

## 1. Introduction

The Angus Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009 is a high-level or 'overarching' document that sets the scene rather than detailing everything we need to do. The Implementation Plan in appendice 2 describes the actions required to meet the aims and objectives of the Angus Local Housing Strategy. It also describes who we will need to help us and the date when the actions will be delivered. This appendix contains a detailed analysis or investigation into the reasoning behind the strategy, considerable background information and references to supporting research.

As with the main Angus Local Housing Strategy we have described the housing system by grouping our Strategy into six themes, starting with those that have a direct impact on our experience of housing.

The themes and their overarching aims are:

- Supply and demand – to ensure a balance between housing supply and demand across all areas,
- Affordability – to ensure sufficient affordable housing to support sustainable communities,
- Quality – to ensure a high standard of housing and related services across all tenures,
- Homelessness – to prevent homelessness and help reduce its impact
- Special Needs – to ensure that suitable housing and support is available to meet individual needs,
- Sustainability – to encourage and support sustainable communities.

Theme one is supply and demand, the simplest market relationship. This describes the factors that affect the relationship between the supply of and the demand for housing. Four following themes link to supply and demand. Affordability describes the supply and the need for affordable housing. Quality describes some issues that can hinder the effective supply of housing and therefore demand for it including desirability, location of available housing and its physical condition. Although there are issues of supply and demand within the theme of homelessness, it is more complex and therefore we have included the Angus Homelessness Strategy as supporting information (Appendix 4.1). Theme 5 deals with a specialised element of supply and demand, which is the provision of housing for those with community care needs.

Fuel poverty also crosses and has elements that affect all themes and we have included the Angus Fuel Poverty Strategy as supporting information (Appendix 4.2)

Lastly the appendix considers theme six, Sustainable Communities, where the housing system's impact and our experience of it are more complex, and

interwoven with other issues such as equal opportunities, social inclusion, the economy and the environment.

The Council is committed to listening to the views of other agencies and, most importantly, the people who live in Angus. If you wish to discuss this appendix further, please contact the Local Housing Co-ordinator, Ian Kennedy, at Angus Council Housing Department, County Buildings, Market Street, Forfar, DD8 3WH. Telephone: 01307 473993 or e-mail at [kennedyi@angus.gov.uk](mailto:kennedyi@angus.gov.uk)

## **2. Theme One: Supply and Demand**

### **2.1 Housing System**

A well functioning housing system is one that meets need and responds to demand. Where need and demand are not in balance with supply, various consequences will arise. The consequences will vary between sectors. In the market sector, imbalances between supply and demand will result in rising or falling prices or rents until supply and demand are in balance. In the non-market or social sector, imbalances between demand and supply will lead to changes in indicators such as waiting lists and voids – price cannot adjust so quantities must adjust.

### **2.2 Housing Market Areas**

There are four housing market areas (HMA) - Forfar, Kirriemuir and the Angus Glens; Montrose and Brechin; and Arbroath. Although part of Angus, Carnoustie, Monifieth and the Sidlaws cover the Greater Dundee area. The submarkets within each market are subject to different and changing needs. The Housing Market Context Statement highlights these differences by suggesting the local submarkets operate independently and that links are limited.

**2.2.1 Forfar, Kirriemuir and Angus Glens housing market area (HMA)** covers the main settlements of Forfar and Kirriemuir as well as a significant part of the rural area of Angus which include the villages of Letham, Glamis and Newtyle. It is, geographically, the largest of the four housing market areas in Angus and contains an estimated 13,000 households (1).

The local economy is performing reasonably well compared with the Angus economy: while there is slower employment growth, affected by the decline in public administration employment, there is disproportionately low unemployment and low long-term unemployment. This may be a result of people moving to the HMA while working in another HMA. This may also influence average house prices. However, there is a strong seasonal element to the local economy, which influences households' capacity to take on long-term financial commitments such as buying a house. Although it is difficult to quantify there may be a market for short-term lets required to suit the number of seasonal workers who move to the HMA seeking seasonal work.

There are declining levels of new build in the area and prices for new build properties are high. There would appear to be significant unmet potential demand for owner occupation, based on household aspirations and recent trends. The decline in building was due, in part, to the formal drainage constraint. However, this has now been resolved and the Dundee and Angus Structure Plan highlights Forfar as a focus for future growth (2). This is reflected in the Local Plan which directs most housing land allowances to Forfar (3).

There is moderate demand for Council housing in the area. The slow relet times for the Forfar housing management area may need to be researched to find out, for example, whether they are caused by differential housing management practices or are a sign of emerging low demand in the area. The annualised housing need projections suggest the supply of Council housing will be greater than current housing need over the next five years.

However, recently completed research both within the Housing Market Context Statement and the Housing Market Area Profiles cannot distinguish between subareas within the HMA - for example, it may be that available supply tends to be in Forfar, while need is elsewhere in the HMA.

The HNA estimates that around 56 households each year - those in need and low-income concealed households - may be in the 'market' for Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) or other affordable housing options over the next 5 years. However, allowing for the properties freed up by social renters, this could be a net need for affordable housing of 20 each year - for concealed households unlikely to be able to afford to buy otherwise (3).

**2.2.2 Montrose and Brechin** housing market area (HMA) covers these two main settlements as well as their rural hinterland and villages such as Edzell and Ferryden. The HMA contains an estimated 11,700 households (6). It is difficult to consider Montrose and Brechin as one market area as the towns are experiencing differing economic circumstances. To consider the two towns as one market area merely distorts the results of any research or analysis. For example there is evidence of need for affordable housing in the area. The need for this is mostly in Montrose as evidence from the HNA suggests that Brechin exhibits low demand for both owner-occupation and social renting while Montrose is fairly buoyant in both sectors.

The area has seen employment growth in manufacturing. Unemployment has been falling quickly over the last two years. It now stands in line with the Angus level, but higher than the Scottish level. The proportion of long-term unemployment is higher than both Angus and Scotland, and this has implications for housing affordability (3).

House prices have been rising rapidly in the area, and are now in line with the Angus average. However, new build prices are lower than the Angus level. Demand for owner occupation appears strong, from recent Sasines data and survey evidence. According to the HNA, affordability is a key issue for owners in the area, with a higher than average ratio of household income spent on mortgages and rents (3).

Demand for social rent in the Brechin area appears low, with high stock turnover and low levels of applications to lets. The annualised projections suggest the

need for social rented properties is lower than expected supply of social rented housing.

Estimates show that around 72 households each year (those in need and low-income concealed households) may be in the 'market' for LCHO or other affordable housing options over the next 5 years. However, allowing for the properties freed up by social renters, this could be a net need for affordable housing of just 19 each year – for the concealed households unlikely to be able to afford to buy otherwise (3). The need for affordable housing is probably from Montrose because, as discussed the housing market in Brechin is in decline.

**2.2.3 Arbroath** housing market area covers the town of Arbroath and the surrounding rural area. It contains around 11,720 households (3). Arbroath seems to have developed a natural split between the east and west of the town. Most of the town's council housing stock is concentrated in the east part of the town. Social rented properties in north Arbroath are undergoing regeneration works including selective demolitions, new build by Housing Associations and conversion of some existing stock. There may be further new build projects associated with the dualing of the A92, which may encourage commuters to live in Arbroath especially in the owner-occupied sector.

There appears to be weak demand for the owner-occupied sector and slow price growth and falling sales are evident. This may link to the high-level of unemployment, slow employment growth relative to the rest of Angus and high levels of seasonal unemployment. Although the HNA states that demand for owner-occupied housing at the top end of the market is good. The demand for owner occupation in the near future is likely to be met from existing out-moves from owner occupation and new-build. (3)

The annualised projections of the need for social housing suggest there will be sufficient supply of housing to meet needs over the next five years (3).

Estimates suggest that around 66 households each year (those in need and low-income concealed households) may be in the 'market' for LCHO or other affordable housing options over the next 5 years. However, allowing for the properties freed up by social renters, this could be a net need for affordable housing of 19 each year – for the concealed households unlikely to be able to afford to buy otherwise (3).

One of the main factors influencing housing need in the area is affordability, with households in Arbroath paying, on average, a higher proportion of their, low, incomes in mortgages (3).

**2.2.3 Carnoustie, Monifieth and Sidlaws** HMA include the major settlements of Carnoustie and Monifieth as well as a large rural area towards Dundee. It contains an estimated 10,790 households (3).

There is evidence of continuing demand for owner-occupied housing, with increasing numbers of resales and rising prices for resales. Overall, owner-occupier demand would be strong. Affordability problems are also less prevalent in Carnoustie, Monifieth and Sidlaws, largely because of the higher incomes of residents and the fact that more people own their properties outright, 49% compared with 32% in the rest of Angus. These figures highlight the fact that the population of this area comprises more pensioner households, 45%, compared 16% in the rest of Angus (4).

There is large unmet demand for Council housing: the area has around 23% of all households in Angus but just 9% of the social housing stock. There are nearly seven applicants for every let made, with even higher ratios applying - 20 applicants per let - in the Monifieth area. Some areas, such as Brechin only have 1 applicant per let. (4)

The housing need for social rented housing, in Carnoustie and Monifieth is substantially greater than the supply. Only 11% of Council stock and on 4% of RSL stock is in this area. The low-level of social housing supply is likely to continue to impact on the ability to meet housing needs in the future. There is a real need for more social rented housing in the area. The demand highlighted by the number of lets to applicants demonstrates this and if the balance is not redressed the situation becomes worse as more emerging households compete for a small percentage of properties

Around 46 households each year (those in need and low-income concealed households) may be in the 'market' for LCHO or other affordable housing options over the next 5 years. However, allowing for the properties freed up by social renters, this could be a net need for affordable housing of just 14 each year – for the concealed households unlikely to be able to afford to buy otherwise (3).

### **2.3 Investment**

Investment and resources are needed to complete the options essential to deliver the LHS. Since 1996 there has been a decrease in investment to fund new-build projects. The resources available in 2004-2005 are around £2.2m (5). This may mean that some projects may be delayed or may not progress, although, building new properties is only one option of the LHS. However, when considering each option we must consider the resources required. Resources will include finance, staff and training. However the most important resource required will be partnerships between the Housing department, other departments and other agencies. Details of partnerships and resources are included in the Implementation Plan.

The transfer of the management of development funding to the Council may improve the targeting of the development funding programme but this is no substitute for adequate resources.

## 2.4 Equal Opportunities

Difficulty accessing suitable housing is a problem for every household and community that it affects and many homeowners and tenants face problems in dealing with these issues irrespective of their background. There is no doubt, however, the problems faced by some households are compounded by added disadvantages that they face. The Housing Improvement Task Force (HITF) concluded that minority ethnic communities, older people, younger households and those with disabilities in particular, are more likely to face problems with the condition of their homes or live in houses that do not meet their particular needs. They also face added barriers in resolving these problems (6). To address the problems faced by some minority groups we have recently finished research about the aspirations and needs of Gypsy Travellers and Black Minority Ethnic (BME) groups

The main points of the BME research highlight that:

- BME groups accounted for only 2.0% of Scotland's population, 0.8% of the Angus population and 3.7% of Dundee's population in 2001. These figures reflect the concentration of BME groups in Scotland's cities
- All BME groups experienced strong population and household growth between 1991 and 2001 in Angus, Dundee and Scotland as a whole
- BME households are on average considerably larger than white households, although average household size fell for all groups between 1991 and 2001.
- All BME groups have low uptake of social housing, although the proportion of most BME groups renting from a Housing Association is rising
- The proportion of all BME groups aged over 70 years is rising rapidly
- The housing aspirations of most BME communities are ultimately broadly similar to those of the white population, i.e. a preference for suburban living and owner occupation. However, these aspirations are only being met to a significant degree by some members of the Bangladeshi and Indian communities in Angus and Dundee. The need for proximity to work and, for the Pakistani community, place of worship, makes suburban living impractical.
- BME homeless people are unlikely to seek assistance from the local authority due to the stigmatisation this would bring from their own community. In addition, hostel and temporary single unit accommodation are both highly unsuitable for many BME homeless people, particularly Asian women.

- Fear of racial harassment means that certain areas and tenures become 'off-limits', restricting housing availability. However, racial harassment appears to be less severe in Angus than in Dundee.
- Language is a significant deterrent to members of BME communities communicating with 'officialdom', be it voluntary or state sectors.
- There is a degree of stigmatisation within BME communities associated with raising issues with 'officialdom' through fear of provoking racial harassment by appearing to be seeking undue assistance

## **2.5 Housing Supply**

### **2.5.1 Right to Buy**

The right to buy has depleted Council Stock over the past 25 years. Angus Council has sold around 5,131 properties (4). Most of these sales have been cottages, which is one reason for the mismatch in housing type in the social rented sector. The best and most attractive properties have been bought and flats and non-traditional properties account for a larger proportion of the stock. This lack of choice can contribute to difficulties in letting. While the right to buy may have had a positive impact in some estates by attracting economically active purchasers to the area, it has more generally been a factor contributing to the reduced attractiveness of what is available to let. This has had definite effects in Carnoustie, Monifieth and Sidlaws where demand for social housing is great - nearly one in four of the stock is sold. The proportion of current residents in the Carnoustie, Monifieth and Sidlaws who bought through the right to buy is just 5% compared to an Angus average of 17% (4). This suggests the right to buy in this area is used as a first step to access the owner-occupied market before moving on.

### **2.5.2 Rural Issues**

According to the latest census figures nearly 35,000 - one in three - people live in rural areas (7). Wages are below average in the main employment sectors of tourism and agriculture, therefore access to the Owner-Occupied sector is often not an option. This is may be a reason the Housing Market Context Statement (HMCS) suggests there is a mismatch between average household incomes and house prices (8). Another is that some areas have been effected by people buying holiday homes, retiring to an area or people settling because it is within commuting distance to work in urban areas such as Dundee or Aberdeen. In such circumstances local people are not in a position to compete. Also the HNA suggests there is a strong seasonal element to the economy, which will influence households' capacity to take on long-term financial commitments such as mortgages (4). House prices are higher in rural areas and the HMCS highlights that properties in small rural communities command high prices. The many reasons for higher house prices in rural areas are complex yet not unknown – for instance higher building costs, no economies of scale, high demand and limited

availability. There are incentives to aid access to owner-occupation in rural areas, for example, the Rural Home Ownership Grant, which facilitate the access to owner-occupation in rural areas. At present these grants are available only in the north Angus glens and the uptake of the scheme is poor

Social housing is not readily available in rural areas, because of lack of investment and the loss of stock through the Right to Buy. At present only 7% of socially rented stock is found in rural areas. Some people don't apply for Social housing, making it difficult to measure demand accurately in rural areas. However the need for this accommodation is real and the HMCS proposes the need for three and four apartment, socially rented accommodation in rural areas. Without this investment members of the local population may be forced to move away to access housing.

### **2.5.2.1 Rural issues – Holiday Homes**

Research completed by Craigforth suggests there are nearly 530 homes in Angus that are not main addresses and may be used as second homes or holiday homes (4). The holiday homes market can create income and employment in the local economy. However, because second homes or holiday homeowners are prepared to pay more for accommodation, this can result in house prices increasing to meet demand. This leaves fewer opportunities for local people to access housing as it becomes more expensive and they may be forced to move to find affordable accommodation. This migration can, wrongly, be perceived as a decline in community life.

