

Appendix 1: Priority Action Plan

Appendix 1 sets out the detailed delivery plan required to implement the 23 Actions. For each Action we explain the rationale, set out the milestones and explain exactly what we will do to ensure delivery.

Objective 1 Increase the supply of housing to meet the needs

Action 1 Work with residential developers and landowners to increase the number of houses

Rationale

Private house building is close to an all time low (there were only about 180 new houses built in 2010/11 compared with over 550 in 2007/08). Sales data for December 2011 indicated that there were only 39 new dwellings available for sale in the Borough. This is compared with over 500 at the height of the market in 2007/08, and a current average annual requirement of about 350.

The emerging Making and Growing Places Development Plan Document will allocate sufficient land to meet the forecast housing requirement set out in the Core Strategy. However, the Council is also keen to work with developers and landowners to kick-start stalled sites and reconsider conditions attached to planning permissions.

The Core Strategy also requires up to 30% of Affordable Housing, on appropriate housing sites, to be provided through Section 106 Agreements. The Planning Obligations SPD addresses the detailed implementation of this policy.

Milestones

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|-----|---|------------|
| 1a) | The Preferred Options of the Making and Growing Places DPD has been published | Early 2015 |
| 1b) | The Making and Growing Places DPD has been adopted | Early 2015 |

The Council faces a difficult balance. Does it reduce its Planning obligations expectations to encourage new development or, does it maintain its standards and risk developers walking away?

Action 1

Work with residential developers and landowners to increase the number of houses

	How will we do this?	Lead	Key Partner	Date
1.1	Invite developers to submit Viability Assessments with planning applications to reduce their planning obligations.	DBC Development Management Team		Ongoing
1.2	Consider approaching developers/landowners with extant planning permissions to review and possibly reduce their planning obligations.	DBC Development Management Team		Ongoing
1.3	Consider alternative ways of increasing the supply of Affordable Housing elsewhere in the Borough, in lieu of on-site provision.	DBC Planning Policy Team		Ongoing
1.4	Complete a review of the potential developable housing land opportunities in Darlington	DBC Planning Policy Team		Spring 2014
1.5	The Making and Growing Places DPD has been adopted.	DBC Planning Policy Team		Feb 2015

Objective 1 Increase the supply of housing to meet the needs

Action 2 Work in partnership with Registered Providers to increase the number of affordable houses

Rationale

Affordable housing needs far exceed the amount of new affordable housing that can be provided. Needs are greater than the total amount of all housing planned in the Borough.

The Local Development Framework sets floor targets of 35 additional affordable homes per annum, up to 2016, and at least 50 pa, thereafter.

Government funding for affordable housing has significantly reduced. The Affordable Housing Programme allocation is sufficient to support the construction of approximately 240 dwellings in Darlington between 2011 and 2015.

Milestones

2a) 35 new affordable units per annum have been delivered. 2012-2016

Reusing empty properties as Affordable Housing increases the number of social houses at a fraction of the cost of new build.

Action 2

Work in partnership with Registered Providers to increase the number of affordable houses

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
2.1	Consider Joint Ventures with other Registered Providers	DBC Programmes and Projects		Ongoing
2.2	Deliver 35 new affordable units per annum.	DBC Planning Policy		2012-2016
2.3	Housing Summit meeting to explore land opportunities and delivery vehicles.	DBC Programmes and Projects	Private sector and Registered Provider delivery partners	November 2013
2.4	Develop a framework to procure new affordable homes directly from preferred delivery partners.	DBC Programmes and Projects	Delivery partners	January 2014

Objective 1 Increase the supply of housing to meet the needs

Action 3 Increase the number of council houses

Rationale

The changing demands within the housing market are creating significant impacts on the demand for social housing and in particular the Council's retained stock. Demand for family housing is increasing while changes that are being introduced through the Welfare reforms are likely to see, either, increased demand for smaller accommodation or young people remaining at their parents' home longer with the potential for overcrowding.

In April 2012, the self financing of the Council's retained housing stock was implemented. It is intended that this will give stock retaining Councils additional freedom to manage and develop their stock. A 30 year business plan has been produced to support self financing. Although the early years of the plan presents a number of challenges, the Council retains the ambition to regenerate its own stock and develop new accommodation.

Milestones

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|-----|---|---------------|
| 3a) | An options appraisal for further development of council housing has been undertaken | December 2013 |
| 3b) | Specific proposals on future development of council housing have been prepared | March 2014 |

Over recent years, Government funding to build new council homes has more than halved. Darlington Council is looking at ways to meet the shortfall.

Action 3

Increase the number of council houses

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
3.1	Consider alternative delivery models and funding mechanisms	DBC Housing		December 2013
3.2	An options appraisal for further development of council housing has been undertaken	DBC Housing		December 2013
3.3	Specific proposals on future development of council housing have been prepared	DBC Housing		March 2014

Objective 1 Increase the supply of housing to meet the needs

Action 4 Increase the number of pitches for gypsies and travellers

Rationale

The Housing Act 2004 requires local authorities to include Gypsies and Travellers in their accommodation assessments. The 2009 Tees Valley Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA) assesses need and identifies pitch requirements across the sub-region.

