



**HOUSING STRATEGY**

**ST ALBANS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**2004 - 2007**

**June 2004**

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## Executive Summary

This document sets out our aims and objectives for the coming years. The shortage of affordable housing is one of the most pressing issues on the council's agenda, and resolving this will play an important part in meeting the Council's corporate aims and objectives.

In common with other districts in the London Commuter Belt, the rising costs of housing means that owner occupation and private rental are now beyond the means of many residents in the district. The Housing Needs Survey, carried out in 2002, highlighted the shortage of affordable housing for local people with a net shortfall of 897 affordable homes per annum

The Council, in its role as both a landlord and strategic authority, has a vital role to play in helping to alleviate the housing problems of those unable to afford the private sector, or who need assistance to remain in their homes. In partnership with housing associations and other organisations, the Council is working hard to address the problems in the district.

In addition the Council is committed to ensuring that its own housing stock meets the Decent Homes Standard and that improvements in excess of this standard continue to be carried out.

The last year has seen some notable achievements:

- The Housing Corporation allocation to housing associations for the development of affordable housing in the district was over £18 million and will deliver 229 homes by the end of 2005. This was the largest allocation in the East Region and largest ever received for the district. In addition the Council has shown its commitment to housing by allocating all of its capital receipts to the Housing Investment Programme since becoming debt free on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002.
- Improvements totalling £3.6 m carried out to the Council's housing stock
- The Homeless Strategy has been completed
- The Private Sector Housing Strategy has been completed
- Supplementary Planning Guidance for Affordable Housing has been approved and implemented in April 2004
- A new Housing Needs Survey was completed in April 2003
- The first Stakeholders' Conference was held in March 2003
- The first Residents' Day was held in July 2003

Overall performance on service delivery has been good in many areas. The Council has achieved top quartile performance for the best value indicators covering decent homes, rent collection and homelessness. The ongoing implementation of the best value reviews covering repairs and housing management have also resulted in service improvements, for example, a repairs appointment system, partnering agreement for uPVC window replacements, mediation service and Tenants' Contents Insurance Scheme. Further details are incorporated within the HRA Business Plan.

There is still however much work to be done and this strategy outlines our targets for the coming years, such as:

- To carry out an Options Appraisal
- Developing CCTV in vulnerable areas to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- To identify and transfer at least one suitable garage site each year to a housing association for affordable housing development
- To continue to reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast by providing more temporary accommodation in partnership with housing associations
- To negotiate 35% affordable housing on qualifying sites
- To continue the programme of aids and adaptations to Council owned stock to enable residents to remain in their own homes
- To continue to invest in the improvement and maintenance of Council owned stock
- To continue to assist in the improvement of the privately owned stock via grants and assistance

A detailed action plan is included at Appendix 8. The availability of resources is critical to the delivery of the Housing Strategy. Priority funding is targeted at meeting the Decent Homes Standard, assisting housing associations with the costs of building more affordable homes and grant aid to individuals in the private sector. Other sources of funding particularly around Government related grants will continue to be pursued vigorously.

The Strategy contains a number of detailed appendices which provide more specific information on aspects of the Housing Strategy. A list of contact details is also included and the Strategy will be available on the Council's website alongside the HRA Business Plan.

## **1. District Profile**

### **1.1. Location**

Centred around St Albans, the District is an attractive area only 20 miles from central London. Served by a good strategic transport network, St Albans is a very popular commuter location where land and house prices are amongst the highest in the country.

The heritage of the District is a key characteristic. St Albans itself was built on Verulamium, the third largest Roman town in Britain and the local people attach great importance to the District's heritage.

With the exception of specifically excluded settlements, the whole of the District is within the Hertfordshire Green Belt, which currently limits any further unplanned expansion.

### **1.2. Population**

The District has a resident population of 129,149, an increase of 2.2% since 1991. In 2001 20% of the resident population were aged under 16, 60% were aged between 16 and 59 and 20% were aged 60 and over. Currently 6.9% of the District's population are from minority ethnic communities. In terms of population growth the District population is projected to increase by 17,300 people (13.3% over the 25 years 1996 to 2021) with the most significant growth seen in the older age groups. There will be around 1,584 more people (9.4% more from 2001) aged over 75 in the District by 2011. In addition, Hertfordshire County Council Social Services indicate that approximately 9-10% of people in the District have a disability.

### **1.3. Quality of Life**

The District is one of the least deprived in the Country and is ranked 331<sup>st</sup> (out of 354) on the deprivation index. The District enjoys a high standard of housing across all tenures. The housing stock within the District totals around 55,000 dwellings of which 78% are owner occupied, with some 13% renting from the Council and Housing Associations and about 9% privately rented. House prices are amongst the highest in the region. A Housing Needs Survey completed in November 2002 identified that in order to access the open market via a one bedroom flat, an annual household income of £35,000 is required.

The high cost of housing and land makes it very difficult for low and middle income households to either rent or buy the type of housing they need at a price they can afford.

### **1.4. Economy**

Unemployment remains one of the lowest in the Country at 1.1% compared to a national figure of 3%. The close proximity to London and in particular the excellent rail and road communications have a significant effect on the District's economic activity. A large number of the local

resident population travel out of the District to London to work (around 20%).

The local economy is dominated by the service sector with offices, small businesses, retailing and 'tourism based' enterprises. It consequently has a distinct and thriving local business community, which provides over 46,000 jobs. Recruitment, particularly of specialist and professional staff, can be difficult due to the cost of living in the District.

## 1.5 **Planning Context**

### 1.5.1 **County Structure Plan**

The County Structure Plan Review Alterations 1991 was approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment in June 1992. The Alterations proposed 7,200 dwellings in St Albans District between 1986 and 2001. Also included in the Alterations were general policies on affordable housing in rural and urban areas.

In April 1998, Hertfordshire County Council adopted a new Structure Plan (ie The Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991-2011). The Plan proposes 6,300 dwellings in St Albans District during the 1991-2011 period. It is proposed that development will be concentrated generally in towns through a strategy of planned regeneration, but the Plan also allows for the possibility of limited peripheral development. A policy on affordable housing is included in the Plan.

In March 2003, the County Council published the "Hertfordshire structure Plan Alterations 2001-2016 Deposit Draft Version". This provides a draft strategic planning framework for the County to 2016. The draft Structure Plan proposes an annual requirement of 470 (net) additional dwellings in St Albans District from 2001 onwards, which amounts to 7,050 dwellings between 2001 and 2016.

The changes to the planning system proposed by the Government in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill include the abolition of County structure plans and the replacement of regional planning guidance by regional spatial strategy, which will include district level housing targets. Hertfordshire now forms part of the East of England for regional planning purposes. Draft Regional Planning Guidance for the East of England is due to be published in Spring 2004. Adoption of the Plan (in the form of a regional spatial strategy, to be called RSS14) is expected in 2005. In view of the above, the Government Office for the East of England (Go-East) has advised the County Council not to continue work on the Structure Plan Alterations

### 1.5.2 **District Plan Review**

The St Albans District Local Plan Review was adopted in November 1994 and the Plan proposes a 1986-2001 dwelling increase of 7,200, in line with the Structure Plan Alterations. Between 1986 and 2001, the actual dwelling increase in the District was just over 6,800 which is well below the 1991 Structure Plan Alterations proposal for 7,200 dwellings. Between 1991 and 2003, a dwelling increase of some 4,850 was

recorded and it is estimated that the total for 1991-2011 will be over 7,500 (1,200 in excess of the structure plan target).

Since 1991, 83% of the District's dwelling increase has been on sites excluded from the Green Belt, with 4% on hospital sites in the Green Belt and 2% on other Green Belt sites. 84% of the 1991-2003 dwelling increase was on previously developed land or through conversions. This figure is well in excess of the Government's target of 60%.

The District Council has been working on the District Local Plan Second Review. In September 2003, a major pre-deposit consultation document was approved for consultation purposes. The consultation document states that it is probable that the Plan should look as far ahead as 2021, to equate with the forthcoming Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS14). The Council has carried out a housing capacity study and a Green Belt boundaries study. As a result, the consultation document proposes some new housing sites within the urban areas and some limited Green Belt releases. If these sites are taken into account total estimated housing capacity in the District between 2001 and 2021 is around 7,350 dwellings.

Before the consultation document could be published, the Government published draft Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12), which gives detailed guidance of the proposed new style local development frameworks, which will replace local plans and supplementary planning guidance. It is clear that the Council's consultation document is not compliant with the proposed new system. Therefore, the Council has decided not to publish the consultation document. Efforts are now being directed towards producing a new style development plan document that is fully compliant with the new planning system and RSS14.

### **1.5.3 Affordable Housing**

The District Plan Review includes a policy (Policy 7A) on affordable housing in towns and large villages excluded from the Green Belt. The policy takes account of government guidance in PPG3. This policy states that the Council will normally seek to negotiate an element of affordable housing on sites of over 0.4 hectares and on sites under this size where 15 or more dwellings are proposed. However, the site size thresholds in Circular 6/98 Planning and Affordable Housing, are higher (ie 1 hectare or 25 dwellings) than those contained in the District Plan Review policy. The Council is currently working to the Circular 6/98 thresholds and this will affect the amount of affordable housing that can be obtained.

Circular 6/98 does state that lower thresholds, ie 0.5 hectares or 15 dwellings may be proposed through the local plan process if exceptional local constraints can be demonstrated.

The Government's July 2003 consultation paper on "Influencing the size, type and affordability of housing" proposes changes to PPG3, including reducing the normal thresholds for affordable housing to 0.5 hectares or 15 dwellings. This paper also indicates that affordable housing can be sought on smaller sites in certain circumstances. If this proposed change to PPG3 is confirmed, the Council will probably conclude that thresholds

lower than 0.5 hectares or 15 dwellings are justified in the District and should be included in the Development Plan document.

The District Plan Review also includes a policy to encourage affordable housing in rural areas. This housing will be on Green Belt sites, but will be permitted only if a demonstrable local need exists. Any housing built under this policy will be reserved permanently for local people and be affordable in perpetuity. Whilst no schemes have been permitted to date under this policy, a local housing needs survey was carried out in 1999 in Sandridge and a survey took place in April/May 2002 in the parish of Colney Heath.

Hardly any housing land is owned by the District Council or housing associations and this illustrates the need to secure affordable housing on sites in other ownership wherever possible. Between 1994 and 2003 an average of 71 affordable dwellings per annum were built and nearly 60% of these (ie 40 per annum) resulted from the operation of Policy 7A. The provision of affordable housing has fallen far short of the target of 200 dwellings per annum stated in the Policy.

It is expected that the total supply of new build affordable housing from all sources in the next few years will be similar to the 1994-2003 building rate. This means that output will continue at well under half the level necessary to achieve the minimum target set out at the time of the District Plan Review. Most new affordable housing in the future will be provided through Policy 7A.

Negotiations with private landowners for affordable housing are time consuming and difficult. This in part is because Circular 6/98 does not allow Council's to insist that affordable housing should be in the form most needed in the District ie housing association rented accommodation. Also, the Circular gives no clear guidance on the extent to which private developers should subsidise affordable housing schemes, whether the affordable housing is provided on site or through a commuted sum.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on affordable housing was sent out for consultation in November 2003, and adopted in April 2004. The SPG states that the Council will seek, by negotiation, a target level of 35% affordable units on suitable sites. The Council's previous target was 25%. In addition the Council is working with other Hertfordshire authorities to provide a guide to best practice for planning obligations.

## **2. The Council's Vision, Aims and Objectives**

- 2.1 The Council's vision is to preserve and enhance the distinctive character of St Albans City and District, making it an outstanding place to live, work and enjoy.

## 2.2 Corporate Aims and Objectives

Each year the Council reconsiders its priorities and focus for the coming year. The corporate aims and objectives have been reviewed in light of the comments received through the CPA process. The revised corporate aims and objectives set out below take into account the findings of the Mori residents' survey 2002 and the draft community strategy which was based on widespread public consultation. In total the Council now has four strategic aims, which are listed below:

1. Provide community leadership by acting as a voice for and meeting the needs of the whole community, working closely in partnership with others
2. Protect and enhance the environment and heritage and create a safer environment
3. Improve the health and well-being of residents
4. Support and promote a thriving and sustainable local economy

The full statement of the Council's Vision, Aims and Objectives can be found in Appendix 1.

## 2.3. Community Strategy

The Local Government Act 2000 requires every local authority to prepare a strategy for promoting or improving economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their area. St Albans District Council held an inaugural meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) on 16 April 2002, to commence the process of developing a strategy. The LSP is made up of elected members and Senior Offices of key organisations across the District, for example, Hertfordshire Constabulary, University of Hertfordshire, Primary Care Trust, Ethnic Minority Community Forum, Council for Voluntary Services etc. In identifying key themes for the Strategy a wide range of consultation was carried out in late 2001 and early 2002. This assisted in identifying five key themes as set out below:-

- Business Transport and Infrastructure
- Community Safety
- Environment and Heritage
- Health, Housing and Social Care
- Leisure, Learning and Culture

Each theme has a group of officers and members who have worked to produce each chapter of the strategy. The groups consist of representatives from a wide range of agencies. The first draft of the strategy was completed in June 2003 and widespread consultation was carried out during July and August 2003. The LSP endorsed the strategy on 1 October 2003.

The Council recognises that housing is integral to policies that address community safety, health and social care. For this reason the priorities identified through these themes have been integrated into this Housing Strategy.

Examples of links between housing and community strategy:-

- achieving 35% affordable housing on qualifying sites
- achieving a range of affordable housing across all tenures
- use of drug action monies to make housing environments a safer place to live and work
- developing an older person's housing strategy
- implementation of measures to tackle anti-social behaviour particularly around Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Anti Social Behaviour Orders
- joint working with the Police to address anti-social behaviour

In addition to the Community Strategy this Housing Strategy has been influenced by a range of other strategies and plans which include the following:-

- Capital Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Supporting People Strategy
- Revised District Local Plan
- Empty Homes Strategy
- Best Value Performance Plan
- Community Safety Strategy
- Private Sector Renewal Strategy
- Equalities Strategy
- Asset Management Plan
- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

## 2.4 Key Points from HRA Business Plan

A summary of the key points from the HRA Business Plan are listed below:-

- demand for tenancies remains high in all areas and for all types of properties excluding retirement housing
- 616 properties failed the Decent Homes Standard following the Stock Condition Survey carried out in 2001/2002
- sufficient resources have been identified to eliminate non-decency within the housing stock by 2006
- Right to Buy sales are anticipated to continue at the rate of 1.31% of the housing stock
- satisfaction with the Council's housing management service remains good
- top quartile performance has been achieved in rent collection, decent homes and households in bed and breakfast accommodation for 2002/03

- £168m is needed during the next 30 years to fund repairs and improvement works

Further details on the above can be found in the HRA Business Plan.