### **2.5.2.2 Rural issues – Private Rented Sector (PRS) and Tied Housing**

The private rented sector in Angus, as the latest Census suggests, provides accommodation for around 12% of households. However, in some rural areas, the private rented sector can account for around 90% of the total rented accommodation available.

Around 4% live in rent-free accommodation of which 1,721 are tied houses (7). Tied housing is linked to a person's employment, which is usually agriculturally based. In Angus, there are roughly 1,800 people or 5% employed in this area compared with 2% in Scotland (4). The HITF states the condition of tied housing and the private rented sector, as a whole is worse, relative to those in other tenures (6). This is supported by the HNA, which suggests there is a common experience of poor heating and properties in poor condition (4). This may be because, historically the private rented sector had been subject to various forms of rent control that have undoubtedly contributed to lack of investment in the sector. In addition, there is no real incentive for the landlord to maintain tied accommodation - it is not let on a commercial basis and is not subject to market forces.

### **2.5.2.3 Rural issues – Empty Homes**

Findings from the 1999 Empty Homes Initiative highlighted there are 408 houses empty in rural areas throughout Angus (9). The report is now out of date and further research is required to ascertain the condition of and options to return empty homes to use. However the report does give valuable information regarding the condition of these properties. The cost of repairs needed varies from negligible to requiring over £35,000 of repairs to return the property to a habitable condition. These empty homes represent a potential valuable asset in an area where demand is considered high. Although the Empty Homes Strategy provides sound information on the condition of empty homes it falls short of describing the reasons the properties are empty. They may be empty because the owner cannot afford the repairs or the building might be listed and subject to building restrictions that make it difficult or too expensive to repair. This information is required to develop a range of initiatives to return properties to use and to be pro-active and ensure properties do not become empty.

### **2.6 Physical**

Low demand refers most directly to the characteristics of the supply of housing. It refers to property types and neighbourhoods that are more likely to be rejected than others in the same tenure. This is best reflected at a local level where decline relative to the rest of the market can be a measure of unattractiveness associated with design or type. In the owner-occupied sector this is likely to be reflected in the price. House prices in Forfar, Kirriemuir and the Glens; and Carnoustie, Monifieth and the Sidlaws are above the Angus average (4). In Arbroath; and Montrose and Brechin the prices are below the Angus average (4). The HMAP states that in Arbroath, this is linked to high unemployment and slow employment growth rather than unpopular housing. In Brechin and Montrose house prices are almost at Angus average levels but may be effected by the overall economic downturn experienced by Brechin at the moment (4).

In the social rented sector the general popularity of an area can be measured by the length of waiting lists or turnover. Brechin, for example, has only one applicant for each property and has a turnover rate of 15%, which is above the Angus average of 12% (4). Definitions of unpopular properties may be linked to customer signals about properties with certain characteristics in relation to design, size and condition. In this context the size of dwellings, amenities - including gardens – and design of properties is important. These various elements come together to leave some obsolete buildings

The private rented sector represents a paradox in that most of the properties are flats, which are perceived as unpopular, but the market is reasonably stable. Also according to the HNA, heating and poor condition are more prevalent with around one in five citing that they can't keep warm or they experienced some other problem with their problem (4). This may be because the customer base for this type of property tends to be single and over 35 and location is either rural or based around town centres.

Over 1,600 existing council tenants and about 900 owner-occupiers have expressed that they have a problem with the condition of their property and they would move because of this (4)

Apart from making it difficult to let poor housing is linked to increased incidences of asthma, mental health illness and drug and alcohol problems (10). These physical qualities will be examined more fully in the Quality section.

### **2.6.1 Below Tolerable Standard (BTS) Housing**

The Tolerable standard is a statutory standard. It applies to all tenures and defines the lowest acceptable standard of housing that anyone occupies. The number of BTS housing in Angus is restricted to the private sector and accounts for around 1.5% of the total stock (4). Properties that are BTS do not represent an effective supply. However, Planning and Transport suggest that housing market forces will ensure that necessary repairs are carried out to BTS properties as they are bought and sold.

## **2.7 Mismatch**

### **2.7.1 Stock**

According to the Scottish House Condition Survey 2002 (SHCS) 73% of all properties in Angus are houses - 63% of the total are in the private sector and around 10% in the public sector. This is higher than the national figure of 63% combined for both sectors (11). This aside it is still flats and maisonettes that account for almost half of all Council stock. This ranges from 64% in Brechin, where demand is low, to only 24% in Carnoustie where demand is high (4). The age profile of housing differs slightly from that for Scotland. There is a higher proportion of old housing stock in Angus than in Scotland - 30% of occupied homes in Angus were built before 1919 compared to 21% for Scotland. The proportion of newer stock is also slightly higher, with 43% of houses in Angus having been built since 1965, compared to 36% for Scotland (11).

Almost half of the houses in Angus have four or fewer rooms and 27% of houses have five rooms. The remaining 27% have six or more rooms. Flats tend to be smaller than houses with over three-quarters (78%) having four rooms or less while around two thirds (61%) of detached houses have six or more rooms (4).

### **2.7.2 Population**

Population growth has slowed and reversed since 1991, declining by 300 people overall by 2001 to stand at 108,400 according to latest census figures (7). Future projections further stress this reversal of population trends, with a 6.6% decline in the population projected between 2000 and 2016. Over the same period, Scotland's population is projected to decline at the much slower rate of 2% (12).

### **2.7.3 Age**

The age structure of the Angus population is broadly similar to that of Scotland overall. Notable differences are a slightly higher level of those aged 5-14 years (13% compared to 10%) and a lower proportion of those aged over 45 (42% compared to 47%). The proportion of the population aged under 14 will decrease from 18% of the population to 14%. Those aged over 60 years will account for 29% of the population in 2016, compared to 22% in 2000 (12). Such trends are likely to impact on the number of houses needed and, possibly, the level of housing support and care services needed.

### **2.7.4 Migration**

The General Registrar's Office migration assumptions for this period are that in-migration will play a slight role in the population level of Angus. The 2000-based projections assume 50 in-migrants a year over the period to 2016 (4).

The Housing Market Context Statement highlights that Angus exhibits high levels of self-containment, with Greater Dundee providing the main source of incomers. Links between the Housing Market Areas are limited as they all work independently.

### **2.7.5 Households**

Although the population is projected to decline, the total number of households is expected to increase by 6%, from 46,900 in 2000, to 49,900 in 2014. This is lower than the Scottish projection, where the number of households is projected to increase by 12% (12). Within this overall increase in household numbers, the greatest growth is in lone parent and single person households, while households comprising two adults and children are projected to decline. This trend noted across Scotland might be expected given the projected decline in population but increase in the number of households. The average size of households in Angus is projected to decline - from 2.29 persons in 2000 to 2.03 persons by 2014. This level of decline is similar to that for Scotland as a whole - from 2.27 in 2000 to 2.00 by 2014. (12)

### **2.7.6 Employment**

There are higher rates of unemployment among renters than among owner-occupiers. Almost a third of households living in accommodation rented from the Council are likely to rely on state benefits for their main source of income - unemployed, sick or disabled and looking after the home or family. Just 37% of those who live in the Council rented sector are employed compared with 61% of owner-occupiers (4). Economic activity of household members across the four housing market areas is similar, though there are proportionately more retired people in Carnoustie, Monifieth and Sidlaws.

Of the 38,000 people were employed in Angus in 2000, over three-quarters (77%) were employed in Public and Other Services; Distribution, Retailing and Wholesaling; and Manufacturing. Compared to the Scottish average,

employment in the region is significantly over-represented in two sectors – Manufacturing and Agriculture. The region is significantly under-represented in the Financial and Business Services sector. The service sector as a whole accounts for only 67% of jobs compared to 77% across Scotland (4).

### **2.7.7 Overcrowding**

Around 2% of households in Angus fail the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions space standards (4). This means that around 750 households in Angus do not have enough space in their homes. The HNA found the incidence of overcrowding was similar between owners and renters but more common among households with children. This means that, in some incidences, children of the same sex have to share bedrooms. The nature of the social rented stock in Angus may limit its flexibility and capacity to meet the space aspirations of families – for example to accommodate home working or study space for schoolchildren.

### **2.7.8 House too large**

There is evidence of under occupation in properties across Angus. 30% of households live in a property with two or more bedrooms than the DTLR bedroom standard points out they need. This ranged from only 3% of social rented properties to 40% of owner-occupied properties, although no one complained their house was too big (4). If this issue was addressed in the social rented sector it may alleviate some of the problems experienced by those living in overcrowded properties. Although difficult to address in the owner-occupied sector, under occupying can lead to issues of affordability, as costs associated with heating and maintenance are higher.

### **2.7.9 Particular needs**

Overall, 7% of properties have features that cause problems for at least one of the residents, an estimated 3,430 households (4). Over half of those with problems are owner-occupiers and around a third Council tenants. These problems will be addressed more fully in the section dealing with special needs.

## **2.8 Demand**

### **2.8.1 Introduction**

Low demand housing has the characteristics of small waiting lists, frequent refusals, high void rates and high turnover. The changing economic base in areas, changing population and migration patterns as well as demographic and aspirational changes, affects it. Instances of low demand can cause resource problems as well as having a negative impact on communities. Low demand increases demands on management time and can account for rent loss on void properties. Once an area begins to suffer from low demand, a cycle of decline can begin as the image of the neighbourhood declines and more stock becomes void. It may also affect other agencies such as police, education services, economic development, social work and the voluntary sector. A concentrated

area of low demand stock is likely to suffer from a higher level of crime and remaining residents may have a heightened fear of crime, while a decline in population will reduce the viability of other services. In rural areas, this could go so far as to result in the closure of schools or businesses. The problems associated with low demand may affect other agencies such as the police, education and social work and this reflects the need for joint-working to overcome these problems

There is evidence of emerging demand problems in Council housing stock. Most notable is the decline in the housing list. Applicant to let ratios reveal that Angus has few waiting list applicants per let. As discussed earlier, of particular note is Brechin, where turnover is high and there is just over one applicant for every let made. Brechin also exhibits low demand in the owner-occupied sector

The demand for private renting is more difficult to quantify. The views of local lettings agent are mixed and do not reach consensus on the future demand for the market. The HMA suggests a dual role for the PRS in Angus, as both a long-term form of housing and a temporary tenure before moving on to owner occupation

### **2.8.2 Image**

There are many reasons an area can experience levels of low demand for housing. Some areas experience it because of the reputation of the area or the tenure in that area. For Council housing it may be because this tenure is sensed as one of last resort and one people do not aspire to. Over a third of Council tenants who are likely to move within the next two years say their main reason is to move to a better or different area. This is becoming a problem in some parts of Angus, with Forfar, Brechin, Arbroath and Kirriemuir having pockets of hard to let properties. This is discussed more fully in the Quality section.

The impact appearance or image has on demand is more difficult to quantify in the owner-occupied sector – which already has a positive image – and is the tenure of choice. This is supported by the indication made in the 2002 Household Survey that 82% of owner-occupiers like living in the house they are in (4).

Again, the private rented sector is hard to quantify because of a shortage of information, but the HNA reports that around 20% of private renters do not have a lease (4). This suggests an image of amateur entrepreneurship, rather than a co-ordinated professional approach.

### **2.8.3 Problems with neighbours**

Some social situations can lessen the demand for housing in a particular area. An estimated 2,180 households across Angus said they had serious problems with neighbours (4). Almost half of those are social renters. Antisocial behaviour does not only affect residents it can also lessen the overall popularity of an area, contribute to high turnover and make properties harder to let. Some households

within the social rented sector, especially those that have never held a tenancy before or have been evicted previously, lack the necessary skills to sustain a tenancy and this can result in properties being abandoned. Also households with particular problems, for example those with mental health problems or chaotic lifestyles, seem to be more prevalent in the social rented sector and their behaviour can be misinterpreted as antisocial. These issues can contribute to the overall desirability of and demand for social housing

#### **2.8.4 Poverty, Affordability and Access to Housing.**

There is a noticeable difference between the economic activity of those living in social rented accommodation compared with those living in the private rented sector or the owner-occupied sector. Around 60% of household members living in the private rented sector or owner-occupied sector engage in paid work, compared with about 35% of household members in the social rented market (4). Average weekly earnings in 2001 in Angus were £356.40, some 12% lower than the average in Scotland (4). Comparing the median total monthly income highlights the stark differences in income between the sectors. Owner-occupiers incomes are double that of the social rented and PRS, £1,392 compared with £703 (4).

There is a strong correlation between low demand and economic downturn. This may be true of Brechin where in recent the American Airbase – which contributed to the local economy - closed. The closure of the base also led to the housing market in the Brechin area being flooded with houses for sale at the lower end of the market as the houses from the base were sold. This has contributed, in part, to the downturn in the social rented sector in the Brechin area.

Difference in incomes can make it difficult to access the housing tenure of choice for some people. This can contribute to single tenure estates with no tenure diversification. A mix of people and tenures can contribute towards a vibrant and sustainable environment. However social housing is an unattractive option for many people and if it were attractive, access to it is difficult. However as owner-occupation is the tenure of choice it is important to facilitate access to this tenure for people – who without the Council's intervention – would not have this choice.

### **2.9 High demand**

#### **2.9.1 Effects of high demand**

The flip side of low demand for housing is high demand – which can also produce problems that require consideration. There is particular pressure in the social rented sector in Carnoustie and Monifieth area, and both areas have disproportionately high percentages of active applicants compared with stock and lets. The council stock in Monifieth and Carnoustie accounts for around 1,000 properties and has a turnover of around 86 properties a year (4). There is a waiting list of near 600 households waiting for a house in this area (4). It could potentially take 12 years for someone to secure housing in this area. This is in

contrast to Brechin where turnover is high, waiting lists low and there are a number of long-term void properties.

The owner-occupied market, according to local estate agents has mixed demand. Both Forfar and Kirriemuir display high demand and Arbroath performs well at the high end of the market. Carnoustie was highlighted as an attractive area likely to produce demand for housing.

### **2.9.2 Housing access**

Access to housing in an area of high demand is likely to be more difficult than in areas of low demand and this is constant across all tenures.

High demand can skew waiting list figures and may even encourage some people not to apply at all, as they feel there is limited chance of being offered accommodation in their preferred area. Carnoustie and Monifieth both experience high demand across all tenures. This leads to long waiting times on housing lists with over 14 applicants per let in Monifieth and 5 applicants per let in Carnoustie compared with an Angus average of 2.8 applicants per let (4).

Access to the Owner-occupied sector in these areas is also a major concern as house prices are higher in this area compared with the rest of Angus. The average house price in Carnoustie and Monifieth is £67,081 compared with £56,845 throughout the rest of Angus (4). This can limit choice and undermine communities as local people move to more affordable areas.

### **2.10 Our vision**

Across Angus we want stable housing markets, showing gentle growth and meeting people's aspirations across all tenures. Supporting all these aspirations, we will develop a better understanding of supply and demand in communities and settlements, and each Angus housing market.