Darlington Council has undertaken work based on trends and local circumstances, which concludes that 35 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches in Darlington are required in the 15 years to 2026.

The emerging Making and Growing Places DPD will identify a range and choice of sites to meet identified needs.

Milestones

- | | | |
|-----|---|------------|
| 4a) | The Making and Growing Places DPD has been adopted | 2015 |
| 4b) | 20 new pitches supported by Homes and Communities Agency grant funding have been delivered. | March 2015 |

In January 2012, Darlington Council was successful in bidding for £1.5m from the Homes and Communities Agency's Traveller Pitch Funding programme to deliver a total of 20 pitches.

Action 4 Increase the number of pitches for gypsies and travellers

How will we do this?	Lead	Key Partner	Date
4.1 Allocate sufficient land to accommodate the required number of pitches in the adopted Making and Growing Places DPD	DBC Planning Policy Team		2015
4.2 Deliver 20 new traveller pitches	DBC Programmes and Projects	Homes and Communities Agency	March 2015

Objective 2 Improve the sustainability of housing

Action 5

Continue to effectively manage the Council's retained stock

Rationale

Housing delivers a wide range of services and accommodation that includes specialist housing for older people.

Some of the most important activities in the delivery of good quality affordable social housing are the provision of a cost effective and progressive housing service. Major activities include the effective collection of rents and the appropriate allocation of properties to ensure the best use of the stock.

The Housing Service works with some of the most vulnerable people, therefore, needs to proactively address the challenges of the Welfare Reforms while also understanding the role that housing plays in meeting outcomes for Adult Social Care and Health.

Milestones

- | | | |
|-----|---|------------|
| 5a) | The condition of estates are evaluated and actions planned in partnership with the tenants | Ongoing |
| 5b) | The need for local allocations policies to make the best use of stock are considered | Ongoing |
| 5c) | The actions from the Supported Accommodation Strategy, where it concerns the council's stock, have been delivered | April 2014 |

The Housing Service aims to maintain the enhanced Decent Homes Standard in the form of the Darlington Standard during the Self-financing business plan period.

Action 5

Continue to effectively manage the Council's retained stock

How will we do this?	Lead	Key Partner	Date
5.1 Consider the housing pressures in local areas and the need for local allocations policies to address these needs	DBC Housing		Ongoing
5.2 Consider the future role of sheltered housing in the light of the Supported Accommodation Strategy published in 2012	DBC Housing		April 2014
5.3 The condition of estates are evaluated and actions planned in partnership with the tenants	DBC Housing		Ongoing
5.4 The need for local allocations policies to make the best use of stock are considered	DBC Housing		Ongoing
5.5 The actions from the Supported Accommodation Strategy, where it concerns the council's stock, have been delivered	DBC Housing		April 2014

Objective 2 Improve the sustainability of housing

Action 6 Implement the Asset Management Strategy

Rationale

The Asset Management Strategy sets the plan for maintenance and improvement to the council's stock. In the period April 2012 to March 2017 a total expenditure £32.7 million is planned.

Last year 69% of all maintenance works were contained within planned programmes and 31% were reactive repairs. The recognised performance standard is a 70% planned and 30% reactive split. Reactive repairs are usually more inconvenient for tenants and more expensive because they may involve emergencies. Therefore, there is ongoing work to shift the balance towards planned programmes that reduce the risk of emergency failures.

A number of significant changes are emerging that will require revisions to the existing strategy, these include the development of an Energy Efficiency and Green Technology Plan.

Also there is a need to build on the successes of the current programmes and therefore a number of reviews will take place to improve delivery.

Milestones

- | | | |
|-----|---|------------|
| 6a) | The Asset Management Strategy has been reviewed and updated | March 2014 |
| 6b) | Repairs and refit programmes reviewed to increase customer satisfaction | April 2013 |
| 6c) | Support Independence | Ongoing |
| 6d) | Consider "Just in Time" approach to service delivery | April 2013 |

The comprehensive planned maintenance programme delivers a range of housing improvement programmes including modernisation of kitchens and bathrooms, and environment works.