### 3. National, Regional and Local Policies

#### 3.1. National Policies

National policies do impact on our local Housing Strategy, examples of this are shown in the table below.

#### Priorities for Action

<b>National</b>	<b>Regional/sub regional</b>	<b>Local</b>
Bringing all social housing up to Decent Homes Standard by 2010	To ensure that everyone can live in a decent home at an affordable price	A programme to bring all social housing up to the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. On target to eliminate by 2006.
Ending the use of bed and breakfast hotels for homeless families by March 2004	To enable housing to contribute fully to ensure good health and promote health equality	Introduction of a Homeless Strategy with objectives to eliminate the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. Continuing to support the Home Improvement Agency
To ensure a strategic approach to key worker housing, and the delivery of a step change in the supply of new housing	To use housing investment to compliment sustainable economic development	Clear definition of key workers with schemes in progress. Participation in the Countywide Key worker Housing Group. Introduction of SPG on affordable housing.
Implementing the Supporting People Programme	To contribute effectively to social inclusion within sustainable communities	An action plan to review the retirement housing stock . Completion of Social Inclusion Best Value Review.
Addressing anti-social behaviour	To contribute effectively to Social Inclusion within sustainable communities	Use of acceptable behaviour contracts to tackle anti-social behaviour.
Environmental priorities such as increasing the use of brownfield land, modern methods of construction.	To contribute to a sustainable environment	Improvements to both public and private sector housing stock in order to improve energy efficiency/reduce fuel poverty. Re-development on brownfield sites well in excess of Government target

### 3.2. Regional Priorities

St Albans District Council is located in the Eastern region and within that the London Commuter Belt. The key strategic aims in the Regional Housing Strategy, which impact on our local housing strategy are illustrated in the previous table.

### 3.3 Housing Strategy Priorities

The table below details the Housing Strategy priorities and how they link into local, regional and national priorities along with stakeholder involvement.

#### Housing Strategy Priorities

Priority	Local/Wider Priorities	Stakeholder Involvement
To increase the provision of affordable housing	National Priority - Sustainable Communities Plan. Regional Priority - to ensure everyone can live in a decent home at an affordable price. Local Priority - to improve the health and wellbeing of residents.	Stakeholder Conference March 2003  Housing Consultative Forum
To sustain a rolling programme of planned maintenance and improvements so as to maintain the stock in decent condition	National Priority - sustainable communities Plan. Regional Priority - to ensure everyone can live in a decent home at an affordable price. Local Priority - to improve the health and wellbeing of residents	Tenants Conference July 2003  Housing Consultative Forum  Feedback from Resident Associations  Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2003/04
To deliver a sensitive and efficient housing management service to tenants and leaseholders which is subject to continuous improvement	National Priority - Housing Options Appraisal process. Regional Priority - to contribute effectively to Social Inclusion within sustainable communities. Local Priority - to provide community leadership by acting as a voice for and meeting the needs of the whole community, working closely in partnership with others	Tenants Conference July 2003  Housing Consultative Forum  Feedback from Resident Associations  Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2003/04

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Local/Wider Priorities</b>	<b>Stakeholder Involvement</b>
To address issues around anti-social behaviour and make local communities safer places to live and work	National Priority - Sustainable Communities Plan. Regional Priority - to contribute effectively to Social Inclusion within sustainable communities. Local Priority - protect and enhance the environment and heritage and create a safer environment	Tenants Conference July 2003  Housing Consultative Forum  Stakeholders Conference March 2003
To maintain the provision of grant to support the improvement and repair of private sector housing	National Priority - Sustainable Communities Plan. Regional Priority - to enable housing to contribute fully to ensure good health and promote health equality	Stakeholder Conference March 2003

A fuller explanation of our Housing Strategy priorities can be found in the following chapters.

### **3.4 Influencing the Regional/Sub Regional Priorities and Cross Boundary Working**

The Council has contributed to regional and sub-regional strategies.

The Countywide Keyworker Housing Group has commissioned a Countywide Housing Needs Survey for keyworkers, and the Council has a place on the steering group.

Also we take an active role in the sub-regional housing groups responsible for preparing the sub-regional housing strategy, currently chairing a working group looking at the development of affordable housing across the sub-region.

The Council is currently undertaking a Gypsy and Travellers Housing Survey in conjunction with Herts County Council, Dacorum, Three Rivers and Hertsmere. Officers provided input to the Sub-Regional Housing Needs Analysis which was used to inform the sub-regional housing strategy, the document was written by the strategy officers from across the sub-region, including our own.

Through the Development Officers, from all Hertfordshire Authorities, opportunities to work across boundaries are being actively investigated.

## 4. Tackling Social Inclusion and Community Safety

### 4.1 Social Inclusion

The Council completed a Best Value Review of Social Inclusion during 2002/03. As a crosscutting review it impacts on all departments across the Council. An action plan has been produced and a number of initiatives have been implemented to tackle social inclusion – these include:-

- tenancy management support service implemented for Council tenants
- increased shopmobility scooter fleet by 25%
- completion of a Homelessness Strategy
- establishment of a crash pad scheme for 16/17 year olds
- Banner project – working with Asian Women’s Literacy Group
- introduction of a taxi voucher scheme to compliment dial-a-ride facility
- implementation of a tenants contents insurance scheme
- appointment of Benefits Visiting Officer
- implementation of revised Corporate Equalities Scheme
- membership of Language Line
- extension of Saturday opening at the Civic centre
- staff training covering equality awareness and disability awareness.

In addition a number of initiatives are also in progress including improvements to buildings to bring disabled access up to the requirements of DDA legislation and a review covering access to services particularly around the Council’s main reception.

### 4.2 Community Safety

The Council is part of the St Albans and District Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, which was set up to achieve the national targets for crime reduction set by the Government. The partnership includes Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Constabulary, St Albans City and District Council and Hertfordshire Police Authority. The partnership updates and delivers a Community Safety Strategy for the district.

The key priorities for the partnership are listed below:-

- cut crime
- tackle anti-social behaviour
- reduce drug misuse
- reduce road casualties
- improve quality of life

A number of initiatives have already been implemented across the District. These include:-

- a domestic violence forum which has raised the profile of the issue and set up a telephone helpline
- use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts to tackle anti-social behaviour

- funding secured from the Home Office to combat drug and alcohol misuse
- acquired funding for Police Community Support Officers in Wheathampstead and Redbourn
- implementation of a mediation service

A number of other projects have also been implemented with Building Safer Communities funding covering a drugs and homelessness worker, a mini-bus for Wheathampstead Hilldyke area and personal alarms for robbery victims.

In addition to the above, the following have also been incorporated within the Community Strategy for completion by April 2005:-

- a permanent drug testing programme
- development of CCTV in appropriate areas to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- development of action plans to educate and support young people and parents about substance misuse

Further information on the above can be found in the Community Strategy.

The Council is committed through its corporate aims and objectives to create a safe environment for people living, working and travelling within the District. To support this, the housing department plays an active role in contributing to the partnership.

## 5 Public Sector Housing Stock

- 5.1 At 1 April 2003 the Council's Housing stock totalled 5,528 properties. Houses and bungalows make up 56% of the housing stock and includes 360 1 bedroom; 581 2 bedroom; 2062 3 bedroom; and 93 4 bedroom properties. Flats comprise 43% of the housing stock and includes 324 bedsits, 1082 1 bedroom; 948 2 bedroom; and 27 three or more bedroom properties. This is summarised in the tables below.

**Table 1**  
**Housing Stock By Type**

Type	Number	% of stock
Houses and bungalows	3096	56%
Flats	2381	43%
Dwellings in multi-occupied dwellings	51	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5528</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2**  
**Housing Stock By Size**

Houses and Bungalows	Number	% of stock
1 Bed	360	11%
2 bed	581	19%
3 bed	2062	67%
4 bed +	93	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3096</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Flats</b>		
Bedsits	324	14%
1 bed	1082	45%
2 bed	948	40%
3 or more bedrooms	27	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2381</b>	<b>100%</b>

The majority of the housing stock was built between 1945 and 1974 with only 17% (963 properties) built prior to 1945. Most of the housing stock is of a traditional construction with 20% of a non-traditional construction. The stock comprises only one tower block in excess of 6 storeys. Within the housing stock the 324 bedsits are mostly located in the 14 retirement housing schemes.

### 5.1 Condition of Council Property

The stock of all public landlords is required to comply with the Government's Decent Home Standard by 2010 (at least one third of properties must meet the standard by 31 March 2004).

During 2001 the Council commissioned external consultants to carry out a stock condition survey covering 11.8% of the overall stock. The report in April 2002 showed that the overall condition of the stock is good with many elements not requiring replacement within the first ten years indicating that the stock has benefited from a substantial level of investment over previous years. The investment required over the next 30 years to maintain the stock is £94 million.

The survey also included an assessment of the decency levels within the stock. Overall 10.95% of properties i.e. 616, were identified as failing the decency standard. The Council reduced this figure to 583 at the end of 2002/03 and is on target to eliminate non-decency within the housing stock by 2006. Details of the repairs and maintenance needs of the Council's stock over the next 30 years and resources are included in the HRA Business Plan. A summary of the public sector stock condition survey is attached at Appendix 3.

The Council has allocated significant expenditure within the overall Housing Investment Programme in recent years to maintaining and improving its own stock. This is illustrated in the following table:-

#### **Expenditure on Housing Within HRA**

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>1999/2000</b>	<b>2000/2001</b>	<b>2001/2002</b>	<b>2002/2003</b>
Total	2,679	4,424	4,016	3,635
% of Overall HIP Expenditure	83%	76%	85%	79%

### 5.3 Condition of Private Sector Stock

The Council last carried out a Private Sector House Condition Survey in 2001. The survey showed that there had been a significant improvement in the stock since our last survey which was carried out in 1993. In relation to unfitness this had reduced from 9.6% to 3.1% (1,515

dwelling) of the stock. Further results are detailed at Appendix 2 Private Sector Stock Condition.

Although the results of our survey for owner occupied housing shows a reduction in unfitness levels the high levels in the private sector rented market is cause for concern. It is clear that spontaneous improvements and repairs by some landlords cannot be relied upon alone to keep the stock in good condition and that a new proactive programme will need to be implemented to improve this housing stock. This will be considered as part of the review of the results of the house condition survey.

As part of its commitment to improving substandard private sector stock, the Council adopted a new grants policy in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 and this has been in operation since 18 July 2003. The Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy published in July details the types of grant aid that the Council will provide. The Council has decided to maintain the provision of grant aid for properties which are unfit or in poor repair (discretionary renovation grants) and for small scale works (discretionary home repairs assistance grants). A new grant has also been introduced to help return long term empty properties back into residential use.

It has been decided at this stage not to provide or fund loans due to the complexities encountered with loan provision and the means testing applied to grant aid.

The following outlines grant availability:

- Discretionary Renovation Grants -The Council considers the provision of home renovation grants to be an integral part of the programme for the improvement of housing in the District and Discretionary Renovation Grants are now available. This, together with the provision of a Home Improvement Agency ensures that residents have adequate access to help with maintaining their home. These grants are means tested and are targeted at those most in need. The Council have adopted a policy of targeting grants to people rather than towards addressed based needs. The maximum grant is restricted to £20,000 although grants above this limit will be considered.
- Mandatory and Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG`s) - The provision of help to those members of the community that are disabled is seen by the Council to be an important part of the grant policy to help residents stay in their own home if they become disabled. Expenditure on DFG`s will therefore be maintained to ensure that our commitments can be met. Discretionary grant aid above the mandatory grant limit of £25,000 will be considered in appropriate cases.
- Discretionary Home Repairs Assistance - These grants are aimed at carrying out smaller scale works up to a maximum of £5,000 for residents over 60 years and the registered disabled over 18years of age. Eligibility for grant aid is dependent on the receipt of one of a number of benefits. The Council consider the provision of these grants to be an important part of the work carried out by the Home Improvement Agency to help and ensure that elderly people

can stay in their home for as long as is possible. The Council will continue to maintain the provision of home repairs assistance to ensure that this commitment is met.

The Private Sector Housing Policy has the following objectives:

- To secure the elimination of unfit or overcrowded housing.
- To secure the repair of private sector housing and the abatement of housing conditions which are prejudicial to health and safety.
- To secure proper standards of management, adequate means of escape from fire, fire precautions and amenities in houses in multiple occupation.
- To secure finance for the provision of grant aid to improve/repair housing.
- To secure the maintenance of proper standards at residential caravan sites.
- To enable improvements to private sector housing and in particular to ensure that disabled or frail, elderly people occupy homes which are suitable to their particular needs.
- To promote energy efficiency in accordance with the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 with particular emphasis on fuel poverty.

New housing legislation for the licensing of houses in multiple occupation and the health and safety rating scheme (HHSRS) is expected to come into operation during 2004/2005. These changes, especially the HHSRS, will require further changes in the housing procedures and training of staff.

#### **5.4 Procurement and Delivery**

The Council is seeking to achieve Best Value in procuring all goods and services and is particularly aware of the benefits of becoming 'Egan Compliant' for maintenance works in relation to its housing stock.

The Council is currently carrying out two specific partnering projects covering cavity wall/loft insulation and uPVC window replacement. Further details are incorporated within the HRA Business Plan.

#### **5.5 Energy Efficiency**

The council's public sector stock condition survey also included an assessment of the energy efficiency of the Council's housing stock. The average SAP rating of the council stock is currently 57, compared to 47 in the private sector stock. The Council has an ongoing policy of improvements to its stock in order to comply with the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995. The Council has also been successful in attracting grants to support its energy efficiency programme covering cavity/loft insulation, external enveloping and energy efficient replacement boilers. Further details are incorporated in the HRA Business Plan.

The Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) requires the Council to consider the energy efficiency of the whole housing stock in the district

and to implement a programme for saving 30% of the energy consumption over a 10-15 year period. The Council is making good progress to the target savings as required by the Act and in our Seventh Progress Report it was reported that the overall improvement in energy efficiency from 1 April 1996 to 31 March 2003 was 13.20%. Although this result is good compared to many local authorities, it is still well below a target figure of 21% at this stage of the ten year improvement period. As time goes on the 30% target is going to be more difficult to achieve as those residents who are most interested in making savings have already carried out improvements and we are left with the hard core of not interested or fuel rich residents.

## **5.6 Adaptations for the Disabled**

There is a continuing need for investment to ensure that the Council stock includes properties that are suitable for those tenants with a disability. The Council will continue with its ongoing programme of adaptations to its own stock with expenditure in excess of around £580,000 per annum planned over the period to 2010.

In the private sector grants are available as outlined in 5.2 to assist residents to stay in their homes with a budget of £350,000 per annum, together with the Anchor Staying Put Scheme, details of which are given in the following paragraphs.

## **5.7 Security and Safety**

Within the Council owned stock, security and safety measures such as door entry systems, carbon monoxide detectors continue to feature in the Capital Programme to 2010. In addition the Council will shortly be commencing a programme of asbestos surveys and a sum has been incorporated within the Capital Programme to cover removal in communal areas. A programme of works to our retirement schemes and homelessness hostels is also underway to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act by October 2004.

In the private sector, the Council see the provision of safe Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO`s) which are in good repair as being a high priority in the strategy to deal with poor housing in the District. HMO`s are important in providing accommodation for single people and often house the more vulnerable members of society. Such tenants need help from the Council to ensure that their living conditions are safe (i.e. that appropriate fire protection measures are installed) and that the condition of the house meets the fitness standard in other respects.

A high priority has been given to this work since 1995 with programmed and targeted inspections being carried out annually. The 1995 registration scheme was replaced on the 4 March 1999 with a Registration Scheme with Control Orders. The new scheme, however, contains numerous exemptions such that the current number of registered HMO`s now number 95. It is estimated that there are still in excess of 300 HMO`s within the District in addition to shared houses.

The Council will continue to risk assess HMO's to ensure that regular inspections are carried out. Properties have been classified into the

categories recommended by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health.

The highest emphasis has been placed on the inspection of three storey properties, particularly those in categories 'A' and 'B' since the occupiers of these houses are most at risk.

A variety of explanatory leaflets for tenants and landlords are available regarding the Council's role, tenants rights and landlords responsibilities. A new booklet was issued in early 1999 detailing the Council's standards for HMO's and provided guidance and information on other matters such as energy efficiency, Trading Standards and Health and Safety legislation.

Concern has been expressed in the past about the standard of shared student accommodation, that may or may not fall into the category of an HMO. The Council has worked with other local authorities in Hertfordshire and the Student Accommodation Officer at the University of Hertfordshire, with the aim of encouraging improvement by voluntary means. There have been meetings and training seminars with Student Accommodation Officers to ensure co-operation. This approach has been very successful and these properties have been improved by the installation of inter linked smoke detectors on each floor. A joint leaflet has also been produced which is available to all students and residents.

The Council have also operated a "Staying Put Scheme" in partnership with Anchor Trust since 1991. The maintenance of this partnership is seen as an important part of the Councils' strategy to ensure that the needs of the elderly owner-occupier are met by supplying help and support at the time in their life of greatest need. In 2003 the St Albans agency merged with the Welwyn and Hatfield agency to provide a larger and more efficient office. The Council will continue to operate the scheme while Supporting People continue to help with the funding.

Anchor Trust in partnership with the Council will continue to review additional ways of helping residents. One successful project has been the "SAFE - Security and Assistance for the Elderly in St Albans scheme. The main aim of SAFE is to provide a rapid response to elderly victims of burglary to carry out emergency repairs and to provide the installation of security equipment to ensure independence and peace of mind. This is an innovative scheme that has required consultation with the Police, Hertfordshire County Council and the local victim support group.

## **5.8 Council Estate Improvements**

The Council places great importance on monitoring the general quality of life on estates through regular investment in minor estate improvements. The estate improvements are a key feature of encouraging tenant and leaseholder participation. Such items often include better lighting, garage improvements, landscaping, refurbishment of refuse areas and the provision of around £80,000 will continue to feature in the Capital Programme.

## 5.9 Maximising the Council's Housing Stock

The Council has for several years carried out a programme of conversion/extensions to existing void properties suitable for this work. The priority has been to increase the size of accommodation in order to meet the needs of larger families on our Housing Register. A sum of around £200,000 per annum enables 4/5 conversions to be carried out each year. In addition the Council will be commencing a review of its retirement housing accommodation during 2004/05 which is the only type of accommodation in low demand within the District. This is partly due to the large number of bedsits, which are increasingly becoming unpopular and difficult to let.

## 5.10 Empty Properties in the Private Sector

There are many social and economic reasons why properties are vacant. Some of these are temporary or occur during genuine resale and need not be the subject of public scrutiny. However, properties, which are kept vacant for long periods of time, are not only a waste of a valuable resource but also deteriorate physically and thereby adversely impact on the local environment.

The Council has now adopted an Empty Property Strategy which will be used to encourage the owners of long term empty houses to return them into occupation. The Council has amended its grant policy to provide empty property grants and has allocated specific funding to target this area. The target for the number of properties returned into use is 3 per year.

St Albans District does not have a major problem with empty properties and the current assessment is that there approximately 300 properties that have been vacant for more than 2 years across the whole of the district. An empty property information pack has now been written which will be sent to all owners of long term empty properties to start the process of returning properties to residential use.

## 5.11 Housing Service Performance

The Council is continuing to implement improvements to the service arising from the best value review of the repairs and housing management service. During 2002-2004 this has included implementation of the repairs appointment system, a partnering arrangement covering uPVC window replacement, further improvements to void procedures, implementation of a tenant contents insurance scheme, mediation service, tenant participation. Future initiatives include the introduction of accompanied viewings and choice based lettings.

The performance of the service remains good. An inspection was carried out of the repairs service during 2001 and the report produced in March 2002 gave the service 2 stars with promising prospects for improvement and identified eleven good practice points.

In relation to the best value performance indicators performance is good particularly around rent arrears which amounted to 1.8% of the rent roll at

the end of 2002/03. On homelessness, the average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation of households which included dependant children or pregnant women and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need at the end of 2002/03 was zero which places the Council in the top quartile performance.

Performance is also good in relation to Decent Homes where the Council is in the top quartile in relation to the number of non-decent homes at 1 April 2002. The table below provides a summary of key performance. A comparison of performance indicators within Hertfordshire including the top quartile performance is shown at Appendix 4.

A wide range of performance information is recorded monthly with best value and local performance indicators incorporated within the service planning process and reported quarterly to the Corporate Management Team and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## Key Performance Summary

<b>Description</b>	<b>2001/02 Actual</b>	<b>2002/03 Actual</b>	<b>2003/04 Outturn</b>	<b>2004/05 Target</b>	<b>2005/06 Target</b>	<b>2006/07 Target</b>
The proportion of Council homes which were non-decent at 1 April 2002	-	10.98%	10.5%	6.5%	3%	0%
The percentage change in proportion of non-decent Council homes between 1 April 2002 and 1 April 2003	-	4.2%	35.5%	73%	100%	Non-decency eliminated
The rent collected as a percentage of the rent due	99.5%	98.7%	98.9%	99.5%	99.7%	99.7%
The percentage of relevant repairs completed within government time limits	91%	89%	95%	96%	97%	98%
The average time taken to relet dwellings available for letting or awaiting minor repairs (days)	36	35	25	22	20	19
The average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation of households which included dependent children or pregnant women and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need	-	0	24.75 days	0	0	0
The average length of stay in hostel accommodation (as above)	-	20 weeks	25.3 weeks	19 weeks	18 weeks	17 weeks
Satisfaction of tenants of Council housing with the overall service provided by their landlord	82%	82%	84%	No survey	No survey	90%
The proportion of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished as a direct result of action by the Council	1.4%	2.7%	3.43%	3%	3%	3%

## 5.12 Options Appraisal

The Council has commenced an Options Appraisal in relation to assessing the investment required/management of its own housing stock. Consultants have been appointed to consider the available options and an Independent Tenants Adviser has been appointed by a panel of 7 tenant representatives. A steering group has been established to oversee the process and the Tenant Empowerment Strategy, Communication and Consultation Strategy and Project Plan have been submitted to Community Housing Task Force for sign off. The Options Appraisal is due for completion in February 2005 with a decision on the preferred option in order to meet the Government's target for sign off by July 2005.

## 6 Housing Demand in St Albans

The Council makes use of a wide range of information and consultations in assessing the housing needs of the District. The most important of these is the district wide housing needs survey which was carried out during 2002/2003. This together with the stock condition surveys on both local authority and private housing stock has provided the council with data on housing need, the ability to afford market housing, aspirations and general household information concerning disabilities, household size and composition. This information together with the dwelling balance analysis carried out as part of the Housing Needs Survey has provided the council with a comprehensive picture of the housing need and demand in St Albans.

### 6.1 The need for Additional Housing

#### 6.1.1 Population Growth

Current population trends have implications for housing:

- the population of the district is growing
- the number of households is increasing, directly affecting the number of homes required
- the type of households increasing most include groups that may require affordable housing, particularly the elderly over 75 who may also have care and support needs and single parent families for example

The 2001 census showed there to be a population of 128,982 in the district, based on the 1996 population projections the number of people living in the district is expected to increase to 147,576 in 2021 (a rise of 17,300 or 13.3% increase from 1996). Significant features of this increase lie in the age groups that are predicted to increase the most, namely the 0 – 19 (an increase of 2,047 residents) ,45 -64 (an increase of 7,769 residents) and 65+( an increase of 7,864 residents). The most economically active age group, 30 - 44 is projected to decrease by 1,246 residents to 2021. These figures indicate that St Albans will continue to have an ageing population, with a significant increase in the over 75s being forecast with numbers increasing by 3,697 residents.

This population increase, coupled with the trend for smaller households will lead to increasing housing demand and need.

### 6.1.2 The Housing Market and Affordability

The private sector provides the majority of housing in the district providing 87% of all homes. Owner occupiers account for 78% of households, with 9% living in privately rented accommodation. The social sector provides the remaining 13% of homes.

House prices are among the highest in the region, in the third quarter 2003 the average price (land registry figures) for a semi-detached house was around £290,137 in the district compared with £237,449 for Hertfordshire and £191,566 for the south east. The high cost of housing and land makes it very difficult for low and middle income households to either rent or buy the type of housing they need at a price they can afford.

A detailed survey undertaken as part of the housing needs survey provided the following information on house prices as at June 2002.

Property Type	Minimum Price	Average Price
1 Bed Flat	£79,950	£118,254
2 Bed Flat	£117,500	£160,452
2 Bed Terraced	£149,950	£189,451
3 Bed Terraced	£144,950	£209,182
2 Bed Semi-Detached	£175,000	£218,034
3 Bed Semi-Detached	£159,950	£254,124

### 6.1.3 The Housing Need Survey

The latest Housing Needs Survey was carried out in September 2002 with a final report being produced in March 2003. It established the scale of need in the district for people unable to access the open market. The survey, carried out in accordance with government approved methodology, provides a comprehensive picture of housing need in the district.

It showed that demand far outweighs supply, concluding that the total housing need annually is for 1,173 affordable homes. Projected over the period to 2011 there is a total need for 8,073 affordable homes. However, it is not expected that the Council will be able to achieve this scale of supply within the timescale, given that affordable housing completions have averaged 67.5 per year (1994-2002).

## Annual Affordable Housing Requirement

Backlog of existing need (833 to be reduced over 5 years)	167
Newly arising need (per year)	1,006
Gross affordable housing requirement	1,173
Supply of affordable housing units per year	276
Net annual affordable housing requirement	897

Housing Needs Survey 2002

The information from the survey, together with the Dwelling Balance Analysis which was carried out at the same time, shows across that the majority of the shortfall is for 1 or 2 bedroom properties in both the open market and affordable sectors. The main findings of the Housing Needs Survey are summarised below.

### Housing Needs Survey Conclusions

- total actual need for 897 affordable housing units
- 3,800 households contain someone with a mobility problem
- 27% of households (14,880 implied) were seeking to move or to move within the next five years
- an income of at least £18,000 was required to access a one bedroom flat in the private rented sector (based on rent at 30% of gross income)
- in order to purchase a one bedroom flat a first time buyer would need an annual income of around £35,000.
- 81% of households are owner occupiers (35% owning their home outright)
- over occupation rates are below the UK average at 1%

The local relationship between house prices and incomes is such that around 75% of newly forming households are unable to purchase a property in their own right. The survey showed that first time buyers would need an annual income of around £35,000 to purchase a one bedroom flat in the district, compared to the average annual income of £28,371.

The impact of Right to Buy has decreased the availability of rented affordable housing and the largest proportion of additional affordable units are required as rented properties both for newly forming and existing households. There is however a need for shared ownership homes of around 95 per year.

In addition to the need for subsidised affordable housing there is a need for 30 unsubsidised starter homes per year for households earning above £50,000.

#### 6.1.4 Ethnic Minority Groups

Within the District there is a substantial ethnic minority population, which is predicted to increase above 5% when the next census results on ethnicity are made public. The Housing Needs Survey included interviews with black and minority ethnic (BME) households, which found that the ethnic minority population in St Albans is well established and settled in the District with 86% of BME households having lived here for over 10 years. The survey revealed significant problems for the BME population, with for example, 33% of households needing repairs to their homes. Whilst harassment is not a major problem, fear of harassment may well limit housing choice for many BME households as many prefer to move only within their existing communities. Low incomes are another factor limiting housing choice, with 35% having household incomes below £10,000 per annum. The size of their housing is also a problem for BME households, with 40% of households interviewed being overcrowded.

The survey has highlighted the needs of the BME communities in St Albans and the council is reviewing its policies as part of the Affordable Housing Strategy. It is clear that the relief of overcrowding should be the main focus and the provision of four bedroom houses on the Burnside, Napsbury and Swallow Lane sites will assist in this. The Council will also be looking at the provision of housing for the elderly as part of its Elderly Persons' Strategy. The needs of young people in the BME community are also important and will be considered as part of an overall BME housing strategy

#### 6.1.5 Elderly People

The Council has 14 retirement housing schemes providing 365 units of accommodation with a Community Warden Service. In addition, a Community Alarm Service is provided to 242 Council tenants and 215 private residents.

Demand for the Council's retirement accommodation has decreased over the last 10 years. The majority of the accommodation is bedsits, which are unacceptable to a number of elderly people and more elderly people are now able to remain in their own homes with practical assistance and aids/adaptations.

The Council has had an ongoing review of its retirement housing and accepts owner occupiers and applications from people over 55. The Housing Needs survey highlighted the significant increase in the population of the district who will be 75 plus years and the council has started to review its provision for the elderly, with the aim of producing an Elderly Persons' Strategy by April 2007. This will take account of the scheme reviews being carried out under the Supporting People Programme, with the level of need for retirement accommodation being assessed much more strategically across the County and at a local level. The Council will continue to support its own programme of disabled adaptations and the 'Staying Put Scheme' run by Anchor Housing Trust, which enables elderly residents to remain in their own homes.

### 6.1.6 Key Workers

Key worker housing is a national priority and in a district where house prices are high, the needs of key workers have become more pressing. Key workers were identified in the Housing Needs Survey as those working in the Public Sector-Health/Social Services, Social Care Workers, Education, other Local Authority services, Police and Fire Services. Whilst home ownership was the preferred tenure of key worker households the survey found that 80% of concealed key worker households could not afford home ownership in the district. Among existing key worker households wanting to move, and taking account of the need for an income of around £35,000 to access the owner occupied sector in St Albans, a significant percentage could not afford to buy, including 60% of Local Authority staff, 49% of Health/Social Services staff and 25% of education staff.

Preliminary details from the county wide key worker housing need survey completed in 2003 showed that whilst 77% of key workers employed in Hertfordshire also lived in the county, of those living out of the county 58% do so in order to access affordable housing. Owner occupation is the preferred tenure for 91% of key workers, with 24% of them wishing to live in St Albans. The Council will be investigating ways of supporting home ownership for this group, as well as for the intermediate market in general.

The Council works with the following definition of key workers:

‘Key workers are people employed or taking up employment (have a confirmed and accepted job offer) in the following employment categories:

- Teachers for Hertfordshire County Council
- Police officers for Hertfordshire Constabulary
- Fire officers for Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Health care workers in National Health Service Trusts working in Hertfordshire
- Social care workers for Hertfordshire County Council (residential care workers and social workers dealing with families/children or vulnerable adults)
- Local Authority staff
- Or such other groups that may be nominated from time to time by the Head of Housing, St Albans District Council.

Key workers eligible for this scheme should be in receipt of salaries between £17,000 - £35,000 per annum for single applicants and up to £50,000 per annum for a couple/family (the key worker salary to be the main salary), salary levels will be reviewed annually in line with public sector pay awards.

Preference should be given to key workers who work or are taking up employment in the St Albans District Council area, followed by key workers working or taking up employment in Hertfordshire.

Key workers who own property will not be eligible for rental schemes.’



possible for most households after a lengthy stay in some form of temporary accommodation.

Over recent years, the number of homeless households who have been accepted for rehousing and have been living in emergency accommodation has ranged between 85 and 100 at any one time. It is anticipated that the incidence of homelessness is likely to continue over the next few years for the following reasons:

- Implementation of Homelessness Act 2002, which extends the priority groups.
- Very high cost of renting or purchasing property on the open market
- Main source of homeless families unchanged, ie sons and daughters of low income families where living conditions become intolerable and viable alternative accommodation is not available
- Increasing number of vulnerable people as a consequence of community care and the closure of institutional facilities in the area.

The Council completed its Homelessness Strategy in July 2003. The key aims of the strategy are:-

- to examine the root causes of homelessness in St Albans;
- wherever possible to prevent homelessness within the district;
- assist residents in the District to access housing across all tenures;
- stop the use of bed and breakfast accommodation;
- reduce the numbers of families in temporary accommodation.

The strategy was produced in consultation with stakeholders. A homelessness conference was held in October 2003 which identified the key priorities for the strategy. These included:-

- optimising the amount of affordable housing in the District;
- engaging the private rented sector;
- improved information to applicants on homelessness services within the District;
- maximising the use of the Council's existing stock;
- developing support services for 16/17 year olds.

An audit was carried out as part of the strategy which identified that a good range of services already exist across the District in partnership with a wide range of agencies.

The main gap in service provision is around support for young homeless people between the ages of 16 and 21. There have been a total of 33 referrals within the 16/17 year age group alone since April 2002. To address this the following actions are being implemented:-

- a planning application submitted by Aldwyck Housing Association has been approved to provide 8 units of supported accommodation for 16-25 year olds. It is envisaged that the main client group will be 16-19 year olds;

- a support service for 16 - 17 year olds established utilising an existing hostel in the District in partnership with Hightown Praetorian and Herts Young Homeless. Three bed spaces have been allocated to this scheme;
- a new Childrens Forum for 16-17 year olds established in partnership with Herts Young Homeless, Children Schools and Families, local housing associations, Connexions, Probation, local drug and alcohol team for adolescents. This forum brings together agencies in order to address issues covering assessment, support packages, mediation and accommodation issues;

The other key issues arising from the strategy are to eliminate the use of bed and breakfast accommodation and develop preventative services.

A leasing arrangement exists with a local housing association in relation to the leasing of properties from the private sector. To date 8 leases have been secured and further leases are programmed for 2004/05.

In developing preventative services the Council has reviewed all its publications covering services across the District. A tenancy management support service for Council tenants was established during 2002/03 as part of the Supporting People Programme. In partnership with a local housing association, support is provided to 25 Council tenants at any one time and has contributed to a reduction in evictions from 16 in 2001/02 to 10 in 2002/03.

An action plan is included within the Homelessness Strategy which is available on the Council's website.

## 6.2 **Increasing the supply of Affordable Housing**

The Council is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing in the district, and given the current uncertainty as to the timing of the introduction of the new Planning Development Framework which will replace Local District Plans, is introducing Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing to assist developers and to explain the policy in the current District Plan. It will seek to negotiate around 35% affordable housing on qualifying sites, as the current plan states the Council's aim is to provide 200 new affordable homes per annum, a target that the council has not been able to meet to date. The table below shows the number of affordable homes provided in 2002/03

**2002/03**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>No. of homes</b>	<b>Grant</b>
<b>Sutton Road St Albans</b>	19	Housing Corporation Grant
<b>NHS laundry Hill End</b>	10	Housing Corporation Grant
<b>Old Albanians St Albans</b>	6 (keyworker)	-
<b>Codicote Road Wheathampstead</b>	10	LASHG and Housing Corporation Grant
<b>TOTAL</b>	45	

Projected completions for 2003/04 are shown below.

**2003/04**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>No of homes</b>	<b>Grant</b>
<b>Swallow Lane St Albans</b>	7	Housing Corporation Grant
<b>TOTAL</b>	7	

Due to difficulties with Section 106 negotiations on Napsbury, completions for 2003/04 are below that earlier projected. Purchase of street properties by RSL's with grants from the local authority are progressing and completions are due in 2004/05. With the abolition of Local Authority Social Housing Grant new guidelines for the payment of grant have had to be drawn up.

The projected completions for 2004/05 are listed below.

**2004/05**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>No of homes</b>	<b>Grant</b>
<b>Burnside St Albans</b>	36	Housing Corporation Grant
<b>Camp Road St Albans</b>	22	-
<b>London Road St Albans</b>	25	Housing Corporation Grant
<b>Napsbury London Colney</b>	145	Housing Corporation Grant
<b>Purchase of Street properties by RSL</b>	5	LA Grant
<b>Conversion of shop units to accommodation</b>	1	LA Grant
<b>Conversion of market rent properties owned by RSL into affordable rented homes</b>	6	LA Grant
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>240</b>	

**2005/06**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>No of Homes</b>	<b>Grant</b>
<b>Camp Road 2 St Albans</b>	18	ADP 2005/06
<b>Eleanor Avenue St Albans</b>	2	LA Grant
<b>Hardwick Place London Colney</b>	2	LA Grant
<b>Garage Site Sandridge</b>	12	Rural Reserve
<b>London Road St Albans</b>	11	Grant to be determined
<b>Reeds Close London Colney</b>	4	LA Grant
<b>Francis Avenue, St Albans</b>	4	LA Grant
<b>Hatfield Road, St Albans</b>	62	Grant to be determined
<b>MAFF Site</b>	14	No Grant required
<b>Peters Avenue, London Colney</b>	10	Grant to be determined
<b>Purchase of street properties</b>	5	LA Grant
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>	

## Potential/Future Sites

There are limited opportunities to increase the housing stock, land is in short supply and development increasingly involves brown field sites. However, other measures are being implemented to ensure the Council maximises the amount of affordable housing within the District. These include:

- redevelopment of garage forecourts
- maximising densities in accordance with the Government's Directive
- rear garden developments where suitable properties are identified during the void inspection process
- purchase of street properties with provision of grants to a local housing association
- completion of the Affordable Housing Strategy
- exploring innovative ways of increasing affordable housing provision, for example, residential development above retail schemes
- windfall sites over and above those already identified
- other planning measures to be incorporated into the Local Development Framework to ensure planning requirements for affordable housing are robust
- working closely with other local authorities in the sub-region to maximise affordable housing in all districts and funding to the Eastern Region
- active participation in county key worker strategy group and chairing Sub-regional working group
- remodel/redevelop unpopular retirement housing schemes
- investigation of private funding for affordable housing

### Potential sites 2006 onwards

<b>Development</b>	<b>Estimated No of properties</b>
<b>Ariston Site St Albans</b>	7
<b>Oaklands St Albans City Centre Campus</b>	105
<b>St Albans City Station Car Park Site</b>	105
<b>Kwick Save, Park Street</b>	68
<b>TOTAL</b>	285

### 6.3 Rural Housing Issues

The Council is actively seeking to provide more affordable housing in two of the more rural parishes, both of which are in the Green Belt. Any affordable housing provided will therefore be provided on Rural Exception Sites and will be secured for local people in housing need in perpetuity.

Following a local housing need survey in Sandridge, a clear need for affordable housing was identified. The Parish Council together with the Rural Housing Enabler and the Housing Department's Development Officer have identified a suitable site for a development to take place. A local Housing Needs Survey took place during April/May 2002 in the parish of Colney Heath. A garage site has been identified and a planning application is being submitted for the provision of three rented units.

## 7 Resources

### 7.1 Capital Programme

The Council has been debt free since 1 April 2002 and has utilised all of its capital receipts through Right To Buy sales of Council properties to support the Housing Investment Programme. The key areas of expenditure are:-

- improvements to the Council's housing stock
- funding new affordable housing in partnership with local housing associations
- renovation and repair of private dwellings and adaptations for disabled people.

The table below provides a summary of previous and projected income from Right to Buy sales.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Capital Receipt</b>	<b>Number of RTB sales</b>
2001/02	3,463	54
2002/03	5,789	61
2003/04	10,063	95
2004/05	5,684	66
2005/06	4,572	66
2006/07	3,343	64

For business planning purposes the number of RTB sales has been estimated at 38 freehold and 28 leasehold in 2004/05 to reflect sales over the previous four years. Thereafter the number of RTB sales are assumed to continue at 1.31% of the general needs stock.

Following the successful allocation of Housing Corporation funding to the District (£18M for 2003/04), additional capital resources have been freed up within the Housing Investment Programme to support other affordable housing initiatives.

The amount of money set aside within the Housing Investment Programme for 2004/05 to support affordable housing is shown in the table below.

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Francis Avenue (4/5 units)	£408,000
Garden Cottages (bringing 6 market rent units into affordable housing stock)	£300,000
Purchase of street properties 5	506,000
Garage site redevelopment (6 units)	£500,000
Rear garden (2 units)	£280,000
Sleapshyde Lane (3)	£175,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2.16M</b>

The Council has a Capital Strategy which sets out the priorities for capital expenditure. Priorities for capital expenditure are reviewed by Scrutiny Committees and determined by Cabinet and these link back to the Council's aims and objectives. The Council has established a HIP Financing Committee which makes recommendations annually to Cabinet on the allocation of capital receipts from the sale of Council properties.

The Council is concerned about the effect that pooling of capital receipts will have on the Housing Investment Programme. The business plan submitted in July 2002 identified that the Council's HRA was in a healthy position with capital expenditure funded throughout the plan. This will be updated as part of the Housing Options Appraisal, given the pooling of capital receipts from 1 April 2004 and other HRA subsidy changes. Further details are included in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

## 7.2 Housing Revenue Account

A 30 year business plan has been produced utilising the ODPM business planning model. Further details can be found in the HRA Business Plan. A summary of the model covering the period to 2007 is illustrated in the table below.

### HRA Budget 2004/05 to 2006/07

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Income</b>			
Rents - Dwellings	18,256	19,095	19,973
Interest Received	53	104	156
	18,309	19,199	20,129
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Supervision and Management	4,347	4,473	4,604
Repairs	2,732	2,835	2,940
Rebates	169	96	22
Cost of Capital	623	623	623
Major Repairs Allowance (Transfer to Reserves)	3,655	3,680	3,726
Distribution to the DWP (Negative Subsidy)	5,571	6,243	6,988
	17,097	17,949	18,902
<b>Net cost/(surplus) of services</b>	<b>(1,212)</b>	<b>(1,250)</b>	<b>(1,227)</b>

In producing the HRA Business Plan a number of assumptions have been made and these are summarised below:

- implementation of Government formula rents and service charges for caretaking and grounds maintenance to 2011/2012 and that rents continue to grow by 0.5% p.a. in real terms thereafter
- implementation of the Government's stated intentions on Management and Maintenance allowances. This includes allowances moving to meet their target levels plus national average growth of 2% per annum until 2011/2012 with no real growth thereafter
- maintenance budgets are assumed to reduce pro-rata with the number of dwellings
- RTB levels are assumed to continue at 1.31% of the general needs stock. Values are assumed to grow at 1% per annum in real terms and the current discount remains at its current level of £34,000
- pooling of receipts so that by 2007/08 75% is paid to Government and 25% only is available
- HRA balance requirements have been set at £50 per dwelling at 2004/05 prices
- inflation runs at 2.5% throughout
- a capital reserve of £10.045 million is available to the HRA at the start of 2004/05.

Further details on these assumptions can be found in the HRA Business Plan.

In addition the HRA Business Plan has also been subject to sensitivity analysis in order to test whether changes to the assumptions produce significant changes to the key outcomes. The sensitivity analysis carried out has included:-

- RTB sales reduce to 50% of their historic level over the first five years
- real growth in subsidy does not materialise
- real growth in management and maintenance subsidy equals the real growth in management and maintenance costs
- real growth in management and maintenance costs increases to 1% per annum
- Council uses the assumed Supported Capital Expenditure for HRA purposes

Details in relation to the sensitivities carried out are included in the HRA Business Plan

### 7.3 Major Repairs and Financing

The HRA Business Plan shows that there is sufficient resources to meet the Decent Homes Standard and to maintain/improve the housing stock. The table below shows the expenditure and financing over the next three years. Further information can be found in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

#### Major Repairs and Financing

	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	£000's	£000,s	£000's
Planned Maintenance	3,702	4,063	4,474
Improvements	1,273	732	770
Other	1,697	1,943	1,613
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>6,672</b>	<b>6,738</b>	<b>6,857</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Right to Buy Receipts	5,684	4,572	3,343
Other (Capital receipts brought forward)	10,045		
MRR	-9,058	2,166	3,514
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>6,672</b>	<b>6,738</b>	<b>6,857</b>

## 7.4 Revenue Expenditure - General Fund

The day to day revenue costs of meeting the strategic role fall into the General Fund. A summary of the relevant budgets are set out in the table below.

DESCRIPTION	2002/2003 OUTTURN	2003/2004 FORECAST	2004/2005 FORECAST	2005/06 FORECAST	2006/07 FORECAST
	£	£	£	£	£
Homelessness	181,597	227,370	208,780	208,290	133,980
Home Renovation Grants	75,140*	88,490	93,720	95,420	98,420
Housing Aid Centre	47,360	48,310	49,520	49,520	49,520
Staying Put Scheme	34,730	38,040	39,000	39,975	40,975
Leased Properties	87,028	170,790	240,040	238,740	237,510
Housing Needs Survey	32,863	20,000			
	383,578	593,000	631,060	631,945	560,405
Total Housing (GF)	876,009	1,196,680	868,140	848,270	784,775

\*Actual cost to GF zero as all capitalised

## 7.5 Sources of External Funding

The Council maximises opportunities wherever possible to secure external funding opportunities. Examples of recent and ongoing external funding are listed below:-

- the Housing corporation's Approved Development Programme and Challenge Fund Programme, which provided £18 million in 2003/04 and is providing £2.4 million in 2004/06.
- funding from the Homelessness Directorate amounting to £39,988 in 2002/03 and 2003/04 to support homelessness initiatives within the District. Additional funding of £45,000 has been allocated for 2004/05 and £20,000 for 2005/06
- £200,000 E Government funding in 2002/03 and 2003/04 for electronic service delivery
- £30,000 from Community Legal Services Partnership to support a three year mediation service which commenced in 2003/04
- £143,201 Building Safer Communities (CAD, PDF and SCI) in 2003/04 and the same amount in 2004/05 and 2005/06. Approximately £105,000 to be spent on drug related projects
- £188,996 Basic Command Unit Fund covering St Albans, Welwyn/Hatfield and Hertsmere for 2003/04 (similar sum for 2004/05 and 2005/06)
- £210,000 Hertfordshire Arson Task Force covering a three year programme (currently awaiting outcome of bid)
- £39,000 in 2002/03 matched Government grant funding to support cavity wall/loft insulation projects to the Council's housing stock. A similar sum is envisaged for 2003/04 onwards
- £304,169 Planning Delivery Grant to support the planning process in 2004/05

## 7.6 Funding Affordable Housing

The table below shows both internal and external funding for affordable housing from 2000 to 2007

Source of funding	2000/01 £'000	2001/02 £'000	2002/03 £'000	2003/04 £'000	2004/05 £'000	2005/06 £'000	2006/07 £'000
Housing Corporation ADP/Regional hsg board allocation	3,132	2,469	626,900	18,247	1,849	606	3,000
LASHG (abolished 1/4/03) Capital Receipts	948	295	343,000	-	-	-	-
LA Grants to RSLs Capital Receipts	-	-	-	355	3,364	1,000	1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,080</b>	<b>2,764</b>	<b>969,000</b>	<b>18,602</b>	<b>5,213</b>	<b>1,606</b>	<b>4,000</b>

The above table projects future funding for affordable housing based on current circumstances covering recent allocations and resources available internally through capital receipts. The Housing Options Appraisal will be looking at the provision of affordable housing across the various options.

## **8 Stakeholder Consultation**

### **8.1 Corporate Aim**

The Council is committed to stakeholder consultation through its strategic aim to provide community leadership by acting as a voice for and meeting the needs of the whole community, working closely in partnership with others.

### **8.2 Examples of Consultation with Stakeholders and Key Partners**

- regular formal meetings with resident association representatives via Housing Consultation Forum
- annual residents conference
- focus groups to gauge user opinions
- conferences for stakeholders and other partners e.g. Homelessness Conference, Housing Strategy Conference
- Newsletters for tenants and leaseholders
- a Mori district opinion poll
- commissioning a Tenant Satisfaction Survey completed in January 2004
- district wide Tenant's Compact
- regular formal meetings with local housing associations and voluntary sector via Housing Consultative Forum
- regular meetings of the Local Strategic Partnership
- cross boundary Supporting People Forum in partnership with Dacorum Borough Council

Feedback from a Stakeholders Conference held in March 2003, Residents Conference held in June 2003 and a Homelessness Conference held in 2002 have identified priorities for our Housing Strategy which also reflect the findings of our housing needs survey, private sector stock and public sector stock condition surveys. This is illustrated at Appendix 5. These are summarised below:-

- securing 35% affordable housing on all qualifying sites and implementing Supplementary Planning Guidance
- making best use of existing stock by reviewing sheltered schemes, low demand garage sites
- developing housing for the intermediate market
- meeting the Decent Homes Standard
- carrying out improvements to the stock in excess of the Decent Homes Standard
- addressing issues of anti-social behaviour and wider community safety issues on estates
- engaging the private rented sector through a rent deposit scheme/leasing arrangements to address homelessness issues
- develop support services for 16/17 year olds
- developing cross boundary and sub regional working to increase affordable housing provision

These key priorities are reflected in our action plans.

A number of other issues were raised including empty properties, seeking 50% affordable housing on designated employment sites and redeveloping the existing stock to higher densities. These are summarised at Appendix 5 with the reasons why these options are not being pursued.

## 9 Delivery of the 2002-2005 Strategy

### 9.1 Progress to date

The Housing Strategy submitted in July 2002 contained a number of detailed targets and plans for the authority for 2002/03 and beyond. A full schedule of achievements is included at Appendix 7. The most important key achievements are:-

- completion of a robust Housing Needs Survey
- securing 28% affordable housing on all development sites above Circular 6.98 thresholds
- completion of a homelessness strategy
- achieving a 2.7% reduction in the number of unfit dwellings within the District
- achieving 79% of available HIP resources to renovate the Council's housing stock
- completing a County wide Housing Study and Market Analysis in order to inform the Regional Housing Strategy

During 2002/03 the Council spent 82% of its capital programme as summarised in the table below.

	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Actual £</b>	<b>% of budget spent</b>
Council stock	4,554	3,635	80%
Private Sector Grants	621	602	97%
Housing Associations	344	343	99%
Other CPO	78	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,597</b>	<b>4,580</b>	<b>82%</b>

The underspend in relation to the Council stock covered three schemes and some outstanding invoices for completed work carried forward into 2004/05. The three schemes related to some replacement mobile homes awaiting planning permission, window and door replacement scheme awaiting revisions to doors and Ridgeview where a feasibility study in relation to the long term provision of this hostel was being undertaken.

The arrangements for monitoring user satisfaction and quality of services and obtaining feedback on the action plan in our Housing Strategy are summarised in the table below.

<b>Method of Feedback</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Tenant/Residents Conference	Annual
Housing Strategy Conference	Annual
Homelessness Strategy Review	Annual
Housing Consultative Forum	Quarterly
Tenant Satisfaction Survey	3 yearly
District Wide Mori Poll Survey	2 yearly
Satisfaction Survey - Repairs	Every order raised completion of capital/improvement schemes annually
Satisfaction Survey - Improvements	
Satisfaction Survey - Estate Services	
Telephone Poll - Repairs	Annual
Housing Times Newsletter	Quarterly

In addition to the above the Council has carried out a post scheme evaluation where major initiatives have been implemented. A recent example is the repairs appointment system where a survey was carried out after 6 months covering tenants, contractors and staff. 84% of tenants surveyed confirmed that appointments had been kept and 80% gave positive feedback on the new service. Further details are incorporated in the HRA Business Plan.

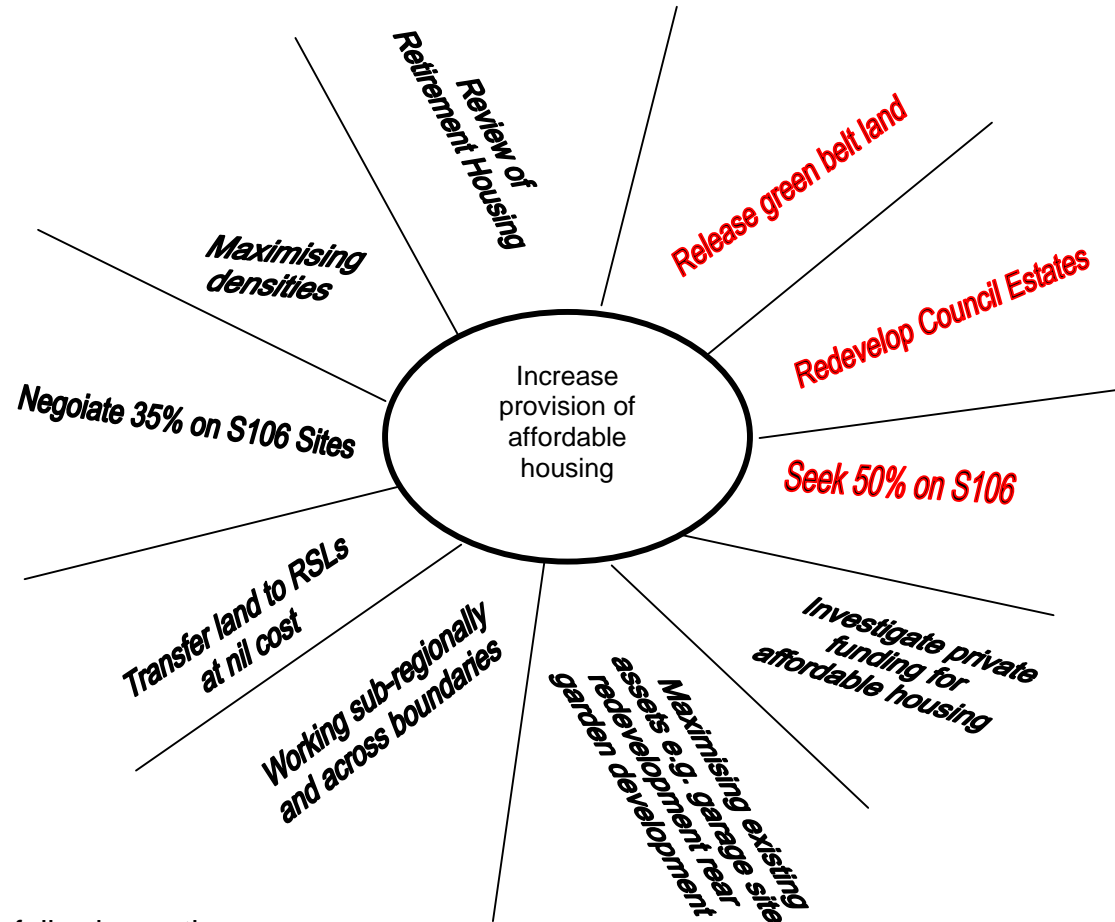
Information from the above surveys will feed into the planning process for updating the Housing Strategy and key methods are detailed in the Action Plan at Appendix 8

## 10 **Housing Strategy Priorities**

The five priorities are summarised diagrammatically below together with explanations on why certain actions are not being pursued. The action plans which follow in Appendix 8 illustrate how the priorities will be delivered over the next three years. Information on how these priorities were selected can be found within the Strategy document.

## HOUSING STRATEGY PRIORITIES

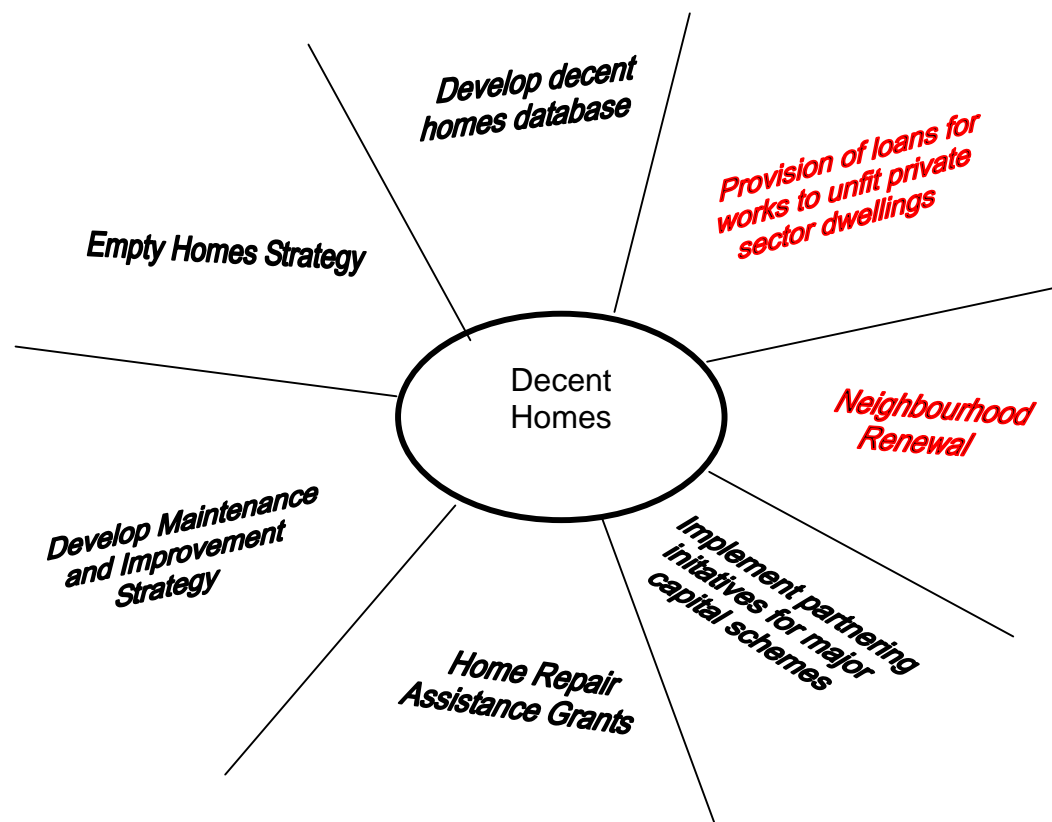
### Priority One - to increase the provision of affordable housing



The Council has not adopted the following options:

- 1) Release green belt land - it is not felt necessary to release green belt sites yet, as there are opportunities to redevelop brownfield sites and land within settlement.
- 2) Redevelop Council's Estates - The Council's stock is in good condition and redevelopment of estates is not deemed cost-effective at present.
- 3) Seek 50% affordable housing on S106 sites - Seeking 50% affordable housing on S106 sites could limit the number of sites coming forward.

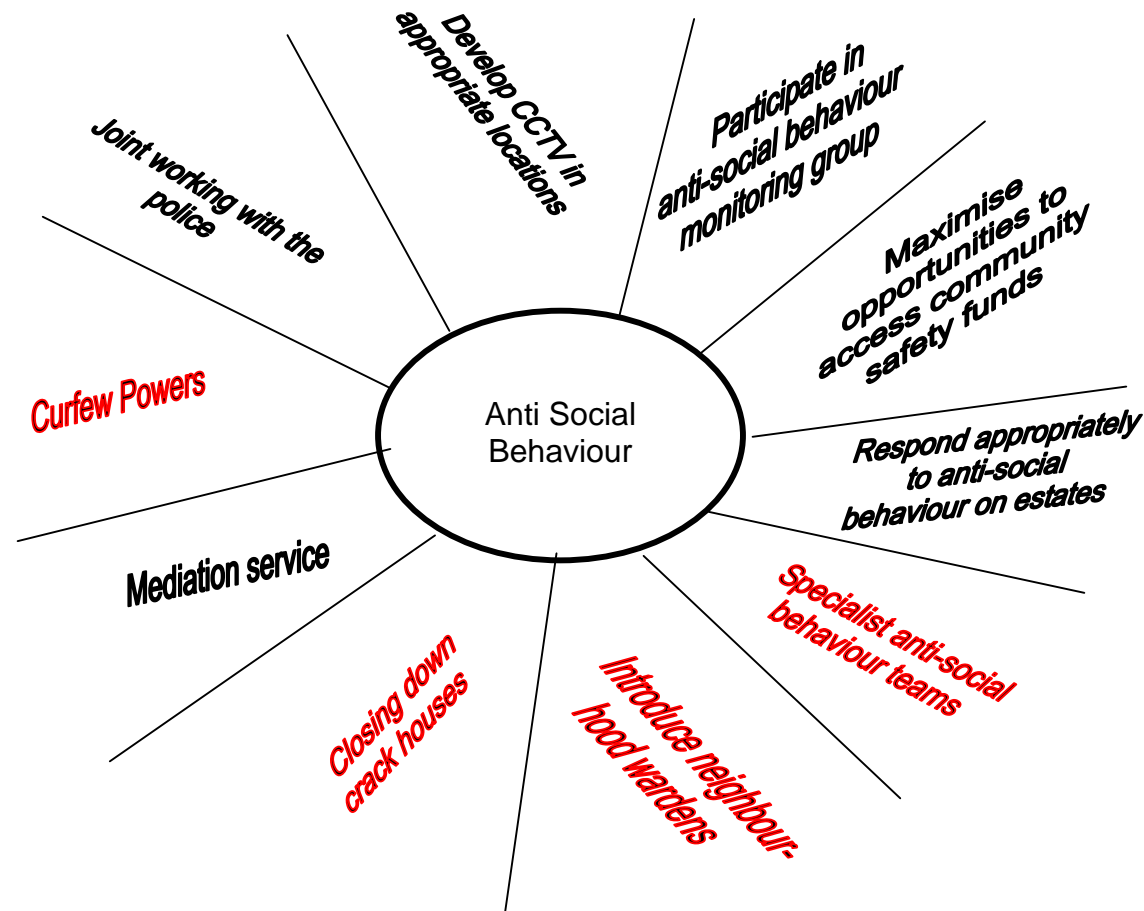
**Priority Two - to sustain a rolling programme of planned maintenance and improvements so as to maintain the stock in good condition**



The Council has not adopted the following options:

- 1) Neighbourhood Renewal - neighbourhood renewal is not being pursued as stock condition is generally good and this approach is not warranted.
- 2) Loan Provision for Repairs - provision of grants is deemed the most appropriate way of improving private sector properties.

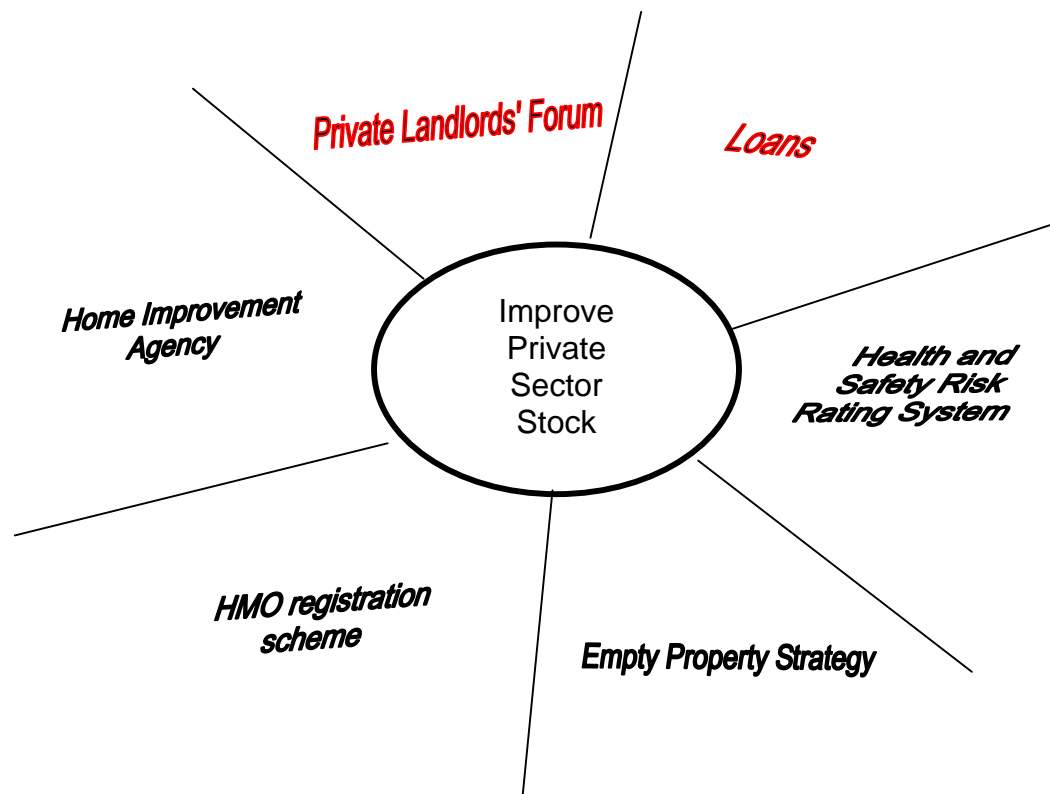
Priority Three - to address issues around anti-social behaviour and make local communities safe places to live and work in



The Council has not adopted the following options:

- 1) Curfew powers - these have not yet been necessary
- 2) Closing Crack Houses - this has not yet become necessary
- 3) Neighbourhood Wardens - level of anti-social behaviour has not warranted this approach to date, but is under review
- 4) Specialist anti-social behaviour teams - as above

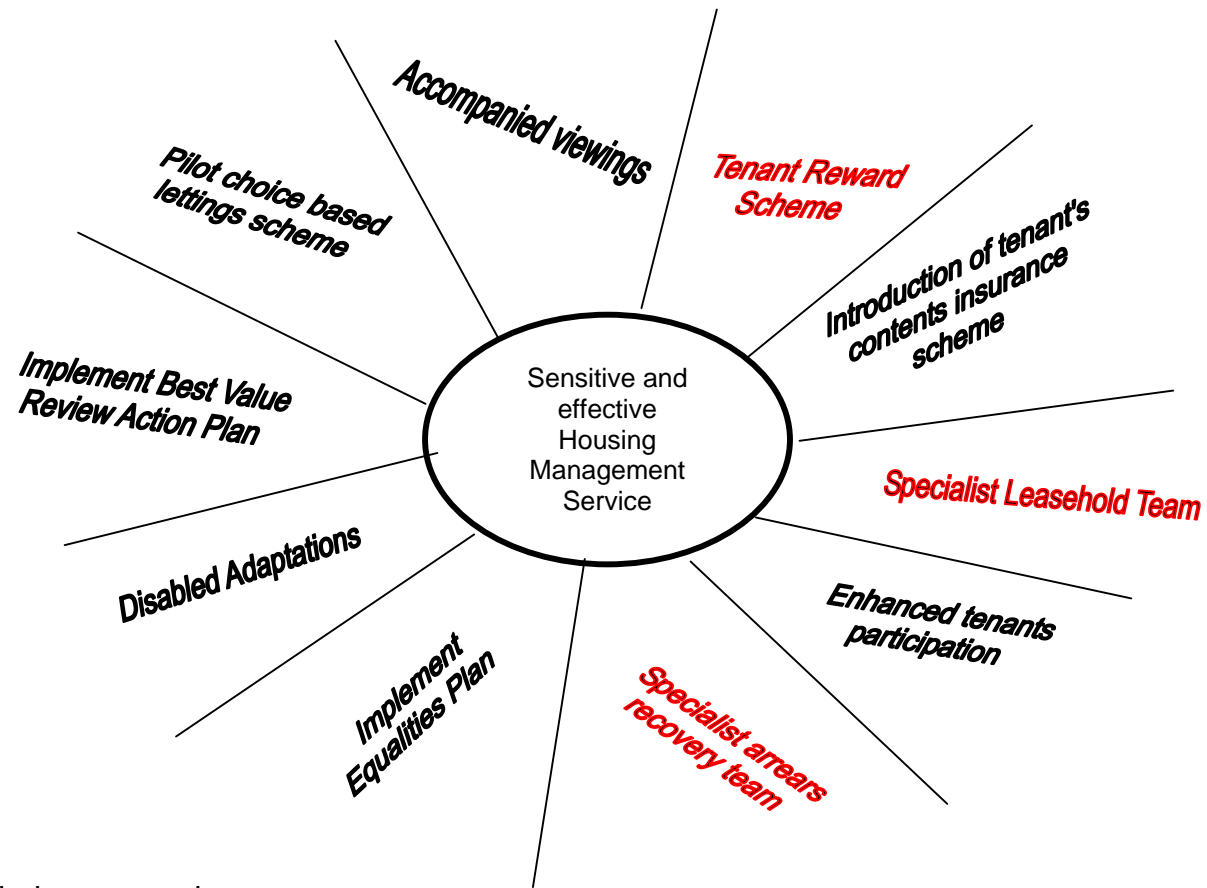
**Priority Four - to maintain the provision of grant to support improvement and repair in the private sector**



The Council has not adopted the following options:

- 1) Private Landlords' Forum - previous forums have been poorly attended but this is still under review.
- 2) Loans - grants are felt to be the most effective given the condition of the private sector stock

**Priority Five - to deliver a sensitive and effective housing management service**



The following actions are not being pursued

- 1) Specialist Arrears Recovery Team - current arrears collection figures do not warrant this approach and a generic approach is favoured.
- 2) Tenant Reward Scheme - no significant housing management issues that this would resolve.
- 3) Specialist Leasehold Team - Council previously employed a dedicated leasehold manager which proved not to be an effective use of staff resources.

## 11 Action Plan

The action plan at Appendix 8 details our proposed priorities over the next three years and how these link to the Council's corporate aims and objectives.

It must also be recognised that there are some national priorities and sub-regional priorities which are not key priorities for this District. These are empty properties, regeneration and unfitness within the private sector housing stock. These in turn link to the allocation of resources within the Housing Investment Programme which are prioritised around affordable housing and maintaining the Council's own housing stock.

The Government will be assessing whether the Council's Housing Strategy is 'fit for the purpose'. If it is deemed 'fit for the purpose' the Council will only be required to provide an annual report on delivery against Action Plans and its work on developing its strategy/plans.

The Action Plan itself will be monitored through:-

- service planning process and quarterly updates to Overview and Scrutiny Community Services and Corporate Management Team
- Housing Consultative Forums with resident association representatives and local housing associations
- annual Residents Conference
- annual Stakeholders Conference

In addition annual updates will be reported to Housing Consultation Forum, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet prior to submission to the Go-East Regional Office.

## Appendix 1: The Council's Vision, Aims and Objectives

<b>The Council's vision:</b>	
<b>To preserve and enhance the distinctive character of St Albans city and district, making it an outstanding place to live, work and enjoy</b>	
<b>Aim 1</b>	
<b>Provide community leadership by acting as a voice for and meeting the needs of the whole community, working closely in partnership with others</b>	
	<b>Objectives</b>
1.1	Provide high quality services and strive for excellence through continuous improvement
1.2	Engage with and ensure our services are easily accessible to all, paying particular attention to ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities, and other groups with specific needs
1.3	Represent community views to government and providers of major public services
1.4	Work in partnership with other voluntary, statutory, commercial and community organisations to meet the needs of the whole community
1.5	Help local communities develop the skills and give them the power to identify and meet their local needs
<b>Aim 2</b>	
<b>Protect and enhance the environment and heritage and create a safer environment</b>	
	<b>Objectives</b>
2.1	Ensure the city and district is kept clean, attractive and healthy for the whole community
2.2	Promote and implement environmental good practice
2.3	Preserve the Green Belt and enhance conservation areas and green spaces in accordance with a democratically agreed District Plan
2.4	Conserve and seek to improve the character and attractiveness of the environment throughout the district
2.5	Help people feel safe and be safe whilst living in, working in and traveling around the district
2.6	Preserve the heritage of the city and district, and share it widely

<b>Aim 3</b>	
<b>Improve the health and well-being of residents</b>	
	<b>Objectives</b>
3.1	Maximise the amount of decent, secure and affordable public and private sector housing in the district
3.2	Reduce homelessness and help residents stay in their own home
3.3	Reduce fuel poverty and enhance energy efficiency across all housing within the district
3.4	Maintain and improve the council's housing stock to keep it in a decent condition
3.5	Improve services, facilities and opportunities which provide a healthy environment and healthier lifestyles for all local residents
3.6	Help people to overcome economic and social disadvantage
3.7	Provide quality, affordable sport, leisure and arts opportunities to all

<b>Aim 4</b>	
<b>Support and promote a thriving and sustainable local economy</b>	
	<b>Objectives</b>
4.1	Work with partners and funding agencies to sustain a thriving local economy
4.2	Promote St Albans city and district as a tourist destination and for local residents to enjoy
4.3	Support opportunities for businesses and employees to enhance their skills and improve their performance
4.4	Support learning opportunities for local people to improve their skills and life chances
4.5	Regulate parking to balance the economic well being of the city and district with the needs of residents
4.6	Meet the needs of residents and businesses for transport in a sustainable way in accordance with a democratically agreed District Plan
<b>The Council's corporate aims and objectives are underpinned by a well motivated, well trained and effective workforce</b>	

## Appendix 2: Private Sector Stock Condition

### Key Findings of the Private Sector House Condition Survey 2001

#### Dwelling Type

The District contains 48,998 private sector dwellings.