The market in low demand areas will be stimulated through a range of measures. Where this removes obsolete housing stock we want to see replacement by family housing to support communities and ensure improvements in housing tenure and design mix. We conservatively estimate the need for 150 new houses to be built to achieve this.

Where mainstream supply is not meeting demand, housing providers, planners and public utilities will work together to ensure appropriate development in both public and private sectors. If there is a need to stimulate private rented sector supply in rural areas where there is little or no social housing, it will be targeted using research at a submarket level. Table 2.1 highlight the potential investment needs and shortfall required to balance supply and demand

<b>Table 2.1</b>	
<b>Investment needs and shortfall of resources to balance supply and demand</b>	
<b>Investment required</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Housing for Rent	£38.4 M
Shared Ownership	£3.6 M
Housing for Sale	£3.6 M
<b>Total Required</b>	<b>£45.6M</b>

<b>Type of investment available</b>	<b>Financial resources available</b>
Public (HAG)	£6.82 M
Private from capitalised rent	£5.53 M
Other grants	£0.52M
Private from Sales	£1.56M
Total available	£14.3 M
<b>Shortfall in Funding</b>	<b>£31.17 M</b>

Supply and demand is in balance in most of Angus, but where it is out of kilter, in low demand estates or in the settlements of South Angus, the Strategy will endeavour to bring it back to equilibrium through the following objectives:

1. To stimulate demand in areas that are less popular or have investment needs
2. Work with Planning to ensure the release of land and existing buildings to meet demand for housing
3. To develop an understanding of each Housing Market Area and Burgh by 2009
4. To invest in rectifying the mismatch between housing type or tenure and housing demand
5. To reduce the number of empty homes by 10% over the period of the strategy.

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### **3. Theme Two: Affordable Housing**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Angus Council supports a vibrant housing market that provides sufficient good quality, affordable, warm housing in a variety of tenures to meet the needs and aspirations of individuals and communities. The different tenures and the distribution of households across each tenure are detailed in figure 3.1.

Tenure	Angus	Scotland
Owned outright	24	24
Buying with help from loan/mortgage	40	38
Local authority	18	26
Private rented sector	12	7
RSL/Co-op	6	5

Base: Angus 637, Scotland 30,227  
Source: Scotland's People Volume 3, Table 2.2, 2001

The last census in 2001 reflects the information contained in table 3.1

Supporting a vibrant housing market places a responsibility on the Council to promote provision of affordable housing within the context of creating balanced communities. It provides choice for people with low or moderate incomes. Lack of affordable housing can limit mobility. For example people with low incomes, who work in the area or those offered work in the area cannot afford to live in the area.

Changes in people's lives can also highlight the need for this type of housing. These changes can include young people leaving home, often with limited finances, young couples starting a family, families where marriage breakdown may require separate housing or retirees with a fixed income.

Future trends indicate that the formation of single person or single parent households will increase by around 20% over the next 10 years (1). The increase in single income households, may require a wider range and number of affordable housing.

Affordable housing has been described as "housing of an adequate standard available at below normal market price or rent, whether in the form of social rented housing, subsidised Low Cost Home Ownership, or other equivalent arrangement" (2). Although supplying houses at an affordable price is an important cog, allowing people access to appropriate housing, affordability in terms of the Local Housing Strategy is more than just that. It recognises that some affordability issues can be solved in situ by introducing initiatives such as equity release schemes and 'mortgage to rent'. Schemes such as these may be

crucial in solving people's affordability problems and at the same time allowing them to remain in their home.

### **3.2 The national picture**

In some parts of Scotland, the market can provide some or all of the affordable housing that is needed. However, in some parts of Scotland, the market is not meeting identified needs for affordable housing at the present time. Planners and housing professionals are very aware that in some parts of the country house prices are now out-with the reach of local people and others with modest incomes.

Where the market fails to meet identified needs for affordable housing, current guidance from the Scottish Executive identifies three main ways to meet these housing needs (3):

1. social rented accommodation;
2. low cost housing for sale, for example shared ownership, self-build or other subsidised or discounted housing for sale; and
3. some private sector rented accommodation, available at lower cost than market rents, and provided either by local landowners or commercial landlords.

Scottish Ministers have advocated that provision of affordable housing should be delivered by a partnership between the public and private sectors.

### **3.3 Measuring Affordability**

The Housing Needs Assessment suggests the conventional method of measure affordability is the measure of rent or mortgage costs in excess of 25% of disposable household income (4). Net household income includes the householder and spouse's income from earning and benefits and from other household members (i.e. 'dig money').

The Housing Needs Assessment further suggests a 30% threshold can be used for owner-occupiers (4). This is since, although owners are purchasing an appreciating asset, and might be assumed to be able to afford a larger proportion of their income than renters, they also need to pay additional costs to offset the depreciation of the asset. Assuming a threshold of 30% for owners, therefore, allows for expenditure on repairs and maintenance of 5% of net household income. Mortgage lenders will generally lend individuals around 3.5 times their annual salary. The lender also conducts an affordability test based on income and expenditure

The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations suggests an alternative method of measuring the affordability of rents and one that they use to set rent levels. For a rent to be affordable, households with one person, head of household or partner, working 16 hours or more should only exceptionally be dependant on

housing benefit in order to pay it (5). Using this method depends on the level of local wages and in Angus, the average wage is around 12% below the Scottish average and tables 5.2 and 5.4 indicate these levels vary across tenures and across Housing Market Areas.

The Housing Needs Assessment suggests that around 4.5% or 2,100 of households have difficulty affording their current housing and a further 2.5% or 1,200 believe they have affordability problems (4).

### 3.4 Affordability in Angus

The Angus economy is heavily dependent on traditional low wage industries and average weekly earnings in April 2001 were £356, some 12% lower than the Scottish average (4). This average hides huge variations within Angus, for example the median income in South Angus is £450 weekly, compared to £260 in Montrose and Brechin. Tables 5.2 and 5.4 highlight these variations across tenure and Housing Market Areas

Appropriately, the average Council rent of £34.18 is the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest in Scotland, although the average Registered Social Landlord (RSL) rent of £40.78 a week is near the national average in the voluntary sector. A household renting privately can expect to pay considerably more – on average £77.54 weekly and around 18% of private renters live in housing that is unaffordable. The weekly average cost for owner-occupiers is £57.92. The average median weekly income and the cost of renting or buying in Angus is detailed in table 3.2

<b>Table 3.2</b>				
<b>Rent and Mortgage Levels</b>				
	Council	RSL	Owner	PRS
Costs	£34.18	£40.78	£57.92	£77.54
Income	£162	£153	£427	£171
% of Income	21%	27%	13%	45%
				Source:
Angus Housing Needs Assessment 2003				
Note: Income based on median figures and include only those who rent or have a mortgage				

Table 3.2 highlights the clear difference in income and housing costs across all tenures. Although renters in the Private Rented Sector have slightly higher income, compared with council and Registered Social Landlord tenants, they spend considerable more on housing, while those with a mortgage spend only 13% of their income on housing.

The Private Rented Sector is a very important resource and element in the overall rented sector, especially in rural areas. For example in the Angus Glens the sector accounts for around 90% of properties. Therefore for the overall sustainability of rural communities – where generally, incomes are below average

– it is important to maintain good quality accommodation with rents that are affordable.

The proportion of income spent on housing in the owner-occupied sector may be similar throughout each housing market area (HMA), but the cost of buying is not. It is more expensive to buy in some Areas of Angus compared with others. In Carnoustie and Monifieth it is around 20% more expensive to buy. The price to buy may reflect the higher incomes in this area and therefore the ability to pay. Table 5.4 shows that median incomes in the Carnoustie, Monifieth and Sidlaws are £1,947 – nearly 45% higher than the Angus median average. Table 3.3 highlights the cost of buying in Angus compared with Carnoustie and Monifieth.

<b>Type</b>	<b>Angus - excluding Carnoustie and Monifieth</b>	<b>Angus Part of Greater Dundee</b>	<b>Tayside</b>
Resales	£54,832	£66,145	£62,284
New-build	£76,789	£74,537	£81,559
RTB	£16,794	£18,388	£16,520
All Sales Exc RTB	£56,845	£67,081	£66,219
All Sales	£51,836	N/A	£59,988

Note: Rest of Angus = Arbroath, Brechin, Forfar, Kirriemuir, Montrose;  
 Angus Part of Great Dundee = Carnoustie, Monifieth  
 Source: Craigforth 'Owner Occupied, Private Rented and RSL Markets' (2001)

High house prices can limit choice and access to housing for those with low income. This is particularly concerning in Carnoustie and Monifieth as choice and access to other tenures is already constricted as owner-occupation accounts for around 81% (6) of all households compared with the Angus average of around 64%

### **3.5 Ability to pay and access to housing**

High house prices can be linked to wages, as high average incomes can be inflationary, as house prices follow the majority's ability to pay, contributing to affordability problems for low earners in the same area. Low wages and lack of affordability can stop a household from meeting its housing need in three ways: preventing access, preventing secondary housing needs being met and precipitating home loss.

The median combined income of owners and private renters at £18,000 is over double that of households in the social rented sector (7). Low wages can restrict access to the tenure of choice. Table 3.4 shows the monthly median income of renters and mortgage payers across the four housing market areas.

<b>Table 3.4 Comparing median incomes</b>	
	<b>Median income</b>
<b>Area</b>	
Forfar, Kirriemuir, Angus Glens	£1,370
Montrose and Brechin	£1,130
Arbroath	£1,278
Carnoustie, Monifieth and Sidlaws	£1,947
<b>Angus</b>	£1,350
Source: Household Survey 2002 Base: 350 (All rent/mortgage payers where income information available)	

Lack of affordable housing can stop people moving to appropriate accommodation to meet a primary housing need, for instance overcrowding, sharing amenities, having a concealed household or having a disability. It is estimated that this affects 14% of households with a primary need and 25% of concealed households (4).

There is also evidence of constrained mobility among owner-occupiers who can afford their current property but who cannot afford to move to a more suitable property. The Housing Needs Assessment estimates that 1,770 owners who wish to move cannot because they could not afford to (4).

In addition, unaffordable housing may limit the extent to which households can meet secondary housing needs by conducting housing improvements or adaptations. This is maybe difficult to quantify in the social rented sector and private sector because households rely on landlords to complete necessary improvements or adaptations. Although, PRS tenants and owners can apply for grants to contribute towards improvements and adaptations

In the worst cases, affordability problems may lead to households being unable to sustain their current housing, leading to possible repossession or eviction. During 2002/2003, 67 households lost their homes because of eviction or mortgage default (8). To avoid this it is essential that owners and renters have access to good quality assistance and advice.

The Housing Needs Assessment suggests that 6% of Council tenants and 18% of private renters live in housing that is unaffordable (4). Research completed by Communities Scotland stated that all households are assumed to be able to afford social rented housing, with the aid of Housing Benefit where applicable (16). This statement is contradictory but suggests the need to assess the full

circumstances of households. For example, there may be incidences where households are not claiming their full benefits entitlement or their house is not modernised and they are spending more to keep warm. Of those with affordability problems most rent their property, around half are single adults and around half occupy flats (4).

### 3.5.1 Forfar, Kirriemuir and the Angus Glens

Just under 2% of households, in this area fail the affordability test, with a rent or mortgage in excess of a quarter of their disposable income. This measure of affordability does not recognise other necessary household costs such as Council Tax, heating and power. This means the estimate of 2% is a conservative one (6).

### 3.5.2 Montrose and Brechin

Around 9% of households, in this area fail the affordability test, with a rent or mortgage in excess of a quarter of their disposable income (6).

### 3.5.3 Arbroath

Around 5% of households, in this area fail the affordability test, with a rent or mortgage in excess of a quarter of their disposable income. However, a further 15% of households say they just manage to pay for their rent. (6)

### 3.5.4 Carnoustie, Monifieth and Sidlaws

Around 2% of households, in this area fail the affordability test, with a rent or mortgage in excess of a quarter of their disposable income. 3% of households had at some point in the past had difficulties trying to get a mortgage while 1% of those who are not likely to move in the next 2 years say this is because they cannot afford to buy. (6)

*Table 3.4  
Comparing Median Incomes and Median Housing Costs (rent/mortgage payers)*

	<b>Median income (A)</b>	<b>Median rent mortgage (B)</b>	<b>Ratio (A/B)</b>
<b>Area</b>			
Forfar, Kirriemuir, Angus Glens	£1,370	£180	7.6
Montrose and Brechin	£1,130	£182	6.2
Arbroath	£1,278	£185	6.9
Carnoustie, Monifieth and Sidlaws	£1,947	£210	9.3
<b>Angus</b>	£1,350	£192	7.03

Source: Household Survey 2002

Base: 350 (All rent/mortgage payers where income/rent information available)

As we can observe proportionately, more people with affordability problems live in Montrose, Brechin and Arbroath than in Forfar, Kirriemuir and the Glens and Carnoustie, Monifieth and Sidlaws. The ratio of monthly median net household incomes to median rent/mortgage of the households shows that the ratio is higher in Forfar, Kirriemuir and the Glens and in Carnoustie, Monifieth and Sidlaws. This supports the suggestion that affordability issues are more common in Montrose and Brechin and Arbroath, primarily due to lower household incomes in the area. Table 3.4 compares the median income and median housing costs across the four market areas.

### **3.6 Renting**

Private renters tend to pay more for accommodation than owners and social renters (see table 3.2). According to the Housing Needs Assessment, problems with heating and poor condition are more prevalent in the private rented sector than in other sectors, which can only compound the issues of affordability. Also only a third of people in this sector claim housing benefit, compared with 47% of council tenants and 53% of Registered Social Landlord tenants (4).

Renters in rural areas are more likely to rent privately because of tenure availability, for example, around 90% of all rented accommodation in the Angus glens is privately rented. Many work in traditional industries like agriculture and forestry, where wages tend to be lower than average. Therefore, rents above average may prove prohibitive for some potential renters. Therefore, there may be a need to develop initiatives that can provide access to a range of cheaper housing in rural areas.

The social rented sector has on over supply of properties in some areas. Despite this, less than 10% of households with affordability problems are currently on a waiting list for housing (4). This may be due to the lack of quality information regarding alternatives to their current tenure or the general unattractiveness of the tenure. It may also be because access to this type is perceived as bureaucratic, with forms to complete that include intrusive questions. Also it is considered that the general unattractiveness of this tenure and the lack of opportunities to exercise choice within the sector is a barrier within These issues are genuine areas of concern and are considered in the section 2 on quality and section 6 discussing supply and demand. However, this is not the case in Carnoustie, Monifieth and the Sidlaws where the social rented sector is very pressured.

