saving measures. Since its conception, the Advice Centre has advised over 45,000 households 9,100 of which are households in East Lindsey.

(vi) Resources Efficiency in New Build Affordable Housing

We welcome new build affordable housing schemes, which offer enhanced resource and energy efficient features. Not only does this have a positive environmental impact by using resources sparingly and minimalising the use of fossil fuels, greater efficiency features also reduce the running costs of the home for the occupant making them affordable to occupy and maintain. A particularly excellent example of this is Franklin Gardens Spilsby. The scheme won two Countryside Agency Affordable Home Ownership awards in 2004 for 'Best Rural Scheme' and 'Innovation in Affordable Housing'.

ELDC supported this innovative scheme along with the Housing Corporation and the Department of Trade and Industry. Developed by Lincolnshire Rural Housing Association, the scheme used materials and construction techniques to achieve the National House Building Council's ecohomes environmental performance rating of very good and almost achieved 'excellent'. The scheme incorporates very high standards of energy efficiency. The homes were designed with mono-pitch roofs to maximise energy and light from sun and incorporate photovoltaic roof tiles. These generate electricity and surpluses, are fed back into the national grid and rebated from the occupant's electricity bill. For the residents annual energy costs can be as low as £120.



Franklin Gardens, Spilsby

Future Challenges for the Housing Strategy Period improving the quality of housing

Ensuring vulnerable people in private sector are not disadvantaged or excluded.

Further investigation into needs in the private sector.

Decent homes in the private sector.

Increasing the understanding and availability of energy efficiency measures to promote affordable warmth.

Increase the proportion of empty homes brought back into use.

Case study

Mr and Mrs Short are owner occupiers and have lived in their home for 30 years. Mr Short retired early due to ill health and they have been managing on their pensions for some time, but increasingly they have been concerned about the condition of their home and having to watch how much they spend on food, including fresh fruit and vegetables.



When a local councillor called around on his campaign trail for the local elections, Mrs Short mentioned her worries about the future and how the lack of help was making her and her husband feel more ill both physically and mentally. The Councillor contacted the Housing Department to see if any help could be given and, the housing support worker, went to visit.

A housing support plan was put into operation to help resolve a number of issues including;

- help with council tax payments, including backdated payments,
- help from the Warmfront energy efficiency organisation for free loft insulation, free cavity wall insulation and a commitment to help towards changing the central heating boiler if it fails over the winter.
- arranging a disabled sticker to allow them to use their car in the town more effectively
- attendance allowance to help with extra needs.

Because of the HSW practical help, Mr and Mrs Short estimate that their income has been increased by 40%, which means they can now buy more healthier foods and save towards a holiday with their family.

Their physical health has improved and will be maintained in the winter due to the insulation provided and more to spend on heating costs. Finally, their mental health has improved as they now feel that they are better able to cope financially as the future seems much brighter thanks to the support the council gave.

4.3 Increasing the accessibility of housing

Key objective

To ensure that everyone has access to an appropriate home, either new build or through adaptation of existing homes, financial support and the provision of information, irrespective of his or her age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality or special needs.

Key components of the objective

- Physical access to new build homes.
- Access through adaptations to existing home.

- Financial support to ensure housing can be accessed afforded and maintained by all.
- Provision of a high quality housing advice service so all clients are aware of their housing options and how to access housing.
- Accessibility of housing for all



4.3.1 Introduction

Accessibility is a wide issue. To successfully address accessibility, all issues, which could present a potential barrier to accessing home, have to be addressed, including financial issues, special or specific needs such as a disability or the need for support, English may not be a first language or a customer may simply want good quality information about their options so an informed choice can be made.

We are also making the affordable housing we develop accessible through choice of tenure (See 4.1.). We are planning a range of affordable housing tenure choices, and will be investigating the needs of special/specific needs group.

4.3.2 Physical access to new build homes

Primarily the issue of housing accessibility is dealt with through Building Regulations, which set the accessibility standards on new development and conversion of dwellings under part M of the Building Regulations. New homes should be accessible for a visit by a disabled person.

Highlighted in our 'Special Needs and Specific Groups Supplement 2005' are a range of specific needs groups, some of whom require greater levels of accessibility features if their home is to meet their needs. Those with a physical disability or age related infirmity are most likely to require features such as wider doorways and low-level worktops in kitchens for wheelchair users.

