

Appendix A –Revenue and Financing variations

1. **Supervision & Management: £273k net underspend.** £523k before £250k is proposed to be allocated to a new earmarked reserve for workforce planning (as outlined in para 13). The overall variation is in addition to the HRA action plan salary savings and are predominantly due to difficulty in recruiting a number of technical posts in areas such as asbestos, mechanical & electrical and contract management across the service leading to the underspend. This is being addressed by reviewing roles and considering alternate methods of delivery in some cases
2. **Sheltered Housing: £66k net underspend** as a result of a significantly reduced call off responsive items, most significantly tree surgery, reduced grounds maintenance costs, with more of this being undertaken in house and a reduced call on the equipment budget for new purchases.
3. **Repairs & maintenance:** A robust approach to delivery has allowed efficiencies to be made across most work streams during the year. Notably we are starting to benefit from past years investments, we have changed the way works are delivered when properties become empty, and we have been more focused in the way the repairs and maintenance service is managed.
 - a. **Cyclical and Planned maintenance - £297k underspend.** Cyclical painting has largely been deferred as the contract has been re-procured in year due to the performance of the incumbent contractor. We are taking the opportunity to realign this programme with future planned programmes of work to ensure synergy and value for money is achieved.
 - b. **General Voids - £92k underspend.** This has been achieved by changing operating practices and moving some traditional void works into planned programmes as appropriate (unless the circumstances show otherwise, such as health and safety concerns) e.g. not replacing kitchens on voids because the programme indicates renewal, but instead assessing their condition on a case by case basis and moving them into the planned capital programme.
 - c. **Gas In-House service - £120k underspend.** SDC Heating Services are showing significant efficiencies when benchmarked against the external market place. This has been achieved through greater partnership working with stakeholders, changes in working practices, negotiated improved materials costs and support servicing contract
4. **Rent & charge income - £89k variation.** Rental and service charge income largely in-line with the revised budget, with a collection anticipated to involve a positive collection of an additional £89k over original budget.
5. This is a very pleasing outcome and can be attributed to the service's redesign where a specialist income team was formed and which has performed exceptionally well, and the impact of welfare reform changes

far less than predicted. It must be noted that major changes notably Universal Credit will be implemented during 2017/18.

6. This positive income performance is all the more reassuring, considering that the sheltered housing modernisation project has meant that two schemes are being closed, creating empty flats during 2016/17 and income loss as a result. Rent income collection is currently 98.7% which is not only higher than projected last year, but an improvement over previous years.
7. A further contribution factor to the positive variation is the delivery of new homes from the New Build programme, which are generally let at affordable rent levels.
8. **Sheltered Housing Modernisation:** The revenue variation is due to lower than forecast expenditure on decants.
9. **Queens Court:** Expenditure of £130k – See commentary in Appendix B.
10. **Funding:** There is a reduction in the level of financing from Capital receipts owing to the reduced level of expenditure within the HRA's capital programme. :
 - a. Shared ownership and other receipts - £449k variation
 - b. HCA grant received - £33k of unapplied grant from 2015/16 being utilised
 - c. Application of RTB receipts to be reviewed at year end once the final outturn position is certain.

Appendix B – Capital Variations**New Homes and Regeneration £0.475m additional expenditure**

1. The New Homes and Regeneration Programme continues to deliver new homes as planned. Members will recall that the budgets for the New Build schemes were reprofiled during the year to reflect the revised cashflow forecast. As noted under risks and uncertainties, additional expenditure of £1.376m is required to achieve the outturn forecasts indicated, which may be subject to some change depending on the valuation of works completed by 31 March..
2. Schemes highlighted as differing from the revised budget profile for the year.
 - a. **Leonard Stanley - £181k** of expenditure which is more in line with the original budget allocation (£2.227m)
 - b. **Top of Town - £233k** of additional expenditure (all phases)
 - c. **Contingency – (£211k)** essentially supporting these schemes has not been spent and can be netted-off against the expenditure above.

Other capital works £2.039m under budget

3. Capital works budgets were revised downward by £2.590m in December to reflect the deferment of expenditure as part of the HRA Action Plan. Further capital slippage of £1.045m is forecast. As noted under risks and uncertainties, additional expenditure of £1.666m is required to achieve the outturn forecasts indicated.
 - a. **Central Heating - £134k underspend.** Despite a high volume of critical failure works being undertaken we are dealing with those efficiently. A credit of £56k from the Central Heating Fund (CFH) was received in year.
 - b. **Disabled Adaptations - £129k underspend.** These works are demand led and there has been a lower volume of DNA referrals than in previous years.
 - c. **Kitchens and Bathrooms £304k underspend.** Works are being validated and if appropriate moved into future programmes if elements do not need replacing i.e. if a kitchen or bathroom has several years of life left they are reprofiled into future programmes
 - d. **Major Voids - £150k underspend.** This budget is demand led where there have been cost reductions, increased intelligence from pre termination inspections has assisted this process
 - e. **Asbestos/Radon - £100k underspend.** All asbestos is identified and managed safely and where appropriate removed rather than encapsulated where there is any indication of risk. In many situations leaving undisturbed asbestos may be the safest option which is then addressed through void or programmed works.
 - f. **Damp works/Insulation - £90k slippage.** Works have been deferred to future years and realigned with other planned works programmes.

- g. **Non-Traditional properties - £37k slippage.** Initial pilot programme was successfully delivered. All future financial commitment is subject to validation and financial appraisal in accordance with the approved strategy and guidance.
 - h. **Door Entry - £175k slippage** Procurement was initially deferred as this work stream had a degree of flexibility which provided some comfort to ensure resource certainty in case additional savings were required to maintain HRA balances in-year. Door entry in our properties are working correctly and this procurement will enhance and replace systems. Consequently this is not an immediate priority and as such delivery will now begin in 2017/18.
 - i. **Professional fees (reclassification of ineligible expenditure from capital to revenue).** This budget will be moved from capital to revenue in future years.
 - j. **External Works - £723k slippage.** Delays in starting on site, and the poor performance and delivery of the contractors have been a factor. This has been managed robustly by officers and outstanding works will be carried forward into future year's programmes. The aim is to ensure works are properly carried out, validated and provide value for money.
4. **Sheltered Housing Modernisation:** The main variance is on Capital due to an allowance for options appraisals that has not been required in this financial year and costs of remodelling units falling across two financial years– all of the ex-wardens properties will have been brought back into use in 2017/18.
5. **Queens Court** – Capital and Revenue combined - £130k and £170k funded from balances. It was anticipated that it would take up to 2 years to progress the project to a point where the property could be disposed on the open market. The HRA MTFP allowed for £400k of reserve funding across 2017/18 and 2018/19, but given the project has progressed more quickly, the revenue and capital buy-back costs will be funded from HRA working balances in the current financial year. A capital receipt of £1.5m to £2.0m was forecast in the MTFP in 2018/19, although this may be realised sooner given the progress to date.



Energy Strategy

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Revision record		
Date	Rev	Details
09/12/16	1_0	Incomplete draft Issued for comment
10/02/17	1_1	Complete draft issued for comment
15/02/17	1_2	Colour template changed to Stroud corporate and typo's addressed
27/02/17	1_3	Comments integrated from internal SDC consultation on v1_2

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Executive Summary

This document sets out Stroud District Council's (SDC) Strategy for improving the energy performance of the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) properties and replaces the existing Tenant Services Energy Strategy (last updated in October 2012).

The key aims of this Energy Strategy are to:

- Relieve fuel poverty and
- Maximise carbon reduction in line with the Council's existing and future agreed targets.

It applies to all dwellings that are owned and managed by SDC, including communal areas of flats and sheltered housing schemes and shops where appropriate, but excludes garages.

The Strategy has been developed following the completion of a comprehensive energy scenario modelling exercise (of the domestic portfolio) to assess the best ways for SDC to improve the energy efficiency across its housing stock portfolio.

Many of the low-cost improvements have already been completed on the majority of homes where practicable. Therefore an increasing proportion of the improvements still required in the stock are to the more challenging "Hard to Treat" homes, which will now need significant and targeted investment.

With 5,200 homes for rent, around 340 of them were built prior to 1930, a further 600 have non-traditional wall construction, and a significant number of the estimated 1,000 homes with uninsulated cavity walls are likely to need some specialist treatment. These groups will require significant investment to improve their thermal efficiency.

Around 24% of the stock currently has no mains gas connection. While around 500 of these now have modern electric heat-pump wet heating systems, a further 700 need significant improvements to make their heating more affordable for occupants and reduce carbon emissions.

Improving the energy performance of the Council's housing stock presents a major challenge. This will be achieved by targeting our resources on measures which provides the Council, and tenants with the greatest return on investment. Encouraging behavioural change (around how energy and heating systems are used) can also contribute to efficiency and affordability, so tenant, staff and stakeholder education is an important additional factor towards reaching our objectives.

A vital component of this Strategy is a detailed list of actions that will be shown in a rolling **Five Year Action Plan** (Appendix Three). These actions along with a set of overriding Aims and Objectives have been developed by a cross-department stakeholder group (Appendix One). The implementation of the action plan will be overseen by the **Energy Strategy Steering Group (ESSG)**, who will monitor its progress and ensure that any changes made to the plan are appropriate in the context of the aims and priorities of this strategy.

This Energy Strategy complements the Corporate Asset Management Strategy, and the Non-Traditional Homes Strategy, as well as other key corporate and departmental

documents which underpin the Councils guiding principles and commitment to reducing carbon, and addressing environmental issues in a responsible way. It will also refer to a new Affordable Warmth Strategy which will be developed to complement existing and future aspirational aims.

Strategy Objectives

The overall objective of the Energy Strategy is to relieve fuel poverty and maximise carbon reduction in line with the Council's existing and future agreed targets.

This Strategy complements the Corporate Asset Management Strategy, which provides direction to overall investment decisions for the Council's housing stock. Significant investment will be required to ensure the necessary improvements to the energy efficiency of the housing stock. Decisions will need to be made prioritising homes for improvement, and target those which may not be able to be brought up to acceptable standards within the boundaries of any existing or future financial or technological constraints.

Direct funding will be utilised where available, alternatively we will seek finance from external sources where appropriate. We recognise that behavioural change will be key to the long term sustainability and viability of our stock, and will help to support investment in energy improvement works. Tenants may benefit from educational, or intervention strategies to help support them where new technologies (such as Air Source Heat Pumps) are installed.

We need an Energy Strategy for the housing we own and manage in order to:

- Ensure affordable warmth for current and prospective tenants
- Achieve compliance with legal and regulatory requirements for Housing
- Make progress towards meeting carbon reduction targets
- Contribute towards improving the health and well-being of tenants
- Ensure the effective usage of diminishing energy resources
- Allow for timely response to opportunities for drawing in external assistance
- Provide a framework for officers and stakeholders to ensure investment is targeted where the greatest need is required
- Develop the Councils capacity to understand and manage demand over time by identifying and sharing learning outcomes with all stakeholders
- Developing a preventative approach and be proactive in seeking opportunities to avoid demand arising in the first place by addressing the root-causes
- Ensure requirement is aligned with maintenance programmed works development and delivery
- Underpin and support strategic investment planning decisions

Action Plan

This strategy is supported by, and implemented according to a rolling five year Action Plan designed to ensure that the overall objectives of the strategy are being delivered. This Action Plan is attached to this Strategy as Appendix Three. Objectives will additionally be supported by ensuring alignment with the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and business objectives.

To maintain momentum and direction, the progress of each action will be reviewed on a six monthly basis. These reviews would also allow for minor revisions where they would provide appropriate response to changing conditions (e.g. additional external funding becoming available for certain measures, or if funding were to be reduced, programmes could be prioritised to minimise any detrimental impact).

In order to ensure relevancy, the strategy and Action Plan will be fully reviewed every two years by the Energy Strategy Steering Group. Any proposed changes to the Strategy or Action Plan other than those driven by legislation or regulatory requirement are to be brought back before the Housing Committee or relevant authorising body for agreement and ratification. Proposed changes will be appropriate in the context of the aims and priorities of this Strategy.

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Strategy Context

The Council's housing stock accommodates some of the most vulnerable people in our community. The cost of energy is rising and the long-term security of fuel supply for the UK is a major concern for UK Government.

The largest consumption of domestic energy is for heating, followed by hot water, cooking and lighting, followed by electrical appliances. To ensure maximum impact, we will therefore need to improve our stocks thermal insulation and the efficiency of heating systems, including switching fuels where it is viable and sustainable to do so. We will also need to help tenants contribute to reducing energy consumption through changing how they use it.

Most of the low-cost insulation measures possible to be undertaken on Stroud District Council's (SDC) housing stock have already been carried out. Most of what remains are within the sub category group "Hard to Treat" (HTT) homes which includes those which are:

- Off the gas network
- Of solid wall construction (such as Victorian terraced)
- Are of non-traditional construction
- Have no loft space (Such as flats)
- Those located within restricted locations (such as conservation or areas of outstanding natural beauty)

Approximately 1,700 (30%) of Stroud District Council (SDC) homes fall into one or more of these categories and will require significant investment to improve energy efficiency. The single most significant factor preventing affordable improvement is the large number of properties which are "off gas" and heated with night storage, oil or solid fuel. For these homes renewable solutions may be a viable, affordable alternative. Where the fabric of a building has a poor thermal performance, it can cost more to overhaul it than to replace it. New homes can be designed and built to very high energy efficiency standards. The performance of buildings, property, and performance is covered within the Council's Corporate Asset Management Strategy, and New Build Development Client Brief.

Most initiatives are likely to be long term projects, but fuel poverty is an immediate concern for tenants, especially in "hard to treat" homes. The worst homes need to be prioritised but against the competing priority of maintaining and improving homes in other ways, and any significant investment on energy improvements must be measured as part of an Asset Performance Assessment as set out in the Corporate Asset Management Strategy.

The Energy Strategy will be implemented in the context of the legal and regulatory environment within which the Council operates, its strategic aims, and local and national targets to which Stroud is committed.

- The importance of physical assets in delivering organisational objectives and outcomes
- The quality of existing physical assets in terms of condition and asset performance
- The long term sustainability and viability of for Stroud, existing and future tenants

- The assets needed to meet or sustain current levels of service.

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Strategic Linkage

Environmental Policy 2017

Stroud District Council is committed to continuously improving the environment by protecting and shaping our high quality natural and built surroundings, reducing pollution, mitigating the impacts and adapting to the effects of climate change, while encouraging and supporting others to do the same, for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors to the Stroud District.

The Council has direct powers and responsibilities in planning and land use, environmental health, waste management, housing, leisure and economic development. It is also a significant resource user and employer. It therefore recognises that its operations and service delivery have a major impact on the environment.

Stroud District Council will achieve its commitment by maintaining an environmental management system - currently EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) - to continuously monitor progress.

The Council will also ensure compliance with all relevant environmental legislation, guidance and best practice principles to fulfil its statutory environmental responsibilities

Corporate Asset management Strategy (CAMS)

The Corporate Asset Management Strategy sets out how we will make the best use of existing assets and available resources to provide decent, affordable council housing. We provide affordable housing for many of the most vulnerable people in our communities, and statically this means that many of our tenants are likely to fall into fuel poverty. Energy efficiency needs to be a key consideration in determining the future viability of “hard to treat” properties.

It is essential therefore that there is clear and consistent process for integrating the objectives and actions from this Energy Strategy and the CAMS. A core aspect of this will be ensuring that work carried out by Stroud to model the domestic stock under different energy reduction measures; will be referenced in any asset management decisions regarding investment in the housing stock.

Non Traditional Homes Strategy (NTHS)

Properties of non-traditional construction form a significant percentage of Stroud’s overall stock make up, and are included within the sub category HTT. Stroud has redeveloped a number of sites where the worst performing units were located, however a significant number still remain within the portfolio which require attention.

Those remaining assets will require significant investment to increase the thermal properties up to an acceptable level. The NTHS has synergy and direct linkage into this strategy.

Assets

This strategy applies to all dwellings that fall within the HRA, including communal areas of flats and sheltered housing schemes and shops where appropriate, but excluding garages.

Newly built properties are constructed to current building regulations which include high energy efficiency standards and whilst they are included within the scope of this strategy they are not likely to be a priority.

A primary element of the Five Year Action Plan will be to ensure that maximum use is made of energy performance data already gathered, and that continual updating of this takes place.

Condition of Assets

The strategy requires comprehensive up-to-date information on the energy efficiency of our properties. The energy efficiency of homes can be measured using the Energy Performance Certificate rating (EPC). A higher EPC rating means a more energy efficient home. This will be used to measure the effectiveness of improvements in energy efficiency.

Energy information is currently obtained from stock condition surveys which are updated by the issue of an EPC whenever a property becomes void. The energy data will be updated for individual properties whenever they are subject to energy efficiency works either through repair/replacement of failed components or as part of a programme of works. The data will be held in the asset management system to facilitate resource planning.

In 2016 Stroud commissioned the development of an Energy Baseline and Scenario Modelling exercise with the objective of baselining the domestic portfolio using all available stock data to provide as accurate a representation as possible. Existing programmes were modelled to show the improvement in baseline, and to illustrate what might be achievable, a number of different scenarios were then modelled using the baseline as a reference point.

Figure 1 shows the baseline, broken down by average SAP, average fuel bill, average CO₂ emissions, and total CO₂ emissions. It should be noted that this is effectively a 'snapshot' in time and is only as accurate as the data used to develop it. In order to maintain an accurate picture of the existing energy performance of our domestic properties this should be reviewed regularly (ideally every year or when significant amounts of updated property data becomes available).

Average SAP	64.32
Average fuel bill	£1,105
Average CO ₂ emissions (Tonnes/yr)	3.1
Total CO ₂ emissions (Tonnes/yr)	15,620

FIGURE 1: SAP BASELINE - SDC DOMESTIC STOCK

Figure 2 shows the distribution of Stroud domestic properties in terms of SAP.

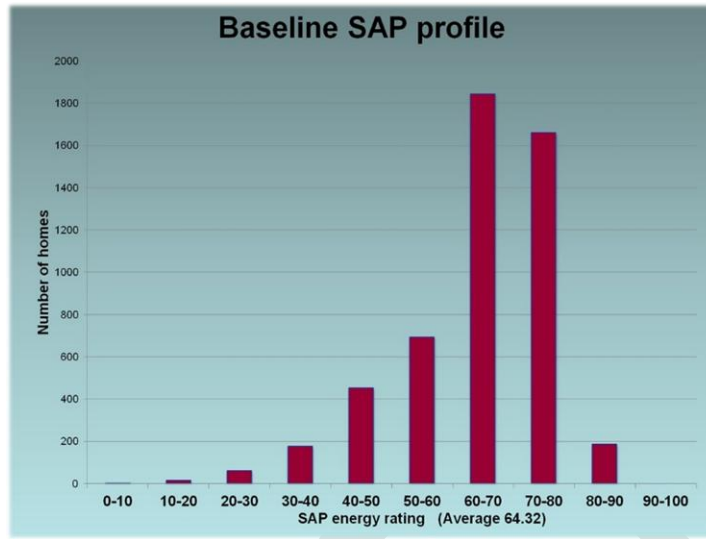


FIGURE 2: BASELINE SAP PROFILE

Drivers

Development of this Energy Strategy has involved a detailed stakeholder engagement exercise involving SDC staff (cross departmental representation), Councillors and Tenant representatives. The drivers outlined below are a summary of those identified during the stakeholders workshops in parallel with a review of the previous SDC Energy Strategy.

Fuel Poverty

Contributory factors that can create fuel poverty include:

- Low income
- High energy prices
- Poorly insulated home
- Inefficient heating systems & controls
- Under occupation

A simplified definition of fuel poverty is where a household has a low income so cannot afford to spend enough on fuel to achieve adequate “standard” temperatures in their home.

More precisely, it is defined by the Fuel Poverty Indicator England that now uses: the “Low Income High Cost” definition, which states that a household is in fuel poverty if:

- They have “standard” fuel costs that are above average (the national median level);
- Were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

Unlike the previous indicator measuring fuel poverty (10% of income), the Low Income High Cost definition is a relative measure as it compares households to the national median bill and income - thereby measuring the contemporary trends and are reflected in both these measures.

Whichever definition is used, a household at risk of fuel poverty is likely to face a difficult choice between a cold home or unaffordable fuel bills. In reducing fuel poverty, Stroud is helping residents achieve Affordable Warmth and sustaining tenancies.

Health and Wellbeing

Fuel poverty has serious implications for the health of the households and communities it affects. Each winter, mortality rates increase by 19% in England (Department of Health, 2011), and whilst not all of this can be attributable to fuel poverty, it is important to note that,

“Countries which have more energy efficient housing have lower excess winter deaths”

(Marmot Review Team, 2011, p.9)

In a cold home, there is a close correlation between excess winter deaths, cardio-vascular disease, respiratory problems and mental health. Damp conditions also encourage dust mite and mould growth and can aggravate asthma and other allergies. Children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable to cold conditions.

As well as physical health, social health is also affected as fuel poverty alleviation reduces anti-social behaviour, educational impacts and other associated social problems. Cold damp homes are less attractive to invite visitors into, tending to reinforce social isolation.

Homes with only one room being heated provide less opportunity for studying away from distractions, potentially hindering educational achievement. Poor health results in more absenteeism from school and work, having both learning and economic consequences.

In a home that is hard to heat, occupants are likely to have to choose between a cold home, and a warmer home but with high fuel bills, which can cause financial problems for households on low income. The direct financial problems of debt may also be compounded with mental health problems such as stress or depression arising from the debt.

Clearly fuel poverty can blight the lives of individual households in a number of ways, and therefore also affect the community they live in.

Sustainability

Supplies of fossil fuels are finite. The UK is already a net importer of gas and oil as North Sea reserves become increasingly depleted. Known global conventional oil reserves should meet projected demand for 20-30 years and gas reserves a little longer. Further reserves have been identified by exploration, although this will increasingly need to be in less accessible and more environmentally sensitive areas (such as US proposals to explore for oil in Antarctica).

Additional sources are potentially available but would require environmentally hazardous processes like gas from “fracking” or decimating large areas of land and inputting significant amounts of energy to extract oil from tar sands. Predictions of the global exhaustion of fossil fuels are uncertain and have regularly been revised as exploration identifies more reserves, but there is also a moral question of whether we should exploit such resources to exhaustion over a relatively short time, or leave some reserves for future generations.

Some energy will always be needed to meet our needs, but these needs can be met more sustainably in the long term by improving efficiency and shifting towards renewable energy with appropriate energy storage to compensate for any intermittency of production. As conventional fuels become scarce their price will rise. So a strategic shift towards more sustainable and renewable sources is also a long term Affordable Warmth Strategy.

We also acknowledge that due to the local topography and geology, the risk of flooding in the district is of significant concern, not only in the present day but even more so as the effects of climate change become more pronounced.

Carbon Reduction

While exploration may extend the known reserves of fossil fuels, scientists agree that burning fossil fuels on the current scale is affecting our climate, and this needs to be addressed urgently. The average global temperature is rising, giving us the rather benign sounding term “global warming”, but the effects of climate change are impacting in different and potentially catastrophic ways around the world. For example: low-lying land is prone to flooding in areas affected directly by rising sea levels.

In England we are likely to see higher risks of drought and heat stress in summer and flooding and wind-damage in winter, resulting in greater summer mortality, disruption, and insurance and repair costs. (For example, floods in autumn 2000 cost the UK £1bn whilst the August heat wave of 2003 is estimated to have resulted in 2000 deaths in England alone). Other risks which will have a direct impact on Stroud and its tenants are worsening air quality and increased subsidence as clay soils increasingly dry out in the summer months.

No single organisation has responsibility for these issues, yet we all suffer the consequences of climate change, and many organisations struggle to cope with the health and social impacts of fuel poverty.

Around 25% of energy used in the UK is used in housing and 50% of carbon emissions are generated by buildings and the processes within them. Therefore, Social Housing Landlords, who not only manage large housing stocks but also operate from large office buildings, are in a position to make a particularly significant impact.

By including lower carbon emissions as an important aim of this energy strategy, Stroud is playing its part in helping residents whilst also meeting other economic, environmental and social objectives.

Sustainable Re-investment

Stroud recognises that care needs to be taken not to re-invest in poor performing areas at the expense of all others, nor should high risk re-investment occur without due consideration, through an option appraisal. Stroud’s Obsolescence Procedure Guide sets out the framework and pathway which will need to be followed before investment is committed.

Generally investment will be prioritised with a bias toward those units identified through the appraisal process, which are considered to be low risk and high demand.

On simple analysis, when Stroud pays for improvements to its housing stock the only obvious benefit is for the tenants in the form of better thermal comfort and/or lower fuel bills. Of course, as a Social Housing Landlord, Stroud does not require strict financial “Return on Investment” to justify paying for improvements to housing stock although it is important to consider value for money. Appraisal will also take due regard of the Egan principles “Assessing Sustainable Communities”.

By providing homes people choose to, and aspire to live in, brings with it a number of indirect financial benefits, such as:

- Fewer voids and associated costs
- Fewer complaints and repairs call-outs
- Lower property maintenance costs (e.g. reduced mould/condensation damage)
- Tenants will have more disposable income to reinvest in the local economy
- Reduced rent arrears

Decent Homes Standard

When the Decent Homes Standard was introduced in 2000, it was to raise standards in social housing alone, but was later extended to vulnerable people living in private sector accommodation. The Decent Homes Standard is a technical standard which sets the minimum criteria to attain 'decency'. The criteria that make up the Decent Homes Standard are shown in Appendix Two.

The Decent Homes Standard has been a major driver for improving thermal insulation in social housing. This is important in reducing the heating energy consumption in all properties, but particularly in those that are off-gas.

Stroud has recognised that better standards of insulation are needed help improve the thermal properties of its homes, regardless of the types of primary heating systems which are installed. As a minimum, Stroud will be installing cavity wall insulation and improving the roof insulation of its homes to modern standards where it is possible to do so.

When carrying out refurbishment work on buildings owned by SDC, we will actively seek to go beyond the minimum level of insulation required to meet regulations where it is practically and economically feasible to do so.

Social Value

Social value remains an important part of our commitment to stakeholders notwithstanding the pressure of legislative changes within the Social Housing sector, and the continued drive to ensure value for money.

Social value is difficult to define as it goes beyond bricks and mortar, but we realise that the communities we work in need to be successful, economically, socially, and environmentally. We want our communities to be a place where people want to live and work as a matter of choice.

We will consider what is beneficial in the context of local needs or particular strategic objectives in determining the impact of investment decisions.

Tenant expectations

Not all the demands to improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock are derived through external drivers and internal policy. Growing competition to attract the best tenants, rising energy costs, and a more informed client has seen tenant expectations rise. Tenants are more aware of what is achievable from the information provided on Energy Performance Certificates (EPC).

Improving the energy efficiency of homes will mean that tenants will live in warmer homes with the potential to manage their energy consumption more efficiently, giving them the scope to reduce their fuel bills.

Creating jobs and stimulating economies through investment in the built environment

This strategy supports Stroud's Jobs and Growth Plan, through the delivery of local projects.

Stroud's Corporate Delivery Plan 2014-2018 has five key strands:

- **Economy:** Help local people and businesses grow the local economy and increase employment
- **Affordable Housing:** Provide affordable, decent and social housing
- **Environment:** Help the community minimize its carbon footprint, adapt to climate change and recycle more
- **Resources:** Provide value for money to taxpayers and high quality services to our customers
- **Health & Wellbeing:** Promote the health and well being of our communities and work with others to deliver the public health agenda

Helping our tenants to reduce their energy bills will enable them to have more disposable income which they may choose to spend locally. Building green and putting people first continues to prove itself important, past the immediate objectives of simply reducing costs.

Through sharing, collaboration, education, and training we aim to ensure that the energy solutions we provide are fit for the future.

Our Vision

To help meet the challenges we face both as an organisation, and for our existing and future tenants, Stroud will strive to become a leading Social Housing provider offering homes which are, warm, high quality, energy efficient, and which produce low levels of carbon in line with our overall target to reduce carbon emissions by 80% (compared to 1990 levels) as required by the 2008 Climate Change Act.

Reducing carbon through effective and efficient investment in our assets, for the benefit of tenants is a key aspiration for Stroud.

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Future Proofing

Innovation

New and emerging technologies will be a key component in transforming the UK's energy infrastructure from carbon intensive and fossil fuel focused to a less carbon intensive one that is in keeping with the CCA's 80% reduction target relative to 1990 levels. Grid electricity is likely to become less carbon intensive over time as large fossil fuelled electricity generators go off-line and the level and scale of renewables contributing to the national grid increases.

Stroud believes that the low-carbon future of heating our homes is likely to be predominantly electric with heating and hot water systems being designed so that the peak periods are smoothed out; this means less instantaneous generation and greater use of hot water storage, thermal mass and Passivhaus performance.

At a local level Stroud has a significant proportion of electrically heated dwellings that are not on main gas, and has already installed a number of electric air to water heat pumps. We will keep firmly abreast of innovations in the field of energy generation and energy efficiency and seek to apply these principles across our own building portfolio where possible.

Champions

In order to fulfil an aspiration to become one of the foremost social housing providers in providing low-carbon energy efficient homes, Stroud will need to demonstrate leadership in this area both internally to our tenants, external partners and associated organisations, but also to our peers in the social housing sector.

To do this we will actively seek out opportunities to talk and present at forums, exhibitions, conferences and produce written material about our projects and experiences. We will draw on external expertise/support where necessary but will establish a number of energy champions ourselves who can offer advice and support to our tenants in their homes about cutting out energy waste, and using existing technologies as efficiently as possible.

We are committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders, and to ensure focus is maintained on delivery of the vision we will ensure suitable monitoring and review processes are in place.

Risks

The Energy Strategy Steering Group will be tasked with reviewing potential risks to achieving the objectives in the Energy Strategy. Specifically, this will be potential risks set out in the following section, however others may arise that cannot be foreseen and all should be reviewed on a regular (quarterly) basis in order to assess the impact on this Energy Strategy.

Policy

The overarching policy underpinning this strategy is the Climate Change Act 2008 which is referred to in our vision. This is an Act of Parliament and makes it the duty of the Secretary of State to ensure that the net UK carbon account for all six Kyoto greenhouse gases for the year 2050 is at least 80% lower than the 1990 baseline to help avoid dangerous climate change.

The Act aims to enable the UK to become a low carbon economy and gives Ministers powers to introduce measures necessary to achieve the targets. There is a risk therefore that different incentives/measures/technologies etc may or may not be introduced by the current or successive Governments in order to maintain this underlying trajectory.

Stroud should therefore keep well abreast of all Government consultations, policy statements on energy policy at a national level to ensure we are informed and can amend our own Energy Strategy accordingly.

Welfare reform

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished Council Tax Benefit; in its place Councils were required to develop a local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS). Historical information shows a reduction in the number of individuals entitled to the LCTS thereby reducing the cost of the scheme to SDC. See Table 1.

Year	Case Count	Amount (£)
2013/14	7,116	£6,428,693
2014/15	6,891	£6,184,601
2015/16	6,582	£5,970,791
2016/17	6,343	£5,810,384

TABLE 1: LCTS HISTORICAL DATA

However there remains a risk that the costs of running the LCTS may increase in future years due to changes in council tax rates and caseload, and this may have an impact upon the financial resources SDC is able to commit elsewhere such as in implementing all objectives set out in our Energy Strategy.

Political

We would anticipate the most significant political risk over the next few years is likely to be BREXIT and this is addressed separately below. However, local elections and changes in Local and National Government all present possible risks through changes in policy and ambition primarily.

Brexit

We respect the UK's decision through a national referendum to withdraw from the European Union (EU). We will work collaboratively with the Local Government Association, District Council Network, our own Members of Parliament and others who are in direct contact with the UK Government to understand and plan for any impacts this may have on Stroud District Council.

We will also work closely with our partners in the public sector to examine the impact on public sector finances affecting all public services in the sector.

As a Local Authority, we have a primary role as community leaders and therefore a responsibility to ensure (as far as we are able to) that the economic, social, environmental and financial implications of this decision on our community and our businesses are managed well.

We understand that much will depend upon the pace and nature of negotiations between the UK Government and the EU. We are committed to the achieving the aims and objectives set out in this strategy - however we will need to review commitments in light of any decisions regarding the Government's BREXIT strategy as more information becomes available.

Review periods

The Energy Strategy Steering Group will meet twice a year as a minimum. The implementation of the Energy Strategy Action Plan will be reviewed in detail at these meetings, progress assessed against expectations, and risks discussed so a suitable risk management approach is developed.

Annually, the Energy Strategy will be reviewed in detail by the ESSG. The Energy Strategy should be considered a 'live document' and updated as required on an annual basis in order to ensure it reflects any changes that have occurred (maybe due to internal and external drivers or other influences) and have rendered a section of the document or an action as out of date.

Training for frontline staff

It will not be possible to achieve all the core aims and supporting objectives underpinning the Energy Action Plan unless awareness of energy efficiency is embedded throughout our staff structure, particularly in those that are front of house and are interacting with tenants regularly whether that is face to face, over the phone or through other indirect communications.

All front line staff will receive training to expand and develop their knowledge on reducing energy use, spotting energy saving opportunities and helping tenants to reduce their carbon footprint through behavioural change.

Behavioural change

Behavioural change is acknowledged by Stroud as being an important method of positively influencing our tenants to make changes to lifestyles to facilitate energy savings. Frontline staff that are going into tenants dwellings on a regular basis as part of normal duties have a fantastic opportunity to give advice and bring about positive change, by:

- Establishing tenant priorities and working with them to determine innovative ways to encourage lifestyle changes
- Using heating controls to provide optimum efficiency
- Understanding energy bills and where current practices could potentially be improved
- Feeding back information obtained from positive behavioural change results with tenants into the Tenants Handbook so this information is shared

Stroud understand that if we are to achieve our vision, we will need to tackle and reduce the energy use in all our buildings through a combination of direct energy saving measures and alternative methods of heat and power generation, but also through awareness raising in energy in our own staff and our tenants.

We also accept that any initiatives/programmes introduced need to be on a 'rolling' basis to reflect the fact that staff and tenants move on, and that this knowledge needs to be maintained and developed.

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Action Plan

This strategy is supported by a five year Action Plan (see Appendix) designed to ensure that the overall objectives of the strategy are being delivered. In order to ensure relevancy, the strategy and Action Plan will be reviewed and updated every 12 months by the ESSG.

The Action Plan is structured per measure as shown in Table 1.

Action	Party/Dept responsible	Start date	Finish/due date	Resources req'd	Desired outcome	Evaluation plan
<i>e.g to develop an SDC healthy homes standard to ensure correct tenant education and advice across the service</i>						

TABLE 2: ACTION PLAN FORMAT

Appendix One – Aims & Objectives

Tables 2 and 3 lists the agreed set of overarching aims and objectives that have been identified by the Energy Strategy Steering Group in order to drive the Action Plan for the next 5 years.

The aims state our intended direction and aspirations:

Aim No	Description
1	Provide healthy homes
2	Ensure effective and efficient use of council resources
3	Provide our tenants with affordable warmth
4	Reduce CO ₂ emissions in line with Government targets
5	Become a leading housing provider for energy management

TABLE 3: ENERGY STRATEGY AIMS

The objectives state how we will achieve our aims and what it will look like when we have achieved it.

Objective No	Description
1	Reduce condensation mould growth issues
2	Introduce a benchmarking and peer review scheme
3	Promote health and wellbeing
4	Increase average SAP rating of SDC SH stock
5	Identify new technologies/opportunities that can be implemented cost effectively
6	Co-ordinate across SDC to ensure joint working
7	Training and education for colleagues & customers
8	Develop an Affordable Warmth strategy
9	Adopt the 'Passivhaus' standard into new build and investigate integration into retrofit
10	Maximise funding opportunities for HRA

TABLE 4: ENERGY STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

The Action Plan shows the actions and steps we need to take in order to achieve the objectives in Table 3, and the overarching aims in Table 2.

Appendix Two – Definitions

SAP

The energy efficiency of homes can be measured using the SAP energy rating (UK Government's Standard Assessment Procedure). The SAP energy rating scale ranges from 0 to 100, where a higher rating means a more energy efficient home. It is a non-linear scale that indicates relative annual fuel costs (heating & lighting) per square metre of floor area. This scale is more useful than the SAP band A-G scale.

Although the assessment methodology is to a large extent standardised, a number of versions and revisions have come into use over the years, so it is important to ensure the same version has been used when comparing results. SDC currently uses SAP2012.

Decent Homes

The Decent Homes Standard has been a major driver for improving thermal insulation in social housing.

The four criteria which make up the Decent Homes Standard are:

- It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing
- It is in a reasonable state of repair
- It has reasonably modern facilities and services
- It has a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

Appendix Three – Action Plan

See attached document 'Energy Action Plan.doc'

DRAFT

Steering Group

AIMS

- Provide healthy homes
- Ensure effective and efficient use of council resources
- Provide our tenants with affordable warmth
- Reduce CO2 Emissions in line with Government targets
- Become a Leading Housing Provider for energy management

OBJECTIVE

1. Reduce Condensation Mould Growth Issues

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	EVALUATION PLAN
To develop an SDC Healthy Homes Standard to ensure correct tenant education and advice across Tenant Services						
Carry out a review of existing communications on damp & mould						
Carry out a review of training on damp & mould, and look to get damp & mould on E-Training for all staff to provide awareness on the issues we may come across						

OBJECTIVE

2. Increase the average SAP rating of SDC stock

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	EVALUATION PLAN
Bring all properties where reasonably practicable to do so, up to sector average values as a minimum						

Increase the SAP by x amount, once worked out over an agreed period of x amount of years						
Fully utilize the energy module in Keystone, Quarterly reports on SAP improvements, develop planned programmes using SAP data						

OBJECTIVE

3. Training & Education for colleagues and customers

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	EVALUATION PLAN
Ascertain staff training gaps						
Develop and implement training programme						
Provide Energy Angels training to key SDC staff and tenants						
Encourage behaviour change by offering tenants ongoing, high quality and easy to understand advice						

OBJECTIVE

4. Maximise funding opportunities for HRA

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	EVALUATION PLAN
Carryout regular reviews of the annual Delivery Plan allowances, supply chain costs, and available grant						
Maximise resources through collaborative working with internal and external partners						

OBJECTIVE

5. Implement an energy benchmarking accreditation system (e.g. SHIFT)

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	EVALUATION PLAN
Agree what areas of the service need to be benchmarked within the strategy						
Identify members to form a working/steering group						
Research which benchmarking systems are out there and recommend which one(s) to adopt						

OBJECTIVE

6. Identify new technologies/opportunities that can be implemented cost effectively

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	EVALUATION PLAN
Market Research against new technologies against other housing providers						
Trials of new innovations/technologies on our stock & produce progress report to identify cost efficiencies						
Actively look for funding opportunities within energy improvement works						

OBJECTIVE

7. Develop an Affordable Warmth strategy

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	EVALUATION PLAN
Investigate SDC affordable warmth policy and how it links to SDC housing						
Integrate requirements of affordable warmth strategy into housing policies						

OBJECTIVE

8. Promote health & wellbeing

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	EVALUATION PLAN
To work with SDC corporate Health & Wellbeing Team to promote a consistent approach across the whole of the district/healthy housing strategy						
Identify our Health & Wellbeing priorities through the Steering Group						
Investigate what Health & Wellbeing opportunities are available through voluntary partners/stakeholders						
To be mindful of the affordable warmth strategy, some actions may involve cross working						

OBJECTIVE

9. Co-ordinate across SDC to ensure joint working

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	EVALUATION PLAN
Put in place Energy Strategy Steering Group (EESG)						
Utilise internal staff as energy champions						
Set up training & briefing sessions to all client facing staff						
Procurement to all other SDC Departments & potential joint procurement ventures						

OBJECTIVE

10. Adopt the Passivhaus standard into New Build and investigate integration into retrofit

Action	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	EVALUATION PLAN
Where financially and technically practicable to do so adopt Passivhaus standards/principals for new housing and retrofit projects						

Use grants where available to help fund work streams						
Keep a watching brief on related low/zero carbon Government Policy and consultations						



Dear Chief Executive

Community Housing Fund

You may recall that, at Budget 2016, a £60 million fund was announced to support community-led housing developments in areas where the impact of second homes is particularly acute. As part of this commitment, I am pleased to inform you that your local authority has been allocated funding for 2016/17 financial year, as shown in the Annex below.

The fund will enable local community groups deliver affordable housing units of mixed tenure on sites which are likely to be of little interest to mainstream housebuilders and will thereby contribute to the overall national effort to boost housing supply. The fund will also help build collaboration, skills and supply chains at a local level to promote the sustainability of this approach to housebuilding. The fund will enable capital investment, technical support and revenue to be provided to make more schemes viable and significantly increase community groups' current delivery pipelines. The funding is allocated between local authorities proportionate to the number of holiday homes in the local area and taking account of the affordability of housing to local people.

In bringing this fund forward, the Department has worked closely with the National Community Land Trust Network and other members of the community-led housing sector. These organisations are well placed to offer advice on how the funds may be most effectively deployed (including, potentially, through registered providers of affordable housing) and are likely to get in touch with you to discuss the opportunities. The sector stakeholder groups have produced guidance to local authorities explaining what community-led housing is and how the grant funding may be used. This guidance is attached separately.

Payments of funding will be made in two tranches; the first being paid now. The second tranche will follow in early 2017 subject to your authority providing satisfactory evidence that the money is being spent in accordance with the objectives outlined in the Budget announcement. Similarly, from 2017/18 onwards, allocations will depend in part on how the 2016/17 allocation has been spent.

The Chancellor has asked that we review the outcomes achieved from the fund and the community-led housing delivery model at a later date. We would be grateful for your co-operation in helping us with that review.

Should you have any questions about this funding, please contact Nigel Kersey at: Nigel.Kersey@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

Two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature on the left is 'Isobel Stephen' and the second signature on the right is 'Emma Lindsell'.

Isobel Stephen and Emma Lindsell
Director, Housing Supply Directorate

Enc

ANNEX**Community Housing Fund - Grant Allocations to Local Authorities, 2016/17**

No.	Local Authority	Amount (£)
1	Adur	£48,819
2	Allerdale	£772,554
3	Arun	£706,119
4	Babergh	£189,741
5	Barnet	£89,083
6	Bournemouth UA	£744,369
7	Breckland	£181,689
8	Brent	£53,349
9	Brentwood	£8,053
10	Brighton and Hove	£464,539
11	Bromley	£62,408
12	Broxbourne	£7,046
13	Cambridge	£52,342
14	Camden	£134,379
15	Canterbury	£442,394
16	Castle Point	£20,132
17	Chelmsford	£20,635
18	Chichester	£1,386,067
19	Chiltern	£25,668
20	Christchurch	£417,229
21	City of London	£40,767
22	Copeland	£193,768
23	Cornwall UA	£5,117,980

24	Cotswold	£882,272
25	Craven	£605,964
26	Croydon	£43,283
27	Dacorum	£27,178
28	Derbyshire Dales	£383,509
29	Dover	£508,829
30	Ealing	£59,892
31	East Devon	£1,210,418
32	East Dorset	£158,034
33	East Hampshire	£99,652
34	East Hertfordshire	£36,237
35	East Lindsey	£2,250,723
36	East Riding of Yorkshire UA	£2,042,864
37	Eastbourne	£365,894
38	Eden	£938,640
39	Elmbridge	£44,793
40	Enfield	£29,191
41	Epping Forest	£32,211
42	Epsom and Ewell	£17,615
43	Forest of Dean	£111,228
44	Fylde	£440,381
45	Great Yarmouth	£652,770
46	Greenwich	£57,375
47	Guildford	£70,461
48	Hackney	£36,740
49	Hambleton	£195,277

50	Hammersmith & Fulham	£90,089
51	Haringey	£58,382
52	Harrogate	£585,832
53	Harrow	£37,747
54	Hart	£24,661
55	Hastings	£244,097
56	Havant	£264,228
57	Havering	£21,642
58	Herefordshire UA	£502,789
59	Hertsmere	£21,138
60	Hillingdon	£43,786
61	Horsham	£144,948
62	Hounslow	£57,375
63	Isle of Wight UA	£1,567,252
64	Isles of Scilly	£49,826
65	Islington	£74,991
66	Kensington & Chelsea	£225,978
67	Kings Lynn & West Norfolk	£1,781,152
68	Kingston upon Thames	£32,211
69	Lambeth	£87,573
70	Lancaster	£707,629
71	Lewes	£180,179
72	Lewisham	£37,747
73	Maldon	£190,748
74	Malvern Hills	£168,100
75	Merton	£39,257

76	Mid Devon	£131,359
77	Mid Suffolk	£225,475
78	Mid Sussex	£46,806
79	Mole Valley	£39,257
80	New Forest	£976,387
81	Newham	£35,230
82	North Devon	£667,869
83	North Dorset	£238,057
84	North East Lincolnshire UA	£203,833
85	North Norfolk	£2,436,942
86	Northumberland UA	£1,314,600
87	Oxford	£54,859
88	Poole UA	£765,508
89	Purbeck	£910,456
90	Redbridge	£42,780
91	Ribble Valley	£157,531
92	Richmond upon Thames	£77,507
93	Richmondshire	£493,730
94	Rochford	£16,105
95	Rother	£748,899
96	Rutland UA	£57,375
97	Ryedale	£431,322
98	Scarborough	£1,860,672
99	Sedgemoor	£485,174
100	Sevenoaks	£51,839
101	Shepway	£437,361

102	Shropshire UA	£580,296
103	South Bucks	£29,191
104	South Cambridgeshire	£50,329
105	South Hams	£1,881,307
106	South Lakeland	£2,357,421
107	South Oxfordshire	£139,915
108	South Somerset	£263,222
109	Southwark	£120,790
110	St Albans	£28,688
111	Stratford-on-Avon	£215,409
112	Stroud	£149,478
113	Suffolk Coastal	£1,524,473
114	Surrey Heath	£17,112
115	Sutton	£29,694
116	Swale	£341,232
117	Tandridge	£29,694
118	Teignbridge	£581,303
119	Tendring	£706,622
120	Thanet	£598,918
121	Three Rivers	£14,595
122	Tonbridge & Malling	£23,655
123	Torbay UA	£643,208
124	Torridge	£448,434
125	Tower Hamlets	£86,063
126	Tunbridge Wells	£66,938
127	Uttlesford	£34,224

128	Waltham Forest	£36,740
129	Wandsworth	£121,293
130	Watford	£6,040
131	Waveney	£685,484
132	Waverley	£75,997
133	Wealden	£301,472
134	West Devon	£247,620
135	West Dorset	£1,365,432
136	West Oxfordshire	£376,966
137	West Somerset	£574,760
138	Westminster	£343,245
139	Weymouth & Portland	£430,315
140	Wiltshire UA	£650,254
141	Winchester	£90,089
142	Windsor & Maidenhead UA	£103,175
143	Woking	£15,099
144	Wokingham UA	£49,826
145	Wychavon	£252,653
146	Wycombe	£115,254
147	Wyre	£377,973
148	Wyre Forest	£191,251
ENGLAND		£60,000,000

Community-led housing: What is it and what can it offer your local authority?

Guidance from the community-led housing sector

This guidance has been prepared by the community-led housing sector for officers and elected members. It:

- explains what community-led housing is;
- highlights the benefits how community-led housing can deliver on your strategic aspirations;
- highlights the availability of substantial government funding aimed at promoting the sector; and
- explains where further advice can be obtained on how to make the best use of this funding, secure the second tranche of funding, and realise the benefits of community-led housing in your area.

Community-led housing is about local people playing a leading and lasting role in solving local housing problems, creating genuinely affordable homes and strong communities in ways that are difficult to achieve through mainstream housing.

Benefits for local authorities

Community-led housing can bring significant benefits to local authorities. These include:

- mobilising public support for new homes and regeneration initiatives;
- reducing reliance on public services, for example addressing social care through building communities with mutual support for the elderly and vulnerable, and involving homeless people in the renovation of homes;
- providing a range of genuinely affordable housing in perpetuity, including rented homes that are not susceptible to the Right to Buy, and homes for those priced out of ownership;
- diversifying the local housebuilding market, and unlocking small sites and landowners that are not attractive or available to established housebuilders;
- supporting the implementation of duties such providing permissioned plots for individuals and groups on the Self and Custom Build Registers; and
- promoting community cohesion and resilience that can help tackle issues like antisocial behaviour.

Community-led housing approaches can also bring benefits to participants, including:

- skills, training and jobs, which can be targeted e.g. at care leavers and unemployed young people;
- a rewarding collective experience, improving their sense of community and connection;
- high quality and imaginatively designed homes and neighbourhoods;
- giving community organisations control over assets and revenue; and
- mutual support within communities, especially for older people and vulnerable young people.

Bringing resources into your area through community-led housing

The newly announced Community Housing Fund provides £60 million per year of revenue and capital funding for the sector. This will be a game-changing fund with significant opportunities for local authorities.

Community-led builders can access mainstream funding, such as the £3 billion Home Building Fund and money from the HCA's and GLA's affordable housing programmes.

Community-led groups have also brought in significant revenue and capital resources not accessible to other housing providers, including commercial lending, social finance, charitable funds, crowdfunding, community bond issues and labour. These cover seed-corn funding for new providers, and pre-development and development finance for schemes, as well as funds for associated aims such as skills training and community development. They can build up new resources and resilience in your communities.

Criteria for genuine community-led schemes

An alliance of community-led housing organisations has endorsed the following definition to ensure that schemes are truly community-led:

- a requirement that the community must be integrally involved throughout the process in key decisions (what, where, for who). They don't necessarily have to initiate and manage the development process, or build the homes themselves, though some may do;
- a presumption in favour of community groups that are taking a long term formal role in ownership, management or stewardship of the homes; and
- a requirement that the benefits to the local area and/or specified community must be clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity.

Approaches to community-led housing

Community-led housing has a significant history accompanied by a range of distinctive terminology and practices. Over time a number of established approaches have developed which all have specific characteristics, yet overlap to the extent that the distinctions between them are becoming increasingly academic.

Communities can and do choose to combine approaches to meet their needs and aspirations, drawing on the principles of each approach as a component to achieve one of their aims.

The main aims that different approaches provide for are:

- **Stronger neighbourhoods, shared spaces, mutual support:** Cohousing principles can be used to achieve this. Households each have a self-contained home but residents come together to manage their community and share some facilities. Cohousing is increasingly becoming an attractive option for older people to create resilient mutual support, in both new developments and retrofit to sheltered housing, which can reduce their reliance on public services including social care.
- **Permanent affordability and local control of assets:** Community Land Trust principles offer a mechanism to provide genuinely affordable housing in perpetuity, both for rent and ownership. Rented homes are protected from the Voluntary Right to Buy, and low cost ownership homes can be designed to remain affordable even if the gap between local incomes and house prices widens.
- **Building neighbourhoods:** Group self-build and collective custom build are great ways of supporting groups of households to work together to build or directly commission their own homes. The emphasis is always on supporting one another through the process which not only creates strong communities, but also develops skills and delivers high quality housing.
- **Greater local accountability and control over housing management:** Co-operative and tenant management principles empower residents to democratically control and manage their homes, often leading to improved efficiencies and financial savings as well as increased skills and confidence within the community. Many housing cooperatives own their properties collectively which also offers opportunities to invest in wider socially beneficial activities.
- **Tackling empty properties:** Self-help housing offers people the chance to bring empty properties back into use, sometimes for their own use. It can be particularly effective in providing work experience and training to people from vulnerable backgrounds in a safe and supportive environment, and help to revitalise homes, streets and neighbourhoods. It can form part of a strategy to tackle homelessness.

Routes to delivery

For the most part, the routes to delivery for community-led housing schemes are the same as in any other industry-standard housing scheme. The difference is that the community takes central role. Communities may work in partnership with a local housing association or developer, or can work on standalone projects. They can provide affordable housing through a section 106 agreement and/or a Rural Exception Site.

There are three main ways in which community-led groups become involved in the process:

- **Group-led:** New community-led groups form in response to local housing need, or to deliver their own homes. They sometimes emerge from existing networks such as Neighbourhood Forums and parish councils. They access technical expertise to support the development and realisation of their ideas.
- **Extension of community based activity:** Existing community-based organisations with local roots decide to provide housing in addition to their current activities, accessing technical expertise to help them understand this new area of work.
- **Developer-led partnership:** A Local Authority, landowner, housing association or local developer wants to provide housing that incorporates a community-led element. They access technical expertise to recruit 'founder members' from within the community and support them to take over ownership and/or management of the homes. In this scenario it is essential that all of the community-led criteria (see below) are met to ensure genuine community benefit and involvement.

Support available for local authorities

The community-led housing sector can provide a range of technical support services for all approaches and all routes to delivery. These are best provided by local or sub-regional organisations with a strong understanding of the local housing market, and relationships and partnerships with local authorities, housing associations and developers. The Community Housing Fund can be used to create or grow this kind of enabling infrastructure in your area.

As a first step, the sector can provide you with advice and enabling services to help you make the best use of the Community Housing Fund and be in a strong position to secure the second tranche of funding. The package of specialist advice includes:

- an introductory session to understand community-led housing, how it might meet your authority's priorities, and how it can dovetail with other duties such as the Right to Build and Neighbourhood Planning;
- mapping existing community-led housing activities in your area and in neighbouring authorities, including groups, technical advisers and enabling organisations, and options for growing the sector locally and in partnership with neighbouring authorities;
- advice on internal policies, procedures and structures to best enable community-led housing and avoid unnecessary and expensive delays, such as asset disposals/leases, the planning system, local sales and lettings policies, and the use of self and custom build registers;
- nurturing a local enabling and support vehicle so that your use of the funding creates a legacy of delivery capacity within your authority and in the local community; and
- signposting further specialist support for each of these areas.

You will be signposted to appropriate online resources (existing or emerging) as part of the support on offer.

What happens next?

If you would like to arrange for an introductory session with a community-led housing adviser please send a brief email to communityledhousing@bshf.org and we will put you in contact with an appropriate specialist.

Further information about community-led housing support services, wider support organisations, and signposting to sample case studies can be found at:

<https://www.bshf.org/our-programmes/community-led-housing>



Tenancy Fraud Policy

February 2017

Tenant Services

Last updated: February 2014

Next document review by: To be Confirmed

Reviewed by: Patricia Andrade, Tenancy Management

Approved by: *To be Confirmed*

1. The Purpose of the Tenancy Fraud Policy

For the purpose of this policy, the term 'tenancy fraud' covers subletting, obtaining housing by deception, wrongful claims for succession and key selling (where a tenant is paid to pass on their keys in return for a one off payment). In addition, applications to exercise 'Rights to Buy' council housing might be subject to dishonesty leading to tenants obtaining property by deception, as opposed to tenancy fraud.

Whilst cases of tenancy fraud (including dishonesty) are relatively small in number in the Stroud district, the majority of tenants legitimately occupying council housing, tenancy fraud presents a serious challenge to the Council. It potentially hampers its ability to effectively manage its housing stock. It also prevents the Council from ensuring that as much as possible of its social housing is available for those in most housing need, which is particularly important given the Council's oversubscribed housing waiting list.

To help prevent the fraudulent use of and access to Council owned dwellings, the Council's approach to dealing with tenancy fraud is set out in this document

2. Financial & risk implications

- Tenancy fraud can impact of our ability to meet housing need, contributing to higher temporary accommodation costs, where homeless families cannot be housed without undue delay and families bidding for accommodation, whilst potential homes options are denied to them because stock is wrongfully occupied
- The costs of repossession can be high, hence the importance of prevention
- Reputational risk may be a problem, if we do not have a robust policy

3. SDC's Approach on Tenancy Fraud

In delivering an effective response to tenancy fraud, we will apply the following key principles:

3.1 Prevent it

The Council considers that preventing fraud is a cost efficient way to tackling tenancy fraud. Consequently, officers will check the accuracy of information provided by applicants for social housing. Further checks will be undertaken when tenancies are signed and during the tenancy to ensure that material changes of the tenant's household circumstances are reported to the Council.

Applicants for housing and tenants are required to provide appropriate evidence of identity and their correct household composition and membership.

In evidencing the above, the council will request verification checks at various stages, these include:

- When an application for social housing is made
- When you sign up to a new tenancy
- As part of a 'tenancy audit', (we will undertake random checks to ensure that the person(s) living in one of our homes is the true and legal tenant)
- If you apply for an assignment, exchange or succession of your tenancy

- Changes to the tenancy such as household composition or a request for an addition to the tenancy
- If you make a Right to Buy application

We will normally expect you to provide photographic evidence of identity (such as a passport or driving license), but if these are not available we will seek relevant documents such as might provide clear evidence of identity. These may include, but are not restricted to:

- Medical card with National Insurance Numbers
- P45, P60 or pay slip
- Evidence of your payment of benefits from the DWP
- Bank account details
- Birth, marriage, adoption certificates
- UK certificate of naturalisation

3.2 Detect it

We will regularly monitor information we are legally entitled to access, including that of shared data with government agencies focusing on tenancy and housing benefit fraud, credit rating and financial agencies, other social landlords and legally constituted and recognised anti fraud partnerships, such as the Gloucestershire Tenancy Fraud initiative. We will also monitor our own tenancy and property records to identify alerts, trends and issues we may point to examples of fraud.

3.3 Investigate it

We will undertake thorough investigations, where necessary, in partnership with relevant statutory agencies such as the Police, DWP, Border Agency, etc. This may include the interviewing of those being investigated, under caution, unless of course, on a case by case basis, this function is considered best held by statutory agencies such as the Police, etc.

3.4 Pursue

Where tenancy fraud has been detected and thoroughly investigated we will consider the following actions:

- Civil action by the serving of either Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP), Notice to Quit (NTQ) and Notice of Possession Proceedings (NOPP) for the repossession of unlawfully obtained accommodation.
- Criminal action where appropriate.

We will always take enforcement action where fraud has been detected.

4. Responsibility for and review of this policy

The person accountable for the delivery of this policy is the Head of Housing Management.

This policy will be reviewed regularly with any notable changes reported to the Housing Committee for approval, as and when appropriate.