### **3.7 Pressured Areas**

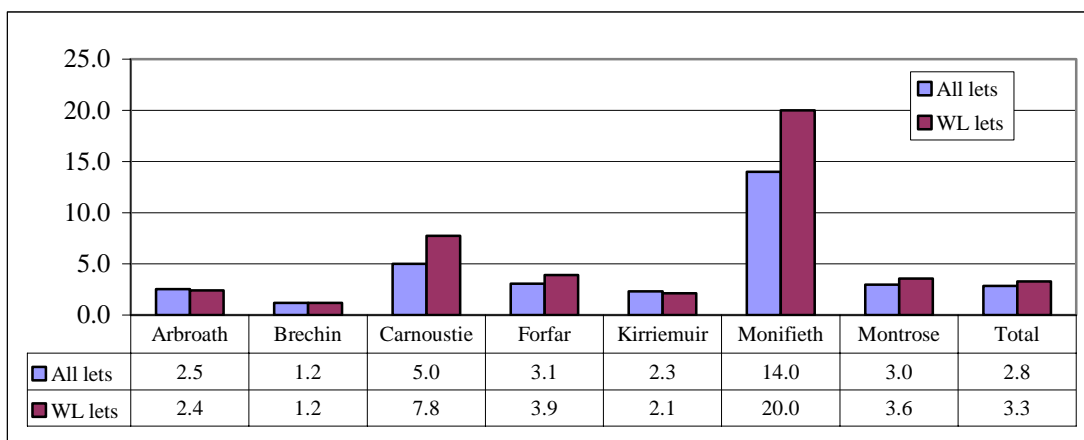
The ability to access affordable housing in pressured areas is difficult. The Housing Market Area Profiles suggests that in Carnoustie, Monifieth and the Sidlaws there is substantial unmet demand for Council housing: the area has

around 23% of all households in Angus but just 9% of the social housing stock (4).

Although, given high average incomes and retirement households with no mortgage, there may appear to be no affordability problem for the majority of people already resident in this area, 2% of households are perceived as having affordability problems (6). It has proved difficult to access accommodation in these areas for people with low incomes. This situation can obstruct people who wish to move to the area for support, to give support, to take up employment or who have a local connection. It can also hinder concealed households from accessing their own accommodation, which would also benefit the visible household as they might have their housing needs met just by the concealed household leaving.

There is exceptionally high demand for social housing, with 14 applications for every let in the Monifieth area and 5 for every let in the Carnoustie area, compared with around 3 applications per let in Angus. Figure 5.1 highlights the demand for council housing across all market areas. The level of housing demand in this area is substantially greater than the supply of social rented housing. The very low level of social housing supply is likely to continue to impact on the ability to meet housing needs in the future.

**Figure 3.1: No. of Applicants per Let**



People in Carnoustie and Monifieth tend to stay in their homes longer before moving and this compounds the pressure. Around 67% of all households have been resident for over 10 years and only 8% of council stock is available for let every year compared with Angus average of 12%(6).

The effects of low turnover are aggravated by the lack of alternative social rented properties – Registered Social Landlords only have 114 properties in the area (6).

The Council can apply for pressured area status, which limits the sale of Council housing in pressured areas to sitting tenants. The Monifieth, Carnoustie and Sidlaws area seems to fit the profile required to apply for pressured area status. However, the right to buy is only suspended for new or transfer tenants and given the low turnover of council housing in the area it may not have the desired impact. Given this situation area the Council is unlikely, in the short term, to apply for pressured area status.

There is an estimated 600 concealed households in the area and incomes of newly-formed households in Angus tend to be low (4). Just under a third in owner-occupation or renting privately having a monthly income of less than £1,000. The Housing Market Area Profile assumes that this would be similar to households emerging in the near future. It may even be higher, since their emergence has been constrained so far. Most are unlikely to be able to afford an entry level mortgage in excess of £38,000. As less than 2% of properties, in this area, are valued at less than £40,000 there is evidence of demand for LCHO or houses at affordable rent in this area (4). If trends in rising house prices in this area continue this situation may continue to worsen. The Housing Market Area Profile conservatively predicts the need for 90 properties in Monifieth and Carnoustie, to be built for Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) or other affordable housing options over the next 5 years (4).

### **3.8 Planning context**

Scottish Planning Policy 3 – Planning for Housing (SPP3) provides a statement of Government policy on planning and housing and includes reference to affordable housing (3). The document recognises housing as a fundamental need and reflects commitment to ensuring that a decent home should be within the reach of all households. Where a particular need can be demonstrated in a within the LHS this is material consideration in planning processes, which should be addressed as the opportunity arises through reviews of Structure and Local Plans. Policy H16: Affordable Housing from the adopted Angus Local Plan provides general support for proposals to develop affordable housing where there is a clearly demonstrated local need. Although indicating that affordable housing is best accommodated on sites identified for housing in settlements, the Policy would also support development of appropriate windfall and opportunity sites. Some LCHO and housing for rent has been provided as part of new housing sites, largely as the result of partnership working. It is recognised that Policy H16 of the Angus Local Plan should be reviewed, taking account of the findings of the Angus Local Housing Needs Assessment. Further detailed research will be required within the Housing Market Areas to identify unmet need for affordable housing at a local or settlement level.

### **3.9 Maintenance**

Owner-occupiers need to maintain their property but sometimes they are not even able to afford to carry out essential repairs. The Housing Needs Assessment highlighted that 3% or around 60 households who failed the 25%

affordability test had problems with their properties including dampness, dry rot and wet rot (4). These types of problems only exacerbate the overall affordability of a property. There is a direct link between disrepair and incomes. The Scottish House Condition Survey states that the median income of households in dwellings with disrepair is £13,900 and £12,500 for those with urgent disrepair. This compares with a median annual income across all tenures of £14,700, which is a difference of 5% and 15% respectively (7). There is a range of grants available to carry out some repairs or improvements, and although these grants are now means tested they are not targeted at the owners of properties in the worst state of disrepair or those lacking basic amenities. Further information is available in theme 3 dealing with Quality.

As mentioned private renters on average tend to pay more for their accommodation than owner-occupiers or those in the social rented sector. This may go somewhat to explaining why 18% are recognised as having affordability problems. However high rents is not the only problem that affects this tenure. It is recognised that problems of heating and poor condition are more prevalent in this sector. Heating a property in poor condition and inadequate heating can be expensive and can compound affordability problems for households.

### **3.10 Our Vision**

We want to tackle the difficulty some people have in accessing appropriate housing in the area they need to live in because of work or family ties. This is particularly true in South Angus and in rural areas where house prices are higher than average and social housing is scarce. We want to develop a policy that ensures the building of affordable houses for rent and for sale in area like South Angus and in rural locations.

There will be local or niche shortfalls in affordable housing for rent and low cost home ownership in most parts of Angus but in South Angus there is an acute and demonstrable under supply. During this Strategy we will develop an affordable housing policy that will highlight the need for 330 affordable homes for rent and 90 houses for low-cost home ownership build in South Angus. Identifying where other local shortfalls are will depend on sub-market research so any public sector investment for affordable housing in Angus will have to be flexible enough to pick up the housing needs of smaller settlements and communities in other areas.

18% of those who rent privately have problems of affordability. These problems may be exacerbated by evidence of poor heating systems and energy efficiency in the properties that they rent. We will work private landlords to support and develop the sector, especially in rural areas, by developing an accreditation scheme that ensures quality both in terms of management and physical attributes.

We will also implement options that help facilitate choice and make it easier to access housing. Implementing choice based letting policies and a common

housing register will ensure that access to social housing is less bureaucratic and less onerous for the applicant. We will also work with minority groups to remove any barriers to housing

We will also conduct research to monitor housing costs and to find out what communities require to be sustainable especially in rural areas

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## **4. Theme Three: Quality Housing**

The aim of this theme of the Local Housing Strategy is to ensure that Angus citizens have access to a high standard of housing and related services across all tenures.

### **4.1 Introduction**

The quality of housing, whether it be in the occupier's ownership or managed by a social or private landlord is crucial to a resident's quality of life, is a factor in the operation of the market and plays a role in the sustainability of communities. It underpins much of what the Local Housing Strategy is trying to achieve and follows on from Supply and Demand. Quality is also at the heart of the Scottish Executive's housing policy and Angus Community Planning objectives, for example, in eliminating BTS housing, modernising Scotland's social housing, fighting fuel poverty and progressing local agenda 21 on sustainability.

When we talk about the quality of housing in the LHS, this refers to three elements: (a) access to housing as a product and its long term management, across all tenures, (b) the physical quality of housing in terms of design, type, state of repair and degree to which it meets modern standards, especially energy efficiency and (c) the overall environmental quality or context in which the housing is set.

For the purposes of the LHS, we divide Angus' housing stock into four tenures: Owner Occupation, Council Housing, Private Rented Sector and the Voluntary Sector, in order of size. Each plays a different and valuable role in meeting the broader needs of Angus citizens and each has different characteristics and problems in terms of the quality of the product it is offering and how efficiently or effectively their consumers' needs are met. A short profile is included below for information.

#### **4.1.1 Owner Occupation**

Owner-occupation is the majority tenure, at around 31,500 or two thirds of all Angus properties but the proportion varies across the different parts of Angus, from 60% in Forfar, Kirriemuir and the Glens to 91% in the Carnoustie, Monifieth and Sidlaws area. The total number of house sales each year is between 2,000 and 2,200, resales accounting for 75% of these. Dwelling sizes tend to be larger than other sectors on average and the majority of owners live in houses, with 31% occupying a detached house, 31% living in a semi-detached house, 19% in a terraced house and 5% living in a bungalow. The remaining owners are split as follows; 8% live in flats, 1% lives in a maisonette, 1% in a 4-in-a-block and 1% in a converted building. Among the owner occupiers surveyed in the Angus Local Housing Needs Assessment, 47% own outright and 53% are buying with a mortgage, compared with 38% and 62% nationally (1).

#### **4.1.2 Council Housing**

Angus Council currently owns and manages 8,732 units or 18% of Angus stock, and is generally in good physical condition and well managed (2). Of the six Council housing management areas, Arbroath contains the largest proportion of stock at 30%, followed by Forfar, Montrose and Brechin. Kirriemuir, Carnoustie and Monifieth each have less than 10% of the stock. Around half the stock is flatted, while two-fifths is cottages and 7% is maisonettes. This profile varies between areas, with cottages comprising relatively large proportions of stock in Carnoustie and Forfar, while relatively high proportions of Brechin and Kirriemuir stock are flats. Two-thirds of all the maisonettes are in Arbroath (1).

#### **4.1.3 Private Rented Sector**

The private rented sector in Angus exhibits very different characteristics from private renting in Scotland as a whole, being larger at 12% of stock and appearing to be less commonly a 'transient' tenure for younger people. This suggests a dual purpose for the sector in Angus, as both a long-term form of housing and a temporary tenure before moving into owner occupation. Flats account for the majority of advertised lets and are more common as furnished lets than unfurnished. In more rural locations the 1-2 apt properties are still mainly flats, although for larger size properties houses are more likely than flats (1). There is not enough detail about the Private Rented Sector at this stage but it includes significant amounts of tied housing, is quite dispersed, and is variable in both physical and management quality.

#### **4.1.4 Voluntary Sector**

The voluntary sector in Angus includes a range of providers including a community care trust and a philanthropic independent housing association, but Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) constitute the largest part. There are 12 RSLs operating in Angus, with a total of 2,732 units for social rent - mostly for mainstream lets - and 99 units for shared ownership. The largest RSLs operating in Angus are Hillcrest Housing Association and Angus Housing Association, each with around 1,000 social rented properties. The next three largest - Servite, Gowrie and Bield - have around 140-200 units each. The RSL stock is slightly different to that of the council stock, with the majority of the housing flatted: 60% compared to 48% for the Council. Although it is the smallest sector, only 4% of stock, it plays a major role in the provision of new affordable housing, whether for mainstream or special needs (1).

The following background paper is divided into the three elements: management, physical and environmental quality and each tenure considered within these elements, although in some areas similar sectors like Council and housing association housing are grouped together.

#### **4.2 Is Housing Well Managed?**

The quality of housing management can be considered in terms of how people can access a home, how tenancies are regulated and problems dealt with, and in

terms of the management of repairs and investment, for different sectors. For rented accommodation all of these issues apply. For owner occupation, it is largely the access mechanism within the market process that is under the spotlight, although there are other problem areas.

#### **4.2.1 Access – Getting a house**

Access to housing can be a problem for a significant number of people in Angus, and this can be due to poverty, location, race and native language, disabilities and vulnerability.

##### **4.2.1.1 Buying a house – Owner Occupation**

Getting a house in the private sector involves massive personal investment and major choices for households but is based on a system of buying and selling that has some fundamental flaws. Those flaws are: the costs of conveyancing are not always transparent, a buyer is expected to search out information from a variety of sources, each interested bidder will need a valuation making unsuccessful bids expensive, the principle of caveat emptor (buyer beware) and the absence of any obligation to disclose defects may lead sellers to conceal information about repairs and maintenance, unclear deeds of conditions or titles, lack of understanding of responsibilities, sharp closing dates can result in ill-considered decisions, and there is no information about energy efficiency, planned maintenance and other running costs or about access for disabilities (3).

Some of the consequences of these flaws are dealt with below under repairs, but all of these points work against informed choices being made and especially the total cost of housing over the lifecycle of a private dwelling or someone's ownership of it. In terms of Angus, there are limited options available to the authority as changes in the way we buy and sell property would require national intervention and local agreement with Perth & Kinross and Dundee City Councils plus Tayside solicitors, surveyors and estate agents. The Housing Improvement Task Force outlined in its second report a range of measures to tackle the problem areas within the private housing market, including a seller's information pack with comprehensive details of a property's attributes and repair needs and a single survey and valuation to be commissioned by the seller for all prospective buyers. The latter proposal is being piloted in the Greater Dundee Housing Market Area in 2004, and so buying and selling of homes in South Angus will be affected (4).

##### **4.2.1.2 Applying for a Council or housing association house**

Allocations systems used by social landlords have developed great sophistication over the last 20-30 years in measuring housing need against a landlord's criteria and meeting that need in a fair and balanced way. Most systems are points based, producing one single or a group of waiting lists, ordered according to applicants' circumstances and allowing staff to offer vacancies to the household defined as "in most housing need". The allocation policies of Angus Council and

most of the housing associations in the Angus are well developed and excellent examples of this approach to matching social housing with people in need.

However, despite their sophistication, the traditional waiting list allocations systems have in recent years been criticised as being one or more of the following: (a) overly bureaucratic; (b) potentially driven by administrative convenience, making the applicant a passive player in the process; (c) obscure and difficult to understand by applicants; (d) open to institutional discrimination and racial disadvantage and (e) contributing to the “welfare” image of social housing (5). At an operational level, the traditional allocations approach can also be inefficient. Where there is significant variation in the desirability of social housing stock and households in priority need can wait for their preferred house, there can be high void losses despite a healthy waiting list. Underlying this is the traditional allocations systems’ difficulty with the complex relationship between defined housing need and the many subjective factors that lead households to make the choice to move.

Social housing was designed for a specific purpose: as an alternative to the poor standards of the Victorian private sector, to facilitate slum clearance and replace war damaged stock. It is now facing the need to respond to a changing market place, and the challenge of finding different customers or accommodating new lifestyles. Between half and two thirds of allocations, or offers of housing are being refused, whilst the private sectors offer different types of quality accommodation and have a constant demand for their product. New customers perceptions of waiting times, location and quality of property available, may actually prevent them from considering the Council or housing associations.