Recognising that 'physical disability' covers a range of ability and needs, the issue for the authority is what is an appropriate level of accessibility beyond part M of Building Regulations in the construction of new affordable housing, and where should it be developed.

Under our former LASHG programme on larger development of over 30 dwellings, we have required a greater level of disability adaptation on 2 new build units as part of the development. Lifetime Homes Standards which incorporate features that make a home more easily adaptable to the changing needs of its occupant offer higher degrees of flexibility but do cost more to construct.

4.3.3 Accessibility of the current home

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are the cornerstone of ensuring that the current home is accessible to its occupants in the event of changing or progressive needs, (such as age related infirmity or a disability). These grants are delivered on a 'tenure blind' basis i.e. no distinction is made between the social or private sector, and are dealt with strictly on



Access Ramp for a wheelchair user

a date of receipt of referral order.

The Delivering Adaptations: A Good Practice Guide November 2004 recommends specific delivery targets, which we are working toward. We are currently working to decrease the initial inspection time by investigating alternative means of delivery including the use of Architectural Practices and Home Improvement Agency, which we would like to role out to the whole of Lincolnshire. We are also developing agreed schedules of rates with selected contractors to negate the need for tendering for the

cost of works to speed up the delivery process.

We have currently appointed a local architectural practice to undertake survey work to reduce the waiting time for surveys. We aim to have delivered 450 DFGs by the end of 2007/08.

4.3.4 Accessibility through financial support (housing benefits)

Insufficient income to afford a home, which meets needs, is a significant barrier to housing access. The provision of a high quality housing benefit service is fundamental to ensuring that housing options are accessible to those on low incomes unable to afford market or subsidised rents outright. The Council's housing benefit service also plays a major part in ensuring that private sector landlords remain willing to make accommodation available to tenants in receipt of benefits which is a fundamental component of accessibility.

a) The service aims and objectives

The Housing Benefit team aims to ensure that the service provided is efficient, prompt and customer focused and is designed to make sure that claimants are aware of their entitlements and receive the maximum benefit that they are entitled to, easily, accurately and promptly.

b) Service need and challenges

Over 12,500 people use the service (around 8000 customers are seen at our front line surgeries around the district) and demand is increasing with the take up of Pension Credits and greater national promotion of Council Tax Benefit. This increasing demand and the need for the service to be compliant with the Governments Verification Framework by the summer of 2005 create challenges for the service.

Also nationally the government is evaluating the outcome of the Local Housing Allowance pilots. Which aims to speed up the processing of Housing Benefit claims by removing the need for private sector claims to be individually valued by the Rent Officer Service and replacing it with standard allowances used in the calculation based on family make up.



Franklin Gardens, Spilsby

In addition it also sees a change to payments with the majority of customers receiving their Housing Benefit directly. This will need careful introduction and liaison with local landlords to ensure they do not withdraw their accommodation from the rented sector thus creating a shortage of suitable accommodation. Nationally the scheme is to be rolled out to all authorities by 2008.

- Links to partner agencies remain vital to the service provision and major changes in the way customers claim their primary benefits.

(Income Support / Jobseekers allowance etc) due later in 2005 will impact on the working practices between the Local Authority and Jobcentre Plus offices.

c) Meeting the challenges

To meet these challenges the service will:

- recruit an additional assessment officer posts as well as increasing the available resource to visit customers in their own homes;
- create a monitoring section to improve performance management data collation and identify and monitor work standards and training needs of staff;
- conduct a staff training needs analysis; and
- provide a major training programme on the section's new claims processing software.

These aims ensure that the service is accurate and timely ensuring that claimants have the opportunity to access and maintain decent accommodation

d) Rent Officer Service Determinations

Another barrier to accessing homes in the private sector is the issue of Rent Officer determinations against market rents. Many rents are assessed at levels below what the landlord is charging, therefore benefit recipients would have to make up an often sizeable shortfall in the rent to access a home. This is frequently beyond their financial means. We will continue to raise the issue with the Rent Officer and investigate best practice elsewhere in relation to this issue.

4.3.4 Accessibility through a high quality housing advice service

In response to the size of the district we provide a housing advice service in ten locations which is freely available and accessible to all. We know the service we give is high quality because we achieved the Quality Mark accreditation in 2004. However we are not complacent and are keen to ensure that we develop the service to address the needs of the district.

We undertook a face-to-face consultation exercise with the general public in February 2005 and this showed that there was a limited understanding of the services the Council could offer and interest in changing how the service is delivered, including locations and the times available. We therefore need to increase publicity of the service and look at whether delivery in locations such as libraries and supermarkets would be appropriate.

The Citizens Advice Bureau was also identified by the public as a major 'first port of call' for housing advice. We therefore need to expand our existing partnership arrangement with them.

We also supported the Community Legal Services Partnership Pilot study in East Lindsey

into raising awareness of CLSP services in rural districts, and the findings from this will assist us tailor the appropriate delivery of housing advice and other corporate services in rural locations.

We also wish to make sure our service is accessible to those with physical, sensory disabilities, other special needs, and to our BME population and will be undertaking research and implementing findings during Autumn 2005.

4.3.5 Accessibility of housing for all

How we are addressing housing accessibility issues for other special needs and specific groups including mental health, learning disabilities, older persons lack and minority ethnic and domestic violence are described in our supplementary Special Needs and Specific Groups document.

Future Challenges for the Housing Strategy Period: Improving the accessibility of housing

Understanding the advice and accessibility needs of our hard to reach groups.

BME housing needs.

Delivery DFGs to meet demand.

Accessibility to private sector rented housing for those on limited incomes.

Maximise the delivery of housing for separate groups with limited resources including, the proportion of new affordable housing that is Lifetime Home Standard or has greater physical accessibility features.



4.4 Housing Priority: The prevention of homelessness

Key objective

To prevent homelessness through the provision of a high quality homelessness service, which provides preventative advice and options.

To provide suitable and decent accommodation for those that become homeless and to provide effective support to prevent the loss of tenancy.

Key components of the objective

- Provision of a high quality homelessness service.
- Effective preventative advice and options.
- Suitable and decent accommodation.
- Effective support to prevent tenancy breakdown.

4.4.1 Introduction

'Homelessness has no place in sustainable communities'. Homelessness is a massive and continuing issue for East Lindsey. In 2003/4 we had 1206 homeless claims. Effective prevention of homelessness and ensuring that those that do not fall into repeat cycles of homelessness is vitally important. Through extensive prevention work we have reduced the number of claims to 426 in 2004/5. However it remains a significant issue as we have given advice to 280 clients on their housing options.

4.4.2 A high quality service

Accurate and timely housing advice can prevent homelessness. East Lindsey has a proactive and effective homelessness/housing advice service. To ensure we continue to deliver high quality services we are members of the Lincolnshire Homelessness benchmarking Group, which shares best practice; we initiated the Countywide Homelessness strategy and have created and expanded the housing support service in partnership with Lincolnshire supporting people. We are also working closely with other advice providers and are keen to stimulate joint advice provision in one location. We have approached the CAB and Shelter to progress this.

a) Joint working

We are working in partnership with the 5 other local authorities to deliver The 2003-2008 County Homelessness Strategy's shared aims in relation to homelessness reduction and prevention. We also have a joint assessment protocol with the Social Services Duty Access Team for Children for 16/17 year olds presenting as homeless and the success of this led to the Salvation Army dedicating a wing of their hostel at Skegness (Witham Lodge) purely for 16/17 year olds, which was the first in the country. We are also members of the Multi Agency Public Protection Agency (MAPPA) and the Homelessness Forum, which ensure that we offer an effective and efficient service to the client and general public.



And of equal importance is the need to research and understand the ongoing needs and issues to ensure that we tailor our services accordingly. We are currently gathering formation from various agencies in the area on clients with drug and alcohol issues and related housing issues to see if there is a need to expand provision

4.4.2 Effective preventative advice and options

In order to address the serious homelessness issue we developed a homelessness prevention toolkit, which provides a number of services designed to prevent homelessness. These have been very effective in significantly reducing the number of clients that we see who have to make a homelessness claim. They are detailed at Appendix III

In summary they include:

- a mediation service
- the Rent Assist Scheme
- Homeless Prevention Budget;
- Discretionary Housing Benefit
- Fast-track Housing Benefit
- Safe at Home Scheme; and
- an Illegal Evictions Officer.

We have developed our referral procedures with organisations within the Community Legal Services Partnership, which has increased efficiency and speed of referrals, which means client's issues are dealt with more promptly.

4.4.3 Suitable and decent accommodation

a) Reduction in Bed & Breakfast and use of leased units

Our aim is to stop using B&B in line with Government requirement. In order to achieve this aim we have leased a number of homes from or RSL partners. These leased units provide temporary accommodation for those who present to the authority as homeless, before more permanent accommodation can be found. A number of RSL properties are allocated as 'temporary duty' housing and others are provided through general lettings. Clients to whom we have a duty are accommodated in these homes following investigation until an offer of accommodation from the housing register is made.

We need to increase the number of leased units further if we are to meet our aim. We will also explore opportunities in the private sector through reuse of empty properties and empty property management orders, as a measure to provide housing for the homeless.

To balance the need for those that are homeless with those in high housing need we have banded our housing register. Homeless clients are classed as high need and enter the priority band with non-homeless high need clients. Accommodation is offered strictly on a time served basis, thereby giving fair access to all clients with this level of need.

There is also a growing number of single people who are now referred to Housing Support, from a number of agencies including Probation and C.M.H.Ts, who due to either problems of addiction, offending histories or simply lacking the necessary life skills to sustain a tenancy. It is accepted by agencies such as CMHT that the problem of people unable to manage independently, is growing with dual diagnosis on the increase.



These people are sofa surfing with little hope of accessing accommodation. This highlights the need for a range of supported housing options including new build and comprehensive support within existing properties.

Hard to reach/specific homelessness client groups

The issues and current activities for a range of specialist client groups and hard to reach groups including:

- victims of domestic violence;
- those with drug and alcohol problems;
- mental health;
- prison leavers; and
- young people

are highlighted in detail in our supporting 'Special Needs and Specific Groups' documents. We are committed to offering the best possible homelessness service for these groups and the provision of suitable accommodation. However we recognise the need to balance the use of available resources.

4.4.4 Effective support

The Housing Support service was developed after monitoring homelessness showed that

a high number of applicants had presented more than once because they were unable to sustain a tenancy without support. Effectively a roof alone was not the whole solution, but with appropriate, timely support many of these families could have avoided homelessness.

Support is invaluable as:

- Rent arrears, in areas where seasonal employment is often the norm, is a major cause of homelessness and claiming benefits at the right time is crucial to prevent eviction for non payment of rent
- Young people becoming homeless through family break-up, often lack the skills and family support, necessary to successfully maintain a home.
- It builds self-confidence in dealing with housing matters and develops budgeting skills for those on a limited income.
- The most vulnerable in society, the elderly, the young, those with mental health problems and learning disabilities (diagnosed or not), can end up in the poorest and least secure accommodation, the support service helps them access more appropriate housing and support services

The service we offer has expanded from 3 to 11 support workers providing a bespoke support service, geared to preventing repeat cycles of homelessness and promoting independence and social inclusion to 150 households, with particularly prioritisation of vulnerable families living in Bed and Breakfast accommodation and temporary RSL tenancies.

The Service achieved the minimum standard in all the core objectives of the Quality Assessment Framework (Level C), in October 2003 and now that the larger team is assimilated, is working toward the optimum standard.

Challenges for the Housing Strategy Period Preventing Homelessness

- Sustained Homelessness Prevention
- Provision of suitable accommodation including accommodation for hard to reach and challenging client groups

4.5 PROVIDING A HIGH QUALITY HOUSING SERVICE TO ACHIEVE OUR PRIORITIES

Underpinning our desire to achieve our housing priorities and corporate objectives is the need to ensure that the housing service we offer across all strategic and enabling functions is the best possible. We set ourselves challenging performance targets in our annual Service Business Plan, relating to National and Local Performance indicators (see Appendix IV).

'Social Services are pleased to be involved in the ELDC Housing Strategy. We look forward to continue with this valuable work which will increase the range of accessible housing and support options for vulnerable people.' – Social Services, Planning and Development Team



Section 106 Affordable Housing, Woodhall Spa

4.5.1. CPA Inspection

East Lindsey District Council underwent a CPA inspection in 2003 and whilst the Authority was rated as weak, Housing achieved good results under the Balancing Housing Markets diagnostic. We have addressed issues relating to maximising affordable

housing through Section 106s and the equitable distribution of DFGs, which is done strictly in date order and further work in relation to BME housing needs and meeting Government energy efficiency targets is underway.

4.5.2 Audit Commission and Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs)

The Audit Commission has published its KLOEs for housing services, which define the criteria by which housing services are assessed, clearly illustrating what is required of an excellent housing authority, as against a fair service. Within this assessment are overarching criteria relevant to all housing functions, which are:

- diversity;
- access and customer care; and
- value for money;

and specific criteria in relation to service functions including Housing Strategy and Enabling, Homelessness, Housing Advice and Support, and Private Sector Regeneration.

It is our ultimate aim to ensure that we offer an excellent housing service and we are currently formulating an action plan to make any necessary improvements to the services we offer. Initially we aim to achieve a good rating from the Audit Commission.

4.6 RESOURCING THE HOUSING SERVICE

4.6.1 Introduction

The Council's various housing functions can be divided into two main operational areas.

a) The Housing Service function is situated within the Environmental Services Division of the Community Services Department and comprises three teams under a Service Business Manager. Its main areas of operation are:

- Housing Advice and Homelessness with Housing Support;
- Housing Strategy and Housing Development; and
- Housing Regeneration.

b) The Housing Benefit Function is situated within the Customer Services Division of Corporate Services.

4.6.2 Financial resources

a) Allocation of financial resources

All the Council's housing related services receive capital and revenue funding within the context of the overall Local Authority budget setting process. The allocation of resources

to Council Priorities is governed by the Corporate Strategy and cascaded through Service Delivery Plans. Each year the Council reviews its Medium Term Budget Strategy (MTBS) with a view to anticipating future resource availability. Management Team Officers and Members examine and prioritise bids for new expenditure and other requested budget changes in order to determine the overall demands on resources from service departments. This overall process enables the council to plan potential growth, or reduction, in services in the context of available resources and in line with the Council's agreed priorities.

In the case of capital expenditure the Council has an agreed Capital Strategy, which provides the framework within which available capital resources are identified and allocated. This Strategy also provides the basis for working with partner organisations to either secure further capital investment into the District or support partnership working to achieve council priorities. Within the Capital Strategy investment in affordable and quality housing are clearly stated priorities.

The Council's housing capital budget is funded from a number of sources, including, specific Government grants, revenue contributions to capital and most notably from the Council's capital funds and reserves which have been built up from various capital receipts. These receipts have historically been largely accumulated from the sale of council houses and from the sale of housing land. However, the Council does not distinguish between the various sources of its capital receipts and its future capital programme for housing will be funded from its corporate available resource pool, regardless of where those receipt have arisen. As a debt free authority the Council's capital strategy does not authorise the use of borrowing to fund capital expenditure.

In 2005/6 East Lindsey had capital in the sum of £38,000,000. Members decided to allocate a significant proportion of this sum, (having regard for anticipated new capital receipts) so that approx £10,000,000 will be unallocated by the end of 2008/9. This was to ensure that the interest from this amount would keep Council Tax requirements as low as possible.

This capital sum was allocated based on:

- Firstly statutory obligations across all authority activity regardless of whether they were a priority or not
- Secondly our corporate priorities. Each priority area was assessed in terms of statutory obligations, the extent of need and demand for the priority and the costs attached to delivery of our priorities. There was also an attempt to balance the allocation so the delivery of other priorities was not jeopardised.



Photovoltaic roof cells: Franklin Gardens, Spilsby

Therefore housing secured the second highest allocation in recognition that to the provision of additional housing and improvements to housing quality are costly to deliver, but further allocations to housing could threaten delivery of other priorities.

Appendix V shows capital resource allocation to housing compared to other corporate priorities.



Linx Homes: Park Avenue, Louth

b) Revenue expenditure

Revenue funding covers the day-to-day running of the Council's housing functions. In addition to staff, premises, transport and central support costs the revenue budget also provides other financial support to organisations and individuals in housing need. For example it includes payment of grants to other

organisations whom we support to deliver related housing objectives, it provides various payments to help prevent homelessness situations, it provides housing benefit payments some of which are unsupported by Government grant.

In 2005.2006 9% of the annual general fund revenue expenditure is allocated to all housing functions, i.e. £2.5m overall. Of this approximately £1m relates to the Housing Benefit function and £1.5m relates to the Housing Service function.

Detailed breakdowns of housing revenue expenditure, past, current and forecast, are included at Appendix VI. Small amounts of restructuring within the Housing Service Department makes some elements of alignment of expenditure and year on year comparisons difficult to make.

c) Capital expenditure

The Housing Capital Programme has two main elements:

- grants to assist in the provision of quality housing; and
- grants towards the provision of affordable housing.

The Council's overall capital programme over the next 4 years (2005/6 to 2008/9), has allocated 25% of its total resources to Housing (£8.4m). This is shown at Appendix VII. This appendix compares planned housing expenditure to previous years housing capital expenditure and identifies the actual and planned sources of funding. The expenditure includes only that which has been funded directly from the Council's own capital resources and excludes schemes funded prior to 2003/2004 from Local Authority Social Housing Grant.

Quality Housing: The Council provides means tested capital grants for quality housing. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are mandatory grants that receive 60% government grant support up to a maximum government funding level. Demand for these grants is increasing significantly and to meet this demand the Council has significantly increased its current and future year budget levels for these grants. All expenditure above £530,000 will be 100% funded from Council resources. The Council's Renovation Grant budget provides support in the areas of home security, energy efficiency grants and major and minor renewal works towards areas such as replacement windows and doors. Renovation Grants are 100% funded by the Council. The anticipated pressure on demand for mandatory disabled facilities grants has required the council to maintain a high budget provision in the area of housing grants but also to realign its resources away from renovation grants towards DFGs.

Affordable Housing: Capital expenditure in the area of affordable housing takes the form of grant funding to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), towards the construction costs of low cost homes in the District. The Council has a £4m programme in partnership with a number of RSLs to part fund over 200 new homes over the next 4 years. This programme has been developed, following the end of Local Authority Social Housing Grant, to support the ever increasing demand for low cost and affordable housing within the District.

d) Additional funding sources

In addition to direct capital funding from its own resources the Council also has a role, working in partnership with various RSLs, to try and secure additional capital funding into the district from organisations such as the Housing Corporation (HC). The HC has its own Affordable Housing Programme for the region and the Council promotes both the needs of the District and specific schemes to try secure a fair share of this budget.

Within revenue services the Council has also secured, since 2002/2003, £140,000 in Homelessness Directorate Funding for the prevention of homelessness.

4.6.3 Future financial resources

Clearly this Housing Strategy identifies actions that the Council would wish to implement to improve service provision. These actions have potential implications for both capital and revenue resources. The following paragraphs identify the position with regard to future resource availability.

The Council's Capital Programme is approved for the next four financial years. This programme is an ambitious one over all service priorities and has allocated a significant percentage of the Council's total available capital resources. The planned capital programme takes account of prudent anticipated future capital receipts. Without significant future 'windfall' receipts (i.e. large unanticipated or uncertain receipts) or a change in council policy to allow borrowing to fund capital expenditure, there is limited scope, at present, for growth within the Housing Service's Capital Plans beyond the end of 2008/2009.

Under the new Gershon initiative, targets have been set by the government for efficiency savings across the public sector. In other words local authorities will be increasingly required to challenge the cost, levels and quality of services provided and will be expected to provide improved services at no extra cost or to either reduce services or the cost of existing service levels. No new additional resources for housing will necessarily become available unless resources are reallocated from other non-priority service areas. The Council's MTBS has made assumptions about inflationary growth in salaries, utility



New Wolds Housing Trust, Spout Yard, Louth

costs, insurance and contractual commitments . However all other budget areas have been frozen at a 0% increase.

The Housing Strategy Action Plan has been formulated within these constraints on revenue expenditure in mind.

Case study

Mrs Addison lived in a Park Avenue prefabricated bungalow. In 2003, when she was aged 85, she was informed that there were exciting changes ahead and she was keen to be moved from her current home to the other side of Park Avenue to wait for her new home to be built. She wasn't the only one to want to do this, some of her neighbours did just the same. She was able to choose from 3 internal layouts for her new home, the pattern and colours in the glass in the front door, as well as choice of wall paint, kitchen cupboards and tiles



The Park Avenue prefabs have always been popular, even though they were built to provide temporary homes just after the war, with an expected life of about 10 years.

Despite being upgraded often, they were cold, draughty, and in need of updated kitchens and bathrooms, with extra occupants that weren't invited!

They were popular because of the location in Louth, access to a frequent bus route, local shops sports facilities. There was and still is a good community spirit in the area.

All the time the new properties were being built, Mr Cabourne, employed by Linx Homes, kept her well informed of progress. Any snags were quickly dealt with and he understood all her concerns.

After a year in the properties on the opposite side of the road, Mrs Addison moved back into her beautiful new home, with the help of her children and relatives.

Mrs Addison likes to keep warm and healthy and was pleasantly surprised to find the solar heating panels were helping keep gas costs much lower than before. The double glazing and insulation have made her home very warm, which she feels has helped to improve her health.

Mrs Addison says there is nothing she can think of to improve her lovely home.

Chapter Five - Target Review

5.1 Introduction

Before we consider our options and set out our action plan, it is necessary to undertake a review of targets we have already set ourselves. These targets encompass not only the last Housing Strategy, but also targets that are included in corporate and countywide strategies that we have been a partner in. Whilst the delivery of the countywide strategies is in partnership and the targets not necessarily, singularly the responsibility of ELDC it is necessary to incorporate them within this document. This will ensure we are clear as to what we have already achieved and what we have planned to do in partnership with other organisations in other strategic documents.

This process will ensure that we demonstrate:

- accountability - we will incorporate any, as yet unachieved targets in our future action planning;
- best use of resources - we will avoid duplication in our action planning by recognising future action planning elsewhere;
- realism - we will ensure that we are realistic in our target setting by considering resource implications of these targets before planning more; and
- compatibility - we will produce an action plan that is compatible with the objectives and targets of other important housing related strategies.

5.2 ELDC 2003 Housing Strategy Targets

We set ourselves challenging targets in our 2003 Housing Strategy Update in relation to our housing aims, under the, then corporate aims. These targets and their outcomes are provided in full detail at Appendix VIII.

Having examined the targets we achieved the majority of them within timescales and within budgets, however we did not achieve our planned training and awareness events in affordable warmth and energy efficiency/promoting sustainable development. These were not delivered due to staff resource issues at the time. However we now have publicity events featured in our 2005 action plan.

5.3 County Homeless Strategy 2003/08

We have achieved the initial targets we set ourselves (see Appendix IX) but the 5-year priorities under the above objectives continue to inform our service developments in relation to homelessness. These are:

- Prevention
 - Increase pre crisis advice and intervention
 - Publicise the service having regard for rurality of the district



Elizabeth Court, Louth

- Innovative service delivery mechanisms
- Accommodation
 - Phase out use of Bed and Breakfast other than for absolute emergencies
 - And ensure sufficient alternative accommodation is available for vulnerable groups
 - Monitor appropriateness and effectiveness of steps already taken
- Housing Support
 - Respond to increased demand and expand service
 - Improve links with other agencies
- Young People
 - Joint working to define and address issues which affect young people
 - Provision of advice accommodation and support for young persons in most appropriate formats
- Joint Working
 - Develop and expand joint working across sectors to improve prevention and support services

These needs will inform the direction of homelessness services.

5.4 The Lincolnshire Older Persons' Housing Strategy 2004-2008

This strategy document aims to improve housing and housing related services for older persons in Lincolnshire. The action plan and targets that are not directly the responsibility of East Lindsey District Council, but we will be working in partnership to achieve objectives as a partner of the Lincolnshire Housing Forum. In relation to our service planning for older persons the objectives and targets in the strategy, which should guide the formulation of, our own targets are:

- A review of housing provision for older person
 - Increase extra care provision
 - Look at innovative housing and support opportunities
 - Increase opportunities for independent living
- Good quality housing information and advice for older persons
 - Improved access to information and advice
- Quality housing for older persons
 - Improve housing quality
 - Increase older persons awareness of affordable warmth
 - Develop the home improvement agency
 - Increase technological awareness to improve support and independence
- Joint working
 - Review service provision strengths and weakness
 - Review single assessment procedures
 - Establish joint training opportunities

5.5 Young Peoples' Strategy

The Lincolnshire Youth Strategy document is still under formulation. The need for the document was identified in the County Wide Homelessness strategy to specifically focus on housing and related issues for young persons.

The Youth Strategy outlines a strategy to tackle the main housing-related problems affecting young people aged 16-24 in the county. The strategic aims of the document centre on improving the integration of services, meeting the accommodation needs of young people, homelessness prevention, and increasing the range of good quality supported emergency and move-on accommodation. We are taking a full role in this documents development to ensure the range of young person's needs are addressed.



NACRO drama group, recently held a production called "Jack" A journey through care.

5.6 Empty Property Strategy

We set ourselves a number of targets to achieve around publicity, working with private sector landlords and the provision of grants. (See Appendix X). These have been achieved and by utilising the rent assist scheme we have been able to bring 125 empty properties back into use. Further actions achieved are highlighted in our action plan.

'ELDC Housing are respected and trusted partners whose commitment to promoting the rights, choice, independence and social inclusion of learning disabled adults has made high quality housing for them a reality whereas previously this was for many an unattainable dream!' – Rose Eastwood, Linkage Community Trust

Case study

Mrs Stones lived in the old Elizabeth Court development and is delighted with the new facility.

“The flats are almost double in size and it’s like living in a luxury hotel. I haven’t had to cook a meal as it’s so reasonable to eat here. I feel so well looked after.” Mrs Stones is reassured by the fact that if she needs a greater level of care, this can be provided in here, rather than having to move to a nursing home.

Miss Pyle was an owner occupier, who kept having falls in her own home. She knew she was at risk and needed the comfort of a system that would help her 24 hours a day, close at hand.

She is thrilled with her new home and is quickly adjusting to a whole new way of life.



New Wolds Housing Trust: Shared ownership homes Hogsthorpe

Chapter 6 - Options and Action Plan

6.1 Introduction and options

This Chapter sets out our 2005/06-2007/08 targeted action plan, defining what we aim to achieve under each housing priority. To arrive at this action plan, we have undertaken an option appraisal. This process examined the housing issues facing East Lindsey and considered what options we have to address them. Each option was considered against the following criteria.

- Is it realistic and achievable?
- Are there resources to do it (staff, time, and money)?
- Does it deliver best value for money?
- How relatively important is the action against local regional and national needs?

The detailed Option Appraisal is located at Appendix XI, which sets out our consideration of each option and includes a description of the resource impact, risk, risk mitigation and a rationale on if and how the option should be addressed in our action plan.

6.2 Using the Housing Strategy Action Plan

The action plan below is set out under our four housing priorities and under each priority is our housing objective. Our specific targets are set out against this.

All targets are **SMART**:

- SPECIFIC** - the target description and/or output is specific.
- MEASURABLE** - the output is measurable.
- ACHIEVABLE** - targets are included after the option appraisal process, who is responsible for their delivery is indicated and any external factors, which may affect delivery highlighted.
- RESOURCED** - resource implications are considered.
- TIME-BOUND** - it clearly states by when a target will be completed.

The action plan covers the period approximately until mid 2007/08 financial year (the midway point of the housing strategy) unless resources are confirmed for longer. We will undertake a detailed strategic review of our housing priorities and action plan targets for the remainder of the strategy period during 2007/08 to ensure relevance and responsiveness to any emerging issues.

Key to team abbreviations

- HSDT - Housing Strategy and Development Team
- HHA - Homelessness and Housing Advice Team
- HS - Housing Support
- HR - Housing Regeneration





Linx Homes: Park Avenue, Louth

6.3 Monitoring and Reporting

6.3.1 Performance monitoring

Progress towards our targets will be monitored on a quarterly basis. There is a specific target within our Service Business Plan in relation to achieving our housing strategy targets. Therefore progress will be reported to the Service Business Manager, Head of

Housing and the Management Team on a quarterly basis.

6.3.2 Reporting to Members

Apart from regular liaison meetings with the Housing Portfolio holder we will also produce a six monthly report to Council on the progress of the Housing Strategy action plan, and give an open presentation to all councillors on the report, in order that the content and any emerging issues can be discussed.

6.3.3 Reporting to general public and partners

We will produce an annual achievement of target report which will be advertised by press release and available on our website, displayed in area offices and libraries and circulated to Area Committees and partners so our performance can be measured.

6.3.4 Review of the Strategy 2007/8

As stated we will undertake a detailed review and consultation on the strategy priorities and action plan in 2007/8 in order to set out the action plan to 2010. This process will include a full consultation including the public, councillors, RSLs, other partners, and housing and related organisations.

6.4 Resourcing the action plan targets

Resources are not allocated to 2006/2007 housing budgets as yet other than for specific expenditure identified in the Medium Term Budget Strategy. The medium term budget strategy assumes zero growth other than inflationary factors therefore:

- any identified 2005/06 target will be delivered within existing revenue budgets;
- 2006-07 targets assume no loss of the existing level of budgetary provision, as any loss would impact on our ability to deliver our targets; and
- Capital Expenditure is planned against our 2004-08 housing capital allocations. It is identified when additional capital funding would be required to complete a target.

'Since developing the Jigsaw Project in April 2003 we have received referrals from various Housing Support Workers, it is a breath of fresh air to know that clients needs are being met and relevant signposting is taking place, I would like to see continuation of working in a joined up way to assist individuals who have suffered any form of sexual violence' – Sue Daniels

Adv. Dip. Couns. Dip. Clin. Hyp. Managing Director of The Jigsaw Project, Specialist in Rape and Sexual Abuse for Lincolnshire, Working in Partnership with Lincolnshire Police and County Domestic Violence Management