- 14,101 dwellings are terraced representing 28.6% of the total stock.
- 16,230 dwellings are semi-detached representing 33.1% of the total stock.
- 10,139 dwellings are detached representing 20.7% of the total stock.

#### Dwelling Tenure

Owner occupation is predominate in the District

- 42,726 dwellings are owner occupied representing 87.2% of the stock
- 4,952 dwellings are in the private rented sector representing 10.1% of the stock

#### Unfitness

- 1,515 dwellings are estimated to be unfit representing 3.1% of the stock
- 807 dwellings in the private rented sector are unfit

#### Poor Repair

- 5,522 of dwellings although not unfit are in poor repair and require remedial work in excess of £3,000. This represents 11.3% of the total stock compared to 18.1% in the previous survey.
- Poor repair dwellings are typically pre-war, owner occupied terraced housing.

#### Costs to remedy unsatisfactory housing

- The minimum cost to remedy unfitness was estimated to be £11.42m.
- The minimum cost to remedy poor repair dwellings, which are at risk of becoming unfit, was estimated to be £3.46m.

## Households in Unsatisfactory Dwellings

- Heads of households aged over 65 years comprise 25.9% of all households in the District yet account for 40.9% of all households living in unfit dwellings.
- Households where the head of household is aged 25 years or under account for 1.7% of all households in the District yet comprise 18.6% of all households living in unfit dwellings.
- Small adult families comprise 24.7% of all households in the District yet account for 49.1% of all households living in unfit dwellings.

## Energy Efficiency

- The average SAP Rating of private sector housing was 47.
- The average carbon dioxide emission for each dwelling was 8.81 tonnes per annum.
- The average annual energy cost was £817 per household.

## Appendix 3 - Public Sector Stock Condition

### Key Findings of the Public Sector Housing Condition Survey

- Condition of the stock overall is good with many elements not requiring replacement within the first ten years.
- £96m of work is required to maintain the stock over the next 30 years excluding improvements.
- £24.9m is required to maintain the stock over the next 10 years excluding improvements.
- £148,855 of catch up repairs is required over the next five years.
- Average SAP rating of the stock is 56.
- Number of non-decent properties totalled 616 i.e. 10.95% of the housing stock.
- 18 properties failed under criteria A
- 431 properties failed under criteria B
- 23 properties failed under criteria C
- 100 properties failed under criteria D
- 44 properties failed more than one criterion.
- £931,150 is required to improve those properties which fail the decency standard.

#### **NB. Definition of criterion**

Criteria A It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing.

Criteria B Where it is in a reasonable state of repair - dwellings which fail are those where one or more of the key building components are old and because of their condition need replacing e.g. roof, windows or two or more of the other building components are old and because of their age need replacing.

Criteria C It has reasonably modern facilities and services. Dwellings which fail lack three or more of the following:

- a reasonably modern kitchen (20 years old or less)
- a kitchen with adequate space and layout
- a reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less)
- an appropriately located bathroom and wc
- adequate insulation against external noise (where it is a problem)
- adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats

Criteria D It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. Dwellings must have both effect insulation and efficient heating

- Appendix 4: Hertfordshire Best Value Performance Indicators

2002/03 Benchmarking (Outturn)

Indicator	St Albans	Dacorum	Broxbourne	Three Rivers	North Herts	Welwyn/ Hatfield	Watford	Stevenage	East Herts	Hertsmere	Top Quartile Perf 2002/03
The average SAP rating of Council owned dwellings (energy efficiency)	57	66	63	54	55	74	60	63 est. pending stock condition survey	N/A	N/A	63
The rent collected as a percentage of the rent due	98.7%	97.02%	98.8%	98.2%	99.3%	96.4%	98.1%	98.2%	N/A	N/A	98.7%
The average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation of households which included dependent children or pregnant women and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need	0.0 weeks	0.0 weeks	5.0 weeks	6.0 weeks	3.0 weeks	0.0 weeks	0.0 weeks	0.0 weeks	15 weeks	9 weeks	0.6

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>St Albans</b>	<b>Dacorum</b>	<b>Broxbourne</b>	<b>Three Rivers</b>	<b>North Herts</b>	<b>Welwyn/ Hatfield</b>	<b>Watford</b>	<b>Stevenage</b>	<b>East Herts</b>	<b>Hertsmere</b>	<b>Top Quartile Perf 2002/03</b>
The average length of stay in hostel accommodation of households which included dependent children or pregnant women and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need	16 weeks	7 weeks	58 weeks	0.0 weeks	31 weeks	16 weeks	44 weeks	5 weeks	22 weeks	31 weeks	0.0
The proportion of Council homes which were non-decent at 1 April 2002	11%	11%	5%	48%	28%	18%	28%	72% pending results Stock Cond Survey	N/A	N/A	20%

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>St Albans</b>	<b>Dacorum</b>	<b>Broxbourne</b>	<b>Three Rivers</b>	<b>North Herts</b>	<b>Welwyn/ Hatfield</b>	<b>Watford</b>	<b>Stevenage</b>	<b>East Herts</b>	<b>Hertsmere</b>	<b>Top Quartile Perf 2002/03</b>
The percentage change in proportion of non-decent Council homes between 1 April 2002 and 1 April 2003	4%	48%	30%	32%	5%	15%	7%	6%	N/A	N/A	22%
The percentage of responsive repairs during the year which the Council both made and kept	Appointment system implemented March 2003 0%	92%	99%	88%	92%	25%	No appt system	14.25%	N/A	N/A	57%
The proportion of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished as a direct result of action by the local authority	2.7%	5.0%	1.1%	10.6 %	0.8%	3.2%	2.7%	4.4%	0.9%	0.2%	4.0%

The number of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned into occupation or demolished during 2003/04 as a direct result of action by the local authority	0	31	28	0	1	0	13	6	4	0	-
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## Appendix 5: Resident and Stakeholder Involvement

### Conferences

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Homelessness Conference	October 2002	Council staff, Shelter, local housing associations, Office of Deputy Prime Minister, Children Schools and Families, Herts Young Homeless, Voluntary Organisations, Primary Care Trust
Housing Strategy Stakeholders Conference	March 2003	Tenants' Associations, Property developers, RSLs' staff, Estate Agents, voluntary organisations, council staff, housing needs survey consultants, Council members
Residents' Day	July 2003	Tenants. Leaseholders, Council members, RSL staff, council staff.

### Surveys

<b>Survey</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Mori Survey of Residents	2002	Residents in the St Albans' District
Public Sector Stock Condition Survey	April 2002	Council Tenants
Housing Needs Survey and Dwelling Balance Analysis	September 2002 –April 2003	Residents in the St Albans District
Tenant Satisfaction Survey	November 2003	Council Tenants and Leaseholders

**APPENDIX 6 – Stakeholder Suggestions for increasing affordable housing not adopted.**

<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Reason for non-adoption</b>
Seek 50% affordable housing on sites designated for employment use	Likely to make sites uneconomic to develop for residential use
Release some greenfield sites	This is a planning issue, regional planning guidance is currently awaited on housing figures
Redevelop existing council estates to higher densities	Stock is generally in good condition and therefore this is not applicable at the current time. The effect of Right to Buy would necessitate the use of compulsory purchase orders.
Develop land owned by the public sector exclusively for affordable housing	Whilst we do this on our land, land is also owned by other public authorities over which the Council has no control
Purchase empty private sector properties	The Council has an Empty Properties Strategy, empty properties are not a major problem in the district

## Appendix 7 Actions Completed Against Previous Targets

### 7.1 Targets – Additional Social Housing

Target	Achievement During 2001/02	Achievement During 2002/03
To secure 25% affordable housing on all development sites above the Circular 6.98 thresholds	22.5% Achieved	28%
To revise the Local Plan policy on affordable housing so as to include a lower site threshold to take account of local exceptional constraints	Still being discussed	Housing Needs Survey incorporated into revised affordable housing chapters
To secure/provide Social Housing Grant to Housing Associations for the provision of at least 50 additional units of rented social housing each year	44 units completed	45 units completed
To transfer to a Housing Association at nil cost, one small site each year for the development of rented social housing in return for nomination rights	Achieved	One site transferred at nil cost to provide 7 rented units
Through joint working with other agencies, to provide 20 homes each year for people with special needs	8 homes plus floating support	No additional units provided
To pilot an initiative to secure 15 additional homes through a partner Housing Association without use of Social Housing Grant	Due for completion September 2002	Completed 16 additional affordable units secured
To seek opportunities through local Housing Associations to acquire and rehabilitate older property, possibly above shops, particularly with the needs of single people in mind	Ongoing	Ongoing

<b>Target</b>	<b>Achievement During 2001/02</b>	<b>Achievement During 2002/03</b>
To undertake a Housing Needs Survey during 2002/03 in order to feed into the Local Plan	Ongoing	Completed
To undertake a review of low demand garage sites in order to ascertain their development potential by April 2003	Ongoing	Two sites identified for 2004/05 bidding round
To develop an affordable Housing Strategy by April 2003	Ongoing	Draft Strategy completed
To explore different ways of providing temporary accommodation	5 additional private sector leases obtained in partnership with a local Housing Association	5 additional private sector leases secured
To complete a homelessness strategy by July 2003	New target	Completed
To transfer to a Housing Association land at a discount on open market value for affordable housing in return for nomination rights	New target	One site transferred at discount for 36 rented dwellings

## 7.2 Targets – Private Sector Stock

Target	Achievement During 2001/2002	Achievement During 2002/03
To respond to complaints of sub-standard housing within three working days and ensure that Housing Act Notices are served where required and when not complied with, that legal proceedings and/or works in default are carried out in accordance with the Council Housing Enforcement Policy	88% of complaints responded to within three working days	89.90%
To provide at least  5 Housing Renovation Grants  40 Disabled Facilities Grants and  80 Home Repair Assistance Grants each year	3 Housing Renovation Grants  31 Disabled Facilities Grants  59 Home Repair Assistance Grants	2  35  62
To ensure that all grant applications are approved within the Council's standard of 19 weeks	95%	93%
To continue to provide financial support to the Home Improvement Agency operated through the Anchor Housing Trust	Achieved	Achieved

<b>Target</b>	<b>Achievement During 2001/2002</b>	<b>Achievement During 2002/03</b>
To maintain a programme for inspection and re-inspection of HMO's so as to improve properties to the required standards. To include 50 new inspections for each year	49 inspections	46
To promote public awareness of improvement of living conditions by the provision of leaflets, advice and media coverage	Achieved	Achieved
To update each year the Home Energy Conservation Report in accordance with the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995	Achieved	Achieved
To undertake a comprehensive private sector stock condition survey during 2001/02	Completed	N/A
To promote Warmer Homes	New Target	Achieved
To implement the Fuel Poverty Strategy to help those residents that are 'fuel poor' and ensure that their homes are fully insulated	New Target	Implemented but ongoing
To achieve a 2% reduction in the number of unfit dwellings within the District	1.62%	2.7%
To return 3 long term empty properties into use as a result of direct action by the Council	New Target	0
To encourage all owners of properties with a SAP Rating of 40 or below to carry out insulation works to achieve a target SAP of 55	New Target	Implemented but ongoing

### 7.3 Targets – Public Sector Stock

Target	Achievement During 2000/2001	Achievement During 2002/2003
To implement the action plan set out in the Tenant Participation Compact by July 2002	Completed	-
To carry out a comprehensive Council housing stock condition survey during 2001	Completed	-
To complete the Best Value Review of all housing management and maintenance services by March 2002	Best Value Review of Repairs completed Housing Management Review completed	-
To conduct a full tenant satisfaction survey by April 2001	Achieved	-
To ensure that at least 65% of available HIP resources each year are used for renovations to the Council's housing stock	77% Achieved	79%
To implement the action plan arising from the Best Value Review of the repairs service by March 2004	Ongoing	Appointments System Implemented in March 2003
To review the Tenant Participation Compact by October 2002	Ongoing	Completed
To continue with the ongoing review of retirement accommodation in light of the	Ongoing	Ongoing

Supporting People Programme		
<b>Target</b>	<b>Achievement During 2001/2002</b>	<b>Achievement During 2002/03</b>
To implement the action plan arising from the Best Value Review of the Housing Management Service by July 2005	New	Ongoing
To improve energy efficiency by 3.8% each year to 2006	New	Ongoing
To complete an Investment Strategy incorporating a 10 year works programme incorporating decency by January 2003	New	Revised Target December 2003

#### 7.4 Targets – Effective Joint Working

Target	Achievement During 2001/02	Achievement During 2002/03
Establish a Supporting People forum in partnership with Dacorum Borough Council	Achieved	-
Participate in a new Herts Housing Strategy Group – set up to co-ordinate social housing across the sub-region and contribute more effectively to the Regional Housing Strategy	New	Completed
Establish a new RSL Forum to facilitate joint working and share good practice and develop common service standards across the District	New	Revised Target 2004/05
Participate in a County Wide Housing Study and Market Analysis	Ongoing	Completed
To participate via the Core Strategy Development Group in developing the Supporting People Strategy across the County	Ongoing	Ongoing
To work with local housing associations in order to produce a District wide BME Strategy	New	Revised Target 2003/04
To work with the small landlords association in establishing a private rented landlords forum by April 2003	New	Ongoing

## Appendix 8: Action Plans: Links between Housing Strategy Priorities and Corporate Objectives

**Housing Priority - To deliver a sensitive and efficient housing management service to tenants and leaseholders which is subject to continuous improvement**

**Corporate Objective 1.1 – Provide high quality services and strive for excellence through continuous improvement**

Task	Priority	Target	Funding	Lead Officer	Outcome
Continue to implement the Action Plan from the Best Value Review of the Repairs Service, Housing Management Service and Social Inclusion (see HRA Business Plan)	High	July 2005	Existing HRA budgets	Principal Management Officer  Project Group Leader	Enhance and improve customer satisfaction with the service.
Undertake a pilot choice based lettings scheme	Medium	2005/06	New budget item for 2005/06 within HRA	Housing Policy Officer	To increase choice within the allocation system
To complete service reviews in accordance with the Supporting People Programme	Medium	Ridgeview - 2004/05  Retirement Accommodation - 2005/06	No budget requirements for service reviews	Housing Policy Officer/ Supporting People Team Hertfordshire County Council	To identify service improvements and meet quality standards set within Supporting People Programme
Identify service/performance improvements	High	February 2005	Included in Options Appraisal	Head of Housing/Housing Policy Officer	Forward programme of improvements to enhance/maintain service delivery and achieve top quartile performance across key best value indicators - decent homes, SAP rating, homelessness and rent collection

Task	Priority	Target	Funding	Lead Officer	Outcome
To implement the actions arising from the Homelessness Strategy	High	Annual 2004-2007	HRA/General Fund Budgets	Principal Rehousing Officer	To deliver further improvements within homelessness and advice services

**Housing Priority - To deliver a sensitive and efficient housing management service to tenants and leaseholders which is subject to continuous improvement**

**Corporate Objective 1.2 – Engage with and ensure our services are easily accessible to all, paying particular attention to ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities and other groups with specific needs**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
To implement the action plan within the Equalities Scheme	High	2004-2006	Existing Budget	Principal Management Officer/Principal Rehousing Officer	To increase the level of accessibility to Housing Services
Carry out tenant satisfaction survey to inform future Housing Strategy	Medium	2006/07	HRA	Special Housing Officer	To assess satisfaction with the landlord service and to inform future Housing Strategy
To hold an annual Residents/Tenants Conference	Medium	September 2004 September 2005 September 2006	HRA	Tenant Participation Officer	To inform future updates of Housing Strategy
To hold a Housing Strategy Update Conference	Medium	Annual	General Fund/ HRA	Housing Policy Officer	To inform future updates of Housing Strategy

## Housing Priority - To increase the provision of affordable housing

### Corporate Objective 1.4 – To work in partnership with other voluntary, statutory, commercial and community organisations to meet the needs of the whole community

Task	Priority	Target	Funding	Lead Officer	Outcome
To complete and implement a joint protocol in relation to homeless 16 and 17 year olds and care leavers in partnership with other District Councils, Children Schools and Families and Herts Young Homeless, Connexions.	High	2004/05	Existing Budgets	Head of Housing	Procedures implemented which cover the assessment and provision of services to care leavers, homeless 16 and 17 year olds and intentionally homeless families.
To actively participate in the Supporting People Programme.	High	Annual	Existing Budgets	Housing Policy Officer	To ensure the supported housing needs of the District are incorporated within a strategic approach across Hertfordshire.
To participate in the Hertfordshire Key Worker Group	High	Annual	Existing Budgets	Housing Policy Officer	To increase key worker housing across Hertfordshire and to inform the Regional Housing Strategy
To participate in the Housing/Health and Social Care Sub Group within the Local Strategic Partnership	High	Annual	Existing Budgets	Head of Housing	Implementation of the action plans contained within the Community Strategy

## Housing Priority - To address issues around anti-social behaviour and make local communities safer places to live and work

### Corporate Objective 2.5 – Help people feel safe and be safe whilst living in, working in and travelling around the District.

Task	Priority	Target	Funding	Lead Officer	Outcome
Maximise opportunities in accessing Community Safety Funding	High	2004/05 - 2005/06	£143,201 Building Safer Communities Funding per annum 2004/05 - 2005/06	Principal Management Officer	Effective use of resources
Develop CCTV in appropriate areas to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour	High	2004/05	£15,000 HRA budget item for 2004/05	Principal Management Officer	Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour
Contribute to Community Planning and Crime and Disorder Strategies	High	Ongoing	No additional funding requirements	Area Team Leader	To ensure where possible housing solutions contribute to outcomes
Participate in the Anti-Social Behaviour Monitoring Group	High	Ongoing	None	Area Team Leader	To respond to serious cases of anti social behaviour via a multi agency approach
Participate in the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) on Anti Social Behaviour	High	Ongoing	None	Area Team Leader	To develop an audit of anti social behaviour across the district
Ensure effective action is taken against tenants engaging in anti-social behaviour on Council estates and those convicted of drug dealing or causing anti-social behaviour through such activities	High	Annual	Existing HRA budgets	Area Team Leader	Safe Communities

Task	Priority	Target	Funding	Lead Officer	Outcome
To help ensure our Home Improvement Agency continues to run the "Safe" scheme to local residents who are the victims of burglary	High	2004/05	None	Principal Environmental Health Officer	Reduction in crime

## Housing Priority - To increase the provision of affordable housing

### Corporate Objective 3.1 – Maximise the amount of decent, secure and affordable public and private sector housing in the District

Task	Priority	Target	Funding	Lead Officer	Outcome
Development of new affordable rented/shared ownership homes	High	218 homes in 2004/05 50 homes in 2005/06 100 (est) in 2006/07	Housing Corporation Allocation £18m in 2003/04 and £2.4m in 2004/06	Development Officer	Ongoing supply of additional affordable rented housing
Development of new key worker housing	High	50 homes in 2004/05 plus 133 tenancies in cluster flats 32 for 2005/06	ADP fund bid 2004/05 NHS/RSL funding ADP bid 2004/06	Development Officer	Ongoing supply of key worker housing for the District
Completion of affordable Housing Strategy	High	February 2005	No additional funding required	Housing Policy Officer	To assist with negotiations on S106 sites

<b>Task</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
To maximise the use of garage sites for increasing the provision of affordable housing	High	sites to be identified and a programme drawn up – ongoing 2004/05 - 2005/06	£670,000 within HIP allocated for 2004/05 onwards to support schemes	Development Officer	To maximise the Council's assets
Conversion of housing market rent properties into affordable housing	High	6 units identified for 2004/05	£300,000 allocated in HIP for 2004/05 onwards	Development Officer	To ensure units are affordable
Purchase of street properties	High	5 units in 2004/05	£506,000 allocated in HIP 2004/05	Development Officer	To increase supply of affordable housing
Development of supported housing for young single people 16-23	High	8 units in 2004/05	ADP bid in 2003/04	Development Officer	To meet the requirements of the homeless legislation in relation to 16/17 year olds
Return long term empty properties back into residential use	High	3 per year	£40,000 allocated in HIP for 2004/05	Principal Environmental Health Officer	Return of long term empty properties to the housing stock
The inspection and improvement of houses in multiple occupation	High	50 per year	Housing Investment Programme	Principal Environmental Health Officer	To ensure the provision of safe housing

<b>Task</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
To complete a Housing Options Appraisal	High	February 2005	£125,000 HRA for 2004/05	Head of Housing	To determine the preferred option to meet the investment required to maintain/improve the housing stock and other priorities identified by tenants/leaseholders and stakeholders
To develop an older Persons Housing Strategy	Medium	April 2007	None identified currently	Housing Policy Officer	To ensure that older person's needs are reflected in the affordable provision and to influence the private sector provision

<b>Task</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
To develop a BME Strategy in partnership with RSL's and other stakeholders	High	April 2007	None identified currently	Housing Policy Officer/Special Advisory Officer	To ensure that the needs of BME groups are reflected in the affordable housing provision and to influence the private sector
To negotiate 35% affordable housing on all qualifying sites through the adoption of Supplementary Planning Guidance	High	Annual	Existing Budgets	Development Officer	To maximise the amount of affordable housing on qualifying sites
To transfer to a Housing Association one suitable garage site at nil cost each year for the development of affordable housing in return for nomination rights	High	Annual	Existing Budgets	Development Officer	To maximise the Council's own assets in securing additional affordable housing
To contribute to the updating of Affordable Housing Policies in the Local Development Framework	High	Annual	Existing Budgets	Housing Policy Officer Local Plans Team Leader	To adopt the new style development plan ensuring it meets the latest government guidance and housing need in the District
To develop a sub regional housing strategy	High	Annual	Existing Budgets	Housing Policy Officer	To inform the Regional Housing Strategy and to maximise funding opportunities to the sub region

<b>Task</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
To carry out conversions/extensions to Council properties and review the retirement housing stock	High	Extensions - annual	Existing Budgets HIP Funding £200,000 2004/05 £205,000 2005/06 £210,000 2006/07	Project Group Leader	To maximise the Council's existing housing stock
		Review of retirement stock - Feb 05	Existing Budgets	Housing Policy Officer	

**Housing Priority - To increase the provision of affordable housing**

**Housing Priority - To maintain the provision of grant and to support the improvement and repair of private sector housing**

**Corporate Objective 3.2 – To reduce homelessness and help residents stay in their home**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Installation of adaptations to Council properties	High	Ongoing	Housing Investment Programme funding of £584,000 in 2004/05 and £599,000 in 2005/06 and £614,000 in 2006/07	Project Group Leader	Assists elderly and disabled people to live independently in their own home
Provision of funding for our Home Improvement Agency Anchor Staying Put St Albans (together with Supporting People and Welwyn & Hatfield Council)	High	Ongoing	Housing Investment Programme funding of £39,000 in 2004/05 £39,975 in 2005/06 £40,975 in 2006/07	Principal Environmental Health Officer	Assists elderly and disabled people to live independently in their own home.
The provision of Disabled Facilities Grants	High	Ongoing	Housing Investment Programme funding of £350,000 in 2004/05 and £350,000 in 2005/06 and £350,000 in 2006/07	Principal Environmental Health Officer	Assists elderly and disabled people to live independently in their own home

<b>Task</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
The provision of Discretionary Home Repair Assistance Grants	High	Ongoing	Housing Investment Programme funding of £75,000 in 2004/05 and £75,000 in 2005/06 and £75,000 in 2006/07	Principal Environmental Health Officer	Assists the elderly to maintain their own homes
The provision of Discretionary House Renovation Grants	High	Ongoing	Housing Investment Programme funding of £75,000 in 2004/05 and £75,000 in 2005/06 and £75,000 in 2006/07	Principal Environmental Health Officer	Assists residents to carry out repairs to their own homes
To develop a support service for 16/17 year olds in partnership with a local housing association	High	2004/05	£45,000 in 2004/05	Principal Rehousing Officer	To help young people maintain their accommodation with appropriate support
To maintain 25 referrals to the tenancy management support service	High	Annual target 2004-2007	Supporting People Funding	Area Team Leader	To support tenants in existing Council accommodation and ensure tenancies are sustained

<b>Task</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
To support the resettlement service provided by Hightown Praetorian and Churches Housing Association	High	Annual	£25,000 HRA £25,000 General Fund	Principal Rehousing Officer	To provide a resettlement service linked to the Open Door Night Shelter supporting homeless people into permanent sustainable accommodation
Review the needs of rough sleepers	Medium	June 2005	Existing Budget	Principal Rehousing Officer	To update information regarding rough sleepers within the District as per the Homelessness Strategy

**Housing Priority - To sustain a rolling programme of planned maintenance and improvements so as to maintain the stock in decent condition**

**Corporate Objective 3.3 – Reduce fuel poverty and enhance energy efficiency across all housing within the District**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Improve energy efficiency within the Council's housing stock through advice, replacement of boilers, loft/cavity wall insulation and external enveloping	High	Annual within Housing Capital Programme	Housing Investment Programme £986,000 2004/05 £1,323,000 2005/06 £1,047,000 2006/07	Project Group Leader	Improved SAP rating for the Council stock
To explore the potential for utilising solar energy	High	Pilot project programmed for 2004/05	Housing Investment Programme £40,000 2004/05 plus Government Grants	Project Group Leader	Effective use of energy resources
Improve energy efficiency within the private sector housing stock through advice and the promotion of local and national schemes for the installation of condensing boilers, loft insulation, cavity wall insulation.	High	3% a year	Housing Investment Programme Government Grants	Principal Environmental Health Officer	Improved energy efficiency of the private sector housing stock
Improve energy efficiency within the private sector housing stock by the use of renewable energy such as solar heating and wind power	High	Pilot project programmed for 2004/05	Housing Investment Programme Government Grants	Principal Environmental Health Officer	Effective use of energy resources

**Housing Priority - To sustain a rolling programme of planned maintenance and improvements so as to maintain the stock in decent condition**

**Corporate Objective 3.4 – Maintain and improve the Council’s housing stock to keep it in a decent condition**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
All Council homes brought up to the Decent Home Standard by 2010 (See HRA Business Plan)	High	Govt target - 31.3.10 compliance of all Council stock by 2006	Funds required to 2010 to eliminate non-decency and ensure properties do not become non-decent thereafter - £12m	Project Group Leader	To achieve the Government target on Decent Homes
To carry out improvements to the Council’s Housing Stock covering door entry systems, minor estate improvements etc	High	2010	Funds required to 2010 £20.3m	Project Group Leader	To improve the housing stock in excess of Decent Homes
To develop a decent Homes database	High	2004/05	HRA budget item £10,000 2004/05	Project Group Leader	Stock condition data is kept up to date
To review the Maintenance/Improvement Strategy incorporating the major works programme to 2010 in consultation with tenants and leaseholders	High	Annual	Existing Budgets	Project Group Leader	To ensure the maintenance strategy is updated and reflects changes in legislation and priorities of tenants and leaseholders

### Glossary of Terms Used in Housing Strategy

ADP	Approved Development Programme
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
DFG	Disabled Facilities Grant
HECA	Home Energy Conservation Act
HHSRS	Housing Health and Safety Rating System
HIP	Housing Investment Programme
HMO	House in Multiple Occupation
HRA	Housing Revenue Account
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
SAP	Standard Assessment Procedure
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance

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