Increasingly, applicants have preferred to wait rather than take offers of stigmatised areas and for some housing in burghs like Arbroath and Brechin, Council and association void losses have climbed inexorably since the mid-1990s. However, Angus is a place of contrasts and there is still high demand in the communities of South Angus and in those areas the allocation of social housing may be too complex with unreasonable waiting times, particularly Monifieth and Carnoustie. The challenge is to develop new systems that will work well in both high and low demand areas, protect the needs of excluded or vulnerable groups, create new markets, reaching new clients, make access as fast and effective as possible whilst still being transparently fair and meeting statutory responsibilities.

Both Angus Council and one housing association in the Angus area, Servite Scotland, have decided to adopt a “choice based letting” or consumerist approach to allocation rather than a bureaucratic one, providing applicants with a greater opportunity to express their needs, demands and aspirations, enabling them to have a greater role in deciding where they wish to live and when they want to move. Central government, the Chartered Institute of Housing and other

housing agencies are now promoting “Choice”, adapted to suit the different UK legislative frameworks, as an alternative to traditional waiting list systems.

The mechanics of “Choice” are straightforward and, although there is variation between landlords, the common elements are: simplified registration to allow bidding for all, some system of prioritisation based on need, publicising vacant properties, a bidding process to match a successful household with a property and finally feedback to customers on the popularity of properties. Studies of the nature and effectiveness of Choice Based Letting or “Choice” have shown that the common thread in all examples is a transfer of the active role from staff to applicant or customer and an opportunity to simplify systems and approach. In a wider context this approach is seen as a key part of the renewal and re-branding of social housing as an attractive housing option rather than the welfare tenure of last resort (6).

Whatever the mechanics of allocation, the nature of the social rented stock may limit its flexibility and capacity to meet the housing needs of families. Further, as housing space standards improve - for example to accommodate home working or study space for school children - the Council's stock may not meet households' aspirations (1). The weight of the evidence is that demand for Council housing is falling behind the effective supply, which will result in further falls in the waiting list and increased difficulty in letting some properties, particularly those in Brechin, Kirriemuir and Arbroath. This is dealt with more fully below.

A further issue for the quality of access to housing for social rent is the confusing array of landlords. The method of allocating homes and organisational culture can be confusing to existing and potential new clients, particularly if they want to access various housing providers, within the same area. There are 16 social or voluntary sector landlords and a huge number of private sector landlords to approach if you are in housing need. Each will have a different policy and in the case of social housing, a different, often hefty form to fill in. This is potentially confusing for applicants and reinforces the bureaucratic image that social housing has.

Through the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and subsequent guidance, the Scottish Executive has been promoting a one stop shop approach to applying for affordable housing, using a common housing register. There are significant obstacles to bringing together different agencies who guard their individuality and independence and have differing administrative and information technology systems. The Council has made a successful bid for Scottish Executive funding to develop a common housing register and the majority of Angus housing associations have expressed an interest.

One weakness in the relationship between RSL's and the Council is the nomination agreement. The number of applicants nominated from Council

waiting lists to housing associations that were successful in getting housed in 2003 was nowhere near the 50% level expected. It is hoped that the proposed Common Housing Register will replace nominations and help strengthened customer choice in this case.

One specific aspect of access to social housing that is currently being investigated is the nature of institutional or cultural barriers to black and minority ethnic households using social housing. This is covered in more detail in Theme 6: Sustainable Communities, but in summary, for access there are problems with language and the complexity of the bureaucratic process and a cultural of self-reliance making it difficult to seek help from the Council (7).

#### **4.2.1.3 Private Rented Sector**

It would appear that the Private Rented Sector has less of a problem with access, given that it is largely run on a market basis. However, people on low incomes or those that are benefit dependent are finding it increasingly difficult to access private lets. The causes centre around delays and uncertainty in housing benefit assessment and payment, as well as the difficulty of raising deposits. There is evidence that this has resulted in homelessness (8) and it certainly reduces the options available for those seeking housing. There is no evidence of there being other problems with access, like discrimination, but further research is needed into this tenure.

#### **4.2.2 Management**

By management we mean arrangements for delivering services to tenants and owners, for regulating tenancies or mortgages, dealing with arrears, anti-social behaviour and factoring.

##### **4.2.2.1 Owner Occupation**

Although it varies over time, there have been periods when lenders have been criticised for taking a heavy handed approach to mortgage arrears, with the emphasis on repossession but the industry recognises the importance of a measured response and there are now mechanisms like “mortgage to rent” where housing associations can help buy out owners in mortgage arrears, preventing homelessness. Angus Council cannot participate in mortgage to rent because of the effect of the Right to Buy but all Angus housing associations are charitable bodies and so properties acquired through this initiative are not subject to Right to Buy regulations.

Where there are neighbour disputes or anti-social behaviour involving owners, Angus Council has limited experience of intervening but through the development of a number of community safety initiatives like mediation and a wider use of anti-social behaviour orders, this is likely to change over the Strategy period.

The management of services like mutual repairs, factoring, and communal lighting, ground maintenance or stair cleaning, there are arrangements within

Angus Council for any properties in mixed ownership but this is an area that needs further development. This is covered in more detail below.

#### **4.2.2.2 Council Housing**

For some people, social housing has an unfortunate image, one of municipal welfare provision. That image has been fostered by the way the service has developed as a bureaucracy and it is only in the last few years that social landlords have aspired to creating a 21<sup>st</sup> century social housing product that starts with the customer. What this new 21<sup>st</sup> century service has to overcome is a limited product, and a much more demanding customer base, aware of its own aspirations and measuring council housing against owner occupation and housing associations.

One area that has risen to the top of the political agenda in recent years is anti-social behaviour and one key aim of the Angus Community Plan is that Communities should feel secure within their environment. Although anti-social behaviour can be found in any tenure and is increasingly found in owner occupation, it is associated more often with rented housing, both private and social housing, where the prevalence is out of proportion to the size of each sector. The Housing Needs Assessment found that almost half of those surveyed who expressed a wish to move house, at least in part because of a serious neighbour problem, are social renters. This produces an estimate of 1,030 households in Council or RSL housing with an anti-social behaviour problem (1).

Discussions with front line Council staff, community police and residents make it clear that inadequate management of the problem of anti-social behaviour across agencies can perpetuate or worsen unwanted behaviour or nuisance. Therefore poor tenancy enforcement and image requires to be addressed from both tenant and landlord. Communities require to take pride and control in their areas by sharing responsibility in tackling certain behaviour in social housing. Estate management suffers from housing staff being under resourced or undertrained in what can be a confrontational job and needs to be reviewed. There is a current trend away from the generic working of the 1990s back to specialisms in housing management. This specialised estate management approach is being developed by Angus Council for housing support, modernisations, arrears and assessment.

It is suggested that social landlords spend 80% of their resources on 20% of their most challenging tenants. Because of the marginalized, troubled or chaotic nature of some social housing customers, this level of investment may increase. Tenants who abide by their tenancy agreement and conditions often receive little attention from their social landlord and this is considered by some to be unfair. Edinburgh Council has declared that its housing service will recognise tenants that comply with the terms and conditions of their tenancy through an incentive scheme akin to the "Gold Service" pioneered by Irwell Valley Housing Association in Manchester (9). By using this positive reinforcement of good

tenant behaviour it is found that there is significant improvement in neighbour relations, the quality of housing estates and quality of life.

Council housing also has a problem in terms of the management of its stock in mixed tenure communities. Council housing was not designed to be sold and in developing the Right to Buy in the 1980s the complexities of an estate management service with an increasing number of owners sharing common grounds and responsibilities were not addressed adequately and there are examples of common responsibilities being managed at the expense of Housing Revenue Account.

#### **4.2.2.3 Private Rented Sector**

Angus Council as the strategic housing authority doesn't know enough about tenancy management within the private rent sector to confirm or deny if there are particular problems. Anecdotally there have been individual reports of a lack of intervention with bad tenants, a readiness to evict and tenancies in the poorest quality end of the private rented sector not being managed at all, other than rent collection. Part of the problem is the diversity of the sector, with many types of private sector landlords and lets ranging from Houses in Multiple Occupation, farmers, estate owners, tenants exercising the Right to Buy and then letting, major employers, Buy to Let properties, holiday lets, park homes, estate agents and any individual owning one or more properties.

One problem in regeneration areas is the effect of low demand and negative equity on owner households who want to move away. In order to afford a move, owners can end up selling at low prices to landlords who are unprepared or willing to responsibly manage their property, or they can rent it out themselves. Anecdotal evidence and external surveys suggest that either option can lead to a failure to deal with anti-social behaviour of private tenants. This provides an opportunity for households with a record for such behaviour to move back into an area they were evicted from as social tenants.

#### **4.2.2.4 Voluntary Sector**

While council housing has found its role changing and shrinking in size, the voluntary sector has managed to grow significantly through new build and stock transfer in the last 30 years. It has been particularly successful in addressing specialist and regeneration housing needs. Recent changes in national policy have meant that the number of housing associations and co-operatives has shrunk, as smaller landlords have sought economies of scale through merger and acquisition. Although there are sound commercial reasons for this, concerns have been raised that the local and often tenant led governance and the local housing management organisation that are such a distinctive part of the Scottish housing association movement is in danger of being lost. Will this lead to a reduction in the choice or quality service from Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in Angus? From the perspective of the Local Housing Strategy, there is a need to support the local nature of the voluntary sector.

### **4.3 Physically fit for purpose**

By physically fit for purpose, we are considering the overall standard of housing in terms of type, design and facilities, but also whether it passes the minimum "Tolerable Standard". Other important factors include the disrepair and planned improvement.

#### **4.3.1 Owner Occupation**

Owner occupation is the majority tenure within Angus (67%) but with its small samples size the 2002 Scottish House Condition Survey could not differentiate between private renting and owner occupation in its analysis of housing quality and condition. As covered above under access issues, the Housing Improvement Task Force's commented that the quality of information provided to buyers about the physical aspects of a house and its repair needs directly contributes towards variable quality and disrepair in the private sector. This is true in the following areas.

##### **4.3.1.1 Below the Tolerable Standard (BTS)**

The Scottish Housing Condition Survey 2002 estimates that Below Tolerable Standard housing in Angus could be as high as 600, which is no change from the 1996 survey. However, in 1997 Environmental Health estimated that the level was much lower, at around 150 houses. It is possible that the SHCS overestimated the incidence of BTS housing due to the small sample size and Environmental Health's records depend on reported examples so the actual figure is likely to be between. The total number of houses recorded below the tolerable standard in Tayside at March 2000 were 2,686 equivalent to 1.5 % of the total regional stock (10). We do know that BTS stock is found predominantly in the private sector, in detached properties, older housing, particularly pre-1919 stock, and in rural areas.

This sector requires further research within the LHS period to identify the properties and costs involved to bring properties up to the basic "tolerable standard". The Scottish Executive is currently reviewing the definition of BTS and it is expected to issue guidance in 2004. If there are significant changes, for instance say the inclusion of an energy efficiency measure where failure is triggered by an NHER rating of 2 or less, the number of BTS properties would rise considerably. In this case 8,000 properties or 16% of the stock would fail and this will have a significant impact on private sector grant policy and expenditure.

At present, the level of BTS properties in Angus is not a cause for concern and there may be sufficient investment through the private market to rectify most of this housing. Some BTS properties may constitute a long term problem, in terms of empty homes or the environment, and the LHS will need some options to address them.

#### **4.3.1.2 Energy Efficiency**

Energy efficiency affects all tenures but the private sector, including the private rented sector, has a greater proportion (86% of private stock) and numerically more (30,000) of housing with poor energy efficiency, defined as having an NHER of 5 or less (10). The energy inefficiency is associated with pre-war housing as a proportion of the pre 1945 stock but numerically there were more inefficient houses built after the war, about 26,000 in Angus.

#### **4.3.1.3 Repairs & Maintenance**

Overall disrepair in Angus is lower than the national average (80%) but at 75% of dwellings, of which 37% have an urgent repair, this is still a concern. Most of the disrepair is in the private sector. The average cost of repairs, as a measure of its seriousness is around the national average. (10) Unsurprisingly, disrepair is associated with older households, older buildings and low incomes. The total estimated costs for remedying BTS, patch repairs, and improvements are: £69m but if patch repairs are replaced with comprehensive repairs this rises dramatically to £129m (10). The estimated cost of patch repairs in 1996 was £37m so this superficial repair cost appears to have reduced to £28m in 2002 but the 1996 sample was boosted and is probably more accurate.

Remedying repairs and modernisation is the responsibility of owners, however the individuals means or knowledge about the nature of repairs or how to pay for them is sometimes limited. This is especially the case with some RTB stock, where many ex-tenants did not understand (or for early 80's transactions, did not have explained to them) their new responsibility for repairs and the more vulnerable have a limited understanding of how to go about organising the work. There is also the problem of a high proportion of RTB owners being capital rich and cash poor. This is further complicated by some title deeds being unhelpful about issues of common or mutual repairs and having no factoring arrangements.

Repairs and Improvement grants contribute to the maintenance of private sector tenures, around 132 cases per year, mostly in owner occupation. The scope for private sector grants to address the scale of the disrepair is very limited because the grant budget is only £200,000 per annum. This is net of grants for special needs adaptations and the budget has reduced by more than 50% since ring fencing was removed from what was then called the non-HRA budget, in 1996. Because of a lack of resources and the fact that it covers a wide range of statutory and discretionary grants, the system is also largely reactive and may not reach those most in need. One attempt to address this problem has been the introduction of a new grants regime which included means testing in October 2003. In addition Angus Council was able to bid for an enhanced Private Sector Housing Grant from the Scottish Executive, for specific improvements and projects in the system. The impact of this is still to be assessed but it will only have a marginal effect on the scale of disrepair in the private sector.

Angus is fortunate to have an active and comprehensive Care and Repair service, which can assist older, disabled or vulnerable owners and private tenants to maintain their properties. However, it relies on the client or agency working with the client to pro-actively access the service. About 1700 clients accessed the service in 2002 and an increase in cases is expected, given the changes in the grant system. The Angus Care and Repair scheme also cover security measures and participate in the Safe as Houses campaign for Angus Council.

When the Scottish Housing Quality Standard was proposed by the Scottish Executive, Angus Council saw in it the opportunity of setting a local standard, above BTS, which older private properties could aspire to meeting. With this higher standard, it might be possible to look at accreditation schemes or promotion of those properties that meet it and conditions set on grants. This would be on a voluntary basis but the alternative form of intervention, ie. council enforcement of minimum standards through statutory repair, improvement or closure orders, causes more problems than it solves as currently any council notice on a property carries with it an entitlement to grant and this would add to the pressure on an already inadequate budget.

#### **4.3.2 Council Housing**

Housing standards in the social sector are high in Angus. Angus Council has developed its own improved standard and is 3 years into a programme of modernisation. Council maintenance services are also excellent, in terms of response times, management and quality (2). Angus' level of public sector disrepair is slightly high for a rural authority but the repairs tend not to be urgent and the last 3 years have seen additional investment to tackle the repairs backlog (11).

#### **4.3.2. Scottish Housing Quality Standard**

The Scottish Executive confirmed their definition of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard in March 2004. This standard will be targeted at social housing but is available to use as a benchmark for all tenures, which the local authority will need to consider, when reviewing the Local Housing Strategy in 2005. Angus Council are required to produce a costed long term Standard Delivery Plan by April 2005, to show how it is going to achieve the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015.

The existing local authority finance regime over the period of the strategy will be changing in line with recommendations from the Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland. Local Authorities are required to develop a 30 year business strategy plan which needs to be quantified to allow transfer of development funding monies to each appropriate local authority. In 2000, Angus Council's stock condition survey (11) reported on the sampling inspection figures of 3,976 provided the following % of dwellings failing the upgrade standard.

Kitchens 62%  
Roof insulation 55%  
Heating 51%  
Double glazing 33%  
Hot water tank insulation 18%  
Bathrooms 4%

Quality within the 8,732 (at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004) council houses is being addressed, particularly the improvement to kitchens, heating and window replacements, through the Housing Capital Programme with around £5M annually of committed programmed work, covering various works over the whole of Angus.

#### **4.3.2.2 Energy Efficiency**

When sampled as part of the Scottish House Condition Survey 2002, the public sector contained a higher proportion of energy efficient housing than the private sector but 73% still had an NHER of 5 or less (10) and so the Council is actively pursuing a programme of improvements to introduce a more efficient use of energy and the reduction of fuel poverty across all its tenants.

#### **4.3.3 Private Rented Sector**

Those private landlords who are using private renting as an investment element within new developments have high quality products, which are well maintained. A significant part of the private rented sector is up market and similarly of good standard but this information comes from landlords and estate agents will to engage with Angus Council and there are a large number of properties in the sector that fall outwith the high value market. Private rented sector house conditions and quality in town centres, regeneration areas and in rural parts of Angus are a concern, particularly as there is so little information about them. From the Housing Needs Assessment we can deduce that energy efficiency is a significant problem.

##### **4.3.3.1 Repairs & Maintenance**

Disrepair in the private rented sector is recognised as a problem but as the Scottish Housing Condition Survey 2002 local authority report does not split the private tenures it cannot be quantified at this stage. By targeting areas with high levels of private renting for external surveys and engaging with the private sector to get better information about total standards of repair it should be possible to build up better data on private stock conditions, and this requires to be addressed within the period of the LHS.

The physical conditions of empty or tied properties was the subject of initial research carried out in 1999 but needs to be updated. The quantity of BTS standard homes, estimated by the SHCS 2002 at around 600 requires further investigation to establish the overall cost to upgrade.

#### **4.3.4 Voluntary Sector**

Housing association built stock is relatively new and well looked after through planned maintenance programmes. Stock transferred to associations in the 1990s was the subject of business planning that included modernisation and this housing is progressively moving to a higher standard. Housing associations that are Registered Social Landlords share with local authorities the requirement to upgrade all their stock to the new Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015.

Some housing associations have older stock, which is in need of redesign or reconfiguration because of changing standards in special needs, like Ark Housing Association's group homes or changing aspirations in Servite Housing Association's smaller bedsit or single person sheltered housing. Other more mainstream providers are finding that flatted accommodation in some areas is unpopular and in need of review. This is quite separate from the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and constitutes a significant investment risk for a number of RSLs.

##### **4.3.4.1 Energy Efficiency**

Housing association properties built in recent years, since 1997, have had to meet higher standards than building regulations in terms of energy efficiency. For those associations with relatively young stock will have a high average NHER rating and are not a cause for concern. Those with stock transfer houses or whose development activity predates the 1980's improvements in building regulation energy efficiency elements, will have inefficient stock and will have significant investment needs to help Angus Council improve the average NHER rating in Angus and in the social rented sector.

#### **4.4 BETTER ENVIRONMENT**

Quality housing cannot sustain communities alone, without taking recognition of the environment and changes in lifestyles.

##### **4.4.1 A Safe Environment**

Following on from comments above about the management of housing, community safety is a priority for all tenures, and is especially important when considering the young, vulnerable and ageing groups. Community safety also has an environmental aspect, when it comes to properties affected by vandalism, estates designed without safety in mind or neighbour problems.

One area popular in the 1980s was the development of defensible space: a concept that looked at allocating external areas as individual gardens identified as part of a property and so looked after, and the elimination of circulation or pathways that could be used as escape routes for criminals, amongst other things. The problem that many landlords or local authorities face is that many households in the social sector do not want gardens or have problems with meeting their responsibilities for their maintenance. However, with tenant and

resident involvement it is possible to design out some of the problems of older estates. Vandalism and fly tipping are also in part due to having areas that no one takes responsibility for.

#### **4.4.2 The Car**

Most residents have a car or aspire to owning, sometimes 2 or 3 cars per household. The problem with estates built in the 1950's or before, is that they were designed without an understanding of how important the car would become in most people's lives and therefore did not provide enough vehicle parking space. There is a need in some areas to incorporate within regeneration or renewal schemes the redesign of parking, preferably to allow either in-curtillage car parking space or small well lit off street parking in close proximity to a resident's property.

#### **4.4.3 Empty Buildings**

Redundant buildings in disrepair, if not actively re-instated or subject to a sustainable change of use, can affect the overall appearance of an area and reduce the effect of regeneration or other investment. Empty homes are a particular problem in town centres and rural areas and this also presents a problem for the supply of housing (12).

#### **4.4.4 Green Space, Play and Recreation**

Play facilities within housing estates or residential areas are a valuable resource for local children but have to be designed thoughtfully to meet the differing needs of a range of age groups. For regeneration areas in particular, with a history of play areas being vandalised or misused, the community needs to take a lead in developing its own facilities. In Clifftown and the other estates in North Arbroath the provision of community facilities and play areas is a high priority and the Clifftown Partnership has prepared an Open Space Strategy to deal with the shortfall.

#### **4.5 Vision**

We want Angus citizens in all tenures to have access to good quality housing that meets their needs, now and into the future, and is built, fitted and maintained to a high standard. This standard should include good insulation and heating to ensure that it is both affordably warm and environmentally friendly. For tenants in we have adopted the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and want to see all rented housing meeting it, certainly in Council or housing association ownership by 2015, but also in the private rented sector through persuasion and incentives.

Social housing is a great community asset and we want to see it return to being an attractive option for a cross section of society who need it, both in physical terms but also in the standard of service. We also want to reverse the decline of renewal areas by improving their environment and community safety.

1. To ensure that all Council housing meets the Scottish Quality Standard by 2013
2. To achieve a 10% annual increase in the number of private sector properties that meet the local quality standard
3. To ensure that social housing is an attractive choice for an increasing proportion of people over the strategy period
4. To achieve an average NHER of 5 across all tenures by 2013
5. To ensure people are satisfied with the quality of their neighbourhood

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## **6. Theme Five: Housing for Community Care**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This section of the Local Housing Strategy also forms the draft Community Care Accommodation Strategy for Angus. The current Joint Community Care Plan is to be reviewed during May and June 2004, with a revised Plan, including the accommodation strategy, being published in July 2004.

All of these documents have to consider a number of distinct groups with particular housing needs. As a first step there is a need to quantify the housing and support requirements of each particular needs group, both as they are today and as they will change over the coming decade.

In itself this is a major challenge, with information about the housing and support requirements of many of the particular needs groups in Angus being difficult to find. The needs groups, as identified by the Angus Community Care Plan, are as follows: older people; older people with mental health problems; learning disabilities; sensory impairments; physical disabilities; acquired brain injuries; mental health; substance abuse/dependency and HIV/AIDS (1). While support services are discussed in this part of the Local Housing Strategy, the Angus Supporting People Strategy covers in detail the present and future funding and administration of housing support services for a wide range of vulnerable groups (2).

### **6.2 Information**

In order to construct a picture of the housing and support requirements of a particular needs group; information must be collected from several sources. Problems can arise with arrangements for sharing data and where database systems used by different organisations are incompatible. The process of collating information on housing and support needs from a range of sources has been simplified recently by the development of a system of Single Shared Assessment (SSA) covering Health, Housing and Social Work service providers (3).

Another problem is the speed with which information on housing and support needs becomes outdated. Individual's circumstances change, as can medical diagnosis. Similarly, advances in medicine mean that survival rates and life expectancies for those with very complex needs and profound disabilities are increasing, requiring an increased provision of highly specialised housing and support services. Information from the University of Dundee's White Top Research Unit suggests there may have been an increase in the overall number of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities living in Tayside over the past decade (4)

However, despite all these problems, a comprehensive assessment of need for housing and support services is still fundamental if the requirements of particular needs groups are to be met today and in the future. Such an assessment of need

is vital to ensure that investment in housing and support services is directed to where it is needed most. Similarly, without detailed information on need, the design of new housing development and support services is likely to be a difficult process with no guarantee the most urgent needs will be met. Availability of accurate information on future need for housing and support services is also important to the management and planning of budgets over the lifetime of the Local Housing Strategy.

The second key challenge for the Local Housing Strategy is to ensure that current and future needs are met once they have been quantified. A complicating factor in meeting the needs of certain groups is that accommodation within an institutional setting is no longer considered suitable. The focus of current policy is to provide support services which enable people to continue to live in the community rather than entering residential care (5). Therefore, the quality and suitability of housing stock is especially important for those with particular needs. Some very specialist housing has no immediate mainstream use, so it is important that such housing is provided where it is needed most, and consideration must also be given to the long-term utilisation of the development.

### **6.3 Resources**

Savings made from the closure of institutional care facilities need to be matched by investment in housing and related services. Of particular note in relation to this is the assertion in the 1997 – 2000 Community Care Plan (3) that any move away from current institutional services should not take place until the appropriate community-based services and support are in place. Institutional care providers must be prepared to play a role in developing housing-based care provision, and this includes contributing to the resourcing of such provision. Provision of care in the community is a more costly option than provision of care in an institutional setting, because of several factors including lack of economies of scale.

Any discussion on investment in housing also needs to touch on the current issues of affordability affecting the South Angus area. Provision of affordable housing in South Angus, by whatever mechanism is eventually employed, needs to include provision of housing for those with particular needs. Those with particular needs are just as, if not more, likely to require affordable housing than the general population (6). Those with particular needs are often dependant on housing for rent from social landlords, which is funded from central government, and levels of investment in development have fallen in recent years. Also, flexible housing designed to suit both general and particular needs groups should not be substantially more expensive than general needs housing.

### **6.4 Different needs and current provision**

All the particular needs groups present a challenge in terms of meeting their housing and support requirements. Details of current accommodation provision for the different particular needs groups is contained within the sections that

follow. However, the challenge presented is not necessarily uniform, with different groups requiring a different blend of specially designed accommodation and support services. For some groups such as those with physical disabilities, specially designed accommodation is just as important as support service provision. For some other groups, such as those with substance dependency problems, provision of support services is more important than specially designed accommodation. The main need for housing for those with particular needs is for single person units, but in some instances there can be a need for family housing for example in relation to those who have suffered a Brain Injury. Accommodation and support services should be focussed on the needs of the individual, and should recognise that aspirations in relation to housing have changed. For example, some of Angus Council's sheltered housing stock is currently affected by low levels of demand, which stem in part from the fact that bed-sit accommodation no longer meet's older people's housing aspirations. Several examples of the new generation of client centred accommodation and support service provision now exist in Angus, for example Angus Community Care Charitable Trust's development at Lentlands Court, Forfar, for those with multiple sensory impairment (1). But while an increasing range of housing and support options are now available to some particular needs groups (7), a flexible approach to providing specialist housing is essential. Where existing housing stock is unsuitable and new development is unavailable, the option of buying and adapting a suitable property on the open market should be open. Specialist housing has been provided by means of the "Made To Measure" route on a small number of previous occasions, but there needs to be a wider acceptance of this option. Further work is needed to make home ownership accessible to those with particular needs, building on projects incorporated into the redevelopment of the Strathairlie area of Arbroath, and Gallowshade Road, Forfar. Expertise on this type of development is available from organisations such as Ownership Options in Scotland.

Providing a choice of housing and support options may not be enough, however, if the options provided are not accessible to as wide a range of service users as possible. For example, many disabled people have low incomes, so will be unable to access more costly housing and support provision options. Some forms of housing for particular needs can be costly, especially where high specifications are required to meet the needs of particular service users. However, these high costs make developing particular needs housing less attractive to Registered Social Landlords, limiting provision of particular needs housing at affordable rents. This can lead to those with particular needs being forced to accept housing based on financial constraints rather than what best meets their needs.

### **6.5 Older people and older people with mental health problems**

Today, over 23% of the population of Angus is aged 60 or over (8), and this figure is projected to rise to 29% by 2016 (9). There is also predicted to be a significant increase in the percentage of the population of Angus in the 75 plus age bracket over the period to 2016 (10). This is significant for providers of

housing, health and social care, as an increasingly elderly population means increasing levels of disabilities and chronic illness which will have to be dealt with. More than half the population aged 75 and over in Angus are affected by limiting long-term illness (3). In order to address this, current and future levels of need for the different forms of adapted, supported and sheltered housing must be quantified and provision of new housing units planned as appropriate. The lack of detailed population data on the 75 plus age group is a concern because of the particularly high levels of dependency associated with those aged 85 and over.

The aspirations and desires of the elderly in Angus also have a role to play in shaping the future of housing provision. In particular, older people should have choice in terms of housing and/or support options. Research suggests that many older people in Angus would prefer to stay in their current homes rather than move into sheltered housing or residential care (11). A range of support services are now available to help older people realise this aspiration, including community meals, homecare and community psychiatric nursing.

#### **6.5.1 Older people and rural issues**

For those in the rural areas of Angus, a move into sheltered housing may not even be an option. Some support services are available in rural Angus, for example Community Meals and Community Alarm, but sheltered housing provision is limited. Consequently, many of those in the rural communities of Angus who do wish to access supported accommodation have to move to the nearest large town away from friends and relatives and the communities they have always been part of. Low numbers of potential clients and infrastructure issues have always made sheltered housing provision in rural areas difficult, and even new concepts such as dispersed sheltered housing only offer a partial solution.

#### **6.5.2 Current provision for older people**

In terms of current housing provision for older people and older people with mental health problems, Angus Council Housing Department is a major provider of sheltered housing accommodation in Angus, with a current stock of 650 units, and also amenity housing with a stock of 46 units (7). Housing Associations operating in Angus provide a wide range of sheltered and specialist supported housing, with a combined stock in the region of 450 units (7). Housing Association's also provide around 270 units of amenity housing, most of which is located in the seven Angus burgh's (7). Other bodies in the voluntary sector such as Edradour Housing Association and Angus Community Care Charitable Trust (ACCCT) also provide supported accommodation for the elderly, although on a fairly small scale at the present time (7). Provision of very sheltered housing is limited to a small number of housing association schemes at present.

While provision of sheltered housing in Angus is extensive, not all schemes are viewed as being equally attractive by older people in the County. As discussed above, several sheltered housing schemes provided by Angus Council are

experiencing problems of low demand for tenancies. At present 36 of Angus Council's 650 units of Sheltered Housing are vacant (12). Some Housing Association schemes are also experience problems of low demand, with some providers reviewing the future of current schemes. Low demand for Sheltered Housing stems from a range of factors including changing housing aspirations, dated building designs and less desirable locations. Recent changes in the financing of care for the elderly have also affected demand for sheltered housing. For example, the introduction of Supporting People charging has made sheltered housing a high-cost option for some older people. This is in marked contrast to the situation for those remaining in their own homes for whom free personal care has been introduced in recent times. Therefore, there is little incentive to move into sheltered housing for many older people. Given this situation, a review of supported accommodation provision for the elderly covering both Angus Council and Housing Association stock would be desirable. Such a review will also need to consider provision of suitable housing and support services for older members of the Black and Minority Ethnic communities living in Angus, along with older members of the Gypsy/Traveller community.

A range of residential care accommodation is provided by Angus Council and the voluntary sector in Angus, and on a commercial basis by the private sector. Angus Council currently provides 88 residential places for older people in Angus, a figure which is set to rise to 104 in January 2005 (13). The voluntary and private sector's together currently provide a total of 389 residential care beds and 513 nursing care beds (13). However, as indicated above, the direction of current policies such as Supporting People is to minimise the use of residential care, with the focus instead being on providing support services to enable people to continue living in the community for as long as possible (5). Hence the importance of developing very sheltered housing provision and step-down care facilities as alternatives to hospitalisation and residential care.

### **6.6 Delayed discharge from hospital care**

Delays in discharge from hospital care are due to a range of factors including the need for patients present housing to be adapted to meet their new needs and abilities, and the availability of suitable support services. While a range of particular needs groups can be affected by delayed discharge, "nearly three quarters of all delayed discharges are patients over the age of 75" (14). Delays in discharge from hospital care not only use up health service resources, but can also have an unfavourable impact on the rehabilitation of the patient (15). While delayed discharge is not such a major problem in Angus as it is in some areas of Scotland (15), it is still an important issue that needs to be addressed. Where patients with support needs have limited housing choices available to them, it is necessary to adopt improved joint working between agencies.

There is also an issue of resettlement from hospital care in relation to older people with mental health problems. A small number of older people with mental health problems currently accommodated in Sunnyside Royal Hospital near

Montrose will need to be re-housed over the period of the Strategy. This will be the last of several resettlements carried out in the run-up to the closure of Sunnyside in 2006. Some of these individuals will need continued nursing care in an institutional setting.

## **6.7 Physical disabilities and sensory impairments**

Physical disabilities refers to those who have been born with a disability, or have acquired a disability through illness or accident, or who have a progressive or chronic illness (1). Sensory impairment is a broad term which includes visual impairment, deafness, being hard of hearing and deaf blindness (1).

There are 2717 people aged between 18 and 65 with severe or very severe physical disabilities who are known to the Social Work and Health Liaison Department or are using disabilities services (16), including those with Acquired Brain Injuries. Acquired Brain Injury is the leading cause of disability in the UK, and is considered separately in the following section. The remaining major causes of physical disability include stroke, Multiple Sclerosis, Huntington's Disease and connective tissue disorders for example arthritis (1).

### **6.7.1 Current provision for those with physical disabilities and sensory impairment**

Current provision of housing and support for those with physical disabilities is diverse, including both adapted and purpose-built housing. However, an assessment of the future housing and support requirements of those with physical disabilities in Angus is essential to allow further developments of housing and support provision as appropriate. The assessment of those with physical disabilities and sensory impairments is administered by the Housing Department's Special Needs Section and undertaken by a Joint Assessment Panel. As a rough indicator of levels of need for specialist housing amongst those with a physical disability, the Adapted Housing Panel (which handles applications for wheelchair adapted housing in Angus) received a total of 31 applications for housing in 2003 (17). Some Housing Association's operating in Angus also hold their own waiting lists.

When considering future levels of need it is important to note that the prevalence rate of Multiple Sclerosis is significantly higher in the North East of Scotland (including Angus) (18). There are also a particularly high number of people with Huntington's disease living in Angus (18), with up to 180 people at risk of developing the disease over the next 10 to 15 years.

The question of whether those with physical disabilities and sensory impairments are excluded from certain housing options is something which needs to be addressed. There has already been research into the accessibility of housing to Black and Minority Ethnic Communities and Gypsies/Travellers in Angus. This research has highlighted the problems experienced in securing funding to adapt site facilities to meet the needs of older members of the Gypsy/Traveller

community. In relation to those with physical disabilities and sensory impairments, issues to be addressed include the accessibility of current homeless accommodation for those with physical disabilities.

As with housing and support provision for older people there is an emphasis on providing choice in housing and support services for the physically disabled. However this must be qualified in relation to some highly specialised accommodation and support provision that may have to be restricted to one or two locations on the basis of cost and levels of demand. Accommodation for those with challenging behaviour or severe autism is likely to fall within this category.

### **6.8 Adaptations**

A key part of enabling people to continue living in the community is the adaptation of their own homes to meet their changing housing needs. Research carried out for the Local Housing Needs Assessment found that “a total of 7% of dwellings have features that cause problems for at least one of the residents” (9). In Angus today, 14% of homes have one or more adaptation, a figure that is evenly split between the private and social rented sectors (19). This situation may change over time, however, as while new properties are being adapted, some properties are also having their adaptations removed. There is a lack of detailed information on adapted properties in Angus today, but it is known that properties are being lost through removal of their adaptations following sale or let to those without any particular needs. Given the need for such properties, and the large amounts of money that can be involved in adapting a property, this is an issue that needs to be addressed. Information is awaited on the number of properties in Angus which are adapted yearly.

Adaptations range from the relatively straightforward such as provision of a handrail or access ramp, to the more complicated and costly such as provision of a level access shower (5). However, regardless of the complexity of the adaptation required the process of adapting a property in Angus can be slow. One of the factors that can slow down the process of getting a property adapted is a lack of knowledge of the adaptability of the existing housing stock in Angus. In the longer term development of the Single Sellers Survey and Sellers Pack in Scotland may provide information on the adaptability of properties.

At the present time the adaptation process can take between 4 and 5 months to complete. Delays stem from several parts of the adaptation process including Occupational Therapy assessment, the need to apply for building warrants and planning permission and the need to tender for contractors to carry out the work.

Linked to this is a lack on information on the adaptability of the existing housing stock across all tenures in Angus. Quality of design and construction of housing stock has varied over the last 100 years but as a general rule, housing built after 1983 is more likely to meet the needs of those with mobility or agility impairments

(5). As such it should be easier to adapt. Although 80% of the Housing stock in Angus was built before 1983 (5), social housing stock with one or more ground floor bedrooms may be suitable for adaptation to barrier-free standard. Action to adapt suitable stock could substantially increase the choice of properties available to those in Angus with physical disabilities and sensory impairments. Similarly, promotion of the lifetime homes concept should help to provide greater choice in new-build development for those with physical disabilities and sensory impairments. Lifetime homes as defined by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Lifetime Homes Group have 16 design features that ensure a new house or flat will meet the needs of most households (20). They should also be flexible enough to cope with changes in these needs (20).

### **6.9 Acquired brain injury**

National prevalence rates indicate that 131 people resident in Angus will suffer a moderate to severe head injury every year (16), with around 300 people resident having a severe disability as a result of an acquired brain injury (3). Those with Acquired Brain Injuries can be split into two groups when considering housing needs. Firstly there are those who have suffered severe physical impairments and who may be wheelchair users, and secondly there are those who may make a good physical recovery but have significant cognitive and behavioural problems (18). At present a minimum of six young adults sustain significant physical impairments as a result of brain injury every year (18). In recent years the Adapted Housing Panel has managed to find suitable accommodation for this group, with only one instance of a delay in discharge from hospital care (18).

Apart from the information given above, there is only limited information on future levels of need for specialist housing and support services for those with acquired brain injuries in Angus. However, without more comprehensive information, planning and delivering suitable specialist housing and support services for those with acquired brain injuries is likely to be problematic.

Again, the aspirations and desires of those with acquired brain injuries have a key role to play in shaping the future of housing and support service provision. Ideally there should be a choice of housing and support options, but for some highly specialised supported accommodation it may be necessary to restrict provision to one or two locations in Tayside as a whole on the basis of cost and levels of demand. There is currently no supported housing provision in Tayside as a whole for those with severe brain injuries (21). This is of particular relevance to those who have significant cognitive and behavioural problems as a result of a brain injury (18). Provision of up to four units of specialised supported housing may be needed to ensure future needs can be met. Completion of a development of specialist accommodation is likely to take between 18 months and two years.

As is the case in relation to those with physical disabilities and sensory impairments, there is a lack of information about the number of properties that have been adapted across all tenures to meet the needs of those with acquired

brain injuries. What is known is that existing adapted properties are being lost as a result of being sold or let to those with no requirement for adapted housing. There are also issues with the ease and speed with which unmodified properties can be adapted, and a lack of knowledge of the adaptability of current stock across all tenures.

## **6.10 Learning disabilities**

There are 369 learning disabilities services users, with up to 46 requiring alternative accommodation provision over the next five to ten years (22). The majority of these 46 service users are leaving group homes, a move which stems both from personal preference and government guidance which seeks the minimisation of the use of accommodation in a group home setting. Age group and level of support needed vary substantially within this group, with some individuals requiring 24-hour support. Therefore a range of housing will require to be provided at several locations in Angus to meet the needs of this group. In addition to this there are a small number of individuals currently accommodated at Strathmartine hospital who will require to be re-housed in more specialist accommodation over the Strategy period. Some learning disabilities service users have additional disabilities such as physical and sensory impairments (1).

### **6.10.1 Current provision for those with learning disabilities**

Current provision of accommodation and support services for those with learning disabilities is highly diverse in Angus, ranging from tenancies in mainstream properties with peripatetic support provision to individual flats with 24-hour support provision as provided at Silverway in Montrose. Group home accommodation with high levels of staffing is also provided for those with complex needs, for example at Doocot Park (22).

A greater understanding of current provision would be desirable, along with provision of specialist information on the housing options available. However, despite the diversity of provision, there are still some gaps. There is a lack of specialist sheltered housing for the older members of the learning disabilities client group. There is also a lack of specialist accommodation and support provision for those with autism across Tayside (22), which has resulted in a small number of service users having to leave Angus to access the accommodation and support services they need. Work is also required to develop a better understanding of autism and the needs of those with autism.

## **6.11 Older carers**

Linked to concerns over the availability of specialist sheltered housing for older members of the learning disabilities client group, are concerns over the problems likely to stem from an increasingly elderly population of carers. Suitable housing and support models will need to be developed to meet the needs of those with learning disabilities whose carers are no longer able to look after them as a result of old age or ill health. Estimating levels of need for this group is complicated as

some individuals with learning disabilities and their carers may not be using services at present and as such may not be known to Angus Council staff.

### **6.11 Mental health**

Mental illness is a broad term for a wide variety of illnesses that affect the functioning of the mind (23). There is a lack of knowledge of the numbers and needs of those with mental health issues in Angus. One in five Scots is affected by mental illness at any one time (23). While information is available on prevalence rates for a number of psychiatric conditions in Scotland as a whole (24), there is a lack of details on those suffering from particular conditions in Angus. It is recognised that it is very difficult to estimate the prevalence of mental health problems in a given population (1). Despite this lack of detailed information, the need for provision of support in a housing context for those with mental health problems is not in doubt. There are also well-documented links between homelessness and unmet mental health issues.

For most of those with mental health problems, the current range of mainstream properties available in Angus is potentially satisfactory. Some specialist care providers are already using social rented housing in Angus to deliver housing and support services. However, the quality and suitability of housing stock available can be very important. Linked to this is the need for an efficient and client-friendly housing service. Those with mental health issues need to be given higher priority in the allocation of social rented housing in Angus.

There are also a small number of individuals with mental health issues currently in traditional institutional care who will need to be re-housed in more suitable accommodation over the Strategy period, for example the small number of long-stay patients still resident at Sunnyside Royal Hospital. These include patients, who while they have been in institutional care for some time, are a generation younger than those who's accommodation needs are discussed under the heading of "older people" and have distinctly different housing and support needs.

### **6.12 Substance abuse and dependency.**

There is a potentially very serious lack of knowledge about the extent of substance abuse and dependency in Angus today. While there are 291 known drug-users in Angus, more information on levels of substance abuse would be of value (2). Those who abuse alcohol and those who abuse drugs are groups for whom support provision is generally more critical than provision of specially designed or adapted accommodation. As such, for the majority of this group the current range of mainstream properties available in Angus is potentially adequate. However the quality and suitability of housing stock available can be very important. For example, those with substance abuse issues should not be allocated housing in areas where drug dealers are known to be operating. Linked to this is the need for an efficient and client-friendly housing service. And, while not strictly a housing issue, there is currently no rehabilitation facility for those with substance abuse and dependency problems in Angus.

### **6.13 Domestic abuse.**

While those suffering domestic abuse may not be identified as a specific care group within the Joint Community Care Plan, domestic abuse is a source of very real concern in Angus today. Angus Council has a statutory obligation to provide advice and support to those suffering domestic abuse. A range of temporary and permanent accommodation and support services is in place and more provision is planned, which will provide further choice to single people and families affected by domestic abuse.

Angus Council will continue to develop and facilitate services and shall work in collaboration with the Angus Partnership on Domestic Abuse (APoDA) to ensure that services provided are responsive to all groups affected by domestic abuse.

### **6.14 Our Vision.**

The Local Housing Strategy has a number of objectives in relation to both quantifying and meeting the housing and support requirements of particular needs groups in Angus:

- To improve understanding of current provision for those with particular needs.
- To ensure a 10% annual increase in the proportion of housing adapted for particular needs.
- To contribute to reduction in average delayed discharge-waiting times in Angus over the plan period.
- To ensure that all those in need of support in their homes within the plan period will receive it.
- To reduce the number of people being referred into institutional care over the plan period by providing housing-based alternatives.
- To develop supported accommodation for people with specialist needs, who would otherwise have to seek it outside Angus.

In order to achieve these objectives, a number of actions will have to be taken in relation to the individual needs groups. These are outlined below.

- Over the Strategy period we will work with partners to develop a better understanding of levels of need for housing and support services amongst the over 65 population in Angus.
- We will work with partners to deliver housing based alternatives to residential and nursing care that meet the needs and aspirations of older people in Angus.
- We will work with partners to implement a streamlined adaptations process that will ensure that people's existing housing meets their needs if at all possible.

- Over the Strategy period we will work with partners to develop a better understanding of current and future levels of need for housing and support services amongst those with physical disabilities, sensory impairments and acquired brain injuries.
- We will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the options available to deliver appropriate accommodation and support services for those with physical disabilities, sensory impairments and brain injuries who currently have to leave Angus to access the Accommodation and support they need.
- Over the period of the Strategy, we will work with partners in Social Work and NHS Tayside to develop a better understanding of both current housing and support needs and levels of current provision for those with learning disabilities.
- With partners, we will examine all the options available to address unmet needs for housing and support services amongst those with learning disabilities.
- Over the Strategy period we will work with partners in Social Work and NHS Tayside to develop a better understanding of the scale of mental health problems and substance abuse and dependency in Angus.

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## **7. Theme Six: Sustainable Communities**

Previous themes have been worked around housing demand, needs, and effective supply but this section deals with housing, not as a commodity but as part of a community's make up, its environment and its sustainability. This section of the Local Housing Strategy directly addresses a number of the Scottish Executive's commitments and priorities set out in its May 2003 programme for government (1) and its guidance to local authorities on social justice and housing: to regenerate our communities, with the aim of building safe, strong communities with improved links between housing and regeneration efforts, using the community planning partnerships approach; to work with communities to improve their standard of living and in particular to eradicate fuel poverty in Scotland; to develop housing policies and programmes that help to promote equality of opportunity for disadvantaged groups in our society (2).

In Angus, the theme is part of the Community Planning vision, with both the Community Plan and the Local Agenda 21 Strategy highlighting the importance of bringing together economic development, the environment and community well-being in a sustainable way (3). There is broad agreement that Housing policies and programmes have a key role to play in breaking the cycle of deprivation and poverty experienced in Scotland.

### **7.1 Introduction**

Although the term "sustainable community" is often used it is difficult to pin down. Sustainable development has been defined as development that 'meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (4). However, to apply this to a community and housing's role within it, we must broaden it to include concepts such as quality of life. Such a community must meet its basic needs, for subsistence, protection/safety, understanding/education, participation and identity; in the present and in the future (5).

The concept of a sustainable community actually covers three "sustainabilities": economic, social and environmental, although they do not sit alone and may overlap and even conflict with each other.

Its *economy* sustains a community through supporting household incomes, providing jobs for its citizens, managing the cost of living, developing and retaining skills, meeting the ambitions of younger people and families and building confidence as an anchor for a balanced population.

Sustainability is also measured by the impact on the *environment*, in local and global terms. Is the community recycling? Is it using energy in all its forms as efficiently as possible? Is it managing its impact on its own environment or the surrounding countryside? In developing, is it considering future generations?

The *social* dimension starts with a balanced population, with no preponderance of a particular age group or household type that might bring conflicts of lifestyle. Other sustainable social characteristics include healthy living, having active citizenship, being self-supportive with family and social networks providing the social capital of a community, having trust and community safety. A socially sustainable community would also be one where “turnover” is low and people who are born into a community, and those that move to it, want to and can stay, to deliver continuity. For rural communities there are added considerations like transport and access to other services as well as connectedness to the greater Angus community.

From this description we can develop a clear picture of how the Local Housing Strategy connects with sustainability and where the areas of concern are.

## **7.2 Social sustainability**

The interaction between housing and social sustainability cuts across community safety, healthy living, active citizenship, family and social networks and trust; some relationships found across Angus and others area specific. These are highlighted in the Angus Community Plan under the key theme “Healthy and Safe Communities” the aim of which is “to improve the health of the community, promote the development of primary health based provision and to maintain a safe environment for all people in Angus”.

At a basic level, the social sustainability of communities is about social capital, which can be interpreted as the amount of trust in a society. With that trust, between individuals and between organisations, social and financial inclusion is more likely and easier to achieve. With more trust or social capital, a community is better able to compete in global markets, as things are easier to initiate and financially support, although it is suggested that social inclusion policy should not be subservient to economic growth (5).

The Community Plan has developed the principle of sustainable communities and the theme of social inclusion into the Angus Social Inclusion Strategy 2003. Within this strategy, the key social inclusion milestones (6) mostly relate to the economy, health and education but, although housing impacts on most of these, there are some that relate directly: “reducing households with children living in temporary accommodation”, “no one has to sleep rough”, “increase proportion of people with learning disabilities able to live at home or in a homely environment”, “increase the proportion of older people able to live independently...” and “increasing the quality and variety of homes in our most disadvantaged communities”. To underline the linkage with the Angus Social Inclusion Strategy, its milestones are used as headings where appropriate for this section on sustainable communities.

### **7.2.1 Homelessness**

Although homelessness as a housing issue is thoroughly dealt with in the Homelessness Strategy, we are also considering the effects on communities. It is in some ways inevitable in a society that has concentrated on individual freedoms and arguably has less social infrastructure, that homelessness exists. There have been significant social changes over the last 40 years, with young people and women in particular becoming less tolerant of abuse (although abuse is still a major problem) and having an expectation of self expression and independence which didn't exist before the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. These changes have contributed to increased friction and relationship breakdown in households and ultimately more people being temporarily without a home. A community with good social capital should be able to intervene and help secure good quality accommodation and help the homeless rebuild their lives. Homelessness affects almost 1,200 households per annum in Angus, although only 27% are assessed as in priority need (7). Most referrals are due to relationship breakdown, between partners or more commonly between parents and children. This has huge implications for sustainability of small communities and important family networks.

Homelessness also has an impact on health and education and therefore opens up a second front for sustainability. The homeless experience difficulties accessing information and health services, there is a higher incidence of mental ill health amongst the homeless and there are gaps in services provided. All these problems and issues are detailed in the Tayside Health & Homelessness Plan.

### **7.2.2 Poverty & Fuel Poverty**

Poverty is not necessarily incompatible with community sustainability, for example where there are other challenges that force a community together and where there are other forms of status and good levels of trust. However, in Angus, poverty is an important element in undermining communities. Housing cost is one obvious factor affecting poverty but there are others like access to good housing quality. The type of poverty that strikes at the heart of all three types of sustainability is Fuel Poverty.

Angus Council's Fuel Poverty Strategy has the primary aim of the eradication of fuel poverty in Angus as far as is reasonably practical by end of 2016. However, Angus Council does not currently have either staff or financial resources to achieve this objective and the current grant system is not generous enough to encourage private owners or private rented landlords to invest in energy efficiency measures in their property. Whilst more staff resources might be found to provide advice on energy efficiency and benefit take-up, this does not mean that advice is accepted, and furthermore, there is little that the Council can do about the cost of fuel. To offset this, the rules governing the fuel companies Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) must change to allow 100% funding of an expanded range of measures, which will make it practical to improve hard to heat

properties, especially in rural areas. There are other national initiatives like the Central Heating Initiative and Warm Deal that offer targeted investment to improve vulnerable groups like older people, social sector tenants and those on benefits, which are welcome tools in tackling fuel poverty but the size of the problem and evidence from the English experience that significant numbers of economically active fuel poor households do not qualify (8), make the Fuel Poverty's central aim almost impossible to achieve.

The Scottish House Condition Survey 2002 figures, which show a daunting 8,000 households in fuel poverty (16% of the population), will be used as the baseline figure for Angus, as there is no more accurate information currently available. This figure will be refined as more data is collected through local household and house condition surveys, and from the programme of energy & fuel poverty audits across all tenures, planned to start in 2004. Fuel poverty is in many ways people related, they are not fixed like the properties are, so it is likely that it will be concentrated in poorer areas as defined by Health Deprivation and Disability Index, although we have no hard evidence currently. Angus Council operates an energy and fuel poverty referral network working closely with the Local Health Care Co-operative, providing awareness training for Health, Social Work professionals, and voluntary organisations – this enables relevant households to be identified and treated as individual cases. A copy of the Angus Fuel Poverty Strategy 2004 is attached as appendix 5.2 for further information.

### **7.2.3 Education**

There is a lot of research that links the educational attainment of children (and adults) and housing quality, in particular the provision of adequate space for study and the separation of family life from private space. Research into the effects of homelessness has also identified problems with education and attainment of children in homeless households.

There is also a link between household's choice of area and the local schools attainment or reputation. However, relatively little is known about the interactions between housing policy and educational problems. There are, however, good reasons to believe that processes of polarisation and residualisation in social housing over recent years have had significant impacts on schools. Examples of the impacts of lettings policies given by recent research are:

- young children entering school were less prepared by their experiences in the home for the demands of schooling;
- the attainments of pupils in school were depressed and more children had difficulties with literacy;
- increasing numbers of pupils displayed disruptive behaviour;
- it became increasingly difficult to involve parents in the life of the school or to count on support from parents for the schools' values and expectations.

These problems were not caused by a mass influx of children with difficulties. It took only relatively small numbers of such pupils to destabilise the school. There was some evidence linking the appearance of these pupils to changes in the landlord's lettings policy. There was also evidence that when the landlord modified its lettings policy to create a more 'balanced' community, this reduced the numbers of problematic pupils entering the school (9).

On leaving secondary education, an increasing number of young people are becoming homeless or seeking to move out of the family home. There are now clear responsibilities to house younger people but there is a perceived problem with some having poor life skills and limited ability to maintain a tenancy. Without an understanding of standards of behaviour or money management, a significant number of young people experience debt, anti-social behaviour, and eviction (7). A pilot project to help young homeless people is being developed by Angus College in partnership with Angus Council and others to provide practical advice and tenant skills. This is an issue that impacts on homelessness, on health and on the image and quality of life in an area.

#### **7.2.4 Housing and Health Inequalities**

A number of pieces of research have linked ill health and poor housing, for instance with dampness or overcrowding, and that poor quality housing across all tenures is a contributory factor in poor quality of life and early mortality for poor households. Although the relationship is far from simple, there are clear health benefits in housing improvement (10) and regeneration schemes in particular benefit from developing community and individual capacity to see the effects of poor diet and neglecting health related issues. Therefore it is considered important that housing issues are not looked at and addressed in isolation.

The Angus Health Improvement Plan details a number of areas of concern that are shared with the Local Housing Strategy, areas that contribute to ill health: lack of life skills amongst younger people, lack of appropriate supported housing for dependent or vulnerable older people, the relative poor health of Gypsy Traveller community, lack of services for people who have problems with substance abuse, the many challenges of homelessness, the need for capacity building and regeneration in some areas and the need to improve safety in the home (11).

#### **7.2.5 Equal Opportunities**

This is a horizontal theme of the Local Housing Strategy, addressing institutional barriers, discrimination and disadvantage across the core objective areas for ethnic minorities, women, people with a disability and young people.

##### **7.2.5.1 Black and Minority Ethnic Communities**

Historically, there was a lack of information and understanding of BME housing needs in Angus and to address this, a joint research project into the housing needs and aspirations of BME populations in Angus and Dundee was

commissioned by Angus Council, Dundee City Council and Communities Scotland. The research was followed by a community consultation event in January 2004 and the final report has now been published. The key findings are:

#### Demographic Characteristics

- BME groups accounted for only 0.8% of Angus' population, compared to 2.0% of Scotland's, in 2001 but although starting from a very low base, the BME population of Angus is growing strongly, particularly the Pakistani community, whose numbers increased from 98 in 1991 to 208 in 2001.
- Pakistani & South Asian households are the largest in Angus, at an average of 4.1 persons in 2001, compared to 3.3 for the 'other' BME category and 3.2 for Chinese households. The average size of an Indian household in Angus is 2.3, the same as for white households.
- The proportion of all BME groups aged over 70 years is rising rapidly, more so than the white population.

#### Housing Characteristics

- Most BME groups have a low uptake of social housing.
- All BME groups, apart from Chinese households, have a greater propensity to rent from a private landlord than the white population.
- Despite generally being in a weaker socio-economic position than much of the white population, all BME groups have a similar or slightly higher level of owner occupation compared to white households.
- Despite high levels of home ownership, most BME groups are becoming less likely to own their home, in contrast to members of the white population which are becoming more likely to own their home.
- A greater proportion of all BME groups experience overcrowding in their accommodation than white households.

#### Social Characteristics

- BME groups are generally less likely to suffer from limiting long-term illness than white people but the incidence is rising.
- In Angus in 2001, Pakistani & South Asian and Chinese households were dominated by a traditional family structure, with 43.1% and 53.5% of households respectively in these ethnic groups being couples with dependent children, compared to 27.5% of Indian households and only 20.8% of white households.
- Surprisingly, most BME groups in Angus have similar levels of lone parenthood compared to the white population, although the number of households involved is relatively modest owing to the small size of Angus's BME population as a whole.

## Needs and Aspirations

- The housing aspirations of most BME communities are ultimately broadly similar to those of the white population, i.e. a preference for suburban living and owner occupation.
- However, these aspirations are only being met to a significant degree by some members of the Bangladeshi and Indian communities.
- The need for proximity to work makes suburban living impractical.
- Social housing remains important for the Pakistani community and recent immigrants.
- Housing choice is constrained as many areas are considered to be unsafe because of fear of racial harassment. This is particularly true of social housing estates, although also some town centres.
- Contrary to widely held popular belief, there is limited evidence of a strong desire to live in close proximity to fellow members of the same ethnic group *per se*. Rather, ethnic clustering is a desire to be close to family and friends and also to avoid, or mitigate the fear of, racial harassment. Most important aspect of the local community stated in the household survey: 5/12 quiet area; 4/12 friendly area. None of the respondents cited proximity to members of their own ethnic group.
- There is reportedly a shortage of affordable larger properties in locations considered safe by members of BME communities.
- BME households often access affordable large properties in the private rented sector. However, HMO licensing may be contributing towards a withdrawal of such properties from the private lettings market.
- There is limited need for sheltered housing amongst BME communities at present. However, this situation may change in the longer term owing to the ageing of the BME population and the increased professional careers and nuclear family living arrangements being pursued by younger members of BME communities.
- BME homeless people are unlikely to seek assistance from the local authority due to the stigmatisation this would bring from their own community. In addition, hostel and temporary single unit accommodation are both highly unsuitable for many BME homeless people, particularly Asian women.

## Barriers and Constraints

- Racial harassment is the ultimate cause of many barriers to BME communities meeting their housing needs. Fear of racial harassment means that certain areas and tenures become 'off-limits', restricting housing availability.

- Housing affordability was considered to be the most important barrier to both private and social housing by respondents to the household survey.
- There is reportedly a poor understanding of social housing and people do not feel well informed about housing issues generally. For example, there is a lack of appreciation of the difference between local authority and housing association housing.
- Procedures to determine housing need for the purposes of allocating social housing can be culturally inappropriate for some BME communities, for example the bedroom standard used means that different sex children need to share a bedroom beyond an age considered appropriate by Muslim families.
- Angus Council remains an important source of housing advice, information and assistance.
- It was suggested by a number of interviewees that if people from BME communities were provided adequate support in some of the communities that are already semi-mixed, a successful strategic approach to integration could be developed.

#### Communication and Dialogue

- Language is a significant deterrent to members of BME communities communicating with 'officialdom', be it voluntary or state sectors.
- There is a degree of stigmatisation within BME communities associated with raising issues with 'officialdom' through fear of provoking racial harassment by appearing to be seeking undue assistance.
- BME communities lack a 'culture of complaint' due to the above two factors, a perception that complaining would be ineffectual and a notion of self-reliance.
- Small, informal groups for consultation make interpretation easier.

Although numbers of BME households are small, the Local Housing Strategy is taking its responsibilities seriously. The research has given housing providers and the Council as the enabling authority a wealth of valuable information to help us address the issues raised and it will be used throughout the document (12).

In recruitment terms, positive steps have already been taken in the Housing Department and in sister organisations in the voluntary sector to recruit a "PATH" trainee in order to improve access to housing careers for people from a minority ethnic background. However, the Council is not complacent and will be reviewing these arrangements to identify ways in which we can better tackle disadvantage and lack of opportunity.

In terms of housing services, most social housing providers have policies on dealing with racial harassment and Angus Council has a corporate Race Equality Scheme Action Plan, which is being implemented across the housing service by 2005. Providers of social housing including the Council have ethnic monitoring in

place for recruitment and allocations but there are still gaps in information, for instance, knowing the existing ethnic make up of council tenants.

#### **7.2.5.2 Gypsy Travellers**

Recent research commissioned by the three Tayside local authorities and Communities Scotland into the housing needs and aspirations of Gypