

North Devon Council Environmental Health & Housing Services

Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy

June 2013



PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2012-2015

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Foreword

The council is responsible for regulating the quality of all the housing stock in the area. Some parts of North Devon have a high proportion of poor quality housing.

Bad housing affects:

- our physical health by causing debilitating and even fatal , illnesses and accidents
- mental health, particularly amongst children and the homeless by causing anxiety and depression
- educational achievement, by affecting children's ability to learn at school and study at home
- opportunities in adulthood by increasing the likelihood of unemployment, low-paid jobs and offending behavior.

The economic climate means we are building fewer new houses than we need to meet the demand from first time buyers and growing families, and lenders are reluctant to fund mortgages.

Employment insecurity is putting pressure on families and increasing homelessness.

In common with the rest of the UK we are witnessing a rapid increase in the private rented sector. A healthy rental sector is important but we need to ensure that accommodation standards are adequate and the sector performs in a responsive and ethical way

We can address these concerns by providing loans to landlords and sometimes by forcing them to make repairs.

The elderly form an increasing proportion of our population. Although we are living well for longer age can often be associated with infirmity. We help disabled people through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). The size of this potential client group is significantly higher than the national average and their financial means are lower than average, which increases the demand. We need to do all we can for this vulnerable group.

Investing in increasing and improving the housing stock has social, economic and environmental benefits for our community. The social benefits include improved physical and mental well-being and more residents being satisfied with their homes and neighbourhood.

Environmental benefits include greater fuel efficiency and a reduction in fuel poverty.

There are also economic benefits from employing people to build new houses and repair and improve the existing stock.

We cannot ignore the condition of the homes we already have. To do so would undermine our health and well-being and that of our communities.

We must do all we can with less resources than we need.

That will require energy, imagination and intelligence. I believe this strategy provides the foundation for achieving our objectives.

Cllr Faye Webber
Portfolio Lead for Housing
13th March 2013

SECTION ONE

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The key strategic objectives for Private Sector Housing have been identified as: -
- (a) Improving the condition of the housing stock by regulatory intervention in the rented sector and targeted financial assistance to both the owner-occupied and privately rented sectors.
 - (b) Promoting market balance by encouraging empty homes to be returned to use, reducing anti-social behaviour and supporting an inclusive and attractive private rental market through a scheme of voluntary landlord and tenant accreditation.
 - (c) Improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities in health by supporting independent living for older people, reducing excess winter deaths and asthma associated with cold homes and the mitigation of fuel poverty.
- 1.2 The key objectives of the strategy will be delivered by a number of module or 'daughter' policies addressing core interventions; for example:-
- (a) Landlord and tenant accreditation.
 - (b) Controlling anti-social behaviour in rented accommodation.
 - (c) The mitigation of fuel poverty and reduction of CO2 emissions.
 - (d) Promoting independent living for older people.
 - (e) Improving the health and development of children and young people.

Where appropriate interventions may be delivered through partnership arrangements with external agencies working in the public, private or voluntary sectors.

- 1.3 Integral to all components of the strategy will be a commitment to:-
- (i) Develop and maintain quality intelligence on client's health and housing needs, and housing market conditions.
 - (ii) Build capacity and resilience, where appropriate, through the use of effective partnerships and/or joint working
 - (iii) Maximise available resources through better procurement processes
 - (iv) Maximise the impact of deployed financial resources to the benefit of the North Devon economy.

2. Introduction

2.1 Legislative Context

There are a number of statutory provisions governing the way we manage private sector housing:

2.1.1 The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995

This places an obligation on a local authority to prepare and publish a strategy to improve the domestic energy efficiency of all residential accommodation in their areas.

The Council must also publish annual progress reports plus information on action taken to help tackle fuel poverty in their area.

2.1.2 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002

This legislation empowers local housing authorities to provide financial assistance at their discretion and subject to Council policy.

It permits local authorities to provide assistance to both tenants and private owners through grants and/or loans and allows the criteria to be determined locally.

2.1.3 The Housing Act 2004

This Act came into force in April 2006 and radically reforms housing for all stakeholders – landlords, local authorities, owners and occupiers. Mandatory duties and discretionary powers placed on local authorities include:

2.1.3.a The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

This system assesses the health and safety risks in dwellings, and replaces the former 'fitness' standard. If the likelihood of harm is significant, the Council must take action to ensure that the risk is removed or reduced.

- It is intended to help authorities prioritise their interventions based on the severity of the hazards encountered in the home environment and to relate them to the vulnerability of the occupier.
- Such hazards include excess cold; damp and mould growth; fire and electrical hazards as well as crowding and space.

2.1.3.b Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

The Housing Act defines HMOs and prescribes a mandatory scheme to licence high risk HMOs (3+ stories, 5+ persons). The granting of a licence is dependent on meeting minimum standards for amenities, management and fire precautions. In addition, there are discretionary powers to license smaller properties.

The Housing Act 2004 is the principal regulatory statute prescribing interventions to protect the health and safety of all residential occupiers.

2.1.4 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Part of this order impacts on local authorities through the enforcement of fire safety conditions in licensed HMOs.

2.1.5 The Energy Act 2011

The Act includes provisions on:

2.1.5.a Green Deal

The Act creates a new financing framework to enable the provision of fixed improvements to the energy efficiency of households and non-domestic properties, funded by a charge on energy bills that avoids the need for consumers to pay upfront costs.

2.1.5.b Private rented sector

The Act includes provisions to ensure that from April 2016, private residential landlords will be unable to refuse a tenant's reasonable request for consent to energy efficiency improvements where a finance package, such as the Green Deal and/or the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), is available.

Provisions in the Act also provide for powers to ensure that from April 2018, it will be unlawful to rent out a residential or business premise that does not reach a minimum energy efficiency standard (the intention is for this to be set at EPC rating 'E').

2.1.5.c Energy Company Obligation

The Act amends existing powers in the Gas Act, Electricity Act 1989 and the Utilities Act 2000 to enable the Secretary of State to create a new Energy Company Obligation that will work alongside the Green Deal finance offer by targeting appropriate measures at those households likely to need additional support - in particular those containing vulnerable people on low incomes and in hard-to-treat housing.

2.1.5.d Green Deal

The Green Deal represents an umbrella for improving energy efficiency, which in conjunction with the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), and the Renewable Heat Incentive is intended to address fuel poverty and achieve the Government's carbon targets.

Green deal finance can be taken up by householders for up to 25 years with the maximum length of loan for each upgrade typically being limited by the product's useful life. The finance is shown as a charge on the electricity bill and must be paid by whoever pays the electricity bill.

The loan maximum is dictated by the 'golden rule', which ensures that the green deal finance repayments are never more than the annual savings in energy costs, meaning that the property occupier should always be better off.

3 Strategic context

3.1 Political and Economic Context

3.1.1 The current Housing Minister is Mark Prisk MP, who was previously at BIS and had responsibility for better regulation.

3.1.2 The Government's Housing Strategy paper "Laying the Foundations" (published in November last year) confirms the Government's intention to focus attention, policy and resources on new build and facilitating access to owner occupation. It is virtually silent on the overall condition of the housing stock and there is little mention of the challenges faced in the private rented sector, neither is there any acknowledgement of the withdrawal of housing renewal funding or the impact of current and forthcoming local authority budget cuts on allied services including adaptations through disabled facilities grant (DFGs) and housing related support, including housing improvement agencies.

3.2 Funding challenges

3.2.1 The housing capital budget of approximately £1.6 billion will be lost during the term of this Government.

The housing renewal budget was first introduced by the government in 1949 to support renovation and conversion of tenanted property. In 2010/11 the budget was £308m, in 2011/12 and the current year it is zero. The impact of these cuts has been vast, although there has been little media comment: it has included the removal of financial support from around 230,000 vulnerable families each year to undertake adaptations, minor works, home improvements and decent homes works. Support for HIAs has been reduced or cancelled and as a result some have been forced to close. There has been a knock-on "reverse multiplier" effect on small builders and other allied businesses. Local housing authority budgets have been scaled back as a large proportion of the DFG capital spend came from the private rented sector renewal budget.

3.3 The private rented sector

3.3.1 The really significant growth in market share in recent years has been in the private rented sector – as much as 48% between 2006 and 2010. In the last decade the sector has grown to accommodate a further 1.3 million households. High demand has pushed up rents by 66 per cent in the same period. In some parts of London, letting agents report annual rent increases of 16 per cent. The private rented sector has recently overtaken the social housing sector in terms of size.

3.3.2 This increase in demand for private rented homes comes at the same time as a reduction in budgets. So while Shelter reports that complaints about the most serious health and safety hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) have risen by 25% in the last two years, the number of local authority staff available to respond to those complaints has fallen.

- 3.3.3 Most crucially however, the private rented sector is typically in the poorest state of repair. For example, it has significantly lower levels of energy efficiency than other housing sectors, with the lowest levels of cavity wall insulation, loft insulation and double glazing and its overall average energy efficiency rating is considerably lower than the social housing sector. DECC's own estimates show 42% of PRS households in F or G rated homes are in fuel poverty.
- 3.3.4 The private rented sector is an increasingly important source of housing for vulnerable people. The changes taking place in respect of homelessness and housing benefit legislation will very likely increase the reliance of vulnerable households on low cost private accommodation. Standards of management vary enormously and nationally there have been some highly publicised examples of criminality by some landlords which serves to emphasise the particular problems associated with maintaining acceptable standards in some parts of the private rented sector.
- 3.3.5 A strong regulatory framework is essential and housing officers must be empowered to intervene where there are hazards harmful to health or serious wrongdoing.
- 3.3.6 The role of housing enforcement officers in ensuring compliance with health and safety standards in the private rented sector is at the core of the Private Sector Housing function. Councils are under a statutory duty to deal with any category 1 hazards found during inspections.
- 3.3.7 North Devon Council aims to be effective and consistent in the use of their powers and duties under Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 to improve health and wellbeing.

3.4 Fuel poverty issues

- 3.4.1 Fuel poverty in Britain at 6.7 million households is at its highest level for 10 years. In 2010/11 over £1bn was spent on improving the energy efficiency standards of low income households' homes in England (£345m on Warm Front, £600m on the priority group element of CERT and £110m on CESP). The Government proposes to spend about £325m on Affordable Warmth (to cover all of Great Britain), with an unspecified proportion of the Carbon Saving (CS) element expected to go to low income consumers in social housing. The proposals therefore represent a severe reduction in resources for fuel poverty, despite previous Government assurances that the ECO would represent an increase.

3.5 Meeting the needs of communities

- 3.5.1 One of the biggest challenges facing the housing sector is that of the ageing population and the consequent changing needs and demands for housing. Health and social care policies have increasingly emphasised the case for supporting older people to live independently in their own home, rather than moving to institutional care. However, the condition and suitability of the homes in which an ageing, low income population lives has not been given due consideration. Failure to make the connection between health, social care and

housing disrepair is not only costly, but has potentially dire consequences for individual older people.

3.6 The contribution of Private Sector Housing in achieving strategic housing objectives

3.6.1 In their publication 'Building Better Lives'¹ the Audit Commission summarised the opportunities to achieve wider strategic housing objectives which can arise from improving the existing housing stock.

3.6.2 Councils can create sustainable communities by :-

Improving housing - this will improve public health and children's education, and make communities more sustainable.

Improving the housing stock that already exists - this will help more people than building new houses, but more homes are also needed.

3.6.3 Well-targeted spending on the existing housing stock can also yield financial benefits:-

Every £1 spent on providing housing support for vulnerable people can save nearly £2 in reduced costs of health services, tenancy failure, crime and residential care.

Spending between £2,000 and £20,000 on adaptations that enable an elderly person to remain in their own home can save £6,000 per year in care costs.

If only five per cent of empty homes could be brought back into use, councils could cut their annual homelessness costs by £½ billion.

3.6.4 Councils with a clearly expressed vision for their area have found it easier to attract developers and funding.

3.6.5 Creative councils can work in partnership to tackle homelessness, reclaim empty properties and improve housing quality in ways they could not have achieved alone.

3.6.6 Councils can use regulatory powers and accreditation schemes to improve the quality of housing without spending significant sums of public money.

3.7 Devon

3.7.1 Devon is characterised by the predominantly rural nature of the county and a relatively low wage economy.

¹ Building better lives' Getting the best from strategic housing. Audit Commission September 2009

- 3.7.2 Whilst Devon has low levels of overall deprivation at county and district level, this masks significant variation at smaller geographical scales in both urban and rural areas.

Analysis at lower super output area level indicates that 21 Devon LSOA's are in the 20% most deprived areas in England and 5 in the top 10 % most deprived and in 4 urban areas over 40% of children are in poverty, compared with the national average of only 21.6%.

In rural areas deprivation can be less obvious as sparsity/density factors can distort graphic representation.

- 3.7.3 There is a clear link in Devon between the areas of worst housing condition, deprivation and greatest health inequalities, as illustrated by the indoor Living environment, health ranking and index of deprivation sub-domains.² There is also a clear link between poor housing conditions and tenure.

House condition surveys³ commissioned by local housing authorities indicate that an average of 20% of owner-occupied dwellings have 1 or more category 1 hazards⁴ whereas in the private rented sector the figure is 25%, and in the most deprived LSOA's the numbers of dwellings with category 1 hazards is as high as 40%.

The most commonly encountered category 1 hazards are those associated with excess cold, arising from inadequate or inefficient heating and/or thermal insulation, often in combination with the secondary hazards of damp, and falls in or around the home. These hazards directly impact on health outcomes for the at risk populations.

Excess winter deaths and morbidity, particularly in the elderly are closely associated with indoor air temperatures⁵.

Damp conditions arising from poorly heated and insulated homes cause an increase in mould fungal spores and in house dust mite antigen and children living in damp and mouldy homes have a greater prevalence of respiratory conditions. In the UK sensitivity to house dust mites is so common amongst young asthmatics that other sources of indoor allergens are relatively unimportant.^{6 7 8 9 10}

² *Devon Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010*

³ *LHA Stock condition surveys 2009-2011*

⁴ *Risk assessment in accordance with Housing Health & Safety Rating System*

⁵ *'low indoor air temperatures and morbidity in the elderly'* KJ Collins. *Age and Ageing* 1986

⁶ *Damp Housing Mould growth and symptomatic health state.* Martin et al *BMJ* 1989 v298

⁷ *The relationship between Respiratory Morbidity in children in the Home environment.* Strachan & Elton. *Family Practce* 1986

⁸ *Childhood respiratory Illness and the Home Environment.* RJ Melia et al. *International Journal of Epidemiology.* 1982 v 11

Over 700,000 older people in the UK attend hospital A&E units after a fall and many more attend minor injury units or call for ambulance assistance. Many of these incidents are as a result of hazards in the home.

45% of accidents occur in the home and accidents are in the top 10 causes of death for all ages.

Cold also impairs movement and sensation, and a lowered body temperature affects mental functioning such that falls are more likely in the cold.

In Devon 1065 persons over 65 suffered hip fractures in the last year¹¹ at an estimated cost to the NHS of £27m¹²

3.7.4 Demand for disabled facilities grants in Devon is high and is growing through demographic change and inward migration.

In poorer parts of Devon the socio-economic profile of the area means that more people are eligible for grant following application of the means test. This places considerable pressure on the limited budgets of some districts and that of the welfare authority.

3.7.5 Fuel poverty is a particular concern in Devon.

The urban centres predominantly comprise dwellings constructed with solid walls, which are difficult to heat and expensive to make more energy efficient.

The rural housing stock is also of older 'difficult to treat' construction but the problem in rural parts is exacerbated by the absence of gas supplies, meaning dwellings require heating with expensive oil or electric systems and need much higher levels of insulation to make them fuel efficient.

In 2006 21% of households in rural areas were in fuel poverty compared with 11% in urban areas¹³.

Recent surveys in Devon reveal average fuel poverty rates of 15-20% whereas in some rural areas it exceeds 30%.

The problem is further exacerbated by the relatively low-income profile in the county.

⁹Home dampness and respiratory morbidity in children. B Brunekreets et al. American Review of Respiratory disorders 1989

¹⁰ Damp housing Conditions and Respiratory Symptoms in Primary school children. Paediatric Pulmonology 1997 v24

¹¹ Devon Health profile 2012

¹² The real cost of poor housing. Roys,Davidson, Nicol, Ormandy and Ambrose. Bre Trust

¹³ The Poverty site 2009 Fuel poverty summary statistics

There are also significant variations in fuel poverty by tenure. Most districts report fuel poverty in privately rented dwellings in excess of 25%.

The health hazards associated with cold homes will also be relevant for those at risk of fuel poverty where experience shows that many will ration heat in the home rather than fall into debt.

- 3.7.6 There is a significant link between housing deprivation early in life and ill-health in adulthood, with poor housing in childhood associated with higher rates of hospital admissions and increased morbidity and mortality in adult life¹⁴

Poor housing conditions have significant negative impacts on key areas of childhood academic achievement which are not explained by differences in ability¹⁵

There is now a broad consensus that an 'area effect' ie. living in deprived urban neighbourhoods, increases the risk of ill-health, even after controlling for individual risk characteristics, such as poor socio-economic status.¹⁶

3.8 North Devon District

North Devon covers 425.6 square miles (1,102 km²) of some of the best countryside in the country. It is divided into 27 electoral wards and 63 parishes.

3.8.1 Population

In common with much of the UK, we experienced rapid population growth in the first half of the nineteenth century. It then stabilised at around 60,000 until the mid twentieth century. Since then, there has been a steady increase, reaching 91,500 in 2009. A further increase of 10,000 is expected by 2026.

The national Annual Survey of Household Income (ASHE) shows that North Devon has some of the lowest wages in England. In both 2008 and 2009, North Devon was in the lowest 1% of the 351 areas of England.

3.8.2 Age and gender

North Devon has a low proportion of working age people compared to the rest of the country. This is because young people tend to leave the area after their secondary education, shown in the diagram, by the dramatic narrowing for people aged between 20 and 34. There is also inward migration of older people. This is shown most noticeably by the difference between the size of North Devon's 60 to 64 age band and that of England. The proportion of the

¹⁴ Marsh et al 1999

¹⁵ Rubin DH, Erikson CJ, Agustin MS, Cleary SD, and Cohen P, *Cognitive and academic functioning of homeless children compared with housed children paediatrics* 97 289-294 ;1996

¹⁶ Diez Roux et al 1997; Kawachi and Berkman 2003

population over 65 is expected to rise over the next 20 years from about a fifth in 2008 to nearly a third in 2033.

3.8.3 Deprivation

The government produces data showing relative deprivation, most recently in 2010. To do this they split England into 32,482 areas. The map shows how the 58 areas that make up North Devon compare to the national picture. Our most deprived area is part of Ilfracombe Central ward, which is in the most deprived 5% of England, closely followed by parts of Barnstaple. The least deprived is part of Braunton East ward.

3.9 North Devon Council Corporate Plan 2011-2015

The Council's Corporate Plan 2011-2015 identifies 6 key policy areas for development. The Private Sector Housing function has a role in delivering all of those policy priorities but 4 are of particular relevance :-

3.9.1 Community Leadership and Well-being

North Devon's strong social and community networks make the area an especially satisfying place to live in. The Council forms one part of that network and aims to encourage and support the community and cultural life of the area.

The Council is committed to treating everyone fairly and will do all it can to eliminate inequality and to build stronger communities based on mutual respect and understanding for everyone. To preserve this quality of life, it is necessary to ensure people feel safe. North Devon has low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour and the Council works closely in partnership with the police to ensure this is maintained

One problem faced by many in North Devon is rural isolation. As people live further apart from each other, it becomes more difficult to provide services to them. Isolation is a particular difficulty for the elderly or disabled.

Care and support services are more difficult and expensive to provide in rural areas and helping people to remain in their own home through adapting properties for occupation by the elderly and infirm is important in helping to preserve dignity and promoting independent living.

3.9.2 Building a more robust local economy

North Devon is an ideal place to live, but not an ideal place to work because our wage levels are very low.

In both 2008 and 2009 North Devon had an average weekly wage that was in the lowest 1% of the 351 areas of England. This makes it difficult for many to pay for things that are most important to them, such as decent homes and basic commodities. The below average earnings can be put down to a variety of reasons. For example, economic growth is restricted by our fairly remote

location in the country, poor road and rail links and poor broadband connectivity.

While our environmental designations provide some opportunities, they can also restrict the growth of some sectors of the economy. There is very limited higher education provision in North Devon and the population's relatively low skills levels (in particular at and above foundation degree level) make the area less attractive to inward investment than it should be.

One effect of our low income levels is a "brain drain", as many of our best and brightest young people leave the area once they have finished their secondary education.

The high quality natural environment attracts inward migration of older people, which means a smaller proportion of our population is of working age than usual. Inward migration of retirees increases the demand for the limited supply of housing, leaving the working age population squeezed between low incomes and high house prices.

3.9.3 Protecting and Enhancing North Devon's unique environment

North Devon enjoys one of the best local environments in the country. The landscape's great natural beauty is nationally recognised and millions of visitors come to share it with us every year. So we need to make sure it is maintained and preserved.

Much of our area is so special that it is protected in one way or another. Nearly one fifth of North Devon is in Exmoor National Park, another fifth is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and there is much more as well.

It is important to enhance our natural environment, recognising its significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of the local community and the role it plays in supporting sustainable tourism and the economy.

3.9.4 Improving North Devon's Housing

North Devon has low incomes compared to the rest of the country, but house prices and rents are high, meaning the housing market is unbalanced. As a result, some people that are born here can't afford to live here for the rest of their lives and some people that want to move here find it difficult.

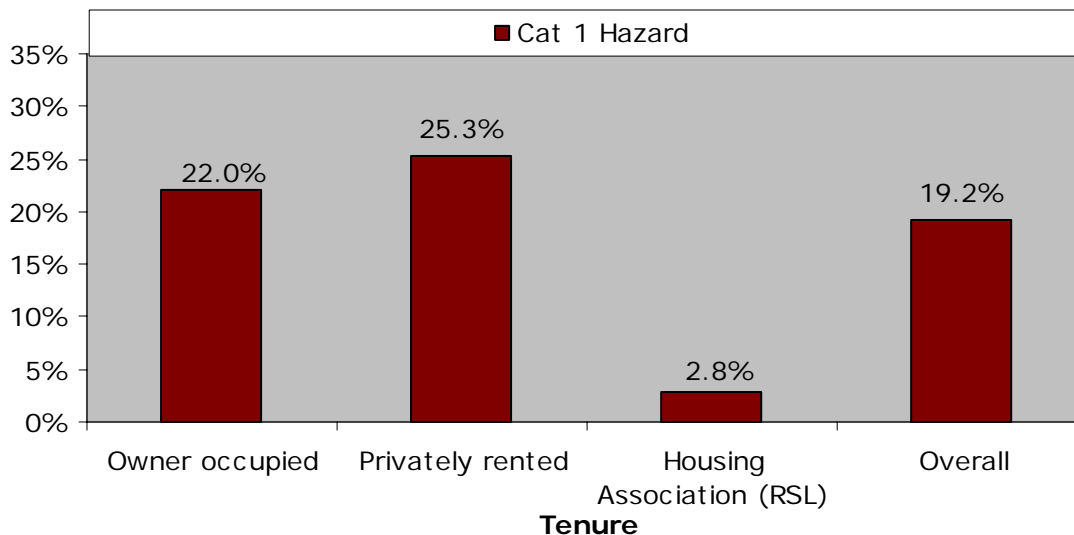
North Devon has a low proportion of public sector housing, such as housing associations, with only around half the national average.

The area has twice the national average of second homes, up to 27% in some parishes. These are only used occasionally. This pushes up the cost of the available housing.

The private rented sector is large but it is sometimes expensive and of poor quality. The number of new houses being built has been hit hard by the economic downturn.

In addition, changes in government policy on housing and benefits are having an increasing impact on local people. For example: there is a dramatic decrease in funding available to housing associations; benefit levels are being reduced by being calculated on a lower assumed rent; registered provider rents are increasing up to 80% of private sector rents and consequently the homelessness prevention service is under increasing pressure.

Based on the House Condition Survey data 16,300 dwellings (38.4%) can be classified as non-decent. In England as a whole the rate is 34.8% (owner occupied, privately rented and RSL stock) making the North Devon rate higher than the national rate. The all England figure is taken as the proportion of non decent private sector dwellings from the 2007 EHCS.



4. Evidence

4.1 In November 2008 Professor Sir Michael Marmot was asked by the Secretary of State for Health to chair an independent review to propose the most effective evidence based strategies for reducing inequalities in health in England from 2010, including policies and interventions that address the social determinants of health inequalities.

The review concluded that reducing health inequalities is a matter of fairness and social justice.

4.2 In England, the many people who are currently dying prematurely each year as a result of health inequalities would otherwise have enjoyed, in total, between 1.3 and 2.5 million extra years of life.

The key messages of the review are set out below.

- There is a social gradient in health – the lower a person’s social position, the worse his or her health. Action should focus on reducing the gradient in health.
- Health inequalities result from social inequalities. Action on health inequalities requires action across all the social determinants of health.
- Focusing solely on the most disadvantaged will not reduce health inequalities sufficiently. To reduce the steepness of the social gradient in health, actions must be universal, but with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage. We call this proportionate universalism.
- Action taken to reduce health inequalities will benefit society in many ways. It will have economic benefits in reducing losses from illness associated with health inequalities. These currently account for productivity losses, reduced tax revenue, higher welfare payments and increased treatment costs.
- Economic growth is not the most important measure of our country’s success. The fair distribution of health, well-being and sustainability are important social goals. Tackling social inequalities in health and tackling climate change must go together.
- Reducing health inequalities will require action on six policy objectives:
 - Give every child the best start in life
 - Enable all children young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
 - Create fair employment and good work for all
 - Ensure healthy standard of living for all
 - Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities
 - Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention

Delivering these policy objectives will require action by central and local government, the NHS, the third and private sectors and community groups.

National policies will not work without effective local delivery systems focused on health equity in all policies.

Effective local delivery requires effective participatory decision-making at local level. This can only happen by empowering individuals and local communities.

5. The Aims of the Private Sector Housing Strategy

- To minimise the adverse health and safety impacts of substandard housing on our most vulnerable populations and to reduce inequalities in health
- To maximise the supply of good quality housing for all

- To ensure our housing stock is fit for the needs of our population now and meets the challenges of future demographic changes
- To ensure that the housing market performs in a responsive, responsible and ethical manner for all stakeholders
- To ensure that we source the best epidemiological and housing market data and interpret the data intelligently in order to make high quality strategic decisions
- To maximise inward investment to the district and to obtain best value from our interventions for the economic benefit of North Devon residents.

5.1 Improving Housing Conditions

Environmental health and housing officers intervene to ensure regulatory compliance with the provisions of the Housing Act 2004 and secondary legislation.

5.2 Regulatory Interventions

are either :-

(a) Reactive

Following complaints or requests for service from residential occupiers

Or

(b) Proactive

Routine programmed inspections of high risk multi-occupied dwellings carried out in conjunction with fire officers in accordance with the Council's partnership with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority.

Enforcement decisions involve a statutory risk assessment of 29 potential hazards in the home under the provisions of the Housing Health & Safety Rating System and action is taken in accordance with the Council's private sector housing enforcement policy.

5.3 Financial interventions

The Private Sector Renewal Strategy directs financial assistance:-

- To the most vulnerable occupiers living in the poorest housing conditions
- To encourage long term empty homes to be brought back into use
- To support energy efficiency measures with the aim of reducing fuel poverty

The assistance provided by the Council takes the form of a subsidised loan product tailored to individual households needs and based on a test of financial resources.

The loan scheme is administered by Wessex Home Improvement loans which is a not-for-profit lending institution acting for a consortium comprising most of the local authorities in the south west region.

The Council currently supports 1 type of loan product:-

- capital and interest repayment

This is offered at a subsidised rate of interest (currently 4%) fixed for the loan period.

In the absence of further capital allocations to the loan fund it is anticipated that it will be possible to maintain a modest level of financial support as set out at Appendix A for the duration of the 2012-2015 strategy period.

5.3.1 Financial Assistance (Equity release)

In January 2012 the Department for Communities and Local Government announced the expansion of the Government sponsored 'first Stop' service which has provided advice and assistance to older people on a range of housing issues since 2009.

The expanded service now provides advice and support directly to older clients with housing needs and also facilitates access to financial products and services such as equity release through Just Retirement Solutions in partnership with Age UK, Saga, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and others.

The Just Retirement Solutions model involves direct client contact, state benefit and equity release impact analysis and product suitability report. Fees are commercial but reasonable and relatively small amounts of capital may be released.

Wessex home loan advisors will also provide benefit advice and can support a referral to an Independent advisor if equity release is considered appropriate.

In all cases a wider family involvement is always recommended.

It is now considered that there exists sufficient independent advice to permit an informed choice of a range of ethical equity release products to enable clients to have sufficient assurance and protection.

5.3.2 Financial Assistance (partnership arrangements)

North Devon Homes

The Council is working in partnership with North Devon Homes to enable up to 15 long-term empty homes to be renovated, managed and offered for rent to local families over the period 2012-15.

The scheme is funded by the Homes and Communities Agency securing £175,000 of public funds for the project.

Owners of long-term empty homes will be invited to offer suitable properties for renovation to decent homes standard in return for an agreed 5 or 10 year lease agreement.

Subject to the renovation investment necessary the owners will receive a rental income throughout the lease period less management and maintenance costs.

At the end of the lease period the property will be returned to the owner in an improved condition.

Energy Efficiency

The Council is in the process of considering procurement options with the aim of entering into a non-exclusive arrangement with an organisation with access to substantial energy company funds to deliver;-

- a) The Energy Company Obligation (ECO)
- b) Community Carbon savings Obligation (CISCO)
- c) Community Carbons Savings Obligation (Rural)
- d) Affordable Warmth Obligation

In the homes of low income households, particularly those living in the most deprived areas of the District or occupying dwellings which are difficult or expensive to make energy efficient.

In many cases the measures installed under the above schemes will be free or at minimal cost to the householder.

The Council's loan fund may support the cost of energy efficiency installations in accordance with current policy.

5.4 Promoting Market Balance

The strategic objective is to promote a profitable, inclusive and ethical private rental market, which represents an attractive proposition to both landlords and prospective tenants.

Key components of this objective are:-

5.4.1 Landlord and Tenant Accreditation scheme

Consultation with stakeholders was completed in April 2011.

A draft scheme has been prepared and is ready for launch subject to resource commitment.

Further development of governance arrangements and partnership potential may now proceed.

5.4.2 A strategy for bringing Empty Homes back into use

Vision

'To bring empty homes back into use, as a sustainable and effective way of increasing the overall supply of housing for local people and reduce the negative impact that some neglected empty homes are having on our community'

Aims and Objectives of the Strategy

Aims

To bring empty properties back into use and create affordable housing solutions.

Objectives

- Identify empty homes across North Devon.
- Develop effective pathways to bring empty homes back into use.
- Create good quality, affordable housing for local people in housing need.

Achieving the Objectives

The objectives and actions are addressed in the Environmental Health & Housing's Business Plan 2012-15.

Objective 1: Identifying Empty Homes across North Devon

A. Outcome sought – have a record of empty homes in the district

Methods of achieving Outcome A:

i) Council Tax Data

The main source of empty homes' statistics is the council tax register. It is important that the figures here are kept up to date through good communication and pro-active visits. The private sector housing officer will liaise with the Revenues Service where the original data is determined to be inaccurate.

ii) Referrals

The private sector housing officer will respond to complaints and referrals of empty homes in the district.

Commonly these may come from:

- Members of the public, e.g. neighbour of the empty property.
- Parties interested in purchasing the property
- Police or Fire Service through the Council's ASB Hub
- District and County Councillors and Parish Councils

- Council employees

iii) Reasons for the property being empty

An essential factor in tackling empty homes in the district is to determine why each empty property has become empty. This knowledge enables appropriate intervention to be deployed to assess the condition of the property and the circumstances of the owner. This information also enables the development of strategies to prevent properties becoming empty in the first place.

B. Outcome sought – through information and publicity raise awareness of empty homes initiatives

Benefits of raising awareness using information and publicity:

- Owners of empty homes aware of the problems associated with their empty property and the opportunities missed.
- Owners become more aware of the assistance available through promotion of the Council's role and the enforcement actions available for dealing with unco-operative owners.
- Neighbours and members of the community affected by empty homes are more informed and are more amenable to assisting the Council to deal with these properties.
- Corporately, the engagement of councillors and other departments is essential for a co-ordinated approach to tackling empty properties.

Methods of achieving outcome B:

- Champion successes

Where successful interventions enabled by the Council have turned empty homes into new homes, these will be promoted through the local media.

Objective 2: Develop effective pathways to bring empty homes back into use

C. Outcome sought – have a co-ordinated approach to empty property work

Methods of achieving outcome C:

i) Meetings with internal services

Successful inter-relationships between building control, environmental protection, council tax and planning colleagues will be important to the success of the role. Presenting details of the progress achieved to date, outlining the revised strategy objectives and obstacles to overcome, will help to gain ideas from these departments on the best ways to achieve these aims by working alongside them.

ii) Engage external agencies

Cases will be referred to the ASB hub as necessary in the instance of criminal activity and to share local knowledge regarding empty properties within their area.

The Council will actively support third party bids to the HCA Empty Homes Fund as part of the Affordable Housing Programme and naturally support all successful applicants.

D. Outcome sought – provide encouragement and support to empty property owners

Methods of achieving outcome D:

i) Initiate written contact with empty property owners

When an empty property is identified, the name of the legal owner will be sought from the Land Registry. Where the property is not registered, the Council will utilise its information-sharing powers under Section 16 of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 to acquire the name and address of the property owner.

As permitted by the Local Government Act 2003, Section 85, the Council Tax register will be referred to in order to identify empty homes in the district and for taking steps to bring these back into use.

Once the reason for an empty property is established, empty homes procedures, tailored to assist each individual case are followed to provide the most appropriate solution to bring the property back into use.

ii) Targeting properties empty for less than 12 months

Properties that have been empty for less than 12 months, predominantly require less time and investment to return them back to use. By making owners aware of the help and support available, the Council aims to facilitate the return of these homes back into use before the properties deteriorate and become a problem for owners and the community.

By targeting for early intervention, those properties which have been empty for less than 12 months, the cost for owners to return these properties back to use can be reduced and homes can be prevented from remaining empty for long periods.

iii) Targeting properties empty for more than 6 months

Priority properties for intervention under this strategy will be determined objectively using the scoring matrix set out in Appendix A.

E. Outcome – develop and adopt enforcement procedures

In exceptional circumstances, where the owner of an empty home refuses to work with the Council towards bringing the property back into use or is untraceable, enforcement action will be considered.

The private sector housing officer will actively consider a number of enforcement options available to deal with the empty property. Any action taken will be taken in consultation with the lead member for housing, relevant district council ward members and Head of Service.

Methods of achieving outcome E:

i) Enforced Sale

Where there is a local charge or another debt owned to the Council by the empty property owner, the Council can force the sale of the property to a third party.

ii) Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO)

Where a property has been empty for 6 months or more and the owner has refused all reasonable offers of assistance, the Council can apply for an interim EDMO. If the empty property is not bought back into use within the 12 months of an interim EDMO, then a final EDMO can be made whereby the Council takes over management of the property for up to 7 years.

As the Council no longer manages housing stock, management agreements need to be in place with local housing associations and/or managing/letting agents before an EDMO is made.

Draft amendments to the EDMO legislation were detailed in January 2011 with proposals that EDMOs are to be restricted to empty properties that have stood empty for at least two years and have become a magnet for vandalism, squatters and other forms of anti-social behaviour. The Council must therefore ensure the support of the surrounding community prior to implementing an EDMO and amend the EDMO policy accordingly.

iii) Compulsory Purchase

When no other enforcement measures are suitable, the Council may consider the threat and use of its compulsory purchase powers. Alternative and prompter enforcement action may be necessary depending on the circumstances of each individual case.

Objective 3: Create good quality, affordable housing for those in housing need

Outcome sought – utilise funding available to bring empty homes back into use and provide affordable housing solutions across the district for those in housing need

Methods of achieving outcome F

Empty Homes Assistance Grant/Loan Schemes will be set out in the Council's Private Sector Renewal Strategy. The availability of this funding will be dependent on the capital resources available to the Council and may be suspended at any time.

How will we take action?

Properties which remain empty for long periods can be significantly more difficult to return to use. The escalating cost of repair after so many years and the inertia of owners to deal with their empty home compound the problem.

By targeting intervention by risk and prioritising the return to use of homes left vacant for less than 12 months, the Council aims to return to use a greater number of empty homes.

Early intervention will predominantly enable owners to return their homes back to use with minimal costs and reduce the inertia associated with properties left empty for long periods of time. The longer a property remains empty, the greater the need for renovation works to return to use. By providing owners with a range of solutions and support at an early stage will equip them with the tools to deal with their empty property.

A number of tools are available to support and encourage owners to bring their properties back into use. However, many owners are reluctant to take advantage of this opportunity, preferring to progress works very slowly or simply ignoring the Council's offers of advice and assistance or grant funding. As a result, properties can be undergoing renovation for several years with no immediate prospect of being returned to use.

Diagram 1 illustrates how many service areas may now be involved in dealing with empty properties in the district, followed by a definition of each enforcement option.

5.5 Improving health outcomes and reducing health inequalities

Childhood experience lays the foundations for later life. Growing up in poverty can damage physical, cognitive, social and emotional development. The impact of child poverty is increasingly well researched with evidence pointing to increased child mortality, low birth weights, child accidental deaths, teenage pregnancy, poor housing conditions, lower educational attendance and attainment and youth suicide. Almost all of these can be determinants of outcomes in adult life. For example children in the lowest income category are five times more likely to die in an accident, are more likely to be born small/or too early and to die early as adults¹⁷. While some children who grow up in low income households will go on to achieve their full potential, many others will not.

¹⁷ *National Children's Bureau on Child Poverty*

Tackling child poverty will help to improve children's lives today, and it will also enhance their life chances: enabling them to make the most of their talents, achieve their full potential in life and pass on the benefits to their own children¹⁸.

Poor children's life chances are dependent upon a complex combination of low household income, a lack of equal opportunities and social exclusion. While some children who grow up in low-income households will go on to achieve their full potential, many others will not. Poverty places strains on family life and excludes children from the everyday activities of their peers. Many children experiencing poverty have limited opportunities to play safely and often live in overcrowded and inadequate housing, eat less nutritious food, suffer more accidents and ill health and have more problems with school work leading to low educational attainment as these children become adults they are more likely to be in poorly paid employment or economically inactive continuing the poverty cycle.

In response to the Child Poverty Act 2010¹⁹ and the government's commitment to end Child Poverty the Devon Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment²⁰ outlines the poverty related needs of children and families in Devon.

- 17,850 (14.6%) dependent children under 16 in Devon are living in poverty(2008)
- 21 Devon LSOA's are in the 20% most deprived areas in England according to the index of multiple deprivation
- Devon has high levels of poor housing, ranking 102 out of 149 authorities under the housing domain of the child wellbeing index
- There is a large poverty related attainment gap evident within schools in Devon and across England. Children and young people who are eligible for free school meals on average perform substantially worse in both key stage 2 and GCSE assessments. In Devon only 23% of those eligible for FSM achieve 5 A*-C including English and Maths in 2009 compared to 54% of those not eligible for FSM.
- Poverty shortens lives. At ward level there is a difference of approximately 13 years between the lowest life expectancy at birth in the Ilfracombe Central Ward (74.4 years) area and the highest life expectancy in West Devon Chagford Ward (87.9).
- In Devon there were approximately 600 births to teenage mothers in the last 3 years. Of these most were born to women living in deprived neighbourhoods.

¹⁸ *Ending Child Poverty: Everybody's business*

¹⁹ *Child Poverty Act 2010* <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/9/contents>

²⁰ Devon Child and Family Needs Assessment 2010-11. Devon Strategic Partnership

- There are many negative health links attributed to deprivation. Children in Devon were found to be more likely to be overweight or obese if they lived in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

5.6 Accidental Injury and Poverty Related Health Needs

Children aged up to 14 from unskilled families are 5 times more likely to die in an accident than children from professional families, and 15 times more likely to die in a fire at home.

Land transport accidents were the most common cause of accidental death for children and young people in 2005 (52% of all deaths by external causes). In England, children in the 10% most deprived wards are three times more likely to be hit by a car than children in the 10% least deprived areas.

Poor children are born too small; birth weight is on average 130 grams lower in children from social classes IV and V. Low birth weight is closely associated with infant death and chronic diseases in later life.

Families of disabled children have a greater than average risk of living in poverty.²¹ The income of families with disabled children averages £15,270, 23.5% below the UK mean income of £19,968, and 21.8% have incomes that are less than half the UK mean²² the last 5 years in the number of families claiming disability living allowance for a disabled child, and currently 4,400 families claim DLA on behalf of someone aged 0 to 17.²³

5.7 Mental Health Needs

Mental illness is an under-recognised but significant contributory factor to child poverty. There is a huge overrepresentation of people with mental health problems among those who are out of work (only 24% of people with long-term mental health problems are in employment), Over 900,000 adults in England claim sickness and disability benefits for mental health conditions.

There are several reasons why experiencing a mental disorder compromises people's capabilities in optimising their income. They may be unable to retain a job, or face stigmatisation in securing employment. Individuals may have temporary or enduring impairments in their cognitive capacity to deal with financial affairs. Also, many mental disorders are fluctuating in their severity, or have patterns of remission and relapse, which adds to the complexity of individuals' needs and capabilities to manage. In turn poverty can be the cause of mental health problems with stressful life events such as family

²¹ *Department of Work and Pensions, Households below average income, an analysis of the income distribution 1994/95-2006/7*

²² *Contact a Family, Counting the Costs 2010*

²³ *Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics. Comparison of Jan-Mar 2005 and Jan-Mar 2010. Based on 0-17 year old DLA claimants at all levels of entitlement.*

bereavement, marital separation, or loss of employment often clustering before the onset of mental illness and influence the course of the illness²⁴.

Substance misuse can strongly influence individual's ability to enter or sustain employment. In addition to cost of the dependence can be a significant drain on a family's finances. Drug misuse has been defined as the use of a substance for purposes not consistent with legal or medical guidelines. In a small proportion of users, this may lead to dependence, a cluster of behavioural, cognitive, and physiological phenomena, such as a sense of need or dependence, impaired capacity to control substance-taking behaviour and persistent use despite evidence of harm.

5.8 Teenage Conceptions and Young Parents

Statistically teenage mothers are shown to have significantly poorer outcomes in terms of social and mental health during the three years after the birth than older mothers or teenage non-mothers (Teenage Pregnancy Unit, 2004²⁵). Similarly, outcomes for their children are poorer.

- The majority of teenage pregnancies are unplanned and almost half end in abortion
- Half of all under 18 conceptions occur in the 20% most deprived wards. Among the most vulnerable girls the risk of becoming a teenage mother is almost 1 in 3
- Babies born to teenage mothers have a 63% increased risk of being born into poverty compared to babies born to mothers in their twenties.
- At age 30, teenage mothers are 22% more likely to be living in poverty than mothers giving birth aged 24 or over, and are much less likely to be employed or living with a partner
- Teenage mothers are 20% more likely to have no qualifications at age 30 than mothers giving birth aged 24 or over.
- Teenage mothers have three times the rate of post-natal depression of older mothers and a higher risk of poor mental health for three years after the birth
- The infant mortality rate for babies born to teenage mothers is 60% higher than for babies born to older mothers. The risk of stillbirth and a baby dying in the first six weeks of life is also around twice as high for women from deprived backgrounds.

²⁴ Gould, N. (2006) *Mental health and child poverty*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York

²⁵ Teenage Pregnancy Unit (2004) *Long term consequences of teenage births for parents and their children*

- Teenage mothers are three times more likely to smoke throughout their pregnancy, and 50% less likely to breastfeed, than older mothers - both of which have negative health consequences for the child
- Children of teenage mothers are more likely to have accidents and behavioural problems. They have lower academic attainment and are at higher risk of economic inactivity in later life. Benefit payments to a teenage mother who does not enter employment in the first three years after birth can total between 19,000 and 25,000 over three years; the cost of a teenage pregnancy to the NHS alone is estimated to be £63m a year.

Thirty wards in Devon have conception rates about the National average, the bulk of these are in Exeter and North Devon. At ward level the highest rate is in Ilfracombe Central in North Devon followed by St James, St Peter's and Priory in Exeter. However, due to the small numbers involved, the vast majority of wards have the data suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

5.9 Promoting independent living in later life

Mandatory disabled facilities grants are funded by an annual allocation from Central Government.

This Council has traditionally contributed significant additional sums to the capital allocation equivalent to 40% of the total budget.

The 40% contribution is no longer mandatory though the Council has elected to continue this level of support in recognition of the consistently high levels of need associated with an ageing and increasingly infirm population.

Although DFG's are the sole remaining form of mandatory assistance, the annual allocation is no longer ring-fenced for that purpose and Local Authorities are free to use their allocation in accordance with their own strategic objectives.

In North Devon, demand for assistance always exceeds the supply of available funds, and the mandatory nature of the assistance means that this Council has no alternative but to use the allocation for that purpose.

The removal of the ring-fence does however represent an opportunity to provide a more flexible approach to addressing the needs of the disabled population.

Mandatory DFG may only be awarded for specific purposes, generally, involving the installation of equipment or appliances or enabling access to such facilities.

In certain circumstances it may be more appropriate for applicants to move to alternative accommodation particularly where that accommodation is already adapted or where care and support is more readily accessible.

The option to provide financial assistance to enable or encourage such alternative approaches can result in significant savings to the DFG budget thereby enabling more people to be helped more quickly.

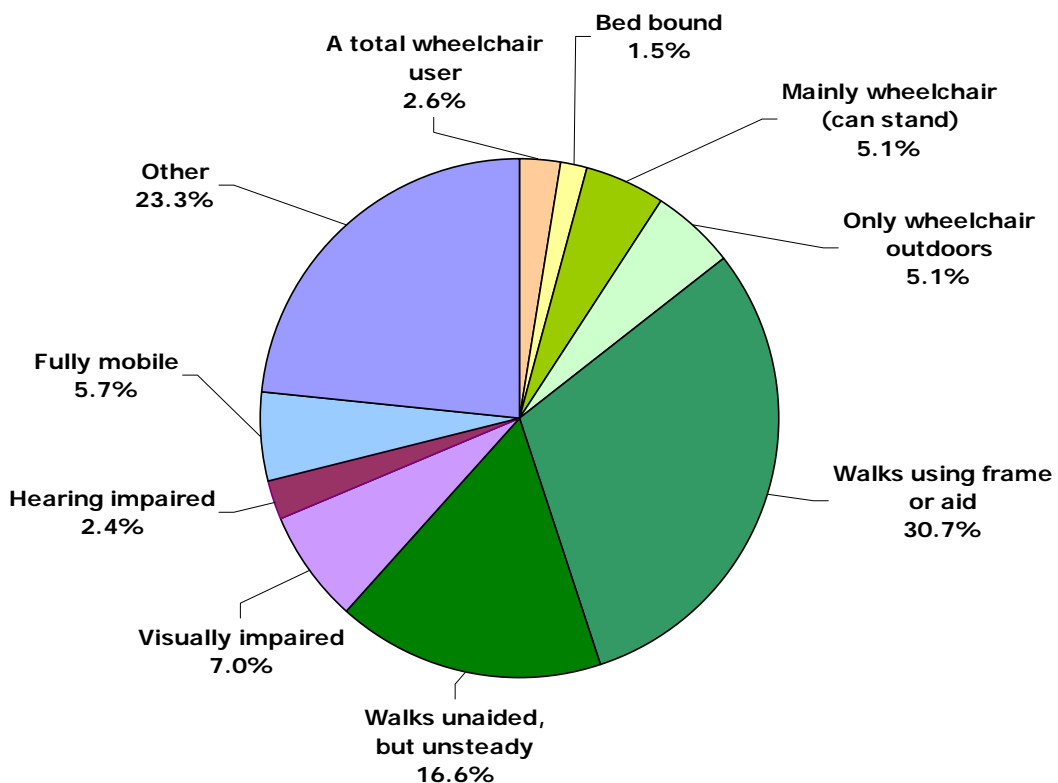
Discretionary loan assistance for these purposes is now available from the mandatory budget and it is considered appropriate for the renewal Strategy to incorporate that policy.

As part of the 2009 House condition survey residents were asked a number of questions relating to health and disability:-

- if any member of the household suffers from a long term illness or disability.

It is estimated that 8,000 (19.5%) occupied dwellings have at least one resident with a long term illness or disability.

- to choose the condition that best described their disability.
- and the following chart illustrates the results of this.



5.10 Health Issues

Residents within occupied properties were asked to provide information on a number of health related questions including accidents at home, asthma and mental health problems. The following table gives a complete breakdown of the results. Of the 4.4% of respondents that had suffered a

fall in the home or garden within the past year, 47.4% of these falls resulted in a visit to the hospital. Asthma sufferers accounted for 8.3% of the respondents and those with mental health problems 2.1%

Table 0.1 Health issues

Health Issue	No	Percentage affected
Accident (Fall)	1,790	4.4%
Of which resulting in a visit to the hospital	850	47.4%
Asthma	3,370	8.3%
Mental Health Problems	840	2.1%

Source: 2009 House Condition Survey

5.11 Fuel Poverty

The mitigation of fuel poverty is a cross-cutting objective which is a component of all 3 primary objectives: -

- Improved energy efficiency enhances the condition of the housing stock and reduces the Carbon footprint
- Spending less on fuel increases household disposable income making housing more affordable and helping to sustain tenancies
- Poorly heated and energy inefficient homes contribute directly to excess winter deaths amongst vulnerable groups and are a major cause of respiratory morbidity particularly in children.

Every £ saved by spending less on fuel is an extra £ available to spend in the local economy.

In October the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) will conclude and will be placed by The Green Deal and the Energy Company Obligation (ECO).

The Green Deal is an 'open market' offer, funded by a loan recovered through fuel cost savings, whereas ECO is specifically targeted to vulnerable households and will comprise free and/or subsidised installations.

CERT provided free or subsidised simple energy efficiency installations in domestic properties occupied by qualifying household groups.

As the programme to insulate lofts and cavity walls concludes the emphasis will shift to tackling 'hard to treat' properties principally through solid wall insulation and new more efficient heating installations.

Loft and cavity insulation will still be included within both Green Deal and ECO and the funds available to provide solid wall insulation and heating installations will be substantially increased.

The Energy Act 2011 is intended to provide for a step change in the provision of energy efficiency measures to homes and businesses.

The Act includes provisions on:

Green Deal

- The Act creates a new financing framework to enable the provision of fixed improvements to the energy efficiency of households and non-domestic properties, funded by a charge on energy bills that avoids the need for consumers to pay upfront costs.

Private rented sector

- The Act includes provisions to ensure that from April 2016, private residential landlords will be unable to refuse a tenant's reasonable request for consent to energy efficiency improvements where a finance package, such as the Green Deal and/or the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), is available.
- Provisions in the Act also provide for powers to ensure that from April 2018, it will be unlawful to rent out a residential or business premise that does not reach a minimum energy efficiency standard (the intention is for this to be set at EPC rating 'E').

Energy Company Obligation

The Act amends existing powers in the Gas Act, Electricity Act 1989 and the Utilities Act 2000 to enable the Secretary of State to create a new Energy Company Obligation that will work alongside the Green Deal finance offer by targeting appropriate measures at those households likely to need additional support – in particular those containing vulnerable people on low incomes and in hard-to-treat housing.

Green Deal

The Green Deal represents an umbrella for improving energy efficiency which in conjunction with the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), and the Renewable Heat Incentive is intended to address fuel poverty and achieve the Government's Carbon targets.

Green deal finance can be taken up by householders for up to 25 years with the maximum length of loan for each upgrade typically being limited by the product's useful life. The Finance is shown as a charge on the Electricity bill and must be paid by whoever pays the electricity bill. The loan maximum is dictated by the 'Golden rule', which ensures that the green deal finance repayments are never more than the annual savings in energy costs, meaning that the property occupier should always be better off.

Green deal is likely to be attractive to Landlords who can undertake a whole house energy efficiency refurbishment which may potentially increase the property value and rental income but the loan will be repaid by existing or future tenants through the electricity bill.

Energy Company Obligation

The Energy Company Obligation contains a range of measures and funding opportunities, which will have an immediate and significant impact for many areas and households in North Devon.

It is recognised that for some of the most effective carbon saving measures green deal finance alone will not be able to cover the full upfront cost of the measures. ECO is intended to combine with green deal to make these measures affordable but importantly will also be used to provide insulation and heating measures to low-income and vulnerable households and insulation measures to low income communities.

The carbon savings Community Obligation (CSCo) is intended to deliver measures in areas selected using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) in England. The lowest 15% of lower super output areas ranked in the IMD will qualify for inclusion within the CSCo element of ECO.

Additionally, a further 20% of activity may be undertaken in LSOA's adjoining those qualifying Lower super output areas.

There are 5 LSOA's in North Devon which qualify:-

- Barnstaple Central Town C
- Forches and Whiddon Valley A
- Ilfracombe Central A
- Ilfracombe Central B
- Ilfracombe Central C
- All LSOA's adjoining these areas will also qualify for up to a further 20% of the funding.

Rural areas will also benefit from the CSCo element of ECO with a requirement for energy suppliers to deliver a minimum of 15% of their CSCo obligation to low income households living in a settlement with less than 10,000 homes and in receipt of the same qualifying benefits as in the ECO affordable warmth obligation.

For the purposes of the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 Local Housing Authorities now have a duty to prepare and publicise their ambitions and priorities for local energy interventions and to describe the measures they propose to support, including financial assistance through ECO and Green Deal.

The document will be published on the Council's website on or before 31st March 2013 and will be revised and refreshed not later than 31st March 2015.

In practice it is intended that the publication will be a 'living' document and that all residents, businesses and other stakeholders will contribute to developing our priorities and proposals in this important area of work during the period.

Of course, our priorities may change over the period and we wish to be flexible in our approach to meeting those challenges.

SECTION TWO

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PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Part 1: Housing Act 2004 - Housing Health and Safety Rating System The Exercise of Statutory Duties and Powers by North Devon District Council

The Enforcement Framework

The Council has a mandatory **duty** to act when Category 1 type hazards are found.

The Council has a discretionary **power** to act in respect of a Category 2 hazard.

Where hazards are found at a dwelling the Council must (in the case of category 1 hazards) and may (in the case of category 2 hazards) take one of the following courses of action:-

- Serve an Improvement Notice requiring remedial works;
- Make a Prohibition Order, which closes the whole or part of a dwelling or restricts the number or class of permitted occupants;
- Serve a suspended Improvement or Prohibition Notice
- Serve a Hazard Awareness Notice;
- Take Emergency Remedial Action*;
- Serve an Emergency Prohibition Order*;
- Make a Demolition Order*;
- Declare a clearance area.

* *Only in respect of Category 1 hazards.*

Although the HHSRS hazard rating is based on the most vulnerable potential occupant, the Council will be able to take account of the circumstances of the actual occupant in deciding the most appropriate course of action. Where one of the above courses of action is taken and the property owner does not comply, the Council may act in default (i.e. carry out the work themselves and recover the cost from the owner of the property) and/or decide to prosecute.

The Council may also recover charges for enforcement action.

Use of Discretionary Power: Decision Rules

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System: Enforcement Guidance, statutory guidance made under Section 9 of the Housing Act 2004, gives advice on how local housing authorities should use their discretionary powers.

The Council must take appropriate action in respect of a Category 1 hazard and may do so in respect of a Category 2 hazard.

In deciding what is the most appropriate course of action, the Council must have regard to a number of factors.

In every case the Council is obliged to give a formal statement of reasons for the action it intends to take.

For the purpose of assessing the hazard, it will be assumed that the dwelling is occupied by the most vulnerable household (irrespective of what household is actually in occupation or indeed if it is empty).

For the purpose of deciding the most appropriate course of action the actual household in occupation will be considered.

The Council will take account of factors such as:-

- Extent, severity and location of hazard;
- Proportionality - cost and practicability of remedial works;
- Multiple hazards;
- The extent of control an occupier has over works to the dwelling;
- Vulnerability of current occupiers;
- Likelihood of occupancy changing;
- Social exclusion;
- The views of the current occupiers.

Having regard to the statutory guidance and to the provisions of the Enforcement Concordat which North Devon District Council has adopted, in addition to the Council's duty to take action where a Category 1 hazard exists, the Council will generally exercise its discretion to take the most appropriate course of action where a Category 2 hazard exists in the following situations:-

The Most Appropriate Course of Action - Category 2 Hazards

A. Band D Hazards

There will be a general presumption that where a Band D hazard exists, officers will consider action under the Housing Act 2004, unless that would not be the most appropriate course of action.

B. Multiple Hazards

Where a number of hazards at Band D or below are present in combination, thereby creating a more serious situation, or where the property is in a dilapidated condition, the Private Sector Housing Manager or the Environmental Health & Housing Manager may authorise the most appropriate course of action to be taken.

C. Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances where A and B above are not applicable, the Private Sector Housing Manager or the Environmental Health & Housing Manager may authorise the most appropriate course of action to be taken.

Level to which Hazards are to be Improved

The Housing Act 2004 requires only that the works specified when taking the most appropriate course reduce a Category 1 hazard to a Category 2 hazard.

The Council will, however, generally seek to specify works which, whilst not necessarily achieving the ideal, are capable of achieving a significant reduction in the hazard level and in particular are of a standard that should ensure that no further intervention should be required for a minimum period of twelve months.

Tenure

In considering the most appropriate course of action, the Council will have regard to the extent of control that an occupier has over works required to the dwelling. In normal circumstances, this will mean taking the most appropriate course of action against a private landlord (including a Housing Association) and in most cases, this will involve requiring works to be carried out.

Owner-occupiers will not normally be required to carry out works to their own home and the requirement to take the most appropriate course of action will in most cases be satisfied by the service of a Hazard Awareness Notice.

Where there is an imminent risk of serious harm to an owner- occupier or to others outside the household, or where the condition of the dwelling is such that it may adversely affect the health and safety of others outside the household then the Council may consider pursuing an alternative course of action.

Enforcement Concordat

The Council has adopted the Enforcement Concordat and observes its principles.

Subject to the specific requirements of Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004, the principles of the Enforcement Concordat mean that the Council will endeavour to take an informal approach in respect of Category 2 hazards, unless :-

- A. There is a risk to health and safety from a hazard of a nature which requires prompt formal action; or
- B. There is evidence of previous non-compliance with statutory provisions made under the Housing Acts or other housing related legislation.

Charging for Notices

In accordance with Sections 49 and 50 of the Housing Act 2004, the Council reserves the right to charge and recover the reasonable costs incurred in taking the most appropriate course of action.

The circumstances in which the Council may charge are where:-

- A. A formal Notice is required to remove a serious threat to health and safety unless the threat arose because of circumstances outside the control of the person receiving the Notice, Order or action; and/or
- B. There is evidence of previous non-compliance with statutory provisions made under the Housing Acts or other housing related legislation; and/or
- C. No adequate action has been taken in response to informal requests from the Council to take action or do works.

Empty Homes

1. **Housing Act 2004 – Section 11 or 12 Improvement Notice**

If a Housing Health and Safety Rating System assessment reveals that one or more Category 1 or 2 hazards exist within the dwelling, the local authority may serve an Improvement Notice requiring the owner to undertake works to remove or reduce these hazards.

2. **Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 – Section 29 Notice**

If a building is unoccupied and not effectively secured against unauthorised entry, or is likely to become a danger to public health, the local authority may serve notice on the owner to secure the building within 48 hours.

3. **Environmental Protection Act 1990 – Section 80 Notice**

Where a local authority is satisfied that a statutory nuisance exists, or is likely to occur or recur, in the area of the authority, the local authority shall serve a notice imposing all or any of the following requirements:

- a) Requiring the abatement of the nuisance or prohibiting or restricting its occurrence or recurrence.
- b) Requiring the execution of such works, and the taking of such other steps, as may be necessary for any of those purposes.

Any of the following problems regarding empty properties may amount to a statutory nuisance:

- Any premises in such a state as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance.
- Any accumulation or deposit which is prejudicial to health or a nuisance.
- Any other matter declared by any enactment to be a statutory nuisance.

4. **Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 – Section 4 Notice**

If in the case of any land it appears to the local authority that steps should be taken for the destruction of rats or mice on the land or otherwise for keeping the land free from rats and mice, they may serve on the owner or occupier of the land a notice requiring him to take these steps.

5. **Environmental Protection Act 1990 – Section 59 Action**

If any controlled waste is deposited in or on any land, the local authority may, by notice, require the occupier to do either or both of the following:

- a) To remove the waste from the land within the specified period not less than a period of 21 days beginning with the service of the notice.
- b) To take within such a period specified steps with a view to eliminating or reducing the consequences of the deposit of the waste.

6. **Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005 – Section 28 Notice**

Local authorities have powers to serve fixed penalty notices on individuals who graffiti private property.

7. Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Section 215 Notice

If it appears to the local planning authority that the amenity of a part of their area, or of an adjoining area, is adversely affected by the condition of land in their area, they may require the owner and occupier of the land to take such steps for remedying the condition of the land, as may be specified in the notice.

8. Building Act 1984 – Section 79 Notice

If it appears to a local authority that a building or structure is by reason of its ruinous or dilapidated condition seriously detrimental to the amenities of the neighbourhood, the local authority may by notice:

- a) Require the owner to undertake works to restore or repair the structure.
- b) Take steps to demolish the structure or part of the structure.

9. Building Act 1984 – Section 77 Action

If it appears to a local authority that a building or structure, or part of a building or structure, is in such a condition as to be dangerous, the authority may apply to a magistrates' court and the court may, where danger arises from the condition of the building or structure, make an order requiring the owner thereof:

- a) To execute such work as may be necessary to obviate the danger; or
- b) If he so elects, to demolish the building or structure, or any dangerous part of it.

The actions detailed above would be the initial approach the Council would follow when dealing with problematic empty homes, however, where owners remain unresponsive or unco-operative, further enforcement options are available to local authorities, as follows:

Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO)

Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO) were introduced in the Housing Act 2004. The intention was to provide a legal tool which could be used by local authorities to bring properties back into use where they had become empty and the owners either had no intention of doing this, or the resources.

The fundamental principle behind the EDMO is that the Council should not take on ownership of a property; the emphasis is on helping the owner manage the property in a way that is beneficial to both the owner and the community, or in the final event, managing the property directly and without the consent of the owner to ensure its occupation.

The legislation and guidance encourages local authorities to engage closely with the owner and work with them to bring the property back into use. Only when the approach fails does the EDMO become accessible to the authority. The process is policed by the independent Residential Property Tribunal (RPT) to ensure that local authorities keep within the parameters prescribed within the legislation and subsequent guidance.

Draft amendments to the EDMO legislation were detailed in January 2011 with proposals that EDMOs would be restricted to empty properties that have stood empty for at least two years and have become a magnet for vandalism, squatters and other forms of anti-social behaviour. The indication is for the Council to have the support of the surrounding community prior to implementing an EDMO.

Enforced Sales (ESP)

The Enforced Sales' procedure uses powers under Section 13 of the Law and Properties Act 1925. Where there is a local land charge or another debt owned to the Council by the empty property owner, the Council can force the sale of the property to a third party, if the debt can not be settled.

The Enforced Sales Procedure (ESP) is a process by which the Council brings about the sale of a privately owned house. It is used as a means to "sell on" a long-term vacant house to a new owner, in circumstances where the present owner is either unwilling or unable to deal with the house and its associated problems.

By bringing about a change in ownership, it is hoped that a new owner would be more willing and able to invest in the property, and ensure its likely re-occupation, upkeep and proper use.

Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)

The Housing Act 1985, Section 17 allows the local authority to acquire underused, or ineffectively used, property for residential purposes if there is a general housing need in the area. In addition, Section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (amended by Section 99 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) allows local authorities to acquire land or buildings, if their acquisition will allow improvements or re-development to take place. CPO can be a lengthy process and the possibility of a CPO is intended to prompt the owner to enter into constructive dialogue with the local authority and to avoid the need to resort to such a measure.

Delivering the Strategy

Strategy Target 2012 – 15

The numbers of eligible dwellings brought into residential occupation attributable to an eligible intervention by the Council, will be greater than 30 homes¹

¹ *Guidelines for monitoring empty homes interventions. A standard approach for local authorities. Empty Homes/Network 2010*

DISCRETIONARY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	ACCREDITED LANDLORDS	VULNERABLE OWNER/OCCUPIERS AND PARK HOME OWNERS	INDICATIVE EXPENDITURE FOR 2012-13
Loan assistance to assist in removal of category 1 hazards	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loan assistance administered by Wessex • Maximum loan £7,500 subject to an assessment of financial circumstances. 	<p>owner/occupier £150K loans</p> <p>Total £150K</p>
Loan assistance to provide enhanced energy efficiency installations and/or to facilitate such installations where supported by ECO or Green Deal funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum eligible expense £5,000; • loan assistance administered by Wessex • Condition of 10 year availability for letting; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loan assistance administered by Wessex • Maximum loan £7,500 subject to an assessment of financial circumstances. 	<p>OWNER/OCCUPIER £75K LOANS</p> <p>LANDLORDS £75K LOANS</p> <p>TOTAL £150K</p>
Empty property or Commercial Conversion loans to facilitate works to achieve decent homes standard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum eligible expense £10,000 • loan assistance administered by Wessex • condition of 10 year availability for letting; 		<p>£50K loans</p> <p>Total £50K</p>

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE CONDITIONS
THE REGULATORY REFORM (HOUSING ASSISTANCE)
(ENGLAND AND WALES) ORDER 2002**

**SUMMARY OF CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO A DISCRETIONARY HOUSING
ASSISTANCE LOAN**

This is a **summary only** of the conditions applying to Discretionary Housing Assistance Loans approved by North Devon District Council, referred to below as 'the Council', under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 and is intended as a **general guide, not a complete statement of the law.**

Carrying out and Completion of Works

1. In approving an application for a loan the Council require, as a condition of the loan, that the eligible works be carried out in accordance with any specification they decide to impose.
2. It is a condition of loan that the eligible works are carried out within six months from the date of approval of the application. This period may, however, be extended by the Council if they think fit, particularly where they are satisfied that the eligible works cannot be, or could not have been, carried out without carrying out other works which could not have been reasonably foreseen when the application was made. If an applicant requires additional time a request must be made in writing before the end of the six-month period, otherwise the right to a loan cannot be guaranteed.
3. The payment of a loan, or part of a loan is conditional on the eligible works being carried out to the satisfaction of the Council and the Council being provided with an acceptable invoice, demand or receipt for payment for the works and any preliminary or ancillary services or charges. An invoice, demand or receipt will not be acceptable if it is given by the applicant or a member of the applicant's family.

An applicant should take reasonable steps to pursue any relevant insurance or legal claim and to repay the loan, so far as is appropriate, out of the proceeds of such a claim. If, after a loan has been approved, an applicant is successful in (a) an insurance claim or legal claim against another person in respect of damage to the premises to which the loan relates, or (b) a legal claim for damages in which the costs of the works to the premises is part of the claim, the applicant is required to notify the Council of that fact and will be required to repay the loan, so far as is appropriate, out of the proceeds of the claim.

4. Unless the Council directs otherwise the eligible works must be carried out by the contractor whose estimate accompanied the application, or where two or more estimates were submitted, by one of those contractors.

Availability for letting

In a case where a certificate of intended letting accompanies the application

1. It is a condition of the loan that, throughout the loan condition period beginning with the date on which the Council certifies the eligible works to have been completed to their satisfaction, or such other period as the Secretary of State may specify, (or as may be

imposed by the Council) the dwelling will be let or available for letting as a residence, and not for a holiday, on a tenancy which is not a long tenancy by the owner for the time being of the dwelling, to a person who is not connected with him (generally speaking, this means not a member of his family).

2. Throughout the relevant loan condition period, persons in receipt of any means-tested or disability related benefit should not be excluded from the loan of a tenancy solely on the basis of their being in receipt of such a benefit. It is also a condition of the loan that the Council may by written notice require the owner to provide within 21 days a statement showing how the property is occupied.
3. The loan conditions remain in force throughout the initial period and are binding not only on the person who provides the certificate but also on any subsequent owner of the dwelling (except for a housing authority or a registered social landlord).
4. In the event of a breach of the loan conditions, the Council may demand the repayment of the loan with interest, but they do have the discretion either not to demand repayment, or to require payment of less than the full amount.
5. It is a further condition of the loan that if, either after any instalment of loan has been paid and before the certified date, or during the loan condition period, as the case may be, an owner makes a relevant disposal (other than an exempt disposal) of the whole or any part of the premises to which the application applied he is obliged to repay to the Council on demand the entire amount of the loan. An owner is required to notify the Council forthwith in writing of his intention to make a relevant disposal and to give the Council any information reasonably requested by them in that connection.
6. It is a condition of the loan that, throughout the loan condition period, the Landlord, his agent, or any other person acting with the knowledge or consent of the landlord, will refrain from any harassment, breach of quiet enjoyment or any other behaviour, capable of causing harassment, alarm or distress to the tenant, members of his household or lawful visitors to the accommodation.
7. In the case of an application for Homeshare Assistance it is a condition of the loan that throughout the loan condition period the accommodation will be available for letting to the number of persons or households specified in the offer of financial assistance.

Owner-occupation

In a case where a certificate of owner-occupation accompanies the application:

1. It is a condition of the loan that throughout the loan condition period (that is five years beginning with the date on which the Council certifies the eligible works to have been completed to their satisfaction, or such other period as the Secretary of State may specify, or as may be imposed by the Council) the dwelling is occupied in accordance with the intention stated in the certificate of owner-occupation. This is binding on any person who is for the time being the owner of the dwelling. If this condition is breached, the Council may demand the repayment of the loan in full.

2. It is also a condition of the loan that the Council may by written notice require the owner to provide within 21 days a statement showing how the above condition is being fulfilled.
3. It is also a condition of the loan that, where an owner makes a relevant disposal of the dwelling, other than an exempt disposal, within the loan condition period, he will be required to repay the loan to the Council on demand. This condition remains in force for the whole of the loan condition period and is binding not only on the person who gives the certificate, but also on any subsequent owner, except that where an exempt disposal is made (other than a disposal referred to in note (a) or (b) in the definition of exempt disposals set out above), the conditions as to repayment cease to have effect. An owner is required to notify the Council forthwith in writing of his intention to make a relevant disposal and to give the Council any information reasonably requested by them in that connection.
4. The Council may decide not to make any demand for repayment in a case where they are satisfied that (a) the owner is elderly or infirm and is disposing of the property with the intention of going to live in a hospital, hospice, sheltered housing, a residential care home or similar accommodation, or a place where care will be provided; or (b) the owner is making the disposal with the intention of going to live with and care for an elderly or infirm member of his family or his partner's family.
5. It is also a condition of the loan that the Council may by written notice require the owner to provide within 21 days a statement showing how the property is occupied.
6. The loan conditions remain in force throughout the loan condition period and are binding not only on the person who provides the certificate but also on any subsequent owner of the dwelling (except for a housing authority or a registered social landlord).
7. In the event of a breach of the loan conditions, the Council may demand the repayment of the loan, but they do have the discretion either not to demand repayment, or to require payment of less than the full amount.
8. It is a further condition of the loan that if, either after any instalment of loan has been paid and before the certified date, or during the loan condition period, as the case may be, an owner makes a relevant disposal (other than an exempt disposal) of the whole or any part of the premises to which the application applied he is obliged to repay to the Council on demand the entire amount of the loan. An owner is required to notify the Council forthwith in writing of his intention to make a relevant disposal and to give the Council any information reasonably requested by them in that connection.

Definitions

'Decent Homes Assistance' means financial assistance for the purpose of achieving the Decent Homes standard in a single dwelling house or flat, not being a house in multiple occupation where any amenities are shared by the occupants or contained within a house in multiple occupation as defined by Section 257 Housing Act 2004.

'Empty Homes Assistance' means financial assistance for the purpose of achieving the Decent Homes Standard in a single dwelling house or flat, not being a house in multiple occupation, where any amenities are shared, or contained within a house in multiple occupation as defined by Section 257 Housing Act 2004. Additionally, the application must relate to a property categorised as Class C in the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of dwellings)(England) Regulations 2003.

'Homeshare Assistance' means financial assistance for the purpose of achieving the Decent Homes standard in a house in multiple occupation other than those falling within the terms of Section 257 Housing Act 2004.

'Converted Buildings Assistance' means financial assistance for the purpose of achieving the Decent Homes Standard in a self-contained unit of accommodation contained within a house in Multiple occupation of any type.

'Commercial Conversion Assistance' means financial assistance for the purpose of converting non-residential accommodation into one or more units of residential accommodation complying with the Building Regulations applicable at the date of conversion.

Note: The meanings of "relevant disposal" and "exempt disposal" are set out in notes (ii) and (iii) below.

Notes

- (i) In a case where personal representatives or trustees are the owner, the letting must not be to a person who has a beneficial interest under the will, intestacy or trust, in the property or the proceeds of its sale.
- (ii) "Relevant disposal" means the sale of the freehold or assignment of the lease, or the grant of a long lease (one of over 21 years, otherwise than at a rack rent).
- (iii) "Exempt disposal" means a disposal of the whole or any part of the premises:
 - (a) to the owner or one of the joint owners of the dwelling or to a wife or husband or former wife or husband of one of the joint owners, or a member of that person's family, or, in the case of a company, to an associated company;
 - (b) under a will or inheritance on a death;
 - (c) by Court Order in the course of a domestic breakdown;
 - (d) compulsorily, or by agreement, to a public body with compulsory purchase powers;
 - (e) of land which is "included land" under Section 184 of the Housing Act 1985;
 - (f) of a defective house under part XVI of the Housing Act 1985 and the owner is exercising his entitlement to assistance by way of repurchase;
 - (g) by way of enfranchisement or lease extension under Part I of the Leasehold Reform Act 1967;

- (h) in pursuance of an obligation arising under Chapter I or II of part I of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and urban Development Act 1993;
- (i) on the exercise of a right of first refusal under Part I of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1987 or in accordance with an acquisition order under Part III of that Act;
- (j) in exercise of the right to buy under Part V of the Housing Act 1985 or the right under Section 16 of that Act of the tenant of a registered social landlord to acquire the dwelling;
- (k) where the person making the disposal is aged at least 70, the disposal is to provide annuity income and the person concerned is entitled to continue to occupy the premises as his or her only or main residence;
- (l) where the disposal is of any other description specified by order of the Secretary of State.

Additional Conditions and Recovery of Loan at the Council's Discretion

The Secretary of State has given general consent to Councils to impose additional conditions or to waive repayment of loan under certain circumstances. This consent includes the following matters –

A Council may impose conditions relating to the giving of notice to them of any relevant disposal, the nomination of tenants to the property, the recovery of specialised equipment for the disabled, the insurance of loan-aided property and the repair of loan-aided property.

*[The Council imposes the following conditions:

- [1 The applicant must notify the Authority of his or her intention to make a relevant disposal of any dwelling, building or house in multiple occupation and shall furnish to the Council any information reasonably required by them in connection with such notification.]
- [2 Where the applicant has an insurable interest in the property, he or she shall arrange and maintain in effect adequate insurance of the property throughout the loan condition period.]
- [3 Where the applicant has a duty or power to carry out works of repair to the loan-aided property, the applicant shall ensure that, to the extent that such duty or power allows, the property remains fit for human habitation throughout the loan period.]]

In the event of a breach of any of the conditions set out above the Council may demand repayment from the applicant of a sum equal to the amount of loan paid or, as the case may be, any instalment of loan paid.

The Council will inform an applicant in writing of any additional conditions they are imposing.

A Council may decide not to demand whole or partial repayment of a loan where they are satisfied that-

- (a) a relevant disposal of the property which is not an exempt disposal is made with the intention of enabling the applicant to move to other accommodation for the purpose of-
 - (i) the applicant or the applicant's partner accepting employment where either of them is or would otherwise become unemployed, or
 - (ii) enabling the applicant or his or her partner to continue in employment where either is required by an employer to move to another workplace, or
- (b) a relevant disposal of the property which is not an exempt disposal is made by a mortgagee in exercise of a power of sale and the mortgage was entered into before the loan application was made.

If you require any further information or are in any doubt about the conditions applying to your loan, please contact the Council.

IMPORTANT NOTE

All the above forms of financial assistance are discretionary and may only be approved subject to Council policy and the continuing availability of financial resources.

The Council reserves the right to amend their policy relating to financial assistance at any time and in particular to vary categories of assistance, the terms of such assistance and conditions which may apply, in accordance with available resources and strategic objectives.

The Council's commitment of resources to your application is confirmed only following formal approval of your application.

The Council cannot accept liability for any expenditure you may incur prior to formal approval of your application.

Works should not commence prior to formal approval.

Any works commenced prior to formal approval are unlikely to be eligible for loan assistance and may result in the rejection of your application.

AGREEMENT

BETWEEN:

(1) North Devon District Council of Civic Centre, Barnstaple EX31 1EA

And

(2) Central North Group Support Team of Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority

1.0 Project

Fire safety in Houses in Multiple Occupation

1.1 Project Description

North Devon District Council (NDDC) is the Local Housing Authority vested with all Statutory powers and duties under the Housing Acts and subordinate legislation thereunder.

The introduction of the Housing Act 2004 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 has imposed an analogous duty on two Statutory Authorities to enforce certain Fire Safety provision within houses in Multiple Occupation.

The Housing Act 2004 provides NDDC with specific powers and duties, including Fire safety, in respect of domestic residential accommodation (Parts 1 and 7) and all categories of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Parts 1, 2 and 7).

Fire and Rescue Authorities have a legal duty to enforce the Fire Safety Order in the common areas of all residential accommodation not forming a single private dwelling.

In recognition of the need for a collaborative approach, North Devon District Council and Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority are signatories to a National Protocol between Local Housing Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Generally, the Fire Safety inspection and enforcement role will be undertaken by the Authority defined as the lead Authority in paragraph 2 of the protocol.

1.2 This Agreement aims to provide a delivery framework for achieving the following shared objectives:-

- (a) A strategic approach to achieving Fire safety in Houses in Multiple Occupation by targeting scarce resources to defined priorities through a programme of proactive risk-based inspections
- (b) To build professional and technical capacity in our respective organisations through the development of common standards and guidance.
- (c) To provide consistent advice to our client groups
- (d) To establish consistent and defensible enforcement policies

- (e) To provide education and training to client groups and to participate in campaign and promotional activity
- (f) To achieve, wherever practicable, a reduction in the Regulatory burden on businesses by delivering our statutory functions through a single intervention.
- (g) To consult in accordance with section 10 Housing Act 2004 and Article 46 Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- (h) To identify and target actions in respect of empty dwellings and commercial premises in order to maximise the opportunities for providing affordable housing to rent and to reduce the potential for arson and anti-social behaviour generally.

2.0 THE AGREEMENT

2.1 In pursuance of the above objectives North Devon District Council undertakes to :-

- (a) Provide the sum of £6000 in the period 1st April 2012 to the 31st of March 2013 for the exclusive services of a 0.2 Full-time equivalent Fire Officer, nominated by Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority, to deliver the enforcement and advisory powers of The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, in conjunction with the enforcement powers of North Devon Council's Private Sector Housing Team under the Housing Act 2004.
- (b) Provide secretarial and administrative support to the nominated officer.
- (c) To assist in the delivery of the shared objectives set out at 1.2 above

2.2 In pursuance of the above objectives Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority undertakes to :-

- (a) Provide the professional services of a 0.2 Full-time equivalent Fire Officer, for the period 1st April 2012 to the 31st of March 2013 to deliver the enforcement and advisory powers of The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, in conjunction with North Devon Council's Private Sector Housing Team.
- (b) To provide secretarial and administrative support to the nominated officer as identified in item (a) above.
- (c) To assist in the delivery of the shared objectives set out at 1.2 above.

Signed 

Date 23/4/12

On behalf of the North Devon District Council

Signed 

Date 18TH APRIL 2012

On behalf of Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority

Works in Default Administration

1. Initial stage

1.1. Officer should send M3 HSWIDLT1 to officially inform that works in default are likely to be commenced.

1.2. Officer will advise TSA that works in default are likely, and give TSA worksheet reference number (will be the notice worksheet). Record on M3 whether works are likely to be contentious or not (this will affect the VAT part of payments).

2. Works in default payment code

2.1. TSA to email Caroline.McEvansoneya@northdevon.gov.uk in exchequer (and cc robert.bates@northdevon.gov.uk, land charges, so he knows what's happening) and request a works in default payment code. Caroline will need to know the following:

- Worksheet number
- Type of works required
- Name of person to whom invoice will be addressed (usually landlord)

2.2. Save email on worksheet as Action 113.

When Caroline replies with code, save code as Action 572.

2.3. Update 'Works in default monitoring sheet' in blue WID folder, and create a new tab in file with worksheet number and first line of address for easy reference. Keep this sheet updated at all stages.

2.4. At this stage, check contractor CIS status – print out 'CIS Memo to Exchequer' from WID folder on Team Drive and complete using info from 'CIS info from exchequer' if required. Save in WID folder for use when invoice received.

3. Receipt & payment of contractor invoice

3.1. Contractor will complete the work and send invoice to us. Check with officer okay to pay.

3.2. Also check with officer that works are complete and notice complied as a result of works in default. If complied, officer will sign off worksheet. Send land charges cancellation memo to landcharges@northdevon.gov.uk (WP HSLCCANC) either by email or internal post.

3.3. Raise payment request using green payment slip. Enter payment code as provided by Caroline McEvansoneya.

3.4. VAT – enter VAT amounts exactly as on invoice, usually as s/r. Sign (or get officer to sign) top two signature fields, IH to sign the bottom one.

3.5. Scan invoice and payment request slip onto worksheet, then send to finance for payment & enter details in WID section of 'Notices' tab.

3.6. Double check interest rate for Public Works Loan Board with jenny.bates@northdevon.gov.uk (currently 1%).

3.7. Send HSWIDLT2 to relevant person, informing them that works complete and that they will soon receive an invoice for works from us.

4. Raise invoice to recover charges

4.1. Email Caroline (cc. Rob Bates in land charges) and ask her to raise an invoice to recover the costs of the invoice. Confirm the following:

- Worksheet number
- Type of works required
- Name of person to whom invoice will be addressed (usually landlord)
- Value (if works contentious, don't include VAT; if works amicable we charge the VAT inclusive amount).

5. Invoice charge

Double check with officer that all notice works now completed on the property. If so, send HSLCCANC to land charges to cancel notice charge.

6. Copy of invoice to recover costs received

6.1. Caroline will send a copy of invoice sent to recover charges. Scan to M3, and email to Rob Bates along with HSLDWID memo, requesting he put an invoice charge on the property. Record this email as Action 576.

6.2. Enter Action 582 with a brought forward action in TSA case load for one year ahead.

6.3. When Rob Bates confirms that the invoice charge has been registered, save his email as Action 576.

7. Payment received

7.1. Enter any payments received from relevant person as Action 573. Any payment value is regarded as acknowledgement of debt, so amend Action 582 to one year ahead of last payment date.

7.2. When invoice paid in full, send

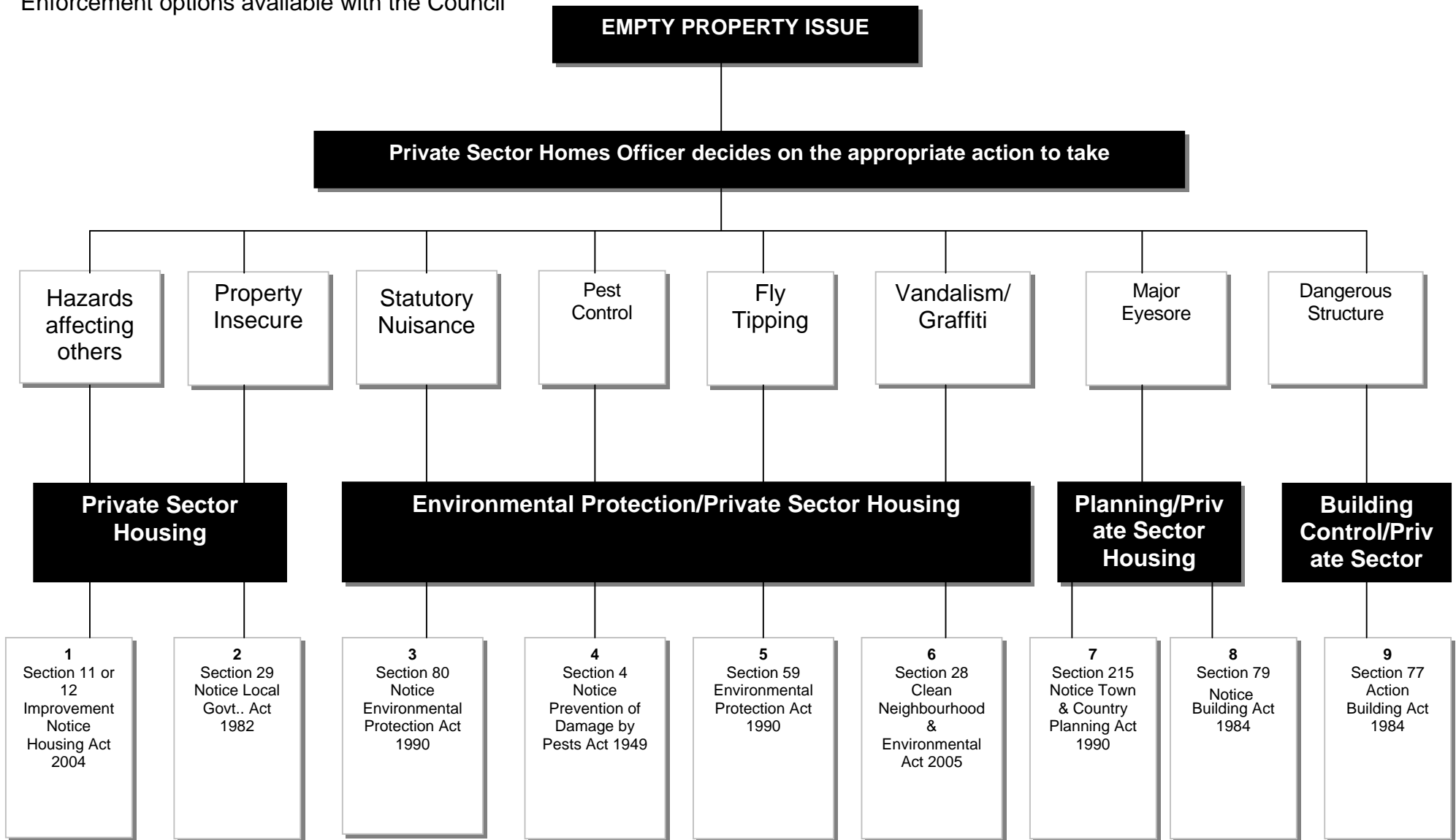
8. Annual acknowledgement of debt

8.1. Monitor action 582. If payments have not been made for a year, request an annual statement of debt from exchequer. When statement received, scan to M3, then send to relevant person with letter HSWIDAST.

8.2. Enter brought forward action for receipt of tear off slip. If this is not received, inform exchequer for them to pursue.

Empty Homes

Enforcement options available with the Council



EMPTY HOMES ASSESSMENT

Address			
Officer Assessing:		Date:	
Council tax register Ref.			
Description of property type		Residential/ Part residential & commercial/ Commercial (delete as appropriate)	
	Description	Points scale	Points awarded
Property description	Bedsit	0	
	1 bedroom	25	
	2 bedroom	50	
	3 bedrooms	100	
Is Property empty?	No (Add notes if further action required)	0	
	Possibly	25	
	Probably	50	
	Definitely	100	
How long has it been empty?	< 6 months	0	
	0-6 months	25	
	6-12 months	50	
	12 months or more	100	
Unauthorised access?	No	0	
	Minor	25	
	Moderate	50	
	High	100	
Dangerous Structure?	No	0	
	Minor	25	
	Moderate	50	
	High	100	
Property in disrepair?	No	0	
	Minor e.g.1 broken window/loose tile	5	
	Significant e.g. more than 1 broken window or guttering hanging down	10	
	Serious Repair e.g. roof collapsed/walls in serious disrepair	25	
Environmental Impact	No	0	
	Minor	5	
	Moderate	10	
	High	25	
Property causing a public health (statutory) nuisance?	No	0	
	Minor	5	
	Moderate	10	
	High	25	
Estimated cost to make decent?	£<5K	100	
	£5-10K	50	
	£10-£20K	25	
	>£20K	0	
Fire risk	None	0	
	Low risk	5	
	Medium	10	
	High risk e.g. Highly combustible materials such as gas cylinders	25	
Housing Need in Parish?	None/Unknown	0	
	Low need (can be provided by existing affordable housing stock)	25	
	Medium need (can't be fully met by existing affordable housing stock)	50	
	High need (a need but no affordable housing stock)	100	
		Total	

(Maximum score 800)

Empty Property Banding Score

Score of:	400 or more	250-399	100-249	99 points or less
Priority Band	1	2	3	4

Notes:

Photo Nos.:

Environmental Housing and Health Report

Results - Empty Homes Draft Strategy Consultation

28th June 2012

Introduction

- 1.1 North Devon Council (NDC) is committed to bringing empty homes back into use.
- 1.2 The Empty Homes' Strategy is intended to sit under the Council's overall Housing Strategy and provide a much more dynamic and robust approach to tackling problematic empty homes.
- 1.3 NDC consulted on a draft strategy between 18th April and 18th June 2012.
- 1.4 A press release and an article on NDC's website was published. Relevant stakeholders were contacted.
- 1.5 An on-line survey was made available to receive comments.
- 1.6 The draft empty homes strategy consultation webpage received over 6100 hits.
- 1.7 The on-line survey page received on 90 hits.
- 1.8 10 people responded to the survey.
- 1.9 This report states the output of the consultation.

Results

- 1.1 The results:

Do you own an empty home?

(9) Responses

Answer Option	Response #	Response %
Yes	2	22.22
No	7	77.78

Do you agree that action is needed to bring back empty homes back into occupation?

(10) Responses

Answer Option	Response #	Response %
Strongly Agree	7	70
Agree	2	20
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	10

Do you agree with the draft empty homes' strategy?

(10) Responses

Answer Option	Response #	Response %
Strongly Agree	7	70
Agree	2	20
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	10

1.2 The following comments were submitted,

Response date: 19/04/2012

There is a national shortage in housing. This is a part of the solution

Response date: 27/04/2012

Yes I agree all empty homes 497 and more should all be taken over. Also places like the job centre in Barnstaple, which could be converted into flats without being demolished, which would cost taxpayers money. If councils and government brought this into law, there would be less eyesores, greenbelt land such as Larkbeare and its habitat of otters, bats dormice etc could be left. Lovely countryside saved.

Response date: 03/05/2012

1. Include a provision recommending getting rid of council tax relief for second homes - it's a scandal and should never have been allowed in the first place. It reduces the amount of fund available to parish/town councils through the precept for local projects.
2. Further to the above, make council tax on second homes 500%. Why shouldn't it be? It could be considered as "compensation" to the local community, which is at risk of losing services such as transport, schools and shops due to empty properties in the locality.
3. Local planning considerations: make it more difficult for applications on second homes for extensions and the suchlike to be loaned - they are of no benefit to the local community and may even blight it.
4. Check whether any owners of empty/holiday homes are on the electoral register twice (their real home address should be on the land registry). If they are take action to prosecute as voting twice is a criminal offence. Cornwall Council thinks the results of local parliamentary elections may have been skewed in the past by this practice.

5. Put pressure on national government to create a brand new planning use class for holiday homes, which must be the subject of a change of use application.
6. Help parish and town councils develop a proforma letter to be sent to the owners of such properties on their patch encouraging them to let the properties (not a holiday lets of course).
7. Set up a hotline (and advertise it a lot) so that people can report when properties are bought as holiday homes, or houses are left empty for a long time - the council will have a better idea of how many houses are empty.
8. Something also has to be done to get local house builders on board - it's currently in their interest for properties to be bought as second homes, as this creates a housing crisis, which they can respond to by more building. Suggestion: local planning policy provision that no new developments will be permitted within x distance of villages/towns where there are more than x% (10?) empty houses. Property developers might react to this by trying to buy up empty homes and renting them out.
9. Provisions in section 106 agreements for new builds - they must market to people already within North Devon for a minimum of 24 months, to reduce the possibility of new homes being bought up as holiday homes.
10. More use of council's powers of compulsory purchase where empty houses fall into disrepair, perhaps in partnership with private investors?
11. When people object to planning applications, check whether they are second homeowners, and give less weight to their objections than people who actually live in the vicinity of the application site. Holiday/empty homes are one of the biggest threats to the community and economy of North Devon. They bring little or nothing to the community/economy. Any capital gains as a result of inflation in house prices will probably be taken out of the area. Empty houses create problems for neighbours in respect of vermin, vandalism, heating and general amenity. Local services are affected. The Council should let it be known that it does not welcome holiday homeowners. This has nothing to do with tourism - it's about private investment. Please do your best to stifle the trend of empty homes in North Devon. Check out Swimbridge as an example - the last houses sold on the high street and church lane are now holiday homes, standing empty for the majority of the year. Swimbridge does not want to become another Appledore.

Response date: 04/05/2012

Before taking a broad-brush action it would be important to establish why homes are empty. In some cases there may be good reason for this. In other cases it may be desirable to change the tenancy or ownership position as soon as possible. Nevertheless I am pleased to learn that the council is taking action on this issue.

HOMES WITHOUT BARRIERS

Making homes work for Devon's tenants

Section 1 – Service Arrangements

What tenants		Local Authority Response²⁶
A. Well advertised arrangements for accessing the service through a single point of contact.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify a single point of contact within the HA for tenants to approach and ensure this is updated when changes arise. 2. Provide information on the HA website and produce leaflets based on the tenant facing information produced as part of the protocol and including the identified point of contact and details about other options. 3. HA staff to refer all potential customers of the service to the identified contact point as quickly as possible*. 4. Where a needs assessment is necessary refer to OT service as quickly as possible*. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Refer minor adaptations assessed over the telephone by Torbay Care Trust/ Care Direct Plus to the relevant HA as quickly as possible*. 6. Refer enquiries made direct to LHA to relevant HA as quickly as possible* for information or action.
B. Minor adaptations to be carried out quickly.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Process orders for minor adaptation works as quickly as possible (from tenant, HA staff or Torbay Care Trust/Care Direct) – either using normal contractors or through HIA service. 2. Apply priority rating using normal repairs service standard used by the HA and provide an appointment time. 	

²⁶ Nb this generally means the responsibility of the district council. Where it is a social services/health trust responsibility this is identified.

What tenants		Local Authority Response ²⁶
	<p>3. Use the College of OT guidance in “Minor adaptations without delay” to aid accurate specification of work required.</p> <p>4. Ensure work completed and assess tenant satisfaction with work, contractor and outcomes from having adaptation.</p>	
<p>C. Good information about options and support to exercise choice</p>	<p>1. Where the initial enquiry suggests that major adaptations may be needed, provide a home visit by an appropriate member of staff as quickly as possible* to provide information about options, consider appropriateness of adaptation and offer support.</p> <p>2. Provide a named contact point for any tenant for whom the preferred option is to move and visit as quickly as possible* to identify support needs and agree support plan.</p> <p>3. Provide or secure appropriate equipment or minor adaptations to assist tenant whilst awaiting transfer.</p> <p>4. Support tenants wishing to move to apply to Devon Home Choice (DHC), consider suitability of advertised property and likely adaptations needed, bid for suitable properties, prepare to move and settle in new home.</p> <p>5. Consider providing financial support to move e.g. removal expenses, cost of disconnection/reconnection of appliances, redirection of mail and incentives to downsize in line with HA policy.</p> <p>6. Where tenants wish to pay for adaptation instead of choosing to move this should be supported where appropriate.</p>	<p>7. LHA staff involved with applicants to DHC to ensure appropriate band awarded to disabled applicants wishing to move and offer to refer them for support.</p> <p>8. Identify disabled people on DHC register who need support and provide support.</p> <p>9. Contribute to the cost of HA incentive schemes to enable disabled tenants to move where DFG would have been necessary.</p>
<p>D. Good information about the</p>	<p>1. Use the DHC checklist to maintain up to date information about the accessibility of all HA properties and any adaptations carried out for previous tenants.</p>	<p>6. OTs and LHA staff to alert HA where they become aware of a property becoming vacant that has been</p>

What tenants		Local Authority Response ²⁶
accessibility of homes advertised through DHC and the adaptations available	<p>2. Where property information is out of date, visit void properties prior to advert to ensure details of adaptations are included.</p> <p>3. Where possible provide floor plans for purpose built, adapted and adaptable homes and include in adverts where they may be suitable for a disabled person.</p> <p>4. Ensure this information is stored appropriately or easily accessed from the IT system used to prepare property attributes for advertising under DHC.</p> <p>5. Be flexible about the use of voids as decant properties for tenants requiring adaptations to their homes.</p>	<p>adapted and the nature of the adaptation to enable appropriate advertising.</p> <p>7. Promote purpose built and adapted homes to disabled people on the DHC register.</p> <p>8. Be flexible about the use of voids within LA housing stock and use intermediate care units as decant properties for tenants requiring adaptations to their homes.</p>
E. Sufficient time to be able to decide whether a property advertised is suitable	<p>1. Provide support for tenants to view properties advertised and to decide whether they are suitable or more readily adapted than current home.</p> <p>2. Advertise purpose built and adapted homes in the “home coming soon” list the week prior to live advertising.</p>	<p>3. Be flexible where possible in closing bids for properties where a disabled applicant has expressed an interest but where delays in assessing suitability have arisen through ill health or availability of support.</p>
F. Assessments of need to be carried out quickly and with full tenant engagement	<p>1. Employ OTs and/or trusted technicians, either directly or jointly with other HAs/HIA to carry out assessments of need for tenants where required.</p> <p>2. Carry out assessments for minor adaptations (where necessary) as quickly as possible*.</p>	<p>3. The Social Services Authority to carry out a needs assessment, or where an OT is already involved with a customer’s care plan, carry out assessments of need and provide a statement to the HA for non-complex needs, e.g. ramps, stairlifts and level access showers as quickly as possible*.</p>
G. Major adaptations to be well	<p>1. Where the scope of the work is the responsibility of the HA surveyor to visit applicant to discuss statement of need and agree the scope of the work required to address needs as quickly as possible*.</p>	<p>9. Where the scope of the work is the responsibility of the LHA grant officer or HIA surveyor to visit applicant to</p>

What tenants		Local Authority Response ²⁶
planned and carried out quickly	<p>2. Prepare drawings and schedules of work where necessary as quickly as possible*.</p> <p>3. Order works necessary with framework contractor within 1 week or seek tenders from appropriate contractors in line with HA standing orders and as quickly as possible*.</p> <p>4. Ensure completion of different scheme types in line with total timeline targets.</p> <p>5. Where decant is necessary provide support to the tenant as outlined above for permanent moves.</p> <p>6. Monitor contract and standard of work carried out.</p> <p>7. Visit as quickly as possible* to assess tenant satisfaction with work, contractor and outcomes from having adaptation and ensure tenant knows how to use the adaptation effectively.</p> <p>8. Consider the needs of tenants when planning programmes of improvement work to dwellings and incorporate adaptations or accessible bathrooms as part of the scheme.</p>	<p>discuss statement of need and agree the scope of the work required to address needs as quickly as possible*.</p> <p>10. LHA or HIA to progress works in line with HA role in previous column.</p>
H. The adaptation to be maintained after installation	<p>1. At completion of work log adaptation and/or equipment onto the property database and include them in planned maintenance and service contracts.</p>	<p>2. Notify HA of work completed under DFG.</p>
I. Clarity about who will organise and	<p>See separate cost sharing protocol at section 3.</p> <p>Policy on means testing tenants requiring adaptations to be reviewed once detail of the new welfare benefit</p>	

What tenants		Local Authority Response ²⁶
pay for the work	arrangements and proposals for flexible tenancies is known.	
J. Communication about the process and likely timescale for the work to be completed and regular progress updates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advise the tenant what will happen, by whom and by when at the start of the process and agree how often updates on progress will be communicated. 2. Ask the tenant to inform the HA contact point if any changes in circumstances arise. 3. Contact the tenant to advise of any changes to the plans or timescales. 	4. Communicate with the tenant as outlined in 1-3 where DFG is the appropriate course of action.
K. All staff engaged with the service to know the role of different agencies and to be able to perform their own role well	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Train all staff in contact with tenants to be able to identify potential need and promote the service. 2. Train response repairs staff and contractors in the College of OT guidance provided within "Minor works without delay". 3. Train surveyors and planned maintenance/asset management staff to understand statements of need or referrals from in-house OTs and/or trusted technicians and to translate these into effective adaptation solutions. 4. Train staff to identify adaptations and accurately reflect these in DHC adverts. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Participate in joint training with HA staff to understand roles and be able to promote the service to tenants. 6. Train staff to identify adaptations and accurately refer details to HAs and housing options staff.
L. More tenants to be able to benefit from the service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work together to ensure best use is made of adapted properties and that adaptation equipment etc is recycled wherever possible. 2. Work together to achieve better value for money through procurement of materials, equipment and adaptation works, both in terms of quality and cost. 	

What tenants		Local Authority Response ²⁶
	<p>3. Ensure that tenants needs are considered when planning major improvements to homes including installation of level access showers and accessible kitchens.</p> <p>4. Work together with LA planning and enabling colleagues to ensure that new homes, wherever possible, meet the Lifetime Homes Standard and that wheelchair accessible homes are included in developments in suitable locations. The needs of people with sensory impairments and other disabilities should also be considered when planning new homes.</p>	
M. Adherence to the protocol and monitoring to ensure it is working	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be clear about ability to sign up to the protocol. 2. Assign responsibility to a single partner to manage the contact list. 3. Monitor the delivery of the protocol in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of tenants suitably rehoused • Number and value of minor adaptations carried out by HAs • Number and value of major adaptations carried out by HAs • Number and value of DFGs provided to HA tenants • Value and source of other funding used to assist disabled tenants to secure suitable housing • Number of new Lifetime and wheelchair accessible homes delivered • Percentage of schemes completed within total timeline targets • Tenant satisfaction with the service using standard questionnaire • Outcomes from the adaptations installed using Supporting People outcome categories and by recording case studies to assist in securing future funding • <i>Estimate of financial savings to health and social care budgets as a result of adaptations.</i> 4. Develop a protocol management group to ensure effective implementation within all partner organisations and to monitor performance using the indicators above. 5. Support the development and activity of a tenant scrutiny group to provide a reality check of the performance of the protocol and to provide feedback about future development of the protocol from a tenants' perspective. 	

6. Agree and participate in dispute resolution arrangements established for the protocol.

Section 2 – Good Practice Timeline for Adaptations

The timescales suggested below are intended to reflect good practice rather than prescribing performance targets. It should be noted that these timescales may not always be possible due to initial consideration of other housing options, insufficient funding being available or if the tenant's health or hospital admission delays the scheme.

	Minor (working days)	Major - Urgent Priority (working days)	Major - Standard Priority (working days)	Complex (working days)
1 Initial enquiry at first point of contact to OT recommendation provided to adaptation service (HA or LHA)	N/A	5	20	20
2 OT recommendation to approval of scheme (grant approval or issue of works contract/order)	N/A	30	50	120
3 Approval of scheme to completion of works	20	20	80	80
Total time from customer request to completion (working days)	20	55	150	220

Definitions

Minor adaptations – these involve minor changes to rooms and generally cost less than £1,000. Examples include grab/hand rails, fixed toilet frames, over bath showers, additional rails to stairs, removal of internal door thresholds, lever taps, extra steps to doorways, installing or moving door entry phones, flashing smoke alarms and door bells, vibrating pad in conjunction with smoke alarm, upgrade speech modules on warden call systems or door entry systems and some ramps.

Major adaptations – these involve extensive structural changes to rooms and cost over £1,000. Examples include larger ramps, level access showers, stairlifts, through lifts, alternative or extra heating, internal alterations to walls or doorways, accessible kitchen fittings, automatic door opening systems and track and hoist systems.

Complex adaptations – these involve extensive structural changes to the property, usually requiring planning and/or Building Regulation approval and include extensions and significant alteration to the external walls and access routes.

Section 3 – Cost Sharing

Housing Association Responsibility	Local Authority Responsibility
1. To pay for all adaptations up to £1,000.	1. To fund the remaining cost of all adaptations excluding those within categories 1&2 under HA responsibility.
2. To fund the remaining cost of all ramps, level access/other showers and straight stairlifts.	2. To consider requests from HAs to top up funding for schemes listed as HA responsibility, particularly where costs are high and for multiple adaptations.
3. To consider funding any adaptations outside of these categories which fall within similar cost bands.	3. The social services authority or health trust to consider funding from re-ablement budget. In particular for hospital discharge cases, preventative work for those who would otherwise be in danger of admission to hospital, or residential care and where adaptation work would enable care packages to be reduced.
4. To consider requests from LHAs to top up funding for schemes listed as LHA responsibility, particularly where the adaptation adds value to the property and for schemes above £30,000.	
5. To take responsibility for ongoing maintenance and servicing of equipment – in the case of some items this may be a chargeable service to the tenant.	

Glossary

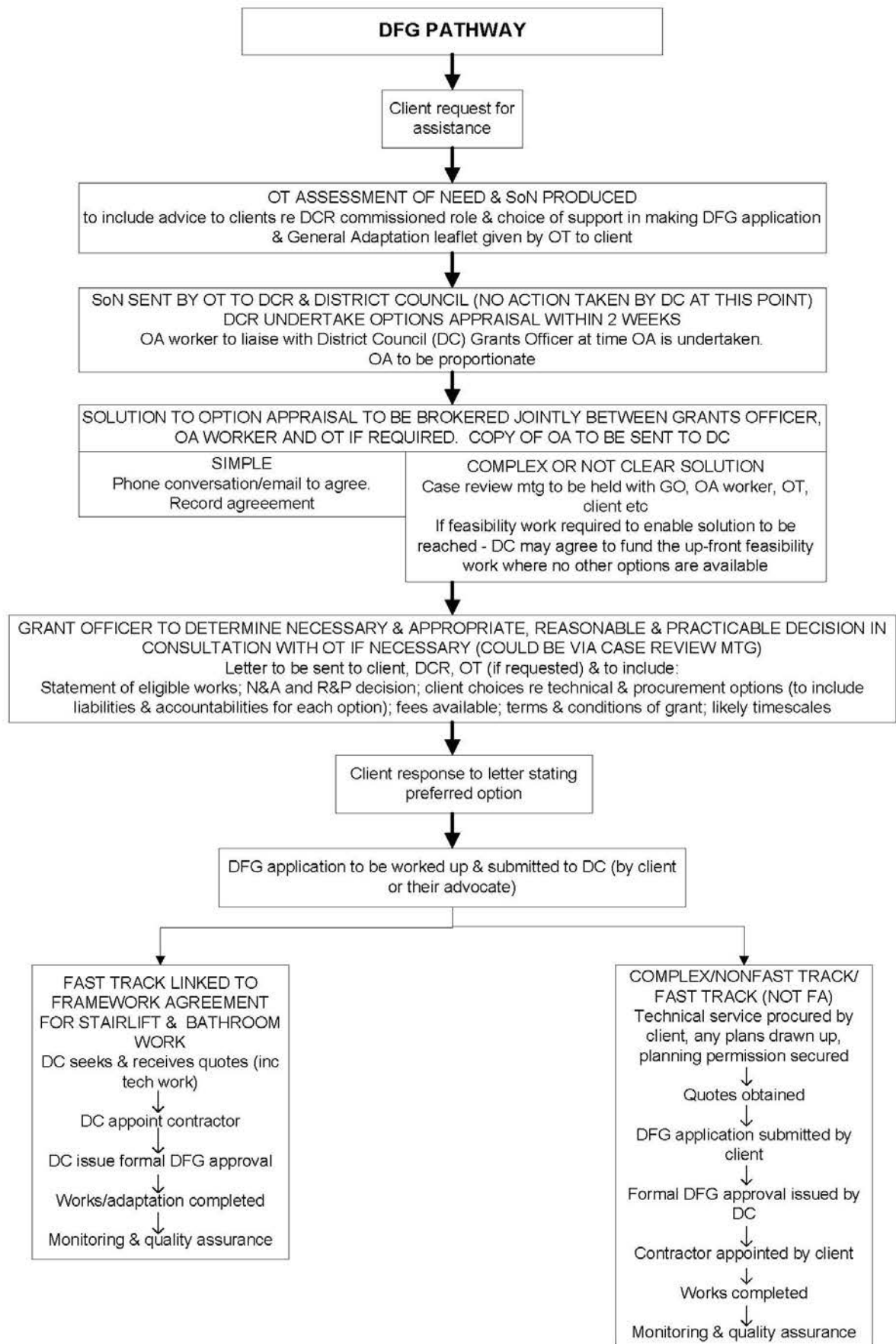
DHC – Devon Home Choice

HA – Housing Association

HIA – Home Improvement Agency

LHA – Local Housing Authority

OT – Occupational Therapist



Your ref: «WORKID»
Our ref: M3/«OFFICER»
Please ask for: «OFFICERDESC»
Tel: 01271 388870 Fax: 01271 388328
Email: customerservices@northdevon.gov.uk
Date: «CURRENTDATE»



«SOURCEFULLNAME3»
«ADDR1»
«ADDR2»
«ADDR3»
«ADDR4»
«ADDR5»
«ADDR6»
«ADDR7»
«ADDR8»

Dear «SOURCEFULLNAME1»

1.1 RE: Your enquiry regarding a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) at «FULLADDR»

Thank you for making an enquiry to me regarding the above matter.

I am now writing to confirm your need for assistance and my advice at this time and my proposals for progressing your enquiry.

1.2

1.3 CUSTOMER CARE LETTER

Your enquiry:

We are in receipt of your statement of need [and a covering letter from Devon Care & Repair] requesting our consideration of whether the proposed works are reasonable and practicable as a basis for an application for a DFG.

My advice:

I consider that the proposed works are necessary and appropriate to meet your needs and the works proposed are reasonable and practicable at your property.

Confirmed works:

This authority considers the following works as eligible for a DFG:

-
-
-

The cost of these works is estimated to be in the region of £ **xxxx**. At this early stage, your contribution is likely to be in the region of £ «**CONTRIB**». Relevant financial evidence will be required to support this figure before your application can be approved.

This authority also considers that technical fees in the form of preparing plans, obtaining quotes, instructing builders and supervising works can be considered as eligible expenses for grant purposes.

North Devon Council can provide the technical support and consider a fee of £**xxxxxx** appropriate for the type of work proposed. This fee is eligible for full grant assistance.

Devon Care & Repair:

Devon Care & Repair have advised us that you have instructed them to act on your behalf in submitting your application, managing your case and providing technical assistance to obtain necessary approvals.

The cost for solely submitting your application and managing your case by Devon Care & Repair is publicly funded at no cost to you.

Technical support via an agency or private architect will incur a fee. We have indicated above the scale of fees that we consider appropriate for your type of case and which are likely to be eligible for grant assistance.

You are advised to consider carefully before you enter into any contract with an agency or private architect to ensure that the level of fees charged are fully eligible for grant assistance.

Typical technical fees from an agency or private architect are between 10% - 15% of the cost of works. As the estimated cost of works is £**xxxxxx** you may be required to fund any shortfall in fees.

Please also be aware that even where fees are fully funded by grant assistance this may increase the level of grant and may also increase the likelihood that the grant will be subject to a charge on your property where the total costs exceed £5,000.

What happens next?

DFG Fact sheet:

You are advised to keep the enclosed leaflet, 'Mandatory Disabled Facilities Adaptations Fact sheet' safe for future reference.

Do you want someone else to support you in contacting me over this issue?

If there is a named person you wish to act on your behalf, then please complete Part I of the enclosed form and return it to me.

1.4

1.5 What I need to progress my investigation

If you agree with the Customer Care Agreement, please complete Part II of the enclosed form and return it to me.

If you are unclear about what to do, please contact our Customer Service Centre on **(01271) 388870** and ask for me or in my absence, the Team Administrator. I will then be able to answer your enquiry before you return the form. Alternatively, call in to see us at the Civic Centre Barnstaple, the Ilfracombe Centre (corner High Street/Highfield Road, Ilfracombe) or the Amory Centre (East Street, South Molton).

Please complete, sign, date and return the enclosed Customer Care Agreement **within 14 days** of the date of this letter so that I may commence work on your behalf.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

«OFFICERDESC»
«OFFICERDESIG»

Encs.

**If you require this document in an alternative format,
please contact us.**

Mandatory Disabled Facilities Adaptations Factsheet

You may find the following information a useful summary of the application process, and are advised to keep this leaflet safe for future reference.

Care Direct

All enquiries relating to Disabled Facilities Grants are initially referred to our partner organisation 'Care Direct' who are part of Devon County Council's Social Services Department (telephone: 0845 1551 007).

Statement of Need

Care Direct arrange for the your needs to be assessed by an occupational therapist (OT), and if appropriate the OT will supply us with a statement of your need and (if appropriate) any risk to you and your priority level for assistance.

Legal Charge

In every case we will place a charge on your property for a period of 10 years to the maximum value of the works where the total cost of the grant is over £5,000 and up to £15,000 (with a maximum charge of £10,000). If the property is sold within this 10 year period, then the amount of the grant will be recovered from the proceeds of the sale, unless it is deemed a 'relevant disposal'.

Assistance with your application

You have the choice of whether you make your application yourself or whether you chose to use an agency such as Care & Repair. If you chose an agency, you should be aware that they will charge a fee for their service. This fee may be included as part of the grant award, but you should be aware that this fee may increase the grant total and therefore the subsequent legal charge placed on your property, as explained above.

An officer from North Devon Council Private Sector Housing team will advise you of this when we visit you prior to processing your application. You are advised not to sign any contracts with any agency until such time as you have been visited by our officer and your application is ready to be processed.

Test of Resources

In all applications, except where the application relates to a disabled child, we means-test resources before we decide if we can offer you any help.

Survey

We may need to survey the property, prepare plans and obtain estimates as well as award any work contract(s).

Finally

Responsibility for ensuring that the needs of a disabled person are met is ultimately with the 'Welfare Authority', which is Devon County Council Social Services Department (DCCSSD).

We try to process all requests to us for help within the time targets set out in central government guidance; 'Delivering Housing Adaptations for Disabled People' – a good practice guide. An electronic copy of this document can be found on our website: www.northdevon.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can find it on the central government website: www.gov.uk.

Customer Care Agreement

Reference: M3/«OFFICER»/«WORKID»

Customer's Name: «SOURCEFULLNAME1»

Customer's Address:

«SOURCEFULLADDR»



1.6 Part I

Only complete this section (**Please PRINT**) if you want someone else to be able to act on your behalf.

1.6.1.1.1.1 Person's Name	1.6.1.1.1.1.1 e l a t i o n s h i p	Security Question	Answer
----------------------------------	--	--------------------------	---------------

By giving the above named person/organisation your authority to act on your behalf, please be aware that the named individual will have access to all information relating to this case under the Data Protection Act 2008.

1.7 Part II - must be completed to allow me to investigate your issue further.

I confirm I have read and fully understand the Customer Care letter I have received and wish North Devon Council to progress my case in accordance with my request.

PLEASE NOTE:

Should it be necessary to significantly change the investigation from that confirmed in the Customer Care Letter (*due to new evidence/findings*), the officer will advise you before taking any further action.

1.8 DATA PROTECTION

In order for us to progress your case, it may be necessary for North Devon Council to discuss and share information with other agencies.

By signing the declaration, you are giving your consent for North Devon Council to process your information.

All personal information will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Name (***Please PRINT***): _____

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

NORTH DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

**DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS POLICY
2008**

1. Introduction.

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) are mandatory grants provided to help people who have disabilities to have the maximum amount of independence in their homes. The grants are available, subject to eligibility, to owner-occupiers and tenants up to a value of £30,000.

2. Statutory Framework

Local Authorities have a legislative duty to those people who have a permanent and substantial disability to provide services to meet their essential needs. The main legislation which governs the provision of Disabled Facilities Grant is contained within the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (HGCRA) as amended by The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 and the Disabled Facilities (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Regulations 2008.

1.9 3. Financial Information

3.1 The maximum grant payable in respect of an individual DFG is £30,000.

3.2 All applicants applying for DFG's in accordance with HGCRA are means tested, however, applicants who are in receipt of either Council Tax Benefit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, Income-based Job Seekers Allowance and Tax Credits with an income under £15,050, will automatically be eligible for assistance with a nil contribution up to the maximum grant limit.

3.3 All applicants applying for DFG and who are in receipt of Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit will not have these payments counted as income in the DFG means test.

4. Eligibility

4.1 All owner-occupiers and tenants, licensees or occupiers who are able to satisfy the criteria in Sections 19-22 of The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 are eligible for a DFG, as follows:

4.1.1 An applicant must have, or propose to acquire, an owner's interest where the relevant works are to be carried out or

- 4.1.2 If the applicant is a tenant, he must not have or propose to acquire an owner's interest where the relevant works are to be carried out
- 4.1.3 The grant must be accompanied by an owner's certificate in respect of the dwelling to which the application relates confirming that the applicant has or proposes to acquire a qualifying owner's interest and intends that the disabled occupant will live in the dwelling as his only or main residence throughout the grant condition period or for such shorter period as his health and other relevant circumstances permit
- 4.1.4 A tenant's application for a grant must be accompanied by a tenant's certificate confirming that the disabled occupant will live in the dwelling as his only or main residence throughout the grant condition period or for such shorter period as his health and other relevant circumstances permit. A tenant's application must also be accompanied by a letter of permission, if applicable, from the Landlord.
- 4.2 Applications for a DFG can only be made to the Local Authority in whose area the dwelling, which is subject of the application, is situated.
- 4.3 Any application for grant assistance will only be processed upon receipt of a referral from the Health and Social Care Department (or other suitably qualified persons) and must be supported by a Statement of Needs following assessment.

5. Works Eligible for Mandatory Grant

The purposes for which mandatory DFG may be given are set out in Section 23(1) of the 1996 Act. They fall into a number of categories and are summarised as follows:

5.1 Facilitating Access

These include works to remove or help overcome any obstacles which prevent the disabled person from moving freely into and around the dwelling and enjoying the use of the dwelling and the facilities or amenities within it.

5.2 Making a Dwelling or Building safe

Section 23(1)(b) allows a grant to be given for certain adaptations to the dwelling or building to make it safe for the disabled person and other persons residing with him.

5.3 Access to a bedroom usable for sleeping

Section 23(1)(d) allows a grant to be given to facilitate access to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room used or usable for sleeping

5.4 Access to a bathroom

The provisions in section 23(1) relating to the provision of a lavatory and washing, bathing and showering facilities have been separated to clarify that a disabled person should have access to a wash hand basin, a WC and shower or bath (or if more appropriate, both a shower and a bath).

5.5 Facilitating preparation and cooking of food

Eligible works may include the re-arrangement or enlargement of a kitchen to ease manoeuvrability of a wheelchair and specially modified or designed storage units, gas, electricity and plumbing installations to enable the disabled person to use these facilities independently.

5.6 Heating, lighting and power

- (a) Section 23(1)(i) provides for the improvement of an existing heating system in the dwelling to meet the disabled person's needs. Where there is no heating system or where the existing heating arrangements are unsuitable to meet his needs, a heating system may be provided.
- (b) Section 23(1)(j) provides for works to enable a disabled person to have full use of heating, lighting and power controls in the dwelling. Such work includes the relocation of power points to make them more accessible, the provision of suitably adapted controls where a disabled person has difficulty in using normal types of controls and the installation of additional controls.

5.7 Dependent Residents

Section 23(1)(k) provides for works required to a dwelling to enable a disabled occupant better access and movement around the dwelling in order to care for another person who normally resides there whether or not they are related to the disabled person.

5.8 Common Parts

DFG is intended not only to assist towards works to dwellings but also to the common parts of buildings containing flats, where the disabled person is the occupant of one of the flats. The purposes for which a grant is available for works to the common parts of such buildings are limited to works to facilitate access to the dwelling through the common parts, or facilitating the use by the disabled person of a source of power, lighting or heating in the common parts.

5.9 Facilitating access to and from a garden or making access to a garden safe for a disabled occupant

A specific DFG is available to enable access to gardens or to make a garden safe where this is reasonable and practicable. The purposes for which a grant is available for works to gardens, yards and outhouses and reasonable access are limited to or, as the case may be, include such works as seem to the authority to be necessary for that purpose. However, access will not include the provision of a patio area or an area of decking. The provision of external mechanical lifts to access a garden is unlikely to be considered to be reasonable and practicable.

Each application will be dealt with taking into account the individual circumstances of each case and any works provided through DFG will be to the minimum requirement to meet the client's needs.

6. Application Process

6.1 The Legislation

The Legislation contained within the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 states that an application for grant assistance must contain the following:

- (a) A detailed written schedule of works
- (b) Two estimates from different contractors of the cost of carrying out the works
- (c) Particulars of any preliminary or ancillary services and charges in respect of the cost of the grant, which may be required. These services may include:

Carrying out a technical or structural survey

Preparing a schedule of works

Help in completing the application form and supporting documentation

Obtaining estimates

Supervising the works

Paying of Contractors

6.2 An application in the prescribed form

6.3 Certificate of ownership. Applicants will be asked to provide the name and address of their mortgagee (e.g. bank or building society) or solicitor holding their deeds. Applicants who do not have a mortgage on their property, will be required to provide a proof of title for inspection. This will be required before works are undertaken. This certifies that the applicant has or proposes to acquire a qualifying owner's interest.

6.4 Certificate of future occupation. Applicants must intend that the disabled occupant will live in the dwelling or flat as his only or main residence throughout the grant condition period or for such shorter period as his health and other relevant circumstances permit

6.5 Local Authorities have discretion as to whether to place a limited charge on adapted properties of owner-occupiers, where the cost of the DFG exceeds £5,000.00. A charge therefore may be placed on the property, which will be limited to a maximum of £10,000.00 and is only effective if the property is sold within ten years. The charges will last for ten years from the date certified by the Council as the date on which the execution of the eligible works is completed to the satisfaction of the Council.

7. Conditions and Completion of Works

7.1 The Legislation

The conditions relating to Disabled Facilities Grants are contained within the Housing Grants Constructions and Regeneration Act 1996 and are summarised as follows:

- 7.2 The eligible works shall be carried out within twelve months from the date of approval of the application. The Council may extend this period if they think fit, particularly where it is satisfied that the eligible works cannot be, or could not have been, carried out without carrying out other works which could not have been reasonably foreseen when the application was made. If an applicant requires additional time, a request must be made in writing before the end of the 12-month period.
- 7.3 The payment of a grant, or part of a grant is conditional on the eligible works being carried out to the satisfaction of the Council by one or more of the contractors whose estimates accompanied the formal application of grant and upon being provided with an acceptable invoice, demand or receipt for payment for the works and any preliminary or ancillary services or charges. An invoice, demand or receipt will not be acceptable if it is given by the applicant or a member of the applicant's family or a company of which the applicant or a member of his family is a Director or Officer.
- 7.4 Where a client is not satisfied with the completed works a senior officer will determine whether or not remedial works are required or confirm if the contractor can be paid.
- 7.5 Should there be any discrepancies with an invoice or the necessary Certificates/guarantees have not been provided, the invoice will be disputed. The contractor will then be contacted by Environmental Health and Housing in order to resolve the issue.
- 7.6 The Council may require the return of certain types of specialist equipment or portable accommodation for the disabled if the recipient disposes of the premises in respect of which the grant was given within 5 years of the certified date. The applicant shall notify the Authority if and as soon as the equipment and/or portable accommodation is no longer needed.

For the purpose of this condition the authority shall apply this condition to the following equipment for a period of 5 years:

- 7.7 Unless otherwise stated, breach of any grant conditions may result in a demand for repayment by the Council for the full amount of grant paid, or any part thereof, together with compound interest on that amount as from the certified date, calculated at such reasonable rate as the Council may determine on an annual basis

HECA FURTHER REPORT

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	TIMING
i) LOCAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY AMBITIONS AND PRIORITIES		
	<p>North Devon is a signatory to the Nottingham declaration and the Devon wide declaration on Climate Change. Local authorities in Devon are in the process of joining Climate Local.</p> <p>There are some 42,500 homes in the District. Based on our 2009 Housing Stock condition survey 70% (29,750) are owner occupied, 20% (8,400) are privately rented and 10% (4,400) are owned by housing associations. We are aware that, in common with most areas, the proportion of privately rented homes has increased significantly since 2009 and believe that the newly published Census data will confirm this trend. Private rented homes are the least energy efficient and housing association homes the most energy efficient.</p> <p>The District's domestic CO₂ emissions reduced by 5% from 244kt 2005 to 233kt in 2010. Per capita emissions in 2010 are 2.5 t CO₂/person, about average for Devon (2.5) and 4% higher than nationally (2.4). Good progress has been made in making homes decent and evaluating Category 1 cold hazards through enforcement activity and financial incentives.</p> <p>In 2010 DECC statistics show that 19% of the District's homes are fuel poor with pockets as high as 31% in in rural off gas grid parts of the District. 35% of the district's homes have solid walls with the proportion of solid wall homes rising as high as 89% in some localities.</p> <p>Energy costs have increased dramatically since 2010, although average earnings have changed little. This leads us to believe that the percentage of fuel poor households will have increased significantly since 2010.</p> <p>The Districts urban centres, Barnstaple and Ilfracombe, contain two and three Carbon</p>	<p>Ensure Housing associations can provide data for future reports</p>

	<p>Saving Community Obligation (CSCO) areas respectively which, although mostly on gas grid, have a high proportion of solid walls and fuel poverty. Some off gas grid areas have up to 78% solid wall properties. ECO funded solid wall insulation therefore has a potentially important role in improving the thermal efficiency of the district's homes.</p> <p>Overall, 27% of homes do not have gas and in these homes the high cost oil, LPG and electric heating makes fuel poverty more likely. The Renewable Heat Incentive may give the opportunity for these households to switch to lower cost renewable heating technologies with lower running costs. However, the success of the RHI will depend on the details of the scheme which are yet to be finalised by DECC.</p> <p>Housing associations in the District have not been able to supply detail data on their housing stock in the time available. There is a mixed approach to the Green Deal and ECO among Housing Associations with a significant proportion being unwilling to let their tenants take out the Green Deal.</p> <p>Priorities for the District include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Targeting solid wall properties in urban centres particularly in CISCO and adjoining areas possibly by developing a street by street approach 2. Developing a complimentary strategic approach to solid wall properties in off gas rural areas occupied by the fuel poor 3. Ensuring that the fuel poor in the private rental sector in 1 and 2 above are prioritised by incentivising accredited landlords 4. Developing a strategy for caravan park homes as part of 1 and 2 above 5. Directing capital programme loan funds to support ECO and Green Deal interventions 6. Establishing carbon saving and renewable energy strategies and targets as part of the Sustainable Energy Action Plan 	<p>Priorities will be further developed in 2013/14</p>
<p>ii) MEASURES WE ARE TAKING TO RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS OF OUR RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION</p>		
<p>Green Deal</p>	<p>The council is the leading partner in the Home Energy Action Taskforce (HEAT) project;</p>	<p>Undertake HEAT project in</p>

<p>and ECO</p>	<p>a partnership between local authorities in the region and Enact aimed at driving high volumes of Green Deal Plans and installations across all property tenures between January and March 2013. The project includes preparing the supply chain, marketing and promotion to householders and has targets of 2,500 Green Deal assessments leading to 750 Green Deal Plans with the creation of 50 new jobs with many more safeguarded.</p> <p>Reductions in HEAT project funding by DECC and delays in receiving approval for project commencement will reduce the achievement of targets.</p> <p>Funding for measures on social housing in the District is available from the Ready for Retrofit programme, a three year EU funded project to improve social housing stock and stimulate demand in the south west of England (excluding Cornwall). The project will work with the Green deal and ECO to stimulate demand by investing £2.3m of project funds to drive total investment of more than £6m in a minimum of 787 social housing energy efficiency measures. SMEs in the supply chain will receive an intensive business support programme focused on developing delivery capability at scale, value and quality.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the lessons learned for these projects will inform how the District develops further plans for the Green Deal and ECO.</p>	<p>2013</p> <p>Participate in Ready for Retrofit in 2013/14/15</p> <p>Develop further plans for 2015</p>
<p>Feed in Tariffs (FIT) scheme</p>	<p>The Districts favourable solar climate has led to some 2.3% or over 900 homes in the district having photovoltaic panels installed the 19th highest in the South West of England. The Council's web site has links to information on renewable energy and guidance for householders who wish to install technologies in their home. It is anticipated that Green Deal activity in the District will further stimulate the uptake of the Feed in Tariff with PV forming part of a package of whole house energy measures.</p>	<p>The Council will continue to signpost the FIT from its web site and include renewable energy in its Green Deal and ECO projects.</p>
<p>Renewable Heat Premium Payment (RHPP)</p>	<p>Off gas grid homes have the greatest potential to benefit from the RHI and the RHPP. Unfortunately statistics are not available to enable the council to know how many RHPP installations there have been in the district or which technology type's householders have chosen. The publication of this data would greatly assist a local understanding of progress in renewable heat, which can potentially offer so much to the districts renewable energy deployment. Locally off gas grid residents within Exmoor National Park can receive up to £2,500 of grant to assist with the installation of biomass boilers before the end of June 2013.</p>	<p>Once the details of the RHI are finalised the Council will signpost from its web site</p>

Zero Carbon Homes	The draft local plan has policies to promote the delivery of low and zero carbon development in the District in support of national policy. In 2011 the District's main social housing provider North Devon Homes completed the retrofit two concrete semis to Passivhaus standard using funding from the Technology Strategy Board.	It is anticipated that the local plan will be in place in 2014
EPCs	The Council is not currently funding the purchase of EPC data for the district as the conclusions from the purchase of EPC data elsewhere in Devon suggests that it does not currently add significant extra information to that provided from other statistics and the district's home condition survey. This conclusion will be kept under review as the proportion of properties which have up to date EPCs increases.	Evaluate purchase of EPC data in 2013/14
Minimum standards in the private rental sector	Minimum standards in private rented accommodation are set out on our web site http://www.northdevon.gov.uk/ndc_private_sector_housing_renewal_strategy.pdf . The Council generally engages with Landlord and Private Tenants usually following complaints and/or service requests about property conditions. Where these occur properties are assessed using our informal/formal process under the Housing Health & Safety Risk Assessment (Housing Act 2004). The Council has standards for HMO's and use a guidance document for landlords for both mandatory licensable HMO's and non-licensable HMO's.	Continue with current activity
Smart meters	The Council will await national policy on smart meters to be more fully developed before deciding if it is appropriate for any local authority intervention.	Evaluate over 2013/14
iii) MEASURES WE PROPOSE TO COST EFFECTIVELY DELIVER ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS IN RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION BY USING AREA BASED/STREET BY STREET ROLL OUT		
	<p>In the short the Home Energy Action Taskforce (HEAT) project will drive high volumes of Green Deal Plans and installations across all property tenures between January and March 2013. By June 2013 over 1500 measures are targeted as a direct result of the project. The lessons learned from HEAT will then be re-applied across the district and disseminated to other local authorities in the region. The project will have a particular focus on solid wall properties in urban centres particularly in CISCO and adjoining areas where the possibly by developing a street by street approach will be explored.</p> <p>More generally the Government's Green Deal and ECO Impact Assessment suggest that over 70% of measures installed will be ECO funded. The Council therefore considers that ECO providers will be strongly motivated to identify ECO eligible households and that this may naturally lead to focussed deliver of energy efficiency in particular localities.</p>	See below

	In parallel with the above the Ready for Retrofit project will support the installation of measures in social housing in to June 2015.	
iv) TIME FRAME FOR DELIVERY AND NATIONAL AND LOCAL PARTNERS		
	<p>The HEAT project impact will be delivered by June 2013. Key partners include North Devon, Torridge, Teignbridge and Mendip councils together with Enact. Community partners include Polperro United Renewable Energy (PURE) Cornwall, Wadebridge Renewable Energy network (WREN), Transition Town Totnes, 361 Energy Action Devon, Transform Devon, Rame Renewable Energy, and North Devon Biosphere. Business partners include Enact Energy (Green Deal Provider (application pending), Member of TGDFC (wave 1 pending), holder of ECO funding contract with EON and overall project manager), JJ Crumps (Devon based installer of insulation (inc EWI), renewables and heating), Energycare (Devon based installer of insulation (inc EWI)), Midas Energy (Devon based large specialist installer of works into social housing inc EWI etc.), TRU Clad (Devon base solid wall insulation specialist), South Devon College (Development and delivery of all training through specialist South West Energy Centre) North Devon Plus (Economic development agency covering North Devon and Torridge), Weber (External wall insulation system supplier).</p> <p>Partners in the Ready for Retrofit project include the Energy Saving Trust and Regen SW.</p> <p>The district will continue to engage a wide range of partners nationally in government, the business and third sector and community organisations as needed to develop its programmes. Following on for the HEAT project the District aims to establish a pilot ECO partnership with other local authorities and a Green Deal Provider(s) perhaps using the well-established Cozy Devon brand during 2013/14.</p>	n/a

Signature: _____

Position: _____