



**London Borough  
of Hounslow**

# **Housing Strategy**

**2010-2014**

**[www.hounslow.gov.uk](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk)**

## **THE HOUSING STRATEGY 2010-2014 CAVEAT**

The 2010-2014 Housing Strategy was approved by Council Members in January of 2010.

However, since the approval of the Housing Strategy we have seen changes of administration at both a national and local level, these changes have brought about movement in policies and priorities.

In addition to the administrative changes there is significant new legislation such as the Localism Bill going through the various stages of the parliamentary process and changes in the funding regime from April 2011.

In light of the changes mentioned above we are currently reviewing the Strategy and our priorities for the Borough to ensure it remains fit for purpose and facilitates the required support and meets the needs for the boroughs housing needs.

**March 2011**

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## Introduction

This strategy sets out the council's response to the current housing need in Hounslow. It examines all tenures, types and sizes of properties and identifies actions that will tackle existing inequalities and encourage a fairer and more accessible housing market for all. The strategy draws on other Council priorities such as improving the environment, community safety, health and well being and employment and training, to identify how housing can improve the quality of life of all residents living in Hounslow.

The strategy is set within the current national, regional and sub regional policy framework and aims to support the strategic goals at each of these levels. It is important that the document is robust enough to withstand changes that may impact on us delivering our objectives and as such we have taken steps to future proof our decisions.

At the same time, our strategy is not rigid; rather it will be subject to continuous review so that it can adapt to changes at a national, regional and local level. The document must remain in touch with households who live in the Borough. Residents and service users will be involved in the review process and will have an opportunity to shape the strategic direction

Based on the evidence from the borough's strategic Housing Market Assessment and through consulting with partners and our stakeholders, the following five key objectives have been identified:-

1. Ensuring well managed and good quality social housing
2. Improving housing standards in private housing, particularly the private rented sector
3. Preventing Homelessness and reducing dependence on social housing
4. Increasing the supply of affordable housing, particularly family sized accommodation (3B+) and providing a range of opportunities for Hounslow Residents to become home owners
5. Working together to build healthy, safe and sustainable communities

The Hounslow housing strategy is underpinned by three core themes that influence the actions we will take to deliver our objectives. These themes ensure that the strategy is appropriate to the environmental, social and economic needs of the borough, the core themes are:

### **Ensuring equality of access for all:**

We will make sure that housing services in Hounslow are accessible to all groups. We will make sure that the services are appropriate to the needs that

we have identified in the Borough. We will try to offer an approach to service users which are appropriate to them.

**Promoting Independence and choice:**

We will make sure that residents have the resources and support to make their own housing choices so that they can remain independent. We will offer information on housing options that will enable people to actively make decisions about their housing at all stages of their lives.

**Securing the best possible use of resources**

We will make sure that housing services offer value for money. This means choices will be made based on the long term value for customers and sustainable use of our resources. We will deliver and maintain housing and housing services in a sustainable way and one which supports Hounslow's pledge to reduce carbon emissions.

**HOUNSLOW'S HOUSING STRATEGY WITHIN A NATIONAL CONTEXT:**

In 2008 the white paper "Creating Strong and Prosperous Communities" the Government gave local authorities the discretion on how, when and what format housing strategies are produced. However it advised they should:

***Fully reflect the wider vision of the authority and its partners:*** We will do this by linking our strategy to the Hounslow Plan and by implementing aims that cut across departments, and that rely on joint resources, practice and approach

***Reflect a clear and evidenced approach:*** The Hounslow Housing strategy is grounded in the evidence in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, but also through a continuous process of consultation (see Appendix 1)

***Provide a strong focus on how partners will deliver their commitments including on the infrastructure needed to support housing growth:*** There is a strong emphasis in our strategy on how our partners will help deliver on all our objectives. Collective resources and shared aims will ensure that Hounslow communities are able to sustain and benefit from housing growth.

**Planning Policy Statement 3 (PP3)**

PP3 introduced a national requirement for boroughs to produce a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). In 2008 new guidance was published for boroughs to ensure their assessments would produce a robust and credible evidence base. Based on this guidance, Hounslow commissioned a full Strategic Housing Market and Housing Needs assessment, which provides the evidence base from which this strategy has been developed. The SHMA is produced separately from the strategy so that it can be regularly updated to reflect the dynamic way in which the housing market operates in Hounslow.

## **2006 Local Government White Paper: Strong and Prosperous communities**

The paper set out how local authorities are responsible for place shaping, a term coined by the Lyons enquiry as:

*“The creative use of powers and influence to promote the general wellbeing of a community and its citizens”.*

Through the housing strategy we will identify how the council intends to shape its housing services in order to enhance the wellbeing of its communities as a “strategic leader and place shaper” (Local Government White paper 2006).

## **THE HOUNSLOW HOUSING STRATEGY WITHIN A REGIONAL CONTEXT**

### **London Housing strategy**

The Hounslow Housing strategy must be in general conformity with the Mayor’s housing strategy which sets out its vision under three headings:

1. Raising Aspirations, promoting opportunity
2. Improving Homes, transforming neighbourhoods
3. Maximising delivery , optimising value for money

LB Hounslow’s objectives are in general conformity with these aims

### **West London Housing Partnership**

Hounslow is part of the West London Housing partnership, along with six other west London boroughs; Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, Harrow, Hillingdon, Ealing and Brent.

The partnership works to meet the housing objectives of the member boroughs through lobbying in the collective interest of the sub region.

Hounslow is committed to regional and sub regional working and our housing objectives will support those of the sub regional strategy which provides the framework for joint approaches to:

- Choice based lettings (CBL)
- Supporting People
- Single conversation
- Housing procurement

## **THE HOUNSLOW HOUSING STRATEGY WITHIN A LOCAL CONTEXT**

### **The Local Strategic Partnership**

The Hounslow Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) brings together public, private and voluntary sector organizations to provide services that meet all residents’ needs. The objectives of the LSP are:

- To build a strong, vibrant and united community

- To enable Hounslow to be a sustainable borough that provides a sense of belonging for all its residents
- To use the strong partnership arrangements already in place to deliver high quality services for all Hounslow residents
- To ensure that locally, regionally and nationally Hounslow is thought of as a high-performing borough that strives for excellence
- To develop and implement a community plan and local area agreement that will support the delivery of a sustainable borough
- To use resources effectively to deliver better outcomes for local people
- The over all purpose of the LSP is to work at a strategic level to deliver real outcomes and a high quality of life for the people of Hounslow.

The LSP were involved in the strategy consultation, working to ensure the document appropriately meets the needs of the borough and that it will withstand future changes in the economic and political climate. The Borough's Housing Strategy Forum is a subgroup of the Local Strategic Partnership.

### **Hounslow's Local Area Agreement**

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) sets actions and targets to meet the objectives set out in the Community Plan. Hounslow's new three-year LAA was agreed in June 2008 and includes 35 improvement targets negotiated between central government and London Borough of Hounslow. There are two national indicators which are directly related to housing; the number of families in temporary accommodation and affordable homes targets.

### **Hounslow Community Plan**

The Hounslow Community Plan 2007-2014 sets out the long term vision for the development of Hounslow. The plan, which has been prepared by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), reflects the efforts of the public, private and voluntary sectors working in partnership to deliver better services and outcomes for our residents. The plan acts as a framework for all partners in the borough to work together to deliver the central vision of the Community Plan, that by 2017:

*'Hounslow will be a borough that achieves the aspirations of its local community and continues to be proud of its identity. It will be a borough that thrives from a new sense of unity where the community continues to celebrate diversity and build cohesion.'*

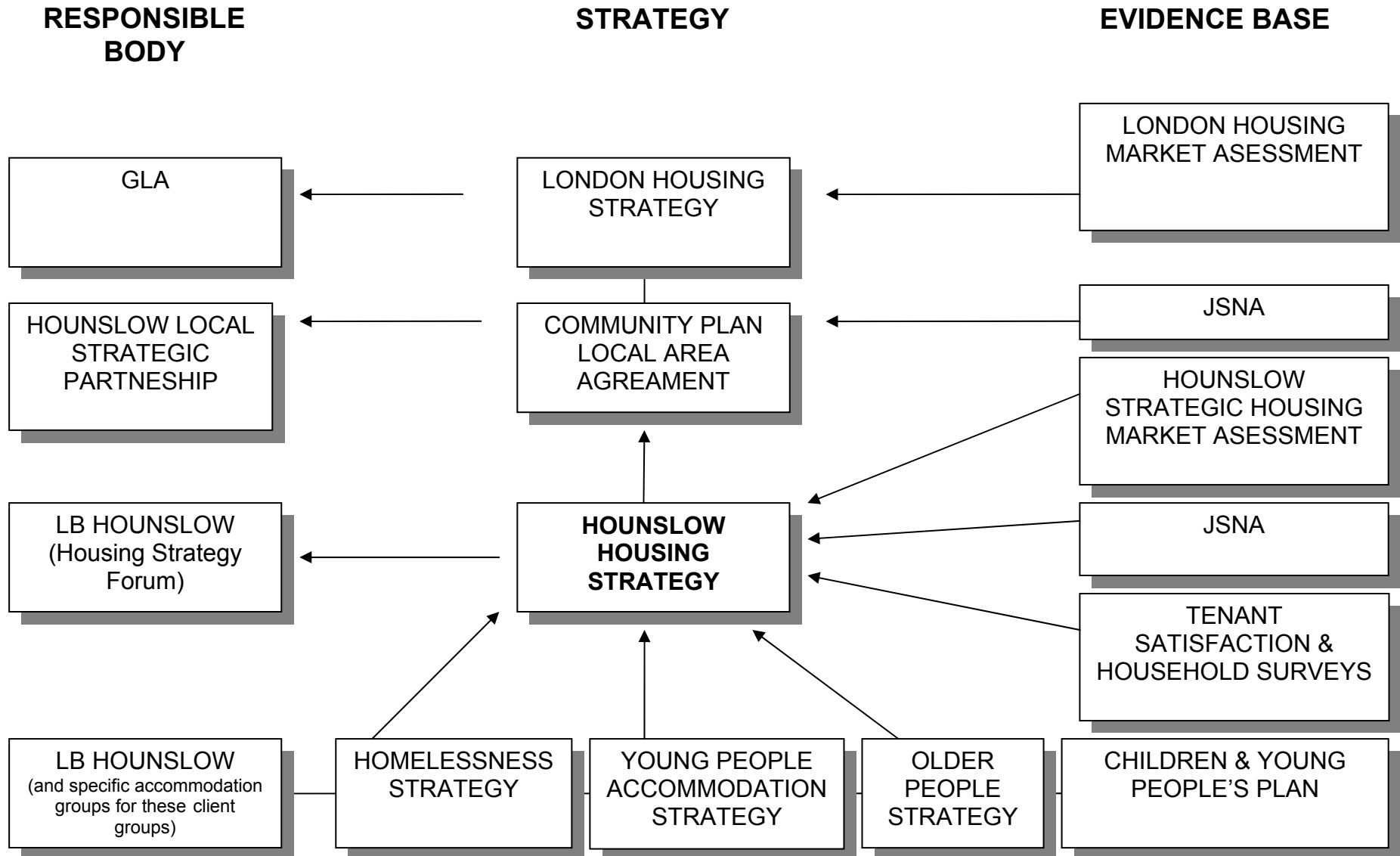
The plan has one overarching theme "a growing community". Through this the Council aims to balance growth, with the protection and enhancement of our environment and to ensure that development meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The housing strategy will be integral to the successful delivery of the community plan. A growing population and changes in diversity will provide new challenges to the borough, the provision of quality housing will be key in ensuring growth remains socially and economically sustainable.

### **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**

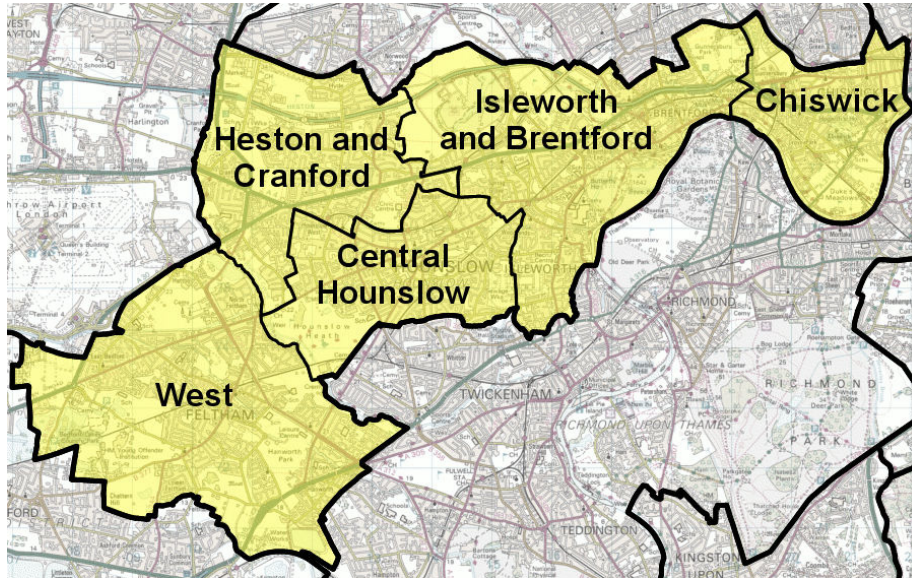
The housing strategy links into the Council's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which provides a snapshot of the health and well being needs within the borough. The JSNA assists the Council, the local NHS and other statutory and voluntary organisations better understand how resources should be deployed and which service areas need to be improved for those in the greatest need. The JSNA assesses current and future needs, potential service gaps and supports the Community Plan and the Local Area Agreement in meeting local needs. The Hounslow JSNA is built around five pillars, public health, Adult social services, children's services and 'the place' which includes housing. Housing has an important role to play in the delivery of health and well being and adult social care services.

The diagram below explains how the housing strategy sits within the current policy framework at a local and regional level, the associated evidence bases well as the relevant bodies responsible for drawing up the strategies :-



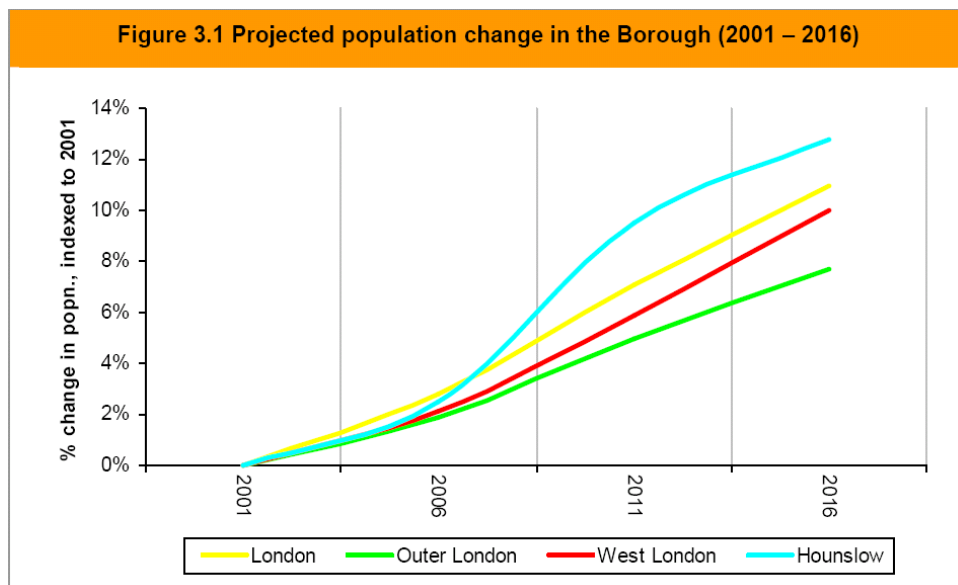
## The Borough of Hounslow

Hounslow is the 9<sup>th</sup> largest borough in London covering 22 square miles, stretching from Chiswick in the East to Bedfont in the West. It is a borough of contrast and the local areas and communities vary immensely in terms of environment, population and as such have unique needs and priorities. The map below illustrates the sub regions of Hounslow:



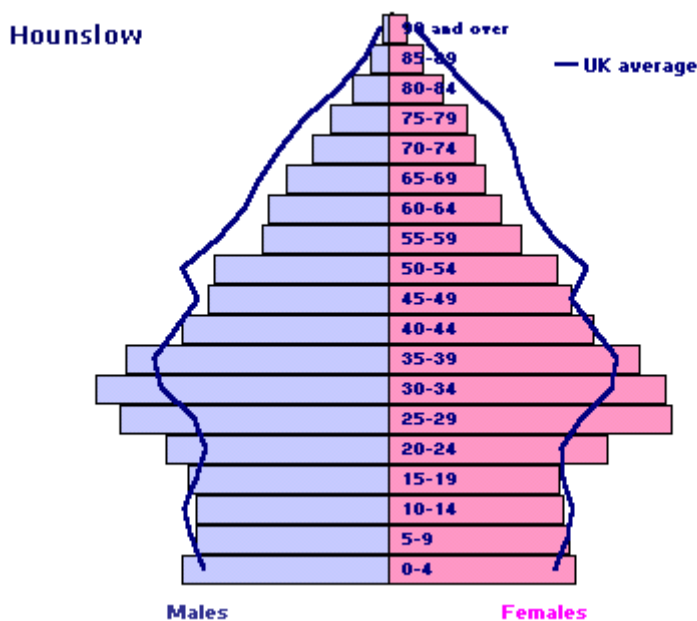
## Population

The local population has been increasing rapidly in the past few years and this trend is likely to continue. The 2001 Census found there to be 212,300 people living in Hounslow. Over the last 10 years the population of Hounslow has grown faster than all the other outer London boroughs and West London as a whole. The GLA projects that this trend is set to continue as illustrated in the chart below:



Hounslow has a high population turnover which although in common with the rest of London, is particularly acute due to the transient nature of a portion of the population linked to the proximity to Heathrow airport. Aside from this there is an outward migratory flow of families whose children have reached school age and also for those of retirement age.

Hounslow’s age profile is also markedly different from the national average, as indicated in the diagram below: On the one hand, Hounslow has a much higher than average proportion of young adults (both male and female). It also has a larger percentage of children under five. Conversely, at the 2001 Census there were lower than average percentages of adults and older people in all age groups from ages 45-49 onwards.

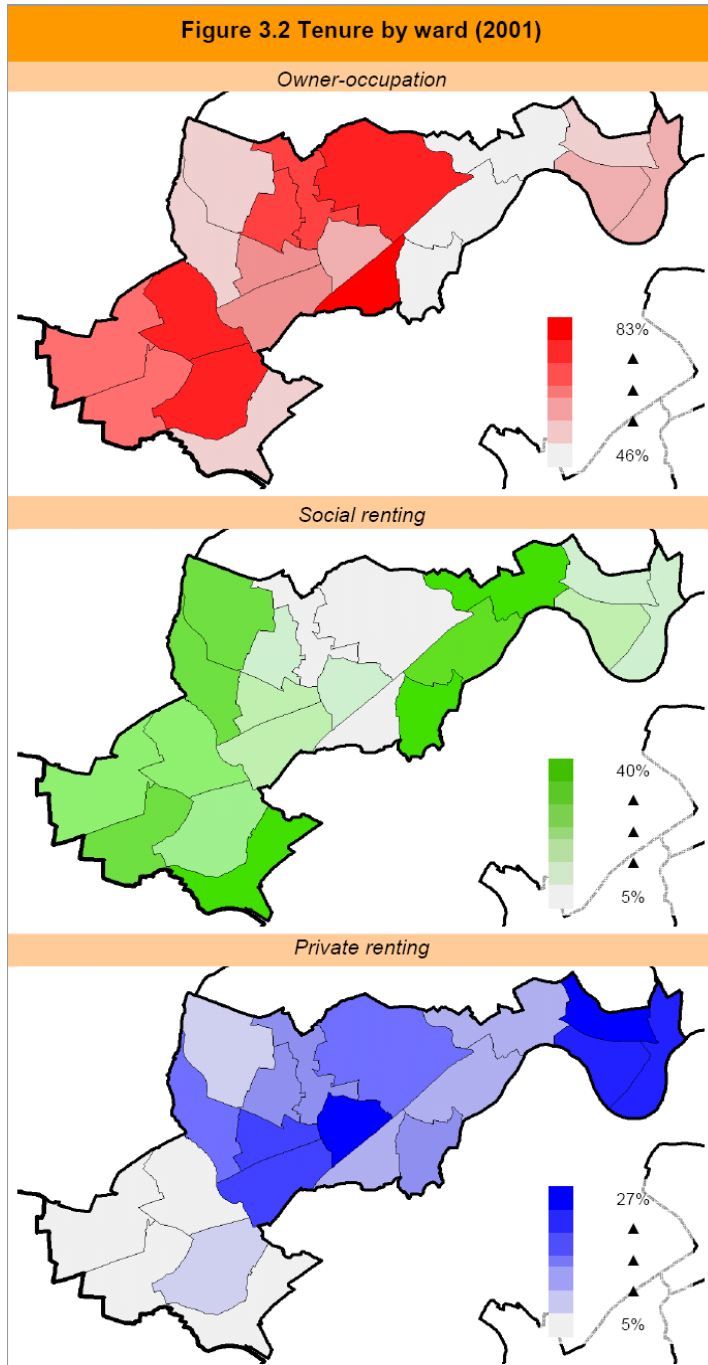


These trends will place particular pressures on the housing demand in Hounslow, particularly in terms of the capacity for families to remain in the borough.

**Tenure**

The tenure profile in Hounslow is strongly inclined toward renting with around 42% of households renting in the social or private sectors which is approximately 10% higher than the national average. Unlike the rest of London, Hounslow household sizes are above average at around 2.52 persons per household.

Tenure type is heavily concentrated in certain areas of the borough with most private rented housing occurring in Chiswick and owner occupied in Osterley, Heston and Feltham. Social housing is also concentrated occurring predominantly in the areas of Brentford Isleworth and Hanworth. The charts below list tenure by ward:



### Employment

A larger proportion than average of the employed population work in the transport, communications, distribution and hotel/restaurant sectors as a result of the proximity of Heathrow airport. Thus earnings in Hounslow are comparatively low to the rest of London and are only marginally higher than the national average. Affordability then is a key requirement for housing in Hounslow.

## Unemployment

Unemployment in Hounslow in 2006-07 was high for women (4,800 or 9.1% of females aged 16-59 deemed economically active, compared with a London average of 7.3% and an England average of 4.8%). There were 4,600 males unemployed in the same period, the same proportion as for London as a whole (7.4%) but higher than the England average (5.6%).<sup>1</sup>

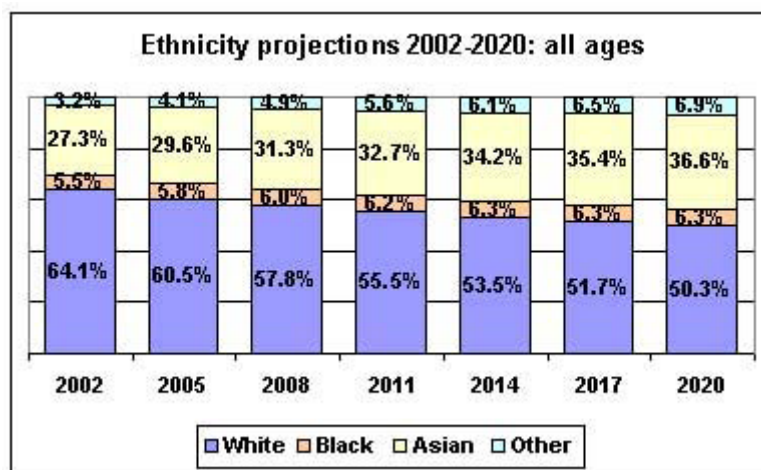
Hounslow has over 300 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), which is in line with West London average figures. A high proportion of NEETs have a learning difficulty and/or disability. The highest proportion is in the west area of the borough.

## Deprivation

Unemployment is varied across the borough. Most recent figures estimate that it is at its lowest in Chiswick Riverside Ward and at its highest in Heston West and Bedfont. Significant pockets of deprivation exist within ward boundaries named Super Output Areas (SOA). A small number of these in Hanworth, Feltham and Brentford fall into the bottom tenth (the 10% most deprived) of the 32,500 areas in England. Quite a few more, spread across the borough are within the bottom third. Areas that are relatively affluent are sometimes adjacent to the most deprived areas.

## Diversity

People in Hounslow have a range of needs regardless of their ethnicity and we aim to support them and meet their needs in a personalised way. In order to understand the diversity of Hounslow this section will briefly set out the ethnic composition of Hounslow. Below is a chart that projects the change in the ethnic composition of the population in the borough:



By 2010 it is likely that half of the population of the Borough will be Black and Minority Ethnic communities, with a high Asian population within this. There has also been a recent widening of the geographic and ethnic origin of people

<sup>1</sup>ONS, Annual Population Survey July 2006 – June 2007: quoted in *NOMIS* (Official Labour Market Statistics). <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk>

living in the borough with particular increases from Somalia. An estimated 7,100-8,200 refugees live in Hounslow, over 3% of the population. The refugee communities represented in the Borough include people from Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iran, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Somalia and Tanzania.

In terms of housing, black households are very strongly represented in the social rented sector, with 56.5% living in this tenure. Other Black and Minority Ethnic groups show the reverse pattern, the Indian population for instance has a high level of home ownership, around 76% and are far less likely to reside in social housing.