Action 6

Implement the Asset Management Strategy

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
6.1	Undertake a review of the current programme to ensure it reflects recent demands for repairs and maintenance and notices of obsolescence	DBC Housing		Ongoing
6.2	Continue to rebalance repairs from reactive to planned	DBC Housing		Ongoing
6.3	Provide adaption's within set timescales in council housing	DBC Housing		Ongoing
6.4	Fit Assistive technology within set timescales in council housing	DBC Housing		Ongoing
6.5	Introduce a programme of property surveys	DBC Housing		10% each year
6.6	Support independence	DBC Housing		Ongoing
6.7	Repairs and refit programmes reviewed to increase customer satisfaction	DBC Housing		April 13
6.8	Consider "Just in Time" approach to service delivery	DBC Housing		April 13
6.9	The Asset Management Strategy has been reviewed and updated.	DBC Housing		March 2014

Objective 2 Improve the sustainability of housing

Action 7

Work in partnership to deliver energy efficiency measures as part of the Green Deal from 2013.

Rationale

In 2011, in Darlington, emissions from the domestic sector accounted for 36% of the total emissions for the Borough. Reducing emissions from the domestic sector is essential if carbon reduction targets set out in the Sustainable Energy Action Plan are to be achieved. A number of initiatives have been implemented to improve energy efficiency including insulation and heating programmes. There have also been a number of initiatives linked to green technology including the provision of photovoltaic cells. Some of these programmes have been opportunity led.

For council housing there is a need to move to a more systematic approach and a specific plan will be produced that will form a core element of the Asset Management Strategy. This work will link into the broader approach to energy efficiency

As part of the Warm Up North Programme, in partnership with several local authorities, Darlington Borough Council will retrofit: loft and cavity wall insulation; solid wall and floor insulation; draught-proofing; smart meters, energy efficient boilers and renewable energy installations. This will benefit both public and private sector housing.

Milestones

7a)	An Energy Efficiency and Green Technology Plan has been approved	March 2013
7b)	Delivery Partner appointed.	2013
7c)	Phase 1 of Programme started	2013
7d)	Phase 2 of Programme started.	2016

We aim to deliver energy efficiency improvements to a minimum of 1,500 residential or other public buildings in Darlington. A Council investment of £5M.

Action 7

Work in partnership to deliver energy efficiency measures as part of the Green Deal from 2013.

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
7.1	Stock condition data analysed to inform targeting of Programme	DBC Programmes and Projects Section		Ongoing
7.2	Phase 1 of Programme started	DBC Programmes and Projects Section		2013
7.3	Phase 2 of Programme started	DBC Programmes and Projects Section		April 2016

Objective 2

Improve the sustainability of housing

Action 8

Ensure new housing meets sustainable building standards as set out in the Local Plan to be resilient to climate change

Rationale

New housing which meets energy efficiency guidance is essential if targets set out in the Sustainable Energy Action Plan are to be met. In June 2010, the Council adopted a Carbon Management Plan which sets out our ambition for reducing our own carbon emissions by 25% over four years and outlines the actions needed to achieve time targets.

Through high quality design and efficient operation of development, energy consumption could be cut which should reduce emissions of CO₂; a major cause of climate change.

Designs should reflect the Council's Design SPD and plan for the lifetime of a development, recognising not only its impact on the current climate but the benefits sustainability can have for the climate in the long term. Location, layout and design of sustainable development should reflect local building types, but will perform in a superior way. All new development should be capable of incorporating measures to reduce carbon emissions in the medium-long term and mitigate forecast impacts of climate change such as; flood risk, extremes of temperature and more frequent storms.

Milestones

- 8a) 90% of applications should achieve CSH Level 3 Ongoing
- 8b) 10% of applications should achieve CSH Level 4 Ongoing

We need to reduce CO₂ emissions by at least 20% by 2020.

Action 8

Ensure new housing meets sustainable building standards as set out in the Local Plan to be resilient to climate change

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
8.1	Implement Renewable Energy Policy in Making and Growing Places DPD	DBC Development Management Team	Developers	2015

Objective 2

Improve the sustainability of housing

Action 9

Prepare and adopt a Tenancy Strategy and a Tenancy Policy for the Council's own stock

Rationale

The Localism Act 2011 requires all Local Authorities to publish a Tenancy Strategy for their area, to provide the framework for the granting and reissuing of tenancies that includes all Registered Providers including housing stock retention authorities like ourselves. The Tenancy Strategy introduces a new responsibility for Local Authorities as it is intended to give Local Authorities more control of the way social housing is used to meet local needs. The Government want Local Authorities to have the opportunity, if they think it is necessary, to introduce a more flexible approach to the types of tenancies being granted.

In November 2012, the 5 Local Authorities in the Tees Valley published a joint Tees Valley Tenancy Strategy.

All Registered Providers also have to produce a Tenancy Policy for their own organisation which has regard to the overarching Tenancy Strategy. Darlington Council, therefore, has to produce a Tenancy Policy for its council housing.

Milestones

- 9a) Review Tenancy Policy at 1st anniversary of approval On going

The Tenancy Strategy has to set out the circumstances in which a tenancy of a particular kind will be granted; where a tenancy is set for a term, the length of that term and, the circumstances where a further tenancy will be granted.

Action 9

Prepare and adopt a Tenancy Strategy and a Tenancy Policy for the Council's own stock

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
9.1	Review Tenancy Policy at 1st anniversary of approval	DBC Housing	Darlington Tenants Board	Ongoing

Objective 2 Action 10

Improve the sustainability of housing

Introduce enhanced role of tenant engagement

Rationale

The regulatory framework for social housing changed from the 1 April 2012 as a result of a Government review and the changes introduced within the Localism Act. The Government is creating new mechanisms for the way tenants' problems with housing services are addressed.

There will be more focus on local mechanisms for resolving complaints. A key aspect of the changes will see greater scrutiny of housing services by tenants

Milestones

10a)	Enhanced scrutiny mechanisms developed	On going
10b)	Progress reviewed	Annual

Darlington Tenants Board already fills an important role in the decision-making structure of the Housing Service, acting as a Forum where tenants and leaseholders can comment on and alter Council policies, set targets and monitor performance.

Action 10 Introduce enhanced role of tenant engagement

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
10.1	Enhanced scrutiny mechanisms developed	DBC Housing	Tenants Board	On going
10.2	Evolve role of Tenants Board to include enhanced scrutiny	DBC Housing	Tenants Board	On going
10.3	Further develop "Mystery Shopping" to monitor performance	DBC Housing	Tenants Board	Cyclical programme

Objective 3 Improve conditions in the private housing sector

Action 11 Increase the number of Accredited Landlords

Rationale

Darlington has a successful and established Landlord Accreditation scheme with 80 landlord members and 600 accredited properties.

This provides an invaluable opportunity to provide good quality private rented properties to residents in the Borough.

The standards of the scheme are high and this ensures that tenants can use and access the scheme with confidence.

Expanding the scheme is a priority to provide greater numbers of good quality properties and good landlords.

Milestones

11a) The number of Accredited Landlords has increased to 90 April 2014

11b) The number of Accredited properties increased to 625 April 2014

There are approx. 9000 privately rented dwellings in Darlington representing 19% of all housing stock. This number is forecast to increase considerably over coming years.

Action 11 Increase the number of Accredited Landlords

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
11.1	Provide information and publicity at landlord events	DBC Private Sector Housing Team	Private Landlords/National Landlords Association and Darlington and District Private Landlords Association.	Ongoing

Objective 3

Improve conditions in the private housing sector

Action 12

Increase the number of houses in multiple occupation which are free from Category 1 Hazards

Rationale

Houses in multiple occupation (HMO) include the very poorest quality in the private rented sector (PRS) and contain the most vulnerable tenants. HMOs are more likely to contain Category 1 Hazards than not.

Category 1 hazards are the most serious of the hazards taking into account the effect they are having, or could have, on the occupants. There are 29 hazards and each hazard is assessed separately.

There is evidence that there is unwillingness from some landlords to improve their properties even to the minimum legal standard, without intervention by the council. Given the difficult economic climate, there is a danger that landlords will limit expenditure and conditions will deteriorate. At the same time, demand for HMOs is expected to increase as a direct result of the welfare reforms designed to reduce under-occupancy in the single under 35s category.

Milestones

- | | | |
|------|--|----------|
| 12a) | The HMO cyclical inspection programme has been reviewed. | May 2014 |
| 12b) | HMO inspection targets have been met | May 2014 |
| 12c) | Category 1 hazards have reduced in HMO's | May 2014 |

Cyclical health and safety inspections are carried out on the 540 HMO's in the borough and significant problems are often found.

Action 12

Increase the number of houses in multiple occupation which are free from Category 1 Hazards

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
12.1	Landlords of unsafe HMOs will be cautioned and prosecuted, if necessary.	DBC Private Sector Housing Team	Legal Services	Ongoing
12.2	Targeting of higher risk premises.	DBC Private Sector Housing Team	Private Landlords	Ongoing
12.3	The number of cyclical inspections will be increased during the summer months.	DBC Private Sector Housing Team	Private Landlords	May 2014
12.4	Landlords of unsafe HMOs will be cautioned and prosecuted, if necessary	DBC Private Sector Housing Team	Private Landlords	Ongoing to November 14
12.5	Review and update HMO database with HMO risk matrix	DBC Private Sector Housing Team	Private Landlords	Ongoing

Objective 3

Improve conditions in the private housing sector

Action 13

Reduce the number of non-decent homes

Rationale

Widespread and significant problems relating to housing conditions were highlighted in the Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey 2009. In Darlington, nearly 34% of the private sector stock failed the Decent Homes Standard, compared with 16% in Stockton, 35% in Hartlepool and 36% nationally.

Approximately 60% of the failures were due to Category 1 hazards and the main hazard was excess cold. This hazard is closely linked to another Decent Homes criterion, poor thermal comfort, and is mainly caused by heating and/or insulation issues. These hazards are particularly prevalent in the private rented sector and in HMOs (see Action 14).

