

Housing and Wellbeing Strategy 2010 - 2015



better homes – more homes – happy and healthy lives

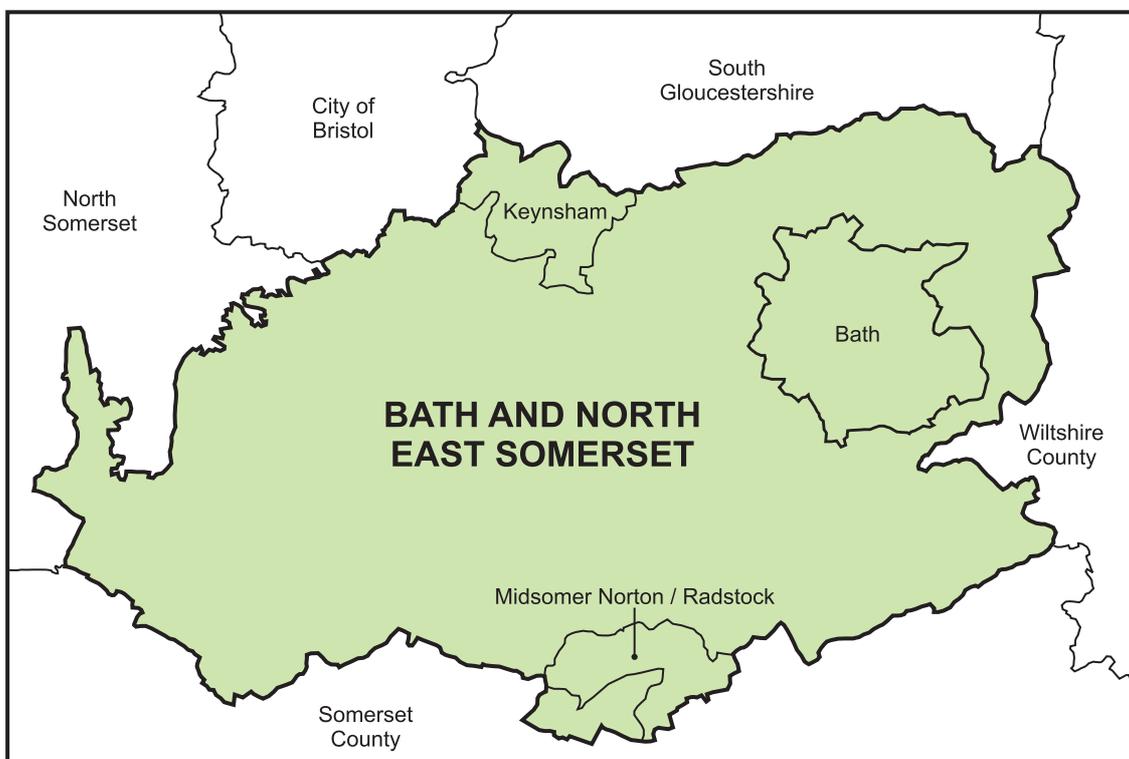
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Housing matters because the experience of being homeless or living in poor quality housing is damaging and creates social problems for the wider community. The Audit Commission says, 'Where people live is a prime influence on their quality of life, their life expectancy and the opportunities for them to work, study, and access leisure, sport and cultural activities.'
- 1.2 This strategy explains the local authority's strategic housing ambitions in a clear and simple way which allows residents and a wide range of partnership organisations to share and contribute towards the achievement of our housing priorities and objectives.
- 1.3 The Housing and Wellbeing Strategy will affect everyone living in Bath and North East Somerset both now and in the future. It can be made available in a range of community languages, large print, Braille, on tape, electronic and accessible formats from Adult Social Care and Housing Services Information Officer on 01225 477983 or email information_officer@bathnes.gov.uk.
- 1.4 The strategy is developed from a review of current and future housing needs across all tenures and types of home for different communities and people. The Strategic Review is available as a separate document.
- 1.5 Map of Bath and North East Somerset



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2 Strategic overview

2.1 The local authority's Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2026 is its overarching strategy that influences everything that we do. It identified six change drivers:



Climate change - 56% of carbon emissions in Bath and North East Somerset stems from domestic energy use and must be reduced by over a third by 2020. Our housing stock is older than the national average and our older housing is less likely to be energy efficient and more costly to keep warm and in good repair. Our challenge is to reduce domestic carbon emissions in our older housing.



Demographic change - One in five of the population are older residents and the number of older people, particularly the very elderly, is expected to increase and have a significant impact on services. Most people aged over 65 own their homes, 16% live in social rented housing and 10% are private renters. Many older people have a low disposable income and have housing support and health needs. Our challenge is to support elderly and vulnerable people to live independently and safely.



Growth - One in five of the population are aged 16-29. In 2001-2007 the number of young people (many of whom are students) living in the area increased by 28%. The percent of young people as resident population is greater in Bath and North East Somerset than in the South West and in England. The challenge is for us to enable housing growth that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.



Inequalities - The area has a population of 178,300¹ and is mostly classified as White British (90%). The largest Black and Minority Ethnic Groups are 'White Other', representing 3% of the total population and 'Chinese or Other Ethnic Group', representing 1.7% of the total population. Our challenge is to make services accessible and welcome more diversity.



Locality - Bath and North East Somerset is mostly rural with many villages set in areas of outstanding natural beauty. The main population centres are in the city of Bath and the market towns of Keynsham and Midsomer Norton/Radstock. The area is divided into 37 wards with life expectancy varying by up to 10 years depending on where people live. Our challenge is to contribute to reducing this disparity.



The Economy - Although employment levels in Bath and North East Somerset are high, average income is less than that of other areas in the West of England and more of the householder's income is needed to pay for housing than anywhere else in the country other than London. House building has been hit by the recession but we still need to help people into affordable homes.

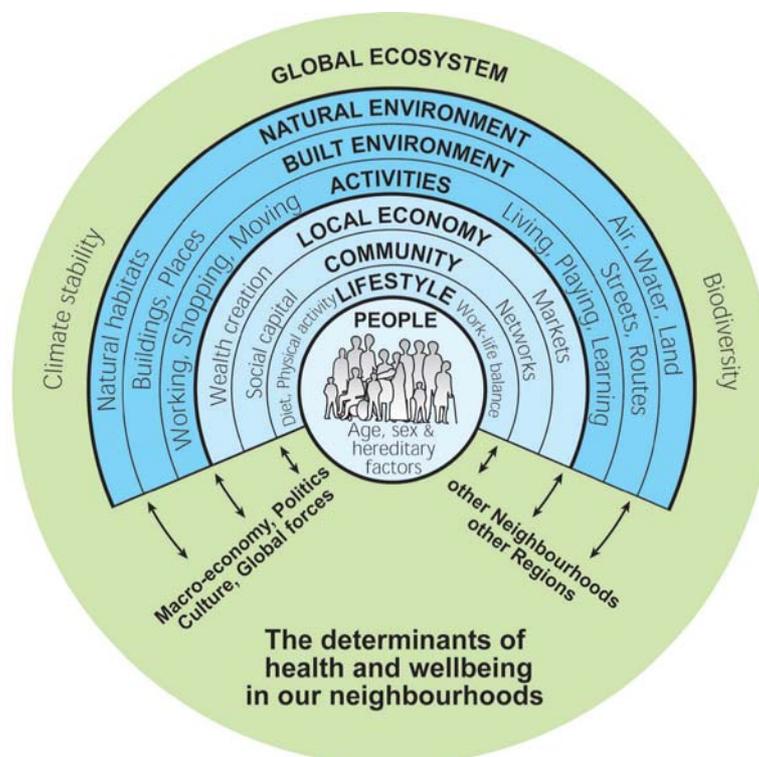
¹ Bath and North East Somerset Equality Profile - mid-year population estimates from 2001 Census Data

2.2 In response, the Housing and Wellbeing Strategy has an action plan which is grouped under priority themes that relate to the change drivers. The Action Plan will be led, reviewed and monitored by the local authority's Housing Services Managers and will be underpinned by detailed service plans. The priority themes are:

- To tackle fuel poverty and climate change by making homes warmer and more energy efficient
- To be well informed about the strategic housing needs of a growing and changing population and to prioritise services
- To reduce inequalities by meeting housing needs
- To improve access to existing affordable housing by matching people to homes
- To make homes safer and healthier
- To increase the supply of new affordable housing

2.3 Along with many other strategies the Housing and Wellbeing Strategy will help to make Bath and North East Somerset an even better place to live in by moving us closer towards the vision expressed by the Sustainable Community Strategy 2009–2026. By working together to make homes better, to enable the supply of more homes and to focus on happy and healthy lives we can improve people's health and wellbeing, as shown by the map below and explained in the next three sections.

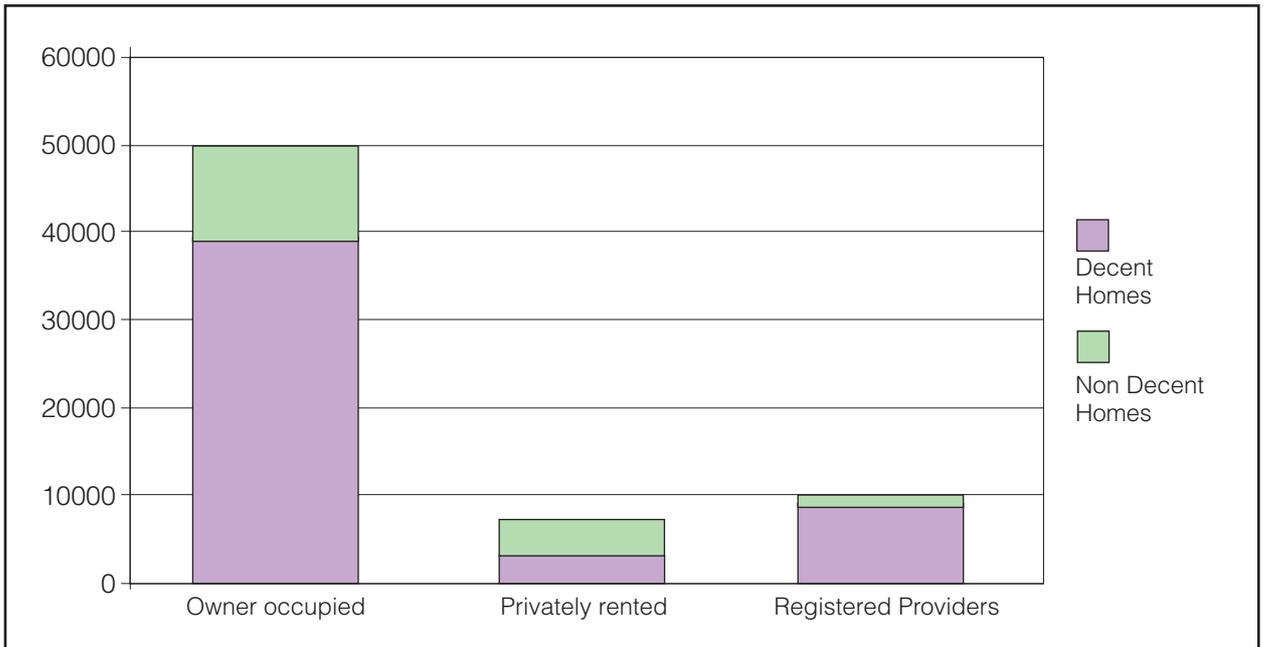
2.4 Health and wellbeing map



© Barton and Grant 2006 based on a public health concept by Whitehead and Dahlgren. The Lancet 1991

3 Better homes

3.1 Bath and North East Somerset tenure and Decent Homes profile (71,400 properties)

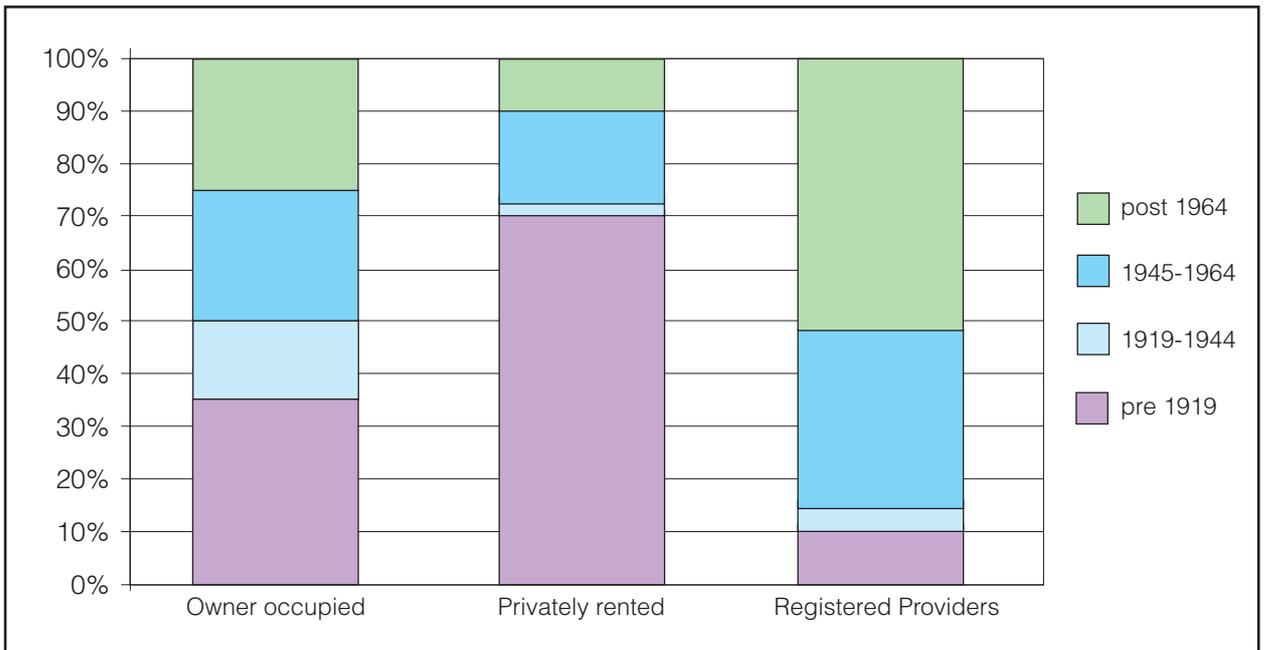


Source: Housing Conditions Survey 2004 (updated by Registered Providers 2009)

- 3.2 Most people in Bath and North East Somerset are owner occupiers. One in three homes is rented from either private or social landlords (registered providers). Increasingly, the private sector is able to contribute to the supply of good quality affordable housing. Affordable housing is rented or owned homes that most people can afford in either the private or independent sectors (housing managed by registered providers/housing associations)².
- 3.3 There are many registered providers operating in Bath and North East Somerset and the local authority's partnerships with them are very important as they provide a supply of new social housing and manage improvements to many existing homes. Local authority social housing transferred to Somer Community Housing Trust in 1999.
- 3.4 It is estimated that 91% of social housing now meets the Decent Homes Standard. However, almost half of private rented housing does not meet the Decent Homes Standard and some of the worst housing is older properties lived in by vulnerable people on low incomes. We will use our strategic influence and powers to improve non decent private sector housing and to raise housing standards for low income households.

² The prescribed definition of affordable housing is set out in Planning Policy Statement 3

3.5 Bath and North East Somerset housing age profile



Source: Housing Conditions Survey 2004

3.6 One in three properties was built nearly 100 years ago. Older housing is concentrated in the private rented sector and much of it is in poor condition which causes Fuel Poverty for low income households. We will reduce domestic carbon emissions and make it easier to heat homes by encouraging the take up of a range of energy efficiency and renewable energy schemes and finding local solutions for hard to treat properties. These schemes will be targeted at the worst areas and most vulnerable households.

3.7 38% of housing in Bath and North East Somerset is occupied by older people. As people grow older they may need to adapt their homes to make them safe and warm to live in. We will enable interventions to be targeted geographically and share information about needs so that we reach vulnerable people who need our help the most. Our programme to prevent excess winter deaths, hospital admissions and GP visits because of cold homes and falls will save health service costs and significantly improve the lives of older people.

4 More homes

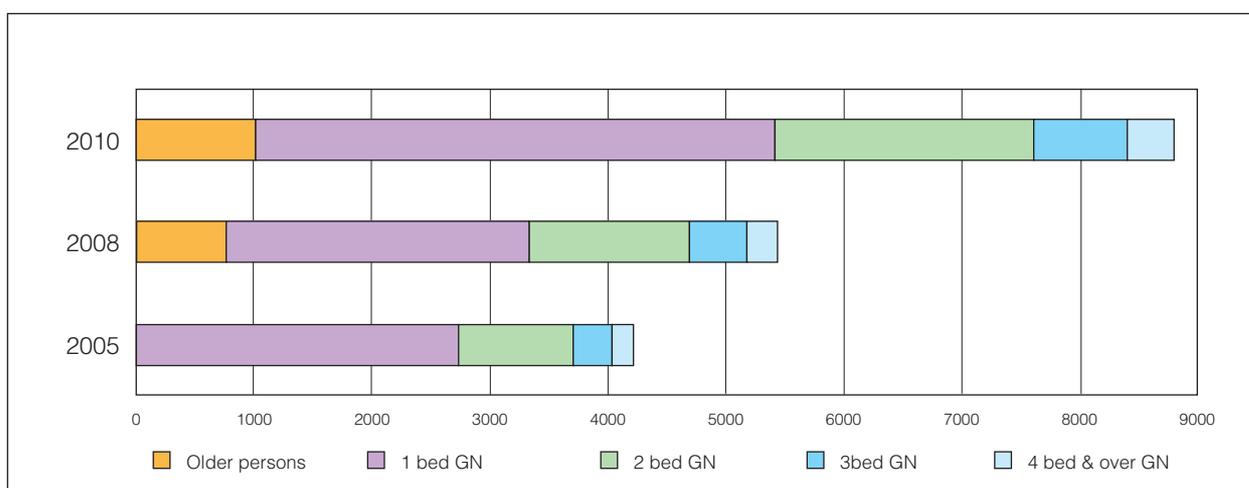
4.1 When this strategy was being developed the overarching plan for the development of new housing in the South West region was The West of England Draft Regional Spatial Strategy 2006-2026. It set out a requirement for 15,500 new homes in Bath and North East Somerset and the broad spatial strategy for where they would be built. This plan is now under review.

4.2 The Council's Core Strategy is part of the Local Development Framework. It is the planning policy which governs the development of new homes in Bath and North East Somerset and the proportion which will be available as affordable homes. The new Core Strategy is planned to be adopted in 2012. It proposes that the proportion of affordable housing should increase from 35% to either 40% or 50% of new housing development sites. The Core Strategy's affordable housing options are set out in full in the Strategic Review.

4.3 Over the next fifteen years demand for affordable housing is likely to outstrip supply. The West of England Strategic Housing Market Assessment completed in 2009 estimated that the annual net affordable housing requirement for Bath and North East Somerset was 847 properties. Under current planning policy and in the current economic climate with rates of building and development slowed, there is likely to be a potential annual supply of 228 new affordable homes.

4.4 We will need to maximise opportunities for new build affordable housing and also develop new policies that will help make the best use of existing stock and empty homes. We recognise and will strengthen the importance of our partnerships with planning services and developers, landlords and registered providers which help us make best use of the housing in Bath and North East Somerset helping more people find a good home to live in.

4.5 General needs (GN) and older persons on Homesearch



Source: Homesearch research and intelligence reports (older persons in 2005 is included in GN numbers)

4.6 The shortfall in supply of affordable housing has a significant impact on the numbers of people in housing need who register for social and intermediate housing. Homesearch is the local choice based lettings scheme for affordable housing, at the end of 2009 almost one in ten households in Bath and North East Somerset were registered on the scheme and numbers have doubled in the last five years.

- 4.7 More than 20% of housing register applicants need to move to a bigger home and we know that many people are mismatched to their homes because they are too big for what they need. We will work in partnership with registered providers and other relevant organisations to find practical and attractive ways to make better use of under occupied homes and help people who need to move to larger homes.
- 4.8 Some existing housing is unsuitable and out of date. We will welcome and support the redevelopment of unpopular and out of date sheltered housing schemes and the development of new schemes that provide desirable housing for older people; homes that meet lifetime needs and encourage the release of larger, family homes back into the supply of social housing.

5 Happy and healthy lives

- 5.1 Priority for social housing is given to households with higher housing need, low income and poor health. Over many years this has led to deprivation and inequalities being closely related to where people live and in closely defined areas of social housing. We will work in partnership with social landlords and health services to support and encourage neighbourhood improvement programmes that create more sustainable communities and we will help people to move across local authority boundaries when they need to.
- 5.2 The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment found that some groups of people are notably worse off in terms of health and care inequalities. We will contribute to tackling these disparities by developing a better understanding of our communities and ensuring that housing services, delivered through our partnerships with local communities and specialist agencies, promote and support inclusion and are accessible to an increasingly diverse population.
- 5.3 We know that there is a need to provide suitable places for gypsies and travellers to live and to upgrade accommodation provisions for rough sleepers. We will be participating in partnership work and community engagement to build a better understanding of the issues and preferences of these groups so that we can help to meet their needs and integrate disparate communities.
- 5.4 The local authority has a commitment to developing supported living and for many people with learning difficulties or poor mental health this means giving them greater choice and control over where they live. In addition, the growing number of older people will create increased demand for support to live independently at home and for extra care and sheltered housing. We will meet these needs by remodelling existing provision and encouraging the development of suitable affordable housing options.

5.5 Prioritising services to those who need them most.



complex interventions

5.6 In the current economic climate services must be commissioned and delivered within existing and diminishing resources. We will encourage creative solutions and partnership work that ensures that services which prevent poor health and poor housing are prioritised, funded and targeted to reach those who need them most.

6 Delivery partnerships

6.1 The Housing and Wellbeing Strategy's promise of 'better homes, more homes, happy and health lives' will be delivered by the Adult Health Social Care and Housing Partnership through engagement with the Local Strategic Partnership and a broad range of other partnerships including neighbouring authorities, landlords and registered providers, Health Services, other council departments and with the voluntary and third sector.

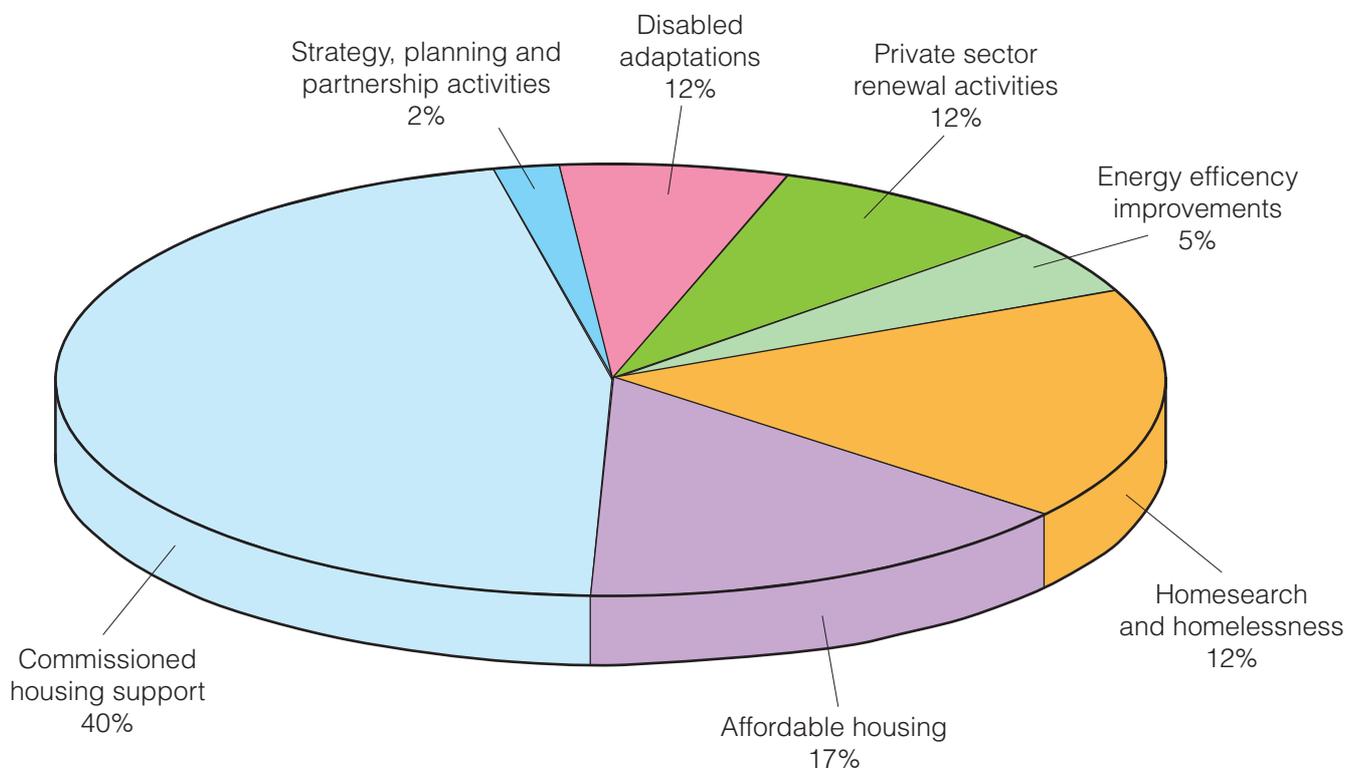
6.2 The Adult Health Social Care and Housing Partnership delivers the following core housing services: access into social and private rented housing, assistance with essential repairs and enforcement of housing standards, delivery of affordable housing, free housing advice, home adaptations and energy conservation, a homelessness safety net for vulnerable people.

6.3 There are a number of funding streams that support the delivery of these core services and this strategy including:

- Council funding which includes both revenue and capital funding. In part this is supported by the 'right to buy receipts' received from Somer Community Housing Trust when former Council properties are bought.
- Housing Benefit which pays for some of Housing Services temporary accommodation costs.
- Supporting People funding which are government grants that fund housing support services.
- Other government funding streams, for example, Private Sector Renewal and Disabled Facilities Grant funding.
- Service charges which includes Houses in Multiple Occupation licensing fees, enabling fees and Homeseach advertising charges.

6.4 These funding streams will provide approximately £10m of funding to support this strategy for 2010/11. In some cases the funders specify where the money must be spent. However much of the funding is now un-specified and so we can decide on where the funding will best achieve our strategic goals. The chart below sets out how the budget is to be allocated.

6.5 Budget allocation 2010/11



7 Action plan

7.1 The key actions needed to tackle the priorities of this Housing and Wellbeing Strategy are set out in the following five year action plan. The Action Plan will be led, reviewed and monitored by the local authority's Housing Service Managers and will be underpinned by detailed service plans.

7.2 Key to Housing Service Managers:



HEM Housing Enabling Manager
Adrian_Holloway@bathnes.gov.uk



HSIM Housing Standards and Improvements Manager
Chris_Mordaunt@bathnes.gov.uk



HOM Housing Options Manager
Mike_Chedzoy@bathnes.gov.uk



PPM Planning and Partnerships Manager
Ann_Robins@bathnes.gov.uk



PPM Planning and Partnerships Manager
Sue_Wordsworth@bathnes.gov.uk

To tackle Fuel Poverty and climate change by making homes warmer and more energy efficient	Lead manager	2010/11	2012/13	2014/15
1. We will proactively seek out external funding opportunities and prioritise our housing renewal funding to support the costs of local solutions that make homes more energy efficient and tackle Fuel Poverty.	HSIM	✓		
2. We will work with a wide range of partners to develop and provide a range of renewable energy and home energy efficiency measures which are suitable for residents and local housing and target them to people and areas in greatest need.	HSIM		✓	
3. We will firmly encourage housing developers to introduce the new environmental sustainability levels for affordable housing on or before the regulatory deadlines.	HEM	✓		

To be well informed about the strategic housing needs of a growing and changing population and to prioritise services	Lead manager	2010/11	2012/13	2014/15
4. We will regularly compare our performance against that of well performing local authorities and against national priorities, and use the information to appraise our service delivery and strategic housing vision and priorities.	PPM			✓
5. We will inform local residents about our housing priorities and involve them in shaping our service delivery by using a range of community engagement mechanisms to build understanding of the housing vision and identify the needs and preferences of local communities and other stakeholders.	PPM	✓		
6. We will engage and maintain good working partnerships with equality related community groups to ensure that they are involved in our consultations and that local housing ambitions are inclusive.	PPM		✓	
7. Working with our sub-regional partners we will systematically review and update the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009.	HEM		✓	
8. Working with our sub-regional partners we will jointly commission a sub regional Housing Condition Survey of cross tenure housing.	HSIM	✓		
9. We will explore and initiate joint working on housing interventions to reduce serious housing health and safety hazards with NHS B&NES	HSIM		✓	
10. We will commission independent research into the housing needs of young people in B&NES and implement an action plan in response to its recommendations.	PPM	✓		
11. We will commission an independent assessment of the housing needs of vulnerable and socially excluded people and community groups in B&NES and implement an action plan in response to its recommendations.	PPM	✓		

To reduce inequalities by meeting housing needs	Lead manager	2010/11	2012/13	2014/15
12. Working with Planning we will encourage new market housing provision to relate to local housing needs for household types and economic status creating socially inclusive communities.	HEM		✓	
13. We will develop our service to households on Homesearch with a range of interventions that enable them to make well informed choices about home improvements and housing options.	HOM		✓	
14. Working with a range of partnerships we will develop the recommendations of the Gypsies & Travellers Accommodation Assessment and enable the provision of recommended pitches and infrastructure when their locations have been identified.	PPM			✓
15. We will work with the Homelessness Partnership to improve outcomes for homeless people including rough sleepers (for example, commissioning a new hostel for rough sleepers) and provide earlier interventions that prevent homelessness.	HOM			✓
16. We will improve the life chances of homeless young people and care leavers by helping them find a safe living space with an approved lodgings provider who will support them in gaining independence skills.	HOM	✓		
17. We will work with a wide range of partners to create employment, training and volunteering schemes for vulnerable and homeless people.	HOM			✓

To improve access to existing affordable housing by matching people to homes	Lead manager	2010/11	2012/13	2014/15
18. Working with our sub regional partners we will develop a sub regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme that encourages mobility by enabling access to affordable housing in neighbouring local authorities.	HOM	✓		
19. We will improve access to affordable housing for vulnerable groups and lower income households through a clear and accessible Choice Based Lettings Scheme (Homesearch) which addresses local priorities and delivers sustainable communities.	HOM	✓		
20. We will enable vulnerable residents and minority groups to have better access to high quality affordable housing in the private rented sector by advertising accredited properties on the Homesearch website and by promoting the rent deposit scheme.	HOM	✓		
21. We will use our statutory housing powers and strategic influence (working in partnership with tenants, Registered Providers and the Tenant Services Authority) to maximise opportunities to address under-occupation, over-crowding and the housing needs of people registered on Homesearch.	HOM			✓
22. We will work in partnership with Supporting People commissioners and supported housing providers to target supported housing tenancies more effectively by investing in a Gateway Hub Scheme.	HOM	✓		

To make homes safer and healthier		Lead manager	2010/11	2012/13	2014/15
23.	We will use our statutory housing powers and strategic influence to enforce and support private sector and social housing improvements by reducing non Decent Homes to a minimum, prioritising the removal of category 1 health and safety hazards, and tackling overcrowding.	HSIM	✓		
24.	We will develop and implement an action plan for meeting the increased demand for disabled adaptations.	HSIM		✓	
25.	We will work to bring empty properties back into use in accordance with our Empty Properties Policy prioritising properties that have been empty for more than one year, are unsafe or which are associated with anti social behaviour.	HSIM	✓		
26.	We will provide targeted assistance to low income and vulnerable households to reduce health and safety risks in their homes including those which will decrease the number of excess winter deaths and falls.	HSIM	✓		
27.	We will assess the need for health and safety improvement measures for park homes and bargee travellers to be included in the Housing Renewal Policy, in particular thermal insulation and renewable energy provision.	HSIM		✓	
28.	We will help vulnerable people feel safer in their homes by working with the Police, Avon Fire and Rescue Services and other partners to improve home security and safety.	HSIM		✓	

To increase the supply of affordable housing		Lead manager	2010/11	2012/13	2014/15
29.	We will maximise opportunities for supply of new affordable housing on all new developments by effectively using the full range of housing and land use planning policy	HEM			✓
30.	Working in partnership with developers we will ensure that new housing is built to a high standard with a focus on liveability, leading to sustainable homes that can be adapted over time as residents' needs change.	HEM		✓	
31.	Working with a wide range of partners we will ensure that developments are linked to wider infrastructure considerations (such as transport links, road access, water supply, schools and hospitals) and promote the sustainability of existing neighbourhoods.	HEM			✓
32.	We will jointly commission a new West of England Affordable Housing Partnership which improves the capacity of the sub regional local authorities and development partners to deliver more affordable housing in line with identified needs and local and regional housing targets.	HEM	✓		
33.	Working with a range of partners we will deliver desirable affordable housing options for older people including extra care sheltered and lifetime homes with wheelchair access.	HEM			✓
34.	Working with a range of partners including mental health and learning difficulties commissioners we will deliver supported housing for people with complex needs.	HEM			✓

Main information sources used to develop this strategy:

National:

Building Better Lives: Getting the best from strategic housing,
Audit Commission September 2009.

The Strategic Housing Role of Local Authorities: Powers and Duties,
Communities and Local Government September 2008.

Regional:

The South West Regional Housing Strategy 2005-2015,
The South West Housing Body

The West of England Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009,
The West of England Partnership

Local:

Core Strategy Spatial Options Consultation 2009

Equality Profile 2009

Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013

Housing Conditions Survey 2004

Inclusive Housing for Mental Health a 5 year plan 2010-2015

Independent Living Plan 2008-2011

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2008

Learning Difficulties Service Commissioning Strategy 2006-2010

Regeneration Plan Draft Student Accommodation Strategy 2009

Strategic Review of Housing Need 2009

Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2026

The Key to Independence: Housing Strategy for Older People 2008-2013

**This publication can be made available in a range of community languages,
large print, Braille, on tape, electronic and accessible formats from
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