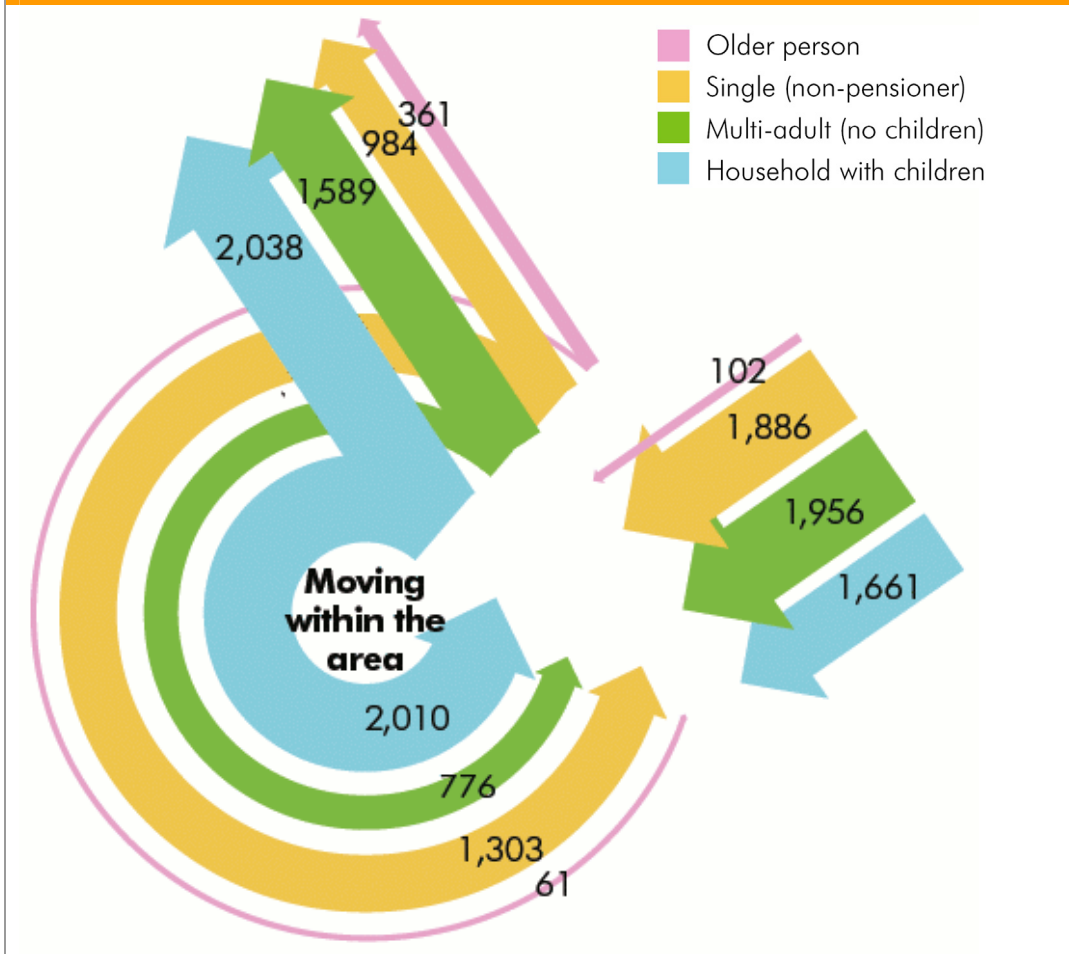
Hounslow has a different pattern of housing provision for gypsies and travellers compared with other West London authorities. There are relatively more (123) pitches on authorised sites compared with other boroughs but a smaller number (50) in settled housing – Ealing and Hillingdon, for example have three times this. According to recent GLA figures, 55% of the travelling showmen in London are based in Hounslow mainly occupying private pitches.

### **Migration**

The number of Eastern European migrants is thought to be growing and it is thought that low wage employment from Heathrow is a major pull factor. This group is most likely to rent privately and could be a contributing factor to the recent growth in the sector

The diagram below shows the estimated movement of households into, out of and within the Borough (based on annualised primary household survey data over a two year period). As the diagram illustrates, the largest outward flow is from households with children.

**Figure S4.6 Annual flow of households – Hounslow**



## Chapter 1: Quality social housing for Hounslow

### **Current policy & Hounslow's evidence base for ensuring quality social housing:**

Social housing in Hounslow offers affordable homes with security of tenure for those who cannot afford or for whom ownership is not the right housing option. There is a relatively small amount of social housing in Hounslow compared to other London boroughs; it has approximately 21,000 homes accounting for just over 22% of the stock.

The government acknowledges that social housing has the potential to offer opportunity to residents and can act as a springboard to improve life chances. However following the Hills report in 2007 the government has been concerned about the lack of mobility in social housing and how local authorities and housing providers can support residents to improve their life chances.

One of the key government concerns is with allocations and the current lack of mobility in the system. Recent draft guidance on housing allocations policy identifies a strategic role for local authorities to ensure that allocations actively promote greater mobility for existing tenants and improved overall transparency in the system. John Healey in his 2009 paper "Fair and Flexible" asks local authorities to work actively to dispel the myths around allocations, for example that particular groups are unfairly prioritised over others. We know that the same sort of concerns exist in Hounslow.

There are currently over 13000 households on our housing register, a number that continues to grow every year while the number of lets is relatively small, in 2008/09 we successfully let 848 units. Many of the households on our register have no housing need and others will have changed circumstances and we will carry out a review of our register to ensure that we have correct details and those that have no housing need are well informed and are able to seek other options.

The draft London Housing strategy pays particular emphasis to overcrowding and asks for a more intelligent use of the existing stock, setting targets to halve severe overcrowding and reduce underoccupation by two thirds by 2016.

The numbers of overcrowded and under occupiers reported to the CLG at the 1.7.2009 are shown below.

<b>No. Overcrowded Households (bedroom standard<sup>2</sup> )</b>	<b>On LA Waiting List</b>	<b>On RSL Waiting Lists</b>	<b>Total on 1 July 2009</b>
Total number	1970	177	2147
Existing social tenants seeking a transfer	665	177	842
Of social tenants number that are severely overcrowded	126	41	167
Number of households recorded as under occupiers <sup>3</sup>	111	46	157

There are a number of registered social landlords operating in the borough owning nearly 8,000 homes (approximately 8.5%) while 14.5% of the stock remains council owned. In 2002 as part of the Round 1 Arms Length Management Organisation programme the council set up Hounslow Homes, a wholly Council owned company to manage its social rented and leasehold properties.. In May 2005, the Audit commission awarded Hounslow Homes the highest three star rating for excellent housing services with promising prospects for improvement enabling Hounslow Homes to draw down its decent homes monies.

The local government white paper of October 2006 identified the need for local authorities to take a more strategic approach to housing as part of the place shaping role. The Hounslow housing strategy will aim to continue the council's strategic role to ensure continuous improvement in management standards of all providers and managers of social housing

The Government pledged to bring all social rented stock to the "decent homes" standard originally by 2010; this has now been extended to 2012. In 2006 Hounslow Homes completed a £100 million programme, meeting the Decent Homes Standard for all the council's housing stock, four years ahead of the government deadline. The London Housing strategy acknowledges that the decent homes standard did not address resident aspirations that go beyond living in decent homes. Rather, the strategy recommends that local authorities move beyond minimum decent homes standards and ensure that stock is "safe, accessible, and green". The Hounslow housing strategy sets out the continuation of the decent homes programme, while incorporating

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1

<sup>3</sup> CLG definition is households having 2 bedrooms too many

improvements which move beyond this standard that work to improve the environment surrounding social housing.

The draft London Plan and Housing Strategy make recommendations for Gypsy and Traveller provision that set to double the provision over the next 10 years. The London wide Gypsy and Traveller Assessment shows that already Hounslow provides the most significant proportion of existing pitch provision for travelling show people in London, accounting for 55% of all such provision. The target set for Hounslow is to provide between 6 and 17 additional pitches for Travellers, and an additional 27 pitches for show people. The existing need coupled with the mayor's new targets mean increased pressure on provision. We will have to do more work to understand how this need can best be met.

A key tenet of the London Housing strategy is the commitment to provide more units of accessible housing. We also want to increase provision for older people or people with a disability and/or sensory impairment living in unsuitable homes that prevent them from living independent lives. Policies in the London Plan meanwhile ensure that all new housing in London is built to Lifetime home standard and that 10% of new housing is designed to be wheelchair accessible or easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users. Increasing the choices for independent living in social housing will then be a key aim for the housing strategy.

Drawing on the issues identified in the current policy and our evidence base, the first key objective for Hounslow's Housing strategy will be:

## **OBJECTIVE 1: TO ENSURE WELL MANAGED AND GOOD QUALITY SOCIAL HOUSING**

The following areas of action have been identified in order to achieve this objective:

### **1.0 Making the best use of our stock**

The Council aims to make the best use of its own social housing stock and to enable its RSL partners to do the same. It achieves this by allocating social homes in a fair and transparent manner. In addition all social landlords in Hounslow undertake works to the existing stock to maximise its use including working to minimise periods when properties are left empty.

Social rented housing is a scarce resource and social rented tenants enjoy both security of tenure and reasonable rents so it is important that our allocation policies meet both national and local priorities and conform to the legislative context and guidance.

In 2003 as part of the pilot round of Choice Based Lettings schemes Hounslow, together with 5 West London Boroughs and 3 Registered Social Landlords, implemented the West London Locata scheme. All the main stock owning RSLs in the Borough and 6 of the 7 West London boroughs are now part of West London Locata also. Following a Council scrutiny review a complete revision of Hounslow's housing allocations policy within the choice based system was recently undertaken and is being implemented in 2010/11.

The aim of the revised policy is to ensure that the Council's allocation policy is fair and transparent and conforms to recent government guidance. In order to implement this new policy a review of all applicants on the housing register is being undertaken in late 2009 and early 2010 to ensure that the system has the right information to allocate houses to those most in need.

The revised Allocations Policy will also enable us to give additional priority to those households who are the most severely overcrowded and help move those people who are under occupying family homes and would like to move to release larger accommodation.

In 2008 Hounslow became an overcrowding Pathfinder and received £100,000 funding from CLG. This money is being used to fund two overcrowding officers who will be taking a hands on approach to finding options for those who want to move. We have a variety of scheme to help people move including our trading places scheme which offers a small payment for tenants wishing to transfer to smaller accommodation. The officers will also visit overcrowded families to offer practical suggestions to give them more usable space in their existing home or assist adult family members (e.g. adult children) to find their own accommodation.

We are also committed to carrying out a programme of extensions and loft conversions to make larger family sized accommodation using £1million from the Council's Affordable Housing Fund and money from London Housing's Board Targeted Funding Stream allocated to West London. To date we have completed over 25 conversions and extensions from these two sources. The £1M allocated from the Council's Affordable Housing Fund has focused on providing conversions and extensions to the current homes of overcrowded tenants living in houses. This programme has been very popular and it has been agreed to add a further £400K, funded from HRA.

The Council recognises that its average void period in recent years have been too high and the Council and Hounslow Homes are working together to reduce the average void period to the West London Average This work has involved detailed work comparing processes and activities in other local authorities performing better on their void periods. The table below shows void times for both sheltered and non sheltered stock.

Numbers of days void

	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10 November
General housing	37	46	55	40
Sheltered	102	131	108	62
All Stock	46	60	66	44

The table shows that void times have been increasing over the last three years but following a void clinic to look at the problems and subsequent actions voids times are beginning to decrease.

Fraud and misuse of Council stock is something the Council takes very seriously and has a joint post with Audit concentrating on housing fraud. The Council has been awarded £50,000 to carry out work on social housing tenancy fraud with Hounslow Homes, and our RSL partners.

**ACTION 1.0 A:** To review the housing register and to ensure that the new Allocations policy is operational in summer 2010 .

**ACTION 1.0 B:** To ensure that staff and partner organisations are fully trained on the revised allocation policy and that residents are aware and confident of bidding using our systems and understand their chances of being successful

**ACTION 1.0 C:** To alleviate overcrowding by proactive work with both overcrowded and under occupying households and offering a range of housing solutions. We aim to halve the number of severely over crowded tenants by 2016 and reduce under occupation by two thirds.

**ACTIONS 1.0 D** To reduce Council void periods to West London average within the next 3 years.

### **1.1 Continuation of the decent homes programme:**

Hounslow Homes brought all the Council's stock up to decent homes standard by March 2006 (with the exception of those who refused the works) and there is still a continuing programme to ensure that this is maintained and that homes which met the decent homes standard at 2006 do not become non decent.

In addition to undertaking decent homes works, the Council has and is undertaking redevelopment schemes on its own stock where the decent homes programme could not be achieved. This has included in recent years:-

- Page Road Bedfont – a phased mixed tenure redevelopment of the whole estate in partnership with Catalyst Housing Group increasing the number of units from 157 flats to 308 mixed tenure flats and houses. This scheme started on site in 2004 and its final phase of private housing is programmed to complete in 2010.
- Ivybridge Estate Isleworth – redevelopment of 3 blocks within the estate with flats replaced by a mixed tenure development of 46 flats and houses. The scheme started on site in 2005 with the properties completed in 2006/7.
- Beavers Lane, mixed tenure redevelopment of 4 structurally unsound social housing blocks with redevelopment by Hounslow Homes, United House and A2D is planned to start on site this financial year (more details of the scheme are given in Chapter 4)

A further innovative self financing scheme implemented by the Council since 2006 has been to terminate the leases of over 40 Council owned street properties leased to a local Co-operative as temporary accommodation and bring them back into use as secure Council tenancies managed by Hounslow Homes. The majority of these properties required funding to bring the properties up to the decent homes standard. In order to fund this programme a small number of the properties have been sold and the proceeds re-invested in the remaining properties. In addition to the decent homes works remodelling of some properties has taken place to make the properties more useful and a number of 5 plus bedroom homes have been created. Some of the properties which were in a poor condition are being used as sites for housing redevelopment with an aim of achieving high levels of larger family houses.