Addressing heating and insulation issues is likely to be the most effective way of reducing the number of non-decent homes.

Approximately 3,700 owner-occupiers and private tenants are living in dwellings with significant repair problems to one or more major structural elements in their home. The rate of disrepair in Darlington (9.2%) is above the national (7.3%) and sub-regional (8.9%) averages.

Milestones

- | | | |
|------|--|--------------|
| 13a) | The number of private sector properties with Category 1 hazards has been reduced. | April 2013 |
| 13b) | The number of private sector properties with High Scoring Category 2 hazards has been reduced. | April 2013 |
| 13c) | The number of residents living in non decent homes in the PRS has been reduced. | April 2013 |
| 13d) | The provision of home loans in the owner occupied sector has been explored by using the Bond Scheme. | October 2012 |
| 13e) | The number of Health and Safety risks in Private Sector Housing has been reduced. | April 2013 |
| 13f) | Public health outcomes have been achieved and homes have been made safer for occupiers | April 2014 |

Reducing the number of non-decent homes will improve the health of occupiers, prevent accidents and reduce fuel poverty.

Action 13 Reduce the number of non-decent homes

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
13.1	Continue the reactive and proactive inspections of properties reducing Category 1 Hazards	DBC Private Sector Housing Team	Private Landlords	April 2014
13.2	Continue the reactive and proactive inspections of properties reducing High Scoring Category 2 Hazards.	DBC Private Sector Housing Team	Private Landlords	April 2014
13.3	Record the number of homes that are returned to the decent homes standard following local authority intervention.	DBC Private Sector Housing Team	Private Landlords	April 2014
13.4	Record the number of homes that are made free from hazards that would otherwise pose a risk for occupiers.	DBC Private Sector Housing Team	Private Landlords	April 2014
13.5	Record the number of homes that are made free of hazards that improve public health outcomes	DBC Private Sector Housing Team	Public Health	April 2014
13.6	Completion of the review of the Bond Scheme to deliver home improvement loans.	DBC Private Sector Housing Team/Place Projects Team	Regional Loans Scheme	October 2014

Objective 3

Improve conditions in the private housing sector

Action 14

Produce a Private Rented Sector Operation Plan

Rationale

The private rented sector (PRS) is increasingly being seen as an alternative tenure to homeownership and social housing. It is sometimes the only tenure that is available for an increasingly large section of society. However, concern has been raised about the condition of the PRS and its ability or suitability to house those who cannot secure a mortgage or qualify for social housing.

The existing Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2008 – 2012 includes the regulation of the PRS. However, it needs to be updated significantly in 2012/13.

Milestones

- 14a) A Draft Private Rented Sector Operation Plan has been completed.
- 14b) A review of the Private Rented Sector Operation Plan August 2014 has been completed.

Laying the Foundations; A Housing Strategy for England recognises the important role that the PRS plays in providing homes and identifies proposals to support its growth and capacity.

Action 14 Produce a Private Rented Sector Operation Plan

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
14.1	Research best practice and prepare a Private Rented Sector Operation Plan	DBC Private Sector Housing Team		November 2013
14.2	A review of the Private Rented Sector Operation Plan has been completed.	DBC Private Sector Housing Team		November 2014

Objective 3

Improve conditions in the private housing sector

Action 15

Reduce the number of empty homes

Rationale

Empty properties represent a wasted resource and a missed housing opportunity. The biggest problems are often experienced by those living near to problematic empty properties which attract anti-social behaviour or are eyesores. Reducing the 800 empty properties in the Borough will create positive improvement in neighbourhoods and encourage sustainability. Therefore, Darlington Borough Council has employed a dedicated Empty Property Officer to carry out the actions required to reduce the number of empty homes in the Borough.

Empty properties are evenly distributed in most wards throughout the Borough. Indeed, some empty properties are in high demand affluent areas. Likewise some of the priority wards have much lower levels of empty properties than would be expected. The Council will update its Empty Property Database to monitor the number and distribution of empty homes in the Borough.

A draft Empty Homes Strategy has been completed and the locations of the empty properties have been mapped.

Milestones

- 15a) Brought 60 previously long-term empty properties back into use. March 2015

There has been a reduction in the number of empty properties since 2010 but, over the long-term, the figures have been fairly static.

Action 15 Reduce the number of empty homes

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
15.1	To lease and repair 30 properties, through funding from the Homes and Communities Agency. Bringing them up to the Decent Home Standard. Properties will be leased over a typical 10 year lease and managed by North Star Endeavour Housing for the term of the lease. Average cost of £17,500.00 per unit of accommodation.	DBC Private Sector Housing Team	Five Lamps	March 2015
15.2	Purchase and repair 20 x 2 bedroom Houses or Bungalows. Average cost to purchase property £80,000.00 with approx. £18,000.00 for renovation costs. To be completed by end of March 2015. Achieving 10 properties per year.	DBC Private Sector Housing Team	Coast and Country	March 2015
15.3	Purchase and repair 10 x 1 bedroom Flats / Houses. Average cost to purchase Maximum £50,000.00 with approx. £12,000.00 for renovation costs. To be completed by end of March 2015. Achieving 5 properties per year.	DBC Private Sector Housing Team	Centre Point`	March 2015
15.4	Refer enquiries for prospective tenants to Compass Choice Based Lettings System.	DBC Private Sector Housing Team & Housing Options Team	Tees Valley Local Authorities and Registered Providers	Ongoing

Objective 4 Invest in the regeneration of key locations

Action 16 Agree and implement a revised Master Plan for Central Park

Rationale

The regeneration of Central Park has been identified in the Core Strategy as one of the top priorities for residential development. In efforts to realise the potential of this flagship scheme, a new master plan was agreed in May 2012 to deliver c500 new homes, a local centre and commercial development to supplement the recently completed Darlington College and Teesside University's Darlington Campus.

Residential development will be centred around high quality, multi-functional open space, which will act as a focal point for the whole community to enjoy.

The master plan includes an overall target of 15% affordable homes throughout the development. Due to viability, 20 units equating to c5% will be delivered as part of the initial phase.

Following the withdrawal of one of the original housing developers, an alternative delivery mechanism was agreed, resulting in the dissolution of the Development Agreement. In addition, Keepmoat Homes have recently completed legal agreements for the residential elements of the scheme, which will be delivered in two distinct phases: Central Park North and South.

Central Park North commenced on site in July 2013 and seeks to deliver 352 new homes, including 20 Affordable Homes, over the next 10 years. The local centre, situated at the gateway of Central Park North, will be marketed before Summer 2015.

Milestones

16a) First new dwellings completed

Late 2013

Investment in housing and its external environment is an important catalyst for regeneration and for creating attractive and sustainable neighbourhoods.

Action 16 Agree and implement a revised Master Plan for Central Park

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
16.1	Revised planning application to substitute house types submitted	Keepmoat Homes		May 2013
16.2	Council formally considers substitution of house types planning application	DBC Development Management Team		June 2013
16.3	Council acquire remaining interests at Central Park South	DBC, HCA, Keepmoat		June 2018
16.4	Legal agreements negotiated and completed.	DBC, HCA, Keepmoat		December 2020

Objective 4 Invest in the regeneration of key locations

Action 17 Implement the remodelling plans for Cockerton

Rationale

The proposed remodelling of Cockerton will provide an opportunity to diversify the local housing offer and provide shared ownership and market sale housing alongside new social housing supply. It also provides an opportunity to increase the long term sustainability of the area through environmental improvements and address emerging issues of non-decency amongst council owned housing.

Specifically, the proposed regeneration in Cockerton provides an opportunity to decrease the oversupply of 1 bed flats, reduce the density of 2 bed flats and increase the supply of family homes to meet identified local housing need. It will also provide an opportunity to create a new quality external environment to support a green corridor, support sustainable modes of transport and access to existing cycle routes. It will consider the introduction of traffic calming measures, the future need for existing commercial premises and the renegotiation of existing public transport routes with commercial partners.

Milestones

17a)	An options appraisal for the Nickstream Lane shops has been completed	Sept 2012
17b)	60 new affordable homes developed	March 2014
17c)	A new quality open space and play area delivered	March 2014
17d)	Up to 28 new market sale homes completed.	March 2015

Critical to the success of regeneration is to create the climate, environment and culture that provides equality of opportunity for residents who live in those neighbourhoods, provides the correct infrastructure in the right locations to support the neighbourhoods and, create attractive conditions and confidence for investors

Action 17 Implement the remodelling plans for Cockerton

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
17.1	Complete Options Appraisal for Nickstream Lane Shops	DBC Programmes and Projects Section		September 2013
17.2	Transfer of land	DBC Programmes and Projects Section	Esh Group and North Star Housing	April 2015
17.3	Provision of 60 new affordable homes	DBC Programmes and Projects Section	Endeavour	March 2014
17.4	A new quality open space and play area delivered	DBC Programmes and Projects Section		March 2014
17.5	Up to 28 new market sale homes completed.	DBC Programmes and Projects Section		March 2015

Objective 4 Invest in the regeneration of key locations

Action 18 Prepare and agree plans to regenerate Red Hall Estate

Rationale

Within the current economic climate new investment in the existing Council Stock will be more difficult to achieve but at least one major project will take place during the life of the strategy

This is part of a strategic plan to ensure the council's stock can meet modern expectations and changing needs. Key criteria will be ensuring that the right mix of properties is available to meet the needs of the local area and this may include the diversification of tenure

Milestones

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|------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 18a) | Draft Masterplan published | November 2013 |
| 18b) | Final Masterplan published | January 2014 |

The Localism Bill encourages a strong neighbourhood led approach to regeneration activity with residents being at the forefront of investment projects and decision making.

Action 18 Prepare and agree plans to remodel Red Hall Estate

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
18.1	Prepare and consult on draft Masterplan	DBC Environment, Urban Design and Sustainability		October 2013
18.2	Prepare and consult on final Masterplan	DBC Environment, Urban Design and Sustainability		November 2013
18.3	Agree final Masterplan	DBC Environment, Urban Design and Sustainability		January 2014
18.4	Identify suitable development partners and agree development plan for approval	DBC Programmes and Projects Section		June 2014

Objective 4 Invest in the regeneration of key locations

Action 19 Prepare a Town Centre Fringe Master Plan

Rationale

The Town Centre Fringe has been identified in the Core Strategy as having the potential to contribute much more to the economy and quality of life of Darlington than it currently does. The Town Centre Fringe has the potential to provide an additional 650 dwellings, over the 2011-26 period, as well as new office accommodation and opportunities for redevelopment. New development and regeneration in the Town Centre Fringe will be key to delivering the vision for Darlington over the medium to longer term. Efforts to realise the area's potential will be co-ordinated through the Town Centre Fringe Master Plan, as well as other appropriate planning frameworks, taking account of constraints (such as flood risk) which will shape the eventual pattern and form of development and redevelopment there.

The emerging Making Places and Accommodating Growth Development Plan Document will allocate sufficient land to meet the housing requirement, for the Town Centre Fringe, set out in the Core Strategy.

Milestones

- | | | |
|------|---|------|
| 19a) | The Preferred Options of the Making and Growing Places DPD has been published | 2013 |
| 19b) | The Making and Growing Places DPD has been adopted | 2014 |

To maximise accessibility and minimize carbon emissions, the highest density development will be expected in the most accessible locations. These are the Town Centre and the Town Centre Fringe

Action 19 Prepare a Town Centre Fringe Master Plan

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
19.1	Through continuous engagement and a series of formal consultations, achieve widespread support for the Master Plan proposals.	DBC Urban Design, Environment and Sustainability Team	HCA, EA, HA, infrastructure providers, statutory undertakers, private sector, residents, voluntary sector.	Ongoing
19.2	Through negotiation and persuasion, direct public sector funding and private sector investment to the Town Centre Fringe.	DBC Programmes and Projects Section	HCA, EA, DEFRA, landowners, developers.	Ongoing
19.3	By focussing improvements in service provision on the Town Centre Fringe, enhance the quality of life of residents and improve the area as a business location.	Darlington Borough Council	DBC People Directorate.	Ongoing
19.4	Include preferred sites within the Preferred Options Making Places and Accommodating Growth DPD	DBC Planning Policy Team		2013
19.5	The Preferred Options of the Making and Growing Places DPD has been published	DBC Planning Policy Team		2013
19.6	The Making and Growing Places DPD has been adopted	DBC Planning Policy Team		2013

Objective 5 Provide good quality and timely advice to prevent crisis, increase choice and enable access

Action 20 Integrate appropriate houses in multiple occupation into Key Point of Access System and maintain strong links with Bond Scheme to maximise the use of private sector housing.

Rationale

Tenants living in HMO's are more likely to be vulnerable and much more likely to require housing related support. Landlords with HMO's are also much more likely to require additional housing support with their tenants. Providing support will reduce the problems that landlords and tenants experience and will result in longer sustained tenancies. This will reduce homeless applications.

Providing a bond to secure a tenancy can be difficult. Providing advice and information and access to a bond will enable more private sector tenants to secure accommodation.

Milestones

- | | | |
|------|---|----------------|
| 20a) | Landlords and tenants of HMO's are aware of the KPA and Supporting People Services. | September 2012 |
| 20b) | Landlords and tenants of HMO's are aware of the bond scheme. | September 2012 |

The Darlington Bond Scheme provides security for landlords by undertaking to indemnify against loss or damage to the property up to a previously agreed amount.

Action 20 Integrate appropriate houses in multiple occupation into Key Point of Access System and maintain strong links with Bond Scheme to maximise the use of private sector housing

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
20.1	Provide information on KPA's referral role to the owners of HMO's	DBC Private Sector Housing Team & Housing Options Team	Voluntary Sector Providers Supporting People	Ongoing
20.2	Provide information on Bond Schemes to the owners of HMO's	DBC Private Sector Housing Team & Housing Options Team	700 club and job centre plus	Ongoing
20.3	Provide information on KPA's referral role to the tenants of HMO's	DBC Private Sector Housing Team & Housing Options Team	Voluntary Sector Providers Supporting People	Ongoing
20.4	Provide information on Bond Schemes to the tenants of HMO's	DBC Private Sector Housing Team & Housing Options Team	700 club and job centre plus	Ongoing

Objective 5 Provide good quality and timely advice to prevent crisis, increase choice and enable access

Action 21 Offer support to all households adversely affected by the introduction of Universal Credit

Rationale

The main change in the Welfare Reforms, the introduction of Universal Credit will begin to impact during 2014, The Government have changed their original implementation plan and will announce a new set of dates during the autumn 2013. Until these dates are confirmed, a timetabled implementation plan cannot be produced

Milestones

- | | | |
|------|--|-------------|
| 21a) | A partnership has been established to consider implementation issues associated with Universal Credit. | Autumn 2013 |
| 21b) | Tenants have been made aware of these changes. | Ongoing |
| 21c) | Payment systems have been reviewed | Autumn 2013 |

The Direct Payment pilots have shown increases in rent arrears of up to 11% of rental income. Many tenants experienced real difficulties with managing their personal finances

Action 21 Offer support to all households adversely affected by the introduction of Universal Credit

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
21.1	The most vulnerable tenants will be identified and contacted	DBC Housing		Autumn 2013
21.2	Information will be provided via a range of media for tenants	DBC Housing		Ongoing
21.3	A Communications Plan will be prepared	DBC Housing		Autumn 2013
21.4	A Money Advice Service will be developed	DBC Housing		Autumn 2013

Objective 6 Provide effective support and opportunities for vulnerable groups

Action 22 Prepare and adopt a Supported Accommodation Strategy

Rationale

A wide range of issues have been identified in relation to housing people with support needs. The development of the Key Point of Access continues to provide an excellent source of information in this area. The Council's objectives of providing more choice and independence and providing accommodation and support that help to prevent the transition to higher dependency services will drive the Supported Accommodation Strategy. It will cover all forms of supported housing across all client groups. It will be developed in conjunction with the new Homelessness strategy

Based on an assessment of needs the Strategy will consider the options that should be available from being supported in normal accommodation to the range of specialist accommodation that should be on offer. It will identify any under or over supply and the fit with current and future needs including types of tenure.

As part of the work an Extra Care Housing Strategy will be produced that will form an Appendix to the report.

Milestones

22a) Review of Delivery Plan

Annual

A Supported Accommodation Strategy will provide the framework for the individual's attainable wishes to be built into their future plan, so they can choose who they live with, where they live and who supports them to live there.

Action 22 Prepare and adopt a Supported Accommodation Strategy

How will we do this?	Lead	Key Partner	Date
22.1	Review of Delivery Plan	DBC Housing	Annual

Objective 6 Provide effective support and opportunities for vulnerable groups

Action 23 Update and adopt a Homelessness Strategy

Rationale

There was a significant decline in the number of homeless households between 2002 and 2009 and a corresponding increase in households supported through housing options and advice. However, a significant number of changes have taken place since 2009 when the current strategy was developed that now require a full review of the Council's approach to Homelessness and the production of a new strategy. This will provide an opportunity to take stock of the implications of these changes.

The new Housing Strategy plus the implications of the Localism Act and the Welfare Reforms represents a further set of changes that will have a fundamental impact on the planning of future delivery of services.

A detailed strategic review is taking place of homeless services funding via Supporting People Grant. This review is scheduled to be completed in December 2014. A new Homelessness Strategy will be produced to accompany this review.

Milestones

- | | | |
|------|--|---------------|
| 23a) | A review of the current pattern of Homeless related services has been completed. | December 2014 |
| 23b) | A Homelessness Strategy has been produced. | December 2014 |
| 23c) | Delivery Plan reviewed | Annual |

There were no reported incidences of "sleeping rough" in Darlington in 2011.

Action 23 Update and adopt a Homelessness Strategy

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
23.1	Complete a needs and supply analysis.	DBC Housing	DBC Housing Options	June 2014
23.2	Undertake consultation with service providers	DBC Housing	DBC Housing Options	September 2014
23.3	Produce Draft Strategy	DBC Housing	DBC Housing Options	November 2014
23.4	Undertake formal consultation	DBC Housing	DBC Housing Options	December 2014

Objective 6 Provide effective support and opportunities for vulnerable groups

Action 24 Older People's Housing Position Statement

Rationale

Following the development of the Supported Housing Strategy a workshop was held concerning housing for Older People. This suggested that it would be very helpful to developers and others interested in Older People's housing if the council made a clear statement about the need for future housing. This is particularly important in relation to the housing choices of owner occupiers how may want to down size

Milestones

24a) A position statement has been produced on December 2013
Older People's Housing

The older population in Darlington is forecast to grow by 7,700 (41%) over the next 30 years, however, 77% of those aged 65-75 are currently owner-occupiers.

Action 24 Older People's Housing Position Statement

How will we do this?		Lead	Key Partner	Date
24.1	Develop background information and assemble statement	DBC Housing	DBC Housing Options	September 2013
24.2	Consult on the Statement	DBC Housing	DBC Housing Options	November 2013
24.3	Publish the Statement	DBC Housing	DBC Housing Options	December 2013