A similar self financing programme for 18 General Fund residential properties is also underway with selective property sales being used to fund decent homes and remodelling works on the remaining properties.

The decent homes programme is concerned with conditions and facilities within the property but Hounslow Homes are also undertaking a decent estates programme to improve outside the home.

The decent homes standard obviously also applies to RSL stock, within Hounslow most RSL stock is recently built or recently acquired although the Council needs to ensure that RSLs are on programme to meet the decent homes target by 2012.

**ACTION 1.1A** To maintain the 100% decent home standard for Council owned social rented housing and to continue to implement a decent estates programme on Council estates.

**ACTION 1.1B** To monitor progress on the decent homes programme in the RSL stock

## **1.2 To deliver its strategic role to ensure continuous improvement in the management standards of social housing providers.**

The Council takes its strategic role seriously both in terms of an overview of the entire social housing stock in the Bough and as acting as the client for Hounslow Homes. The Council welcomes future work with the Tenants Services Authority to regulate social landlords and will be involved in the setting of both national and local standards.

The Council's management agreement with Hounslow Homes lasts until 2012 when a second review of the management agreement will be due. The first review in 2007 resulted in a review of a number of functions and introduced some changes in functions between Hounslow Homes and the Council as well as introducing a management fee structure. The review in the lead up to 2012 will take place following both national and local elections and at this stage is difficult to predict its outcome. As part of the preparatory work the Council will

be undertaking a Options Study in 2010/11 about the future of the Council's housing stock which will consider whether to go for a self financing option (if available), stock transfer, or to bring the service back in house or extend the management agreement with Hounslow Homes.

The Council is currently leading a TSA local standards pilot project within the Borough to establish a set of local standards linked to antisocial behaviour, security and neighbourhood management on estates by way of undertaking some a baseline research on six estates of different ages and types and with different landlords. The project will look at initiatives to develop communities and support one another. In addition to this local standards pilot West London boroughs have developed a set of common management standards for all local social housing providers and Hounslow will be monitoring this amongst its housing providers

The Council has also had concerns about the level of service charges in some shared ownership schemes and has worked together with RSLs to look at how to improve this situation for existing schemes where possible and learn lessons for how to minimise service charges in new shared ownership schemes.

**ACTION 1.2A:** To undertake a review of the Hounslow Homes Management Agreement before March 2012.

**ACTION 1.2B:** To work with the Tenant Services Authority, West London Boroughs and local social landlords to develop national and local standards

**ACTION 1.2C:** To continue to undertake work to keep service charges in shared ownership schemes understandable and reasonable and to develop local best practice by 2012.

### **1.3 Tackling needs of Hounslow's Gypsy and Traveller community**

The Housing Act 2004 requires local authorities to assess the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the area and develop strategies to meet the needs.

The 2009 London Plan will set out proposed pitch provision for all London boroughs based on the 2008 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA) in London which identified need for 768 new pitches across London, more than doubling the current number .

**The Gypsy and Traveller community in Hounslow:** Hounslow currently has one existing authorised site for Gypsies and Travellers and this is Hartlands Travellers Site which has 20 pitches and is managed by Hounslow Homes. Hounslow also has 103 travelling show people families which accounts for 55% of travelling show people in London. Currently there are no unauthorised encampments.

GTAA for Greater London estimated that Hounslow need a maximum of 14 and a minimum of six pitches for Gypsies and Travellers within the 2007-2012 period, and 27 plots for Travelling Show people. Planners have been working

with GLA to look at fairly distributing the need for plots for Travelling Show people across London.

Hounslow is working with West London Local Authority partners to research on how needs can be best met given that a large amount of the demand for additional pitches is due to people currently resident in ordinary homes who have a psychological aversion to bricks and mortar.

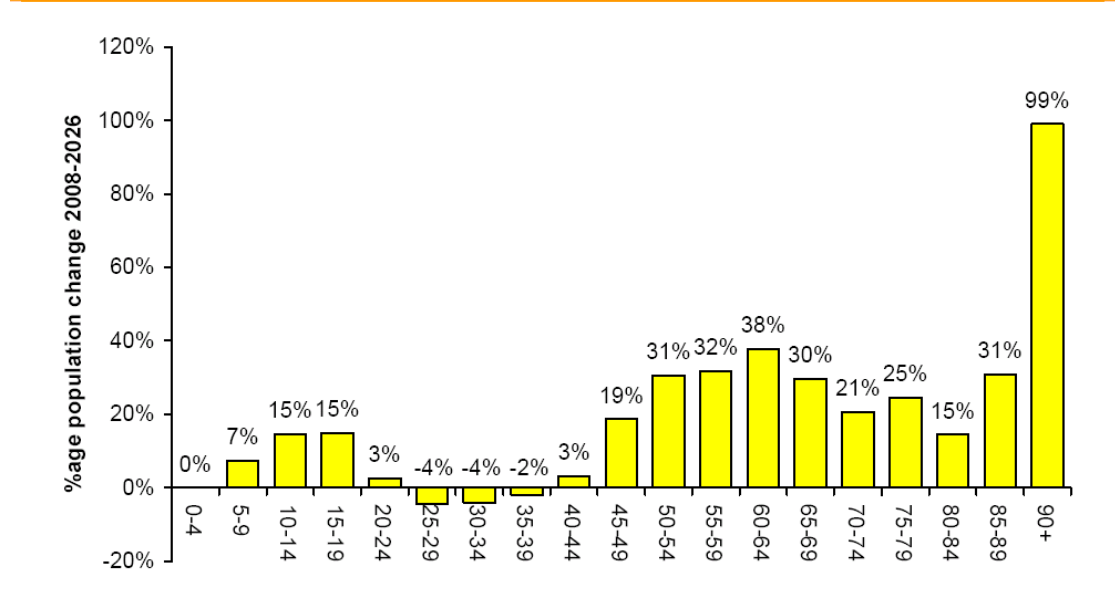
**ACTION 1.3A:** Carry out with West London work to look at how needs can be best met and research on how best to assess psychological aversion to bricks and mortar. Report to be delivered by January 2010

**ACTION 1.3B:** To look at options to meet the needs identified by the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, improving management agreement between Hounslow Homes and Hartland's. To work with planners and West London to identify sites for pitches in line with London plan targets.

**1.4 Promoting independence and choice for Older People**

In common with national trends, Hounslow has an ageing population. The increase in the number of older households in the borough is quite dramatic as illustrated in the chart below. In total, the proportion of the population aged over 60 in Hounslow is expected to increase by around 30% from 34,000 in 2008 to 44,200 in 2026

**Figure 11.1 Forecast population change by age group in Hounslow, 2008 – 2026**



Source: GLA PLP High Demographic Projections (2007)

We currently have an Older People's Housing Strategy which looks at the needs of older people in all tenures and the way forward for sheltered Housing. Currently we have approximately 932 units of sheltered housing and some of this is bedsit accommodation. We also have a Supporting People Strategy which sets out the overall direction for accommodation and non-

accommodation based services for vulnerable people. We plan to carry out a review of the existing a service provision to ensure that we have a realistic action plan so that we can provide the best use of resources to meet the accommodation and support needs of older people in the future.

**ACTION1.4A:** Produce an updated Older Person's Housing and Support Services Strategy with guidance on the range and volume of service provision required over the next five years e.g. sheltered housing, extra care housing, floating support, community alarms by April 2010

**ACTION 1.4B:** To implement the specific recommendations for individual schemes coming out of the Older Person Housing and Support Services Review.

### **1.5 Accessible Housing**

Hounslow is improving the way we provide accessible housing to our disabled community. We understand that it is crucial to provide equal choice and access to social housing openly and fairly. Our service however is under a growing amount of pressure from changes to the borough's demographics and increasingly we have to find different approaches to meet growing demands.

Hounslow's population is ageing. Statistics show that disability increases with age, which means that people who are living longer are more likely to have a disability. Also, most people prefer to remain at home, rather than move into supported housing. This increases the demand for our adaptations service

Further, children with severe disabilities are now more likely to survive birth and live longer. This has increased the number of adults with congenital disabilities. We have estimated that the number of adults aged 16-65 with a physical disability will increase by 1% per annum.

Legislative changes have also changed the way our service is shaped. The definition of what people are entitled to have as part of their home has been extended, i.e. to include access to a garden if there is one. The families of children who require adaptations are now not means tested for access to disabled facilities grants. The combined effect of these changes has meant that our demands for Disabled Facilities Grants have increased, as a time when our resources are reducing. In the past, we have funded Disabled Facilities Grants from Housing Revenue Account capital receipts, mainly from sales under the Right to Buy programme. In the past two years there has been a dramatic reduction in the Right to Buy, which has limited the amount of capital available to help fund adaptations to housing.

In accordance to these pressures we have developed a series of actions which we anticipate will help us deliver more accessible housing to those in need:

**Action 1.5A:** Implement the London Accessible Housing Register within targets. Project starts in 2009 in Kensington and will roll out to other boroughs.

**Action 1.5B:** Monitor targets to ensure that 100% of new build properties are built to the Lifetime Homes standard and 10% are wheelchair accessible.

**Action 1.5C:** Provide disabled facilities grants for private home adaptations and also help older homeowners repair and improve their homes

**Action 1.5D:** Promote independence by providing housing related support services that enable individuals to live independently in their accommodation.

## **1.6 Tenant Empowerment**

**Hounslow Homes: Rainbow project:** In 2008 the LBH Executive approved up to £1.5 million of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reserves for the Rainbow Project, which asks all our Hounslow Homes residents what projects they would like to see happen to improve estates, their local environment or run community based projects. The distribution of this money is to projects which contribute to building strong and cohesive communities.

This one off funding will go towards projects identified by the residents. Support and guidance will be offered whenever necessary, but this is about residents taking ownership and control, directing progress and taking decisions every step of the way.

There are two grant schemes under the programme

- Large grants: £15,000 - £100,000
- Small grants: £5,000 - £15,000

The Rainbow Project needs to be independently evaluated to assess whether it is achieving its objectives, before a new programme is undertaken.

**Hounslow Homes: Empower Project** In 2009 Executive agreed a further 2.7M of HRA reserves to be spent according to tenant priorities. The aim was to empower tenants by engaging with them directly on their ideas for the use of the reserves and also to spend money on initiatives that would have the maximum impact on quality of life for tenants. Consultation was undertaken by area meetings, visits to tenants and estates as well as leaflets. 472 individual responses were received and on the basis of tenant preferences the monies have been allocated to be spent on estate tidy ups/communal repairs, physical access improvements to sheltered schemes, extensions, security and enhancements to recycling facilities.

**Action 1.6A** Evaluate outcomes of the Rainbow Project and Project Empower

**Action 1.6B** Increase participation in the decision making process in line with the Community Engagement Strategy

## Chapter 2: Private sector housing that benefits Hounslow

### **Current Policy & Hounslow's evidence base for improving private sector housing**

There are 73,000 dwellings in the private sector in Hounslow, most of which are owner occupied and are concentrated in Osterley, Heston and Feltham. Between 2001 and 2007, Hounslow's private rented sector increased by 60%, and is now significantly larger than both London and English averages.

While the primary responsibility for repairing and improving homes in the private sector lies with the owner, the council recognises that some groups, particularly the elderly and vulnerable, may not have the necessary resources to do this. Further, poor condition housing may have significant impact on both the health of the occupant and the communities in which it is located. The council then has a necessary and vital role in supporting those who cannot support themselves to ensure their homes remain decent. The strategy will aim to increase the number of decent homes in the private sector for vulnerable occupants and assist residents to remain independent.

The Council views the private rented sector as a housing solution for many families and a vital part of the housing market. Private rented accommodation offers a flexible form of tenure and widens choice meeting a range of housing needs including those in receipt of Housing Benefit. However, the current supply of the private rented sector has been enlarged in the last 12 months by unusual housing market conditions. It is possible that this situation may change in an unpredictable way as the market changes. The SHMA identified however that the private rented accommodation in Hounslow, has some of the poorest conditions of all the tenures, approximately 44% is overcrowded.

The rapid growth of private renting in Hounslow has been due in part to the buy to let activities of small scale investors. Although this expansion has increased supply many of these landlords are unfamiliar with their role and responsibilities and are vulnerable to changes in market conditions. The draft London Housing Strategy supports the role of institutional investment as it can bring professional and less fragmented management, higher standards and potentially longer term rental periods. To enable greater institutional investment in London's new housing, the HCA has launched its Private Rented Sector Initiative. Investors such as pension funds have been invited to submit expressions of interest setting out a long term model for new private rented housing. We will monitor these developments to understand the effects of this type of investment on this sector in Hounslow.

In October 2008 the Rugg review was published which made a number of recommendations on how to raise standards and professionalism in the private rented sector. In 2009 the government issued a response to the Rugg review, designed to encourage a growth in professionalism, tackle bad landlords and provide improved consumer protection. The recommendations put forward by Rugg include:

- Introducing a light-touch national register of every private landlord in England to increase protection for both vulnerable tenants and good landlords
- Full regulation for private sector letting agents. The government proposes creating an independent regulator for all letting and managing agents
- An improved complaints and redress procedure for tenants
- Greater local authority support for good landlords

The Housing Act of 2004 introduced new regulation for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). There are a large amount of landlords in Hounslow with a small portfolio of properties and so this regulation is particularly pertinent for the borough. Problems associated with mismanagement, poor conditions and antisocial behaviour (ASB) have been linked to HMOs in Hounslow. Subsequently, the Council was the first authority in London to be granted an additional licensing scheme.

While the number of homeless acceptances has reduced significantly in Hounslow, youth homelessness remains a significant issue. We are working toward the Government's target to half the numbers in temporary accommodation by 2010. One of the ways in which the Council believes it can work to prevent homelessness in the first place is to improve access to private sector housing. There are a number of projects which are contributing to the prevention of homelessness, by developing alternative housing options for households threatened with homelessness. Our Direct Lets team assists households in acute housing need access private rented options through advice, assistance and a Rent Deposit or Bond scheme. We have also developed a website jointly with West London partners, West London Letstart which enables landlords and tenants to access information about private rented options.

Drawing on the issues identified in the current policy and our evidence base, the second key objective for Hounslow's Housing strategy will be:

## **OBJECTIVE 2 IMPROVING HOUSING STANDARDS IN PRIVATE HOUSING PARTICULARLY THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR**

The following areas for action have been identified in order to achieve each objective:

### **2.0 Increase the number of decent homes in the private sector for vulnerable occupants and assisting residents to remain independent:**

Hounslow has a clear commitment to a cross departmental approach to energy efficiency, carbon reduction and tackling fuel poverty. Our intention is to build on retrofitting and environmental programmes already in place. We have continued to deliver our sub regional West London Warm Zones (WLWZ) Project. This programme has a number of additional benefits,

including income maximization, reducing fuel poverty, adopting renewable technologies, fire safety and identification of hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

We have also developed a borough wide energy use mapping tool to identify the most deprived (fuel poverty) and high energy usage areas. This tool will enable targeted use of resources and will enable monitoring of accurate CO2 reductions from energy efficiency measures in order to gauge success and report against National Indicators 185,186 and 187.<sup>4</sup> The aim will be to use a 'whole house' approach including innovative, renewable technology in addition to traditional programmes such as the installation of central heating systems and cavity or loft insulation.

The Council's grants programme targets vulnerable people living in the private sector to assist them in making their homes decent. Working with our partners we aim to improve living conditions and enable independent living for older homeowners, whilst reducing the need for residential care and future health interventions.

Hounslow is committed to the 'putting people first' agenda for services and enable people who are vulnerable to remain in their own homes. The Disabled Facility Grants programme together with the Discretionary Grants Policy enables people to live independently in safe and healthy homes that are suitable for their needs.

The Care and Repair service also provides in house practical help and assistance to older home owners to organize repairs, improvements and adaptations so they are able to continue to live in their homes, if this is what they choose. They offer independent advice to clients and can assist to identify areas of disrepair and support clients in applying for grants loans insurance claims and charitable funds. We also have a Handyperson service which is able to carry out minor repairs, security or energy efficiency jobs around the home. This service reduces the risk of minor accidents which can lead to hospitalisation and contributes to the reduction in fear of crime. Additional funding has recently been secured from the Strategic Joint Partnership to enable capacity building activities to develop a targeted gardening scheme, expansion of the use of volunteers, joint protocols with Intermediate Care Teams for hospital discharge, provision of a home safety check for falls prevention, and possible re-settlement service.

**ACTION 2.0A:** Extend the use of mapping to assist in other areas such as enforcement, linking data to the private sector stock condition survey, enforcement activities, mapping empty properties and HMOs to target our resources better.

**ACTION 2.0B:** Increase scope of services for our older and disabled service users to include other services such as a gardening schemes and protocols for Hospital discharge and safety check for falls prevention.

**ACTION 2.0C:** To investigate and where possible make full use of volunteers to improve the quality of service by December 2010

### **2.1 To encourage and where necessary enforce a well regulated professional and high quality private rented sector**

For many people in Hounslow private rented accommodation offers a housing solution, as it is flexible and is available much more quickly than social housing. The supply of rented accommodation has been increasing year on year, mostly from small landlords with a portfolio of one to three properties. We are committed to encouraging the growth of a more professional private rented sector, and to dealing poor management practices, and to protect private tenants.

Hounslow Council is part of the London wide Landlord Accreditation scheme the aim of which is to provide training and educate Landlords regarding their responsibilities and thereby drive up standards. We regularly host Landlord Fairs to engage with local landlords and ensure they are aware of the council's aims.

**ACTION 2.1:** Run 2 Landlord events per annum and ensure that an additional 10 landlords are registered with the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme by 2014.

### **2.2 Improve conditions in the private rented sector stock**

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) often contain some of the worst conditions in the private sector and house some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

In 2006 the Housing Act 2004 introduced a Mandatory Licensing Scheme for larger HMOs (those of 3 or more storeys in height and with at least 5 occupiers). In Hounslow we have licensed nearly 200 HMOs under this scheme and as a result have driven up standards in this area and improved conditions in those dwellings. We are also the first London Borough to use the powers under the act to extend the licensing scheme because we believe there are other types of HMOs that are causing problems. The National Licensing Scheme only covers three story properties containing a minimum of five people in more than two households. We have extended the scheme within 5 wards to include properties that have 2 or more stories and occupied by 4 or more people forming at least two households.

We also ensure that conditions in the private rented stock are maintained by enforcing action under the HHSRS and we have developed a clear policy which sets out what owners, landlords, their agents and tenants of private sector properties can expect from the council to secure effective compliance with legislation.

**Action 2.2A:** Review the additional licensing scheme to assess its impact and effectiveness by 2012.

### **2.3 To ensure the most efficient use of housing resources by bringing empty properties back into occupation**

The Housing Act 2004 has extended the powers available to Councils to bring empty properties back into use by the use of Empty Dwelling Management Orders. Meanwhile the Mayor of London in the draft London Housing Strategy actively encourages local authorities to adopt measures to bring privately owned empty properties back into use, stating that no more than 1% of empty homes should stand empty or unused for more than 6 months. This target is supported by an investment of £60 million to support Local Authorities to develop policy initiatives and to support targets and reporting requirements. The level of vacant property in Hounslow is 1.7% which is lower than the national average of 3%. However the figure remains above the Mayors target and so a key aim for the strategy will be to ensure the most efficient use of housing resources by bringing empty properties

Although Hounslow has one of the smallest proportions of empty dwellings in London the Council recognises the importance in bringing empty properties back into use and we proactively work towards tackling empty properties.

As part of this Hounslow was the first local authority in the country to obtain an Empty Dwelling management Order, enabling the Council to carry out repairs and bring the property back into occupation.

The level of vacant property is lower than the national average, with just 1.7% of dwellings vacant compared to 3.0% nationally. The Draft London Housing Strategy states that no more than one per cent of homes should stand empty and unused for over six months. The council will continue to act promptly in response to empty properties to meet the Mayor's proposed target.

**ACTION 2.3A:** Identification of long term empty dwellings and pursue informal mechanisms to return the empty dwellings back to use.

**ACTION 2.3B:** Use empty dwelling management orders and Enforced sale procedures if other options fail.

### **2.4 To work with landlords, tenants and owners to prevent homelessness and improve access to the private sector stock**

The private sector offers choice and mobility to residents of Hounslow and is a major resource in the prevention of homelessness. Access to these properties for households who are likely to become homeless is facilitated through the rent deposit bond schemes. These have been very successful. 424 households were assisted into the private rented sector in 2008/9 and over 160 lets have been achieved this year.

In conjunction with West London partnership we operate the Letstart scheme. This aims to increase the number of private sector lets through online service which advertises available properties online.

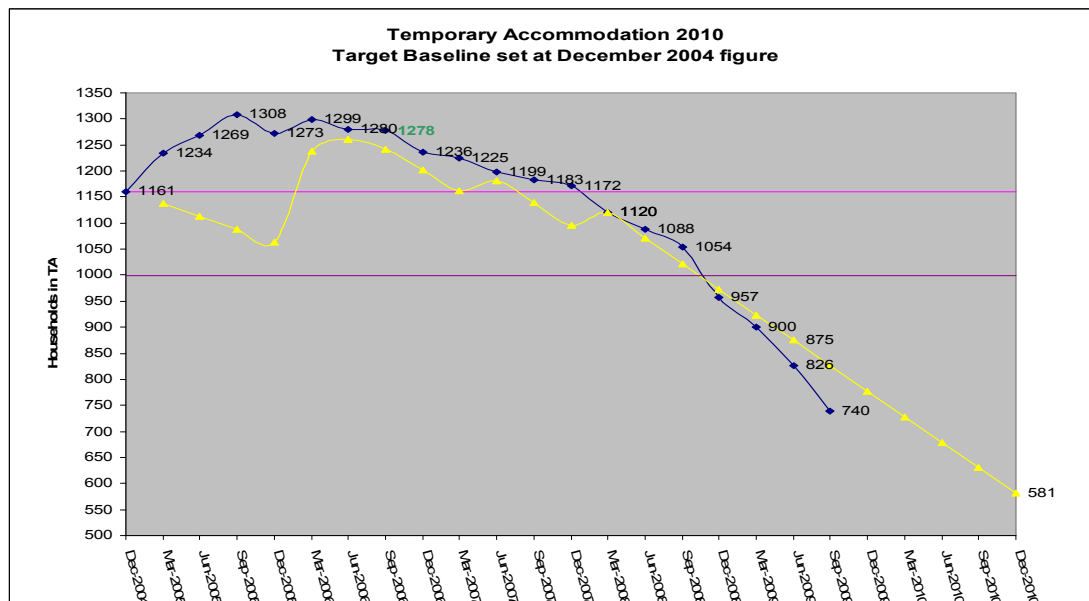
**ACTION 2.4:** The Direct lets team will work to provide advice, deposits and bonds to help households access to good quality private rented housing.

## Chapter 3: Preventing Homelessness

### Introduction

Hounslow is committed to preventing homelessness where possible and our Homeless strategy sets out our plans for 2008 –2013 for the prevention of homelessness and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support are available for those who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless.

The successful delivery of prevention initiatives through a range of partners have helped reduce the numbers of homeless applications and acceptances so that we are well on course to reach our temporary accommodation reduction target by 2010. In 2004/5 we accepted 891 households as homeless and we had 1234 households in temporary accommodation. During 2004/5 we significantly remodelled our services to place the emphasis on prevention and we began to see a significant reduction in the number of homeless applications as more households were helped to move into private accommodation with help from our deposits schemes. By 2008/09 acceptances had reduced to 329 and the total number in temporary accommodation was down to 900 households.



As the chart shows during 2009 the numbers in temporary accommodation has continued to fall and we are likely to achieve our reduction target before December 2010.

The number of rough sleepers remains low and in the last count in 2006 there were estimated to be around 3 but we will continue to monitor the information on numbers and aim to achieve a target of zero. We work with Street Rescue, who is funded by the CLG, to support any rough sleepers that are reported to us in Hounslow and these are recorded on their data base. In 2008/9 the data base shows that there were 26 contacts throughout the year with rough

sleepers and of these, 23 were seen only once as they had either moved away or resolved their problem. This level of contact is consistent with the likelihood of 3 rough sleepers in the borough at any one time.

Homelessness links in with other Key LAA Targets in Hounslow such as tackling worklessness and poverty, addressing social exclusion and supporting vulnerable adults to live independently. Equally other targets within the LAA will help achieve homelessness targets such as the culture of achievement and high aspirations and reducing teenage pregnancies.

Drawing on the issues identified in the current policy and our evidence base, the third key objective for Hounslow's Housing strategy will be:

### **OBJECTIVE 3: PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS AND REDUCING DEPENDENCE ON SOCIAL HOUSING**

#### **3.0 Prevention of Homelessness**

Our homelessness prevention strategy focuses on early prevention and identification of the causes of homelessness through outreach work with schools and improved communication our colleagues in Housing Revenues, Adult Care and Children Services.

Joint working in preventing and tackling homelessness is crucial if its effects are to be sustainable and attract necessary resources and it must be robustly linked to the strategic priorities and frameworks directing the work of the partners. This is particularly important for children and young people in the light of the recent Southwark judgement which made it clear that the Children Act 1989 had primacy over the Housing Act and that a lone homeless child should be accommodated under S20 with limited exceptions.

Work is already underway to ensure a coherent joint response and to ensure good collaborative working between departments to obtain the best outcome for the child. Significant prevention work for young people has already been undertaken and the number of 16/17 years old accepted as homeless or in Bed and Breakfast accommodation has dropped significantly over the last few years so that in August 2009 there were only 15 cases in temporary accommodation, 5 in bed and breakfast of which 4 were still under investigation.

We have also started on ambitious plans for the use of our hostels. We are beginning the redevelopment of a hostel which will provide accommodation for up to 26 people at risk or leaving care between the ages of 16-21 who are unable to live independently or remain in the parental home. This will also include an assessment facility for homeless young people and intensive support will be provided on site. The assessment facilities for 16 and 17 year olds with low-medium support needs will offer intensive short stay provision for up to 8 weeks whilst family mediation is undertaken. The service will have a support planning process and good local partnership links to develop

independent living skills, cultivate self-confidence, cultural identity and combat social exclusion.

We have also successfully introduced a supporting lodgings scheme which will expand the range of options to enable the prevention of homelessness for young people.

We work closely with all vulnerable groups and have protocols in place with the Youth Offending Service, Connexions and Community Mental Health Team/Lakeside Mental Health Unit and the Probation Service.

We have developed a supported accommodation move on process which enables the use of supported accommodation as a more suitable alternative to homeless temporary accommodation for more vulnerable clients in housing need.

The G15 group of 15 large housing associations in London are working together to improve the way affordable housing and temporary housing are let. They will be working more closely with boroughs to help house homeless households and to help Council's meet their temporary accommodation targets.

**Action 3.0A** To develop a protocol and joint working arrangements between housing and children's services for young people who present as homeless by April 2010

**Action 3.0B** To bid for and use funding opportunities and initiatives such as the mortgage rescue scheme to prevent homelessness.

**Action 3.0C** To ensure that the homelessness strategy is implemented and specialist hostels and services are developed as needed.

### **3.1 Provision of Accommodation and Choices**

Increasing the supply of affordable housing is central to reducing homelessness and housing need. The number of social housing lettings has been decreasing over the last few years and we need to manage residents' expectations of about the chances of being housed in this sector. We have improved our website and leaflets to give realistic waiting times for social housing and to promote other housing options and choices and we will continue to give clear messages and advice about other housing options.

We work closely with landlords through our Bond and Rent deposit schemes and work with RSLs to ensure that we have a good supply of private sector properties which we can offer to families so that they do not need to make homeless applications. In addition to this we have a West London Website where landlords can advertise properties which are available to rent . We also offer the full range of low cost home ownership options to those that can afford them as well as a significant amount of below market rental accommodation which has been developed in the borough.

Helping residents into work or education can have an impact on their ability to access housing choices. We have been working with the west London sub region on a project on Housing and Employment Link (HELP) which links people who apply as homeless or in temporary accommodation to employment and training opportunities. In addition to this a further west London project, the Income project, works with Shepherds Bush Housing Association to provide education or work based training. A direct offer of a 1 bed flat on a 2 year assured short hold tenancy is made to adults who are non dependants and living in overcrowded social households and this is conditional on their entering into training or employment. The projects meet a range of objectives: it helps young people into employment, helps avoid evictions occurring in an unplanned way by parents or friends, and also relieves overcrowding.

We also ensure that for those families where we have accepted a homeless duty that their temporary accommodation is of a good standard. Numbers in temporary accommodation are at a record low of 721 in October 2009 and most families are accommodated in private sector leased properties. We have a target to reduce the number to no more than 581 households by 2010 and we are continuing to look at our temporary portfolio in order to ensure we provide good quality accommodation in the most cost effective manner. We aim to reduce the use of temporary accommodation below the current government target and have set a target for no more than 150 households in temporary accommodation by 2012.

**Action 3.1A:** To continue to reduce the numbers of households in temporary accommodation to no more than 150 by 2012.

**Action 3.1B:** To link homelessness and workless priorities to ensure that residents are able to access wider choices of accommodation of accommodation.

### **3.2 Independent living and Support**

Our approach to the more vulnerable members of our community is promoting independent living and control and choice of housing options and ensuring that there are the necessary support services in place. Support services are provided to those people who need help to get back on their feet and maintain a tenancy. The services are either accommodation based or floating support provided to people in their own homes in the latter case we continue to ensure that these are not tenure specific. Housing related and additional support services have a key role in preventing homelessness occurring or reoccurring. The supporting people review identified the prevention role for homeless support services that could provide clear pathways away from crisis for people who become homeless or are at risk of becoming so.

The Supporting People Strategy 2008-2011 identified the importance of accessing move-on accommodation and the need to see the private sector as a viable alternative to social housing. Supported housing providers have an

important role in delivering this approach and ensuring that they work with service users to develop reasonable and realistic expectations in terms of their housing options and prepare people for living in the private sector. The private sector could also be a source of supported housing itself and this has already been achieved for some learning disability clients. The Move on Project is a joint venture between housing needs and the Drug and Alcohol team that assists those leaving supported housing in their resettlement in private rented accommodation. Home ownership should also be an option for some groups of vulnerable service users and this again has been done in relationship to Learning Disabilities.

The strategy identified gaps in provision for homeless families and for victims of domestic violence. The strategy also identified for a surplus of accommodation based services for older people – i.e. sheltered accommodation. We are currently in the process of producing an Older Peoples Housing and Support Strategy which will review our Older People's Housing strategy and enable us to make informed decisions about the current and future provision of support for older people in accommodation and floating support services.

**Action 3.2A:** Develop and implement the Older People's Housing and Support Strategy.

**Action 3.2B:** Work with supporting people and commissioning teams to ensure provision of accommodation based supported units as required.

**Action 3.2C:** To work with our partners to produce a Housing Domestic Violence Policy by March 2010

## Chapter 4: Housing for families to remain and grow in the community

The Council recognises that there is a shortage of affordable housing in the Borough for households on both low and moderate incomes and the provision of additional affordable housing, particularly family housing, is a key aim through the Community Strategy, Local Area Agreement, and The Hounslow Plan.

We know that 41% of people currently in private rented accommodation would like to own their own home yet just 28% expect they will. Hounslow has developed, along with its partners, mechanisms and processes to assist first time buyers onto the housing ladder. Despite the collapse in the housing market there has still been a good take up of low cost home ownership options in Hounslow. We want to continue provide this support for those who live and work in the Borough.

The development of additional affordable housing requires consistency between housing and planning policy and there is close working between planning and housing officers at all levels to ensure coherent and effective affordable housing policies as well effective site by site negotiations.

In the past few years the Borough has exceeded its targets for both new housing and affordable housing, a total of 3,599 new homes of all tenures have been built in the last 3 years in the Borough and there have been 1695 affordable housing completions from April 2006 to March 2009 and completions are continuing above target despite the recession. The Borough is being vigilant to ensure that the situation is monitored and the performance can be maintained.

We have emphasised delivery of family sized accommodation because this has been an important priority for the Administration since 2006. In addition, the Mayor, in the draft London Housing strategy has asked for more family accommodation. We know from the HMA that many families are leaving Hounslow, in part because they cannot find suitable affordable, family sized homes within the borough. When asked about why they were moving out of the borough, 33% of respondents cited wanting larger accommodation as a reason to move out (HMA Household survey)

Taking into consideration the current policy framework and the evidence from our HMA, the objective for this chapter is:

### **OBJECTIVE 4: INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING, PARTICULARLY FAMILY SIZED ACCOMMODATION (3B+) AND PROVIDING A RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOUNSLOW RESIDENTS TO BECOME HOME OWNERS**

The following areas of action have been identified in order to achieve this objective:

#### **4. 0 Provision of at least 243 additional affordable homes per annum with a focus on family sized housing**

The Council included National Indicator 155 (completion of new affordable homes) in its Local Area Agreement at the beginning of 2008/9 and during the 2008 the target was increased in agreement with the London Mayor and GOL from 675 to 730 over the 3 year period i.e. a revised target of 243 per annum.

In addition to the LAA target the Hounslow Plan "Building Pride Borough Wide" lists 10 promises to the local community of which Promise 9 is "to bring more family sized homes into the Borough". The Council has set a target of producing 35% family housing on all sites, particularly for social rented stock. Family sized housing is defined for this purpose as being 3 BR or more. This has not always been easy to achieve on private sites but where Council resources or Council land are a major part of the scheme finances, a higher proportion of larger homes have been delivered. The Council will now use the Mayor's targets of 42% of homes for rent and, by 2011 16% of intermediate homes to be three bedroom plus.

Final figures for 08/09 show that we achieved 252 new build completions, both rented and low cost home ownership – of which 53% of rented units were 3-bed plus.

331 completions are projected for 2009/10 - 183 rented and 150 shared ownership/intermediate rent/rent to buy. Of these 28% (52) of rented units will be 3-bed plus, The lower number of three bedroom plus units in 2009/10 is as a result of completion of schemes where planning consent was given several years ago.

For affordable schemes currently on site, 36% of rented units are 3-bed plus out of 525 total, and 5% of shared ownership/intermediate rented out (out of 466 total).

The majority of completions in recent years have been linked to the redevelopment of former mixed use or employment sites in the Borough and achieved through effective use of Section 106 agreements to deliver on site affordable housing units mainly with associated HCA grants . There has been concern locally however about the number high density developments of one and two bedroom flats that have been built particularly for the private market and therefore the Council welcomes the London Housing Strategy's emphasis on family housing.

The recession has made changes to this pattern of affordable housing completions linked to S106 agreements and brought back schemes where developers are proposing either no affordable housing or 100% affordable housing and also has enabled RSLs to come back into the market as purchasers of land for residential development in their own right.

The Council is currently preparing its Core Strategy and is programmed to adopt its Local Development Framework by the end of 2011. The Core Strategy will set out the overall spatial vision for Hounslow and how the places within it should develop over the next 15 years. This will include a delivery strategy which sets how much development is intended to happen where, when and by what means it will be delivered. We will consult on the next stage of our Core Strategy in September 2010. The Core Strategy will take account of the recommendations in the Housing Strategy

The majority of funding for affordable housing in the Borough has come either from the Homes and Community Agency (and its predecessor the Housing Corporation) site cross subsidy and also on some schemes Council resources in the form of either grant to RSLs (funded from either earlier S106 on site contributions or housing capital receipts) or land sales to RSLs or Hounslow Homes.

In addition to working across Departments of the Council there is considerable West London working on affordable housing both linked to allocation of resources by the Homes and Communities Agency on a West London basis but also and also to learn and develop best practice.

The Council is developing its single conversation with the Homes and Communities Agency and is agreeing its vision for future development with the Agency which will help to set out future funding for affordable housing development in the Borough.

**ACTION 4.0A:** To continue to develop affordable housing with at target of 42% of social rented and, by 2011, 16% of intermediate housing being 3 bedroomed or more

**ACTION 4.0B:** To agree the Local Investment Plan Single with the Homes and Community Agency.

#### **4.1 Creation of mixed communities in terms of both tenure and types of housing available in new developments**

The council will continue to seek mixed communities in terms of tenure and sizes of properties in all but the smallest developments. The majority of Section 106 sites have had a mixture of social renting and low cost home ownership as part of their affordable housing element. The housing developments being undertaken by Hounslow Homes both have cross tenure elements (see below). The current LA new build application is for a wholly rented scheme (as this is part of the scheme criteria).

The London wide Strategic Housing Market Assessment prepared in support of the replacement London Plan and the Mayor's Housing Strategy has identified a need for 13,200 additional affordable homes per annum which equates to approximately 40% of London's overall housing provision. Within the overall provision of affordable housing the Mayor is also seeking to ensure

that 60 per cent is social housing and 40 per cent intermediate. In terms of securing delivery, unlike the current Plan, which sets a London wide target of 50 per cent of new housing provision as affordable, the Mayor in the draft London Plan requires individual boroughs to set local affordable housing targets which are in general conformity with the London Plan strategic target. Such targets may be expressed in absolute or percentage terms in light of local circumstances. In terms of negotiation, the maximum reasonable amount should be sought in developments of 10 or more homes, and the Mayor is clear that the achievement of a borough's affordable housing target within a particular year should not constrain maximisation of affordable housing output on individual proposals – the target applies for the term of the plan.

The Council's recent local Housing Market Assessment (HMA) incorporating a Housing Needs Assessment (July 2009) identified that at the level of 40% of income spent on housing, there is a need for 4,188 affordable units per annum within the borough. Given that the current borough wide target for total housing provision (private and affordable) is 445 units per annum, it is clear that such a need cannot be met from new building housing alone. However, the evidence does show a clear need for the maximum achievable provision of affordable housing on all new development sites in order to optimise their contribution to meeting the borough's significant levels of housing need. Proportions of affordable housing over 50% on a development site are unlikely to be viable in most market situations, therefore despite the overwhelming need, a 50% affordable target is likely to be the maximum achievable. Of the additional affordable housing produced, the evidence in the HMA of need is that 70% should be social rented and 30% intermediate.

In terms of a local affordable housing target, the Borough has traditionally had an overall target of 50% affordable housing of which 70% is to be social rented and 30% low cost home ownership or intermediate. The emerging Core Strategy will need to identify a new affordable housing target in accordance with the London Plan, taking account of the London SHMA, the local HMA and the emerging west London SHMA. Furthermore such a target will be subject to viability testing in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing

The Council's Housing Strategy proposes the maximum achievable affordable housing target on the basis of need (likely to be 50%) for new homes (measured by habitable rooms). In terms of the split between affordable rented and affordable intermediate units the Council's housing policy will aim for a balance of 60% rented and 40% within the affordable units on an overall Borough basis, this differs from the needs based proportions indicated in the local HMA for the following reasons:-

- The aim to achieve a higher proportion of larger family units in the rented stock
- A borough policy to increase levels of owner occupation in the Borough and in recognition of aspirations from Borough households to become home owners

- The number of town centre schemes likely to be coming forward where larger family units for renting may not be achievable on a significant scale.
- To take account of the findings of the London Strategic Housing Market Assessment as expressed in the London Housing Strategy and draft replacement London Plan.

**ACTION 4.1A:** To propose the maximum achievable affordable housing target on the basis of need (likely to be 50% of new homes on a habitable room basis) of which 60% of units should be social rented and 40% intermediate tenures

**ACTION 4.1 B:** To continue to create mixed communities on individual sites in terms of both tenure and property sizes

#### **4.2 Regeneration of town centres and other borough locations**

In the early part of this decade the Council was involved in two major town centre developments at Feltham and the first phase of Hounslow Town Centre. The Feltham redevelopment was a housing led project resulting over 800 new homes (over 200 affordable) as part of a new mixed use town centre. The first phase of Hounslow Town Centre included retail and residential including 155 affordable housing units both for rent and low cost home ownership.

The Council's vision for development of the Borough include the redevelopment of the second phase of Hounslow Town centre, the redevelopment of land south of the High Street in Brentford as well as the redevelopment of the Brentford Football Club site along with relocation of the facility in a mixed use development within the Borough boundaries. Although these developments will not be housing led the inclusion of additional residential has always been a key part of proposals and it will be important to ensure that these meet the Borough's housing ambitions.

The Borough is undertaking work as part of its Single Conversation with the Homes and Communities Agency to create a master plan for these areas in the new economic climate

**ACTION 4.2:** To work with other parts of the Council and other Agencies to regenerate and redevelop town centres and other key Borough sites and achieve well designed .homes including family housing where possible.

#### **4.3 Enabling further supported housing schemes**

Supported housing schemes have a key role to play in providing alternatives to residential care, where the service users are assessed as being able to manage in a more independent setting.

Principal results from the Supporting People Strategy's gap analysis of current services highlighted the following:

- More need for accommodation based services for people with mental health problems; young people generally; adult offenders; and older people with specialist needs.
- Less need for accommodation based services for other older people (i.e. mainstream sheltered).

**Action 4.3** To develop more accommodation based schemes in line with needs identified in the Supporting People and Commissioning strategies, subject to resources.

#### **4.4 Council developing its own affordable housing schemes with Hounslow homes on council owned land**

Within the Borough two housing schemes are currently underway on former Housing Revenue Account sites with Hounslow Homes as the developer and owner of the affordable homes being built. The two schemes are:-

- Convent Way and North Hyde Lane – development of 19 affordable housing units in partnership with Lovell Developments as part of a mixed tenure scheme on the site of former garage blocks and a disused canal side property. The 14 rented homes are all 3BR plus (including 4 x4B units) with 4 x2B shared equity flats. The scheme is funded by a mixture of cross subsidy from 20 units for full sale, Council land subsidy and direct Council grant of just over £1 Million. The scheme started on site in early November 2009 and is due for completion in early 2011. The affordable housing units will count as nil grant units for the HCA.
- Beavers Lane Estate – this London Housing Board regeneration scheme involves phased redevelopment of 4 structurally unsound blocks as a mixed tenure scheme in partnership with United House and A2D. The scheme will produce in total 60 affordable rented units, the unit mix is mainly determined by the housing needs of the tenants who will be displaced and thus only 20% is 3 Bed plus. In addition there will be 29 shared ownership units with A2D and 96 private for sale units of which 35% are 3bed plus. The scheme is due to start on site in December 2009. The London Housing Board estate regeneration funding has financed the costs of decanting the 54 tenants and 18 leaseholders as well as estate regeneration works in the wider area. The scheme is also funded by Council discounted land sale for the private units, sales cross subsidy, £1.075 direct Council grant and £2.9M HCA funding. The scheme will commence in two main stages and is due to complete in 2012.

The changes in the HRA subsidy system for new dwellings as well as encouragement from the Government and HCA for local authorities to undertake new build affordable housing developments means that future new build schemes on HRA land will be Council owned, rather than Hounslow Homes owned, with Hounslow Homes acting as the Council's development agent. The reason for this change in direction are:-

- The financial disincentives for direct Council development have now been removed
- Direct development by the Council minimises the legal discussions ,documents and therefore legal costs
- The financial arrangements are simpler
- The legal rights of the tenants are identical to other Council tenancies.

The Council has 3 development opportunities although the first two may be developed by Hounslow Homes if additional funds for LA new build are not available:-

- Heston Estates Renewal – a London Housing Board Estate regeneration scheme across 6 Council owned estate in partnership with Lovells. The London Housing Board scheme related to 155 additional homes, of which 87 are affordable, although the development potential of the estates involved is probably higher than 155 . The scheme is complex in planning terms and it is hoped to start on site mid 2010, HCA funding will be required following the recession and this is likely to be a Council bid to the HCA after the current LA new build bidding scheme.
- Manor Lane Renewal – the third London Housing Board scheme aiming at a total of 100 new homes of which 52 are affordable. The scheme involves demolition of an existing vacant sheltered block as well as two small blocks of general needs housing consisting of both tenanted and leaseholder units leaseholder units. The LHB funding supports the costs of displacing the tenants as well environmental improvements across the wider estate. This scheme may also need HCA funding.
- Elmwood Avenue – this small development of wholly rented units is the Council's bid for Round 2 of the HCA's LA new build pilot. The scheme will include 20 homes of which 80% are 3B plus houses.

The Council will continue to work up further ideas for new build developments it can undertake itself subject to funding being available.

**ACTION 4.4A** To complete the five new build developments in partnership with Hounslow Homes

**ACTION 4.4B** To undertake future Council new build schemes on HRA sites including bidding directly for HCA funding where necessary

#### **4.5 Assisting households who live or work in the borough into home ownership**

The Council has had an aspiration for the past 4 years both to increase levels of owner occupation in the Borough as well as assist more Borough households into owner occupation.

The Borough has its own low cost home ownership register which integrates with the London wide Housing Options web site.

The Council has held annual popular and successful Low Cost Home Ownership Open days. The latest Open Day on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2009 attracted over 500 people and many expressions of interest were received, with 9 cheques handed over as reservations on shared ownership properties.

Despite the recession, intermediate housing schemes remain very popular in Hounslow and at the end of August only 57 units remained unsold of which most were recently marketed.

The Council has agreed £450K funding for a local cash incentive scheme which is currently being implemented.

The Council will be utilising the Mayor's new income thresholds for its affordable housing schemes.

The Council is keen to encourage the development of 3 bedroom or larger low cost homeownership products both to meet the draft London Plan targets but also to meet the expressed local demand, there are however barriers to this including HCA grant calculation being on a per unit rather than per person basis

**ACTION 4.5A:** To continue to actively assist low and moderate income households who live and work in the Borough into owner occupation

**ACTION 4.5B** To achieve 16% three bed plus low cost home ownership units produced annually by 2011.

#### **4.6 ENCOURAGING THE BUILDING OF HOMES OF HIGH DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS**

The Council are committed encouraging the development of homes which are well designed, sustainable, attractive and affordable. This involves spending time reviewing the layout and design of proposed affordable housing schemes as well as ensuring they meet high environmental standards.

Chapter 5 gives more details of the Council's overall environmental ambitions.

The Council's first zero carbon development by Catalyst has started on site at Staines Road.

**ACTION 4.6A:** All new homes approved in the Borough should meet the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 with 80% of new affordable housing schemes approved meeting level 4 by 2012.

## Chapter 5: A happy, healthy & safe community for all.

### 5.0 Introduction

Hounslow is a vibrant, diverse borough with a constantly changing population: By 2010 it is likely that half the population of the Borough will be from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities.

In the 2006 Hounslow Residents Survey, 61% of respondents agreed with the statement that their local area is a place where residents respect ethnic differences between people and 22% disagreed<sup>5</sup>. This indicated to the Council a need to continue working locally towards a cohesive community.

### **OBJECTIVE 5: WORKING TOWARD TOGETHER TO BUILD HEALTHY SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES.**

#### 5.1 Building Cohesive Communities

Housing has an important role to in contributing to the Community Cohesion agenda in Hounslow.

The Community Cohesion Strategy Group was also established to lead the Council's Community Cohesion work. It is a partnership of statutory, private and community organisations that are committed to deliver the Community Cohesion programme, share intelligence and ensure an effective partnership response to local issues. The group is also responsible for monitoring progress on the Community Cohesion actions in the Corporate Equalities and Community Cohesion Plan.

The council's work on cohesion came at a time of renewed national emphasis on cohesion which included a new agreed definition between the Communities and Local Government, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and the Local Government Association (LGA) In 2009 Hounslow was awarded Beacon status for its outstanding work in the area of cohesive and resilient communities.

Housing can contribute to building cohesion in a variety of ways: By ensuring a mix of housing types and tenures, through design which allows diverse communities to coexist and in creating a sense of belonging which residents can be proud of.

The council will continue to deliver mixed housing via scheme specific letting plans which will help secure the right balance of residents for our permanent rented units. Lettings plans can help reduce potential management issues and promote balanced communities through specific targets including:

- Under occupation
- Previous successful tenancy management history
- Lettings to vulnerable tenants

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<sup>5</sup> Hounslow Residents Survey 2006, BMG/ LB Hounslow

- Lettings to households employed for a minimum of 16 hours per week

In taking this approach, the council can actively contribute to tackling worklessness, overcrowding and providing secure housing options for vulnerable tenants.

Housing decisions need to be made in a regional context to avoid moving issues from one area to another and ensure consistent dialogue. The West London Community Cohesion Partnership which includes representatives from Housing to ensure they are contributing to the CC agenda on a sub regional basis.

**ACTION 5.1** Scheme specific letting plans are in place for every new development that encourage sustainable communities

## **5.2 Working toward Environmental Improvement**

Hounslow Council is committed to reducing climate changing carbon emissions and signed the Nottingham Declaration in 2008 and is therefore committed to ensuring that the residents of Hounslow have a sound basis for a sustainable quality of life, for now and future generations to come.

While the borough is working to improve its own environmental record, we also have a hand in supporting London's targets. We will support the Mayor in his ambitious plan of a 60% reduction in London's carbon emissions by 2025. The strategy also states that all new publicly funded housing developments should meet a minimum of Code for Sustainable Homes level 3.

The Environmental Strategy unit through its carbon management plan has adopted the target to reduce its CO2 emissions from its activities by 40%. In doing this it hopes to set a standard that the council can then carry forward at a borough level that may eventually apply to all activities

The council also reports on other targets that ensure we are monitoring the progress we are making in reducing climate change and securing sustainable development. In particular, LAA target 186: Reducing emissions borough wide, which includes housing.

Hounslow council is working to include environmental sustainability into everything we do and housing has a major role to play in this. The Housing Strategy supports the wider agenda to reduce climate change by securing sustainable development in the borough.

**Improving energy efficiency of current and future stock:** Hounslow is committed to design that ensures a greener stock and will make full use of new technologies to support local and regional targets.

Hounslow will continue to make steps towards the Mayor's ambitious target, all new homes to be zero carbon by 2016 through implementing new technologies. Full use will be made of Combined Cooling Heat and Power

networks to maximise energy and water efficiency. We will also explore on site renewable energy generation for some of our new developments. For our existing homes the retrofitting programme will enable households to reduce fuel consumption and improve on water efficiency.

**ACTION 5.2 A** Existing housing will benefit from the retrofit program that will see standards brought beyond the current decent homes.

**Low carbon and sustainable construction:** The council in accordance with the proposals set out in the Mayor's draft London Plan, will ensure that highest standards of sustainable design and construction are achieved to improve the environmental performance of all new housing developments in the borough.

**ACTION 5.2 B** The Council will provide local businesses and residents with the opportunity to apply for employment during the construction of developments.

**ACTION 5.2 C** The Council will ensure that all major housing development proposals will meet the minimum standards outlined in the Mayor's supplementary planning guidance on Sustainable Design and Construction.

**Sustainable transport** :This is one of the key ways in which the council hopes to secure an improved local environment and encourage healthier and safer lifestyles. As housing is linked with transport, this strategy will support Hounslow's transport agenda which includes a range of initiatives aimed at improving the balance between communities and their local transport systems. The council's aims will also link into the Mayor's proposals for London's Transport strategy which sets out the vision for London's transport for the next 20 years.

The housing strategy will help ensure that communities remain connected, which is particularly important during uncertain economic times when poor transport can reduce a community's opportunity to connect with employment.

**ACTION 5.2 D** To Secure development sites already well served by public transport: The Council's key development areas and to work across the council and with Transport for London (TFL) to improve transport services where needed.

**ACTION 5.2 E** The Council will actively work with all housing providers in the borough across all tenures to identify low cost and effective ways of promoting sustainable transport to residents.

### **5.3 A safe community**

The London housing strategy emphasises how housing has a role in reducing levels of crime for communities and in particular, tackling antisocial behaviour.

In Hounslow there have been reductions in crime for six successive years and levels of crime compare fairly well with other boroughs<sup>6</sup>. However evidence from the Residents Panel, Place Survey, Police Key Individual Network, Police Fear of Crime Survey show that perceptions and fear of crime by residents remain a real concern.

The resident's survey panel of 2007 showed that 85% of Hounslow residents surveyed felt fairly or very safe in their local area during the day<sup>7</sup>. However, this residents' survey figure reduced to 35% when the Residents Panel were asked to consider their safety levels after dark. Females are significantly more likely than males to feel unsafe during the evening/night in their local neighbourhood.

The Housing Strategy has a key role in supporting the community safety strategy. This is particularly the case in the area of domestic violence which consistently remains among the highest in London and accounts for 50% of violent crime in the borough. The Strategy also supports the implementation of more holistic housing support and sanctuary schemes.

**ACTION 5.3 A** Domestic Violence strategy to be in place by April 2010.

Hounslow's Community Safety Partnership (HCSP) has an agreement to share relevant information/intelligence on crime and disorder with 30 statutory and non-statutory partners across the borough. The partnership will continue to develop a coordinated response to all types of anti-social behaviour.

Anti social behaviour action groups (ABAGS) identify offenders who perpetrate anti-social behaviour, work towards appropriate remedies to address this behaviour, and prevent re-offending. These remedies include voluntarily entered Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and Parental Control Agreements (PCAs) as well as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), which although are civil remedies become criminal offences if breached. ASBAGs are responsible for monitoring those signed to ABCs and PCAs and those subject to an ASBO.

**High Quality Design:** Hounslow has developed strong partnerships with developers which prioritise build quality. All of the council's new homes will continue to be developed in line with design standards and where possible the council will go beyond the minimal space and environmental requirements.

It is important to our commitment to healthy and safe communities that our homes encourage the best possible use. Where we can we will encourage active lives through integrating leisure into the design of our homes.

Secured by design principles are to be integrated into all outdoor spaces so that residents can feel confident about using these areas. Physical improvements to these spaces will be achieved through talking to the

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<sup>6</sup> Métropolitain Police Statistics Crime Figures. Download at:

<http://www.met.police.uk/crimefigures/datatable.php>

<sup>7</sup> Hounslow Residents Survey, BMG, 2007. BMG website: <http://www.bmgresearch.co.uk>

communities that use them to ensure development is appropriate to need.

**ACTION 5.3 B** All new developments to comply with sustainable code 3, building for life and secure by design principals.

**Local Development Framework (LDF):**The development plan documents (DPDs) that form part of the LDF will eventually replace all of the saved policies in the Council's UDP, and together with the London Plan, will form the statutory development plan for the borough. DPDs set out the Council's policies and proposals for different types of development in different areas.

The key document in Hounslow's LDF will be the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy will set out the overall spatial vision for Hounslow and how the places within it should develop over the next 15 years. This will include a delivery strategy which sets how much development is intended to happen where, when and by what means it will be delivered. We will consult on the next stage of our Core Strategy in September 2010. The Core Strategy will need to take account of the recommendations in the Housing Strategy.

Unlike most boroughs, Hounslow also prioritised the production of two DPDs – the Brentford Area Action Plan (BAAP) and an Employment topic DPD ahead of Core Strategy. The BAAP which allocates a large number of sites for additional housing development was prioritised due to continual development pressure and the need for a comprehensive regeneration strategy for the area

**ACTION 5.3 C** Implement and monitor the BAAP in light of the changing aspirations of the community

Hounslow has a good track record of partnership working and takes a multi agency area based approach in tackling ASB, crime and fear of crime. This approach has made the identification of perpetrators and the delivery of appropriate remedies more effective and consistent across the borough.

#### **5.4 Healthy Communities:**

**Well London:** Hounslow is one of 20 London areas participating in the Well London project which promotes mental health, access to healthy foods and the opportunity to get more physically fit. Programmes around these themes are delivered at a very local level, in Hounslow Cranford Ward which has been selected as it is among the 11% most deprived super output areas in London.

Well London aims to get residents involved in setting up and running projects that will improve open spaces, mental health, and encourage healthy eating. These projects will build on the existing skills and knowledge of local people and work already being done in the area.

In Cranford, partnerships with the YMCA, Groundwork, Riana Development foundation and the Arts Council have enabled the delivery of the following classes on the Beavers Lane estate:

- Bounce Theatre workshops
- Cook and Eat classes
- Girl's Dance classes
- Young People's football

Well London will run for three years and will hopefully have a marked impact on the lifestyle outcomes of some local residents. The University of London will monitor the outputs of the programme against a control area of similar demographics in another area of the borough.

**Physical Activity and Sport Strategy:** Hounslow will shortly be publishing its Physical Activity and Sport Strategy for the next five years. The strategy which will set out how the borough intends to provide access to healthy and active lifestyles for all its residents. There will be particular emphasis on ideas to reduce obesity of school age children and increase adult participation in sport as these are targets included in Hounslow's Local Area agreement. Partnerships with our housing providers will help deliver local resources to communities to improve active lifestyles.

**Brentford Football club:** As part of the regeneration of Brentford, the football club will play an increased role in providing greater cohesion and social inclusion to the local community. Both the current Community Plan and the BAAP express the Council's continued support for the relocation of Brentford Football Club to new site in the east of Brentford and creation of a mixed use community hub including a large number new homes. It is intended that the existing ground at Griffin Park will be redeveloped for Housing once the new stadium is built for the land in Lionel Road not needed for the new stadium to be used to build a number of community facilities and a range of residential properties.

**ACTION 5.4A** To continue to develop partnerships to deliver well London initiatives

## Chapter 6: Delivering the strategy

This strategy has been developed through research and consultation that began early in 2007. The Council will continue to review the strategy on an annual basis and changes will be made as necessary if policies change and new legislation is introduced. Where policies or services do not deliver, their anticipated outputs will be subject to strategic review.

The delivery of the action plan will be monitored and regular updates provided to members and partners. Where appropriate we will undertake further consultation as actions set out in this document are put to work.

The strategy will be regularly monitored by the Housing Strategy Forum which is tasked to ensure delivery of the objectives and has wide representation from all areas of the Council and external partners. This group will also provide feedback into the LSP as required.

Integral to the successful implementation of the strategy will be the continuous and meaningful involvement of the community and our stakeholders. Partnerships will continue to evolve and extend in response to changes to policy and the economy. We will continue to ask the users of all our housing services about our performance and will draw on these opinions in planning for future improvement. Our communications strategy will identify the consultation mechanisms which we will employ, to ensure all of those who choose to be, are involved in the decision making process.

The Hounslow plan delivery road map matches promise 9, to deliver more family sized accommodation into the borough, with national and regional targets as well as the councils own softer targets:

The Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) is a new approach to assessing local public services and this includes housing. The CAA will examine how well need is being met by the authority and its partnership arrangements with other public bodies and authorities.

The CAA will draw on the National Indicator Set, specific to housing are Net Additional Homes (NI 154), the Increase in the Number of Affordable Homes (NI 155) and the number of vulnerable people achieving independent living (NI 141).

## Appendix 1

### **EVIDENCE BASE**

The housing strategy has been and will continue to be informed by evidence drawn from a range of sources which are identified below. Hounslow's housing market assessment, the analyses of need for affordable housing report and the strategy consultation document are available alongside the strategy to download from the Council's website.

#### **Household surveys**

- 2001 Census
- 2009 Housing market assessment household survey
- Range of customer satisfaction surveys
- Summer 2009 Residents Panel survey

#### **Research, information and publications**

- Analysis of need for affordable housing report
- Housing market assessment
- Homeless review 2008
- A window on extremism: Young people in Hounslow, a study of identity, social pressures, extremism and social exclusion.
- London Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GAAT)
- Land registry
- 2004 Index of multiple deprivation
- London housing market assessment
- West London housing investment guide
- Hounslow Joint strategic Needs Assessment
- Hounslow stock condition survey

#### **Data kept by the local authority**

- Housing and transfer register
- Lettings and nominations data
- Homelessness applications and decisions
- Locata (choice based lettings)
- Records of racial harassment and anti social behaviour

#### **Consultation**

- Residents Panel consultation
- Partnership boards
- Place shaping panel
- Housing strategy consultation workshops: During the autumn of 2009, the Council held two workshops which invited key partners and representatives from the community and voluntary sector to make specific recommendations on the draft Housing strategy. The feedback generated from each session was used to refine and strengthen the document.
- Housing strategy conference 2007

**Other council strategies:**

Each chapter of the strategy will identify links to related Council strategies including:

Community safety strategy

Homelessness strategy 2008 – 2013

Private sector housing strategy 2006 – 2010

Private stock condition survey 2004

Supporting people strategy

Youth Homelessness Strategy

Older Peoples Housing



## Objective 1

### Well managed and good quality Social Housing

- 1.1 Implement new allocations policy
- 1.2 Alleviate overcrowding
- 1.3 Reduce void periods in Council stock
- 1.4 Maintain DHS in Council stock
- 1.5 Monitor DHS in RSL stock
- 1.6 Review options for management and maintenance of stock
- 1.7 Work with WLA & local social landlords on national and local standards of housing management
- 1.8 Keep service charges in shared ownership schemes understandable and reasonable
- 1.9 Review options for meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers
- 1.10 Ensure provision of Supported Housing
- 1.11 Develop the Older Person's Housing, Support and Care strategy
- 1.12 Review housing options for older people including sheltered housing schemes and their management
- 1.13 Implement the London Accessible Housing Register
- 1.14 Ensure 100% lifetime homes, 10% wheelchair in new build
- 1.15 Tackle graffiti, litter and dumped rubbish (Council Pledge)
- 1.16 Evaluate 'Rainbow' and 'Project Empower' funding schemes

## Objective 2

### Improving standards in Private Sector housing, especially private rented housing

- 2.1 Increase scope of partnership working
- 2.2 Develop a volunteers service linked to the handyman and gardening service for older and disabled people
- 2.3 Improve standards in 2,500 private dwellings (rented or owned)
- 2.4 Implement the Empty Property Strategy and tackle long time empty homes
- 2.5 Promote good Private Sector rented housing
- 2.6 Help disabled and vulnerable people in the Private Sector to adapt, improve and repair their homes

# Hounslow Housing Strategy Objectives 2010-2015

## 1 Well managed and good quality Social Housing

## 2 Improving standards in Private Sector housing, especially private rented housing

## 3 Preventing Homelessness and reducing dependence on social housing

## 4 Increasing Supply of affordable housing and promoting home ownership

## 5 Healthy, Safe and Strong Communities

## Objective 3

### Preventing homelessness and reducing dependence on social housing

- 3.1 Provide advice and assistance to prevent homelessness and consider housing options in context of reduced welfare benefit
- 3.2 Develop a protocol for joint working for homeless young people
- 3.3 Review implementation of the Homelessness Strategy
- 3.4 Develop Temporary accommodation portfolio management strategy
- 3.5 Link homelessness and worklessness agendas
- 3.6 Work with partners to produce a Housing Domestic Violence policy

## Objective 5

### Working together to build healthy, safe and strong communities

- 5.1 Ensure effective use of resources across the Council and with partner organisations
- 5.2 Develop the Strategic Housing Delivery Board of the Local Strategic Partnership
- 5.3 Scheme specific letting plans in place for every new development
- 5.4 Develop "retrofit" investment program for existing homes
- 5.5 Create employment opportunities from the development and investment programme (Council pledge to create jobs)
- 5.6 Ensure that all major housing development proposals meet the minimum standards outlined in the Mayor's supplementary planning guidance on Sustainable Design and Construction
- 5.7 Develop housing action plan for Transport Strategy with Environment Directorate
- 5.8 Identify low cost and effective ways of promoting sustainable transport to residents in isolated areas
- 5.9 Work on Council action on crime initiative (Council Pledge with 100 uniformed officers on streets and CCTV in crime hotspots)
- 5.10 Implement and monitor the Brentford Area Action Plan
- 5.11 Review opportunities to promote "Well London" initiatives
- 5.12 Promote housing related support services that enable individuals to live independently in their accommodation
- 5.13 Increase participation in the decision making process

## Objective 4

### Increasing supply of affordable housing and promoting home ownership

- 4.1 Promote greater supply of affordable housing (Council pledge of 2500 affordable homes)
- 4.2 To agree a Borough Investment Plan (Single Conversation) with the Homes and Community Agency
- 4.3 Propose the maximum achievable affordable housing target on the basis of need
- 4.4 Promote mixed communities on individual sites in terms of both tenure and property sizes
- 4.5 Work with other parts of the Council and other Agencies to regenerate and redevelop town centres and other key Borough sites
- 4.6 Complete the 5 new build schemes at Convent Way, Beavers Lane, Heston area, Manor Lane and Elmwood Avenue
- 4.8 Assist actively low and moderate income households who live and work in the Borough into low cost home ownership
- 4.9 All new homes approved in the Borough should meet the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 with 80% of new affordable housing schemes approved meeting Level 4.

# Housing strategy

2010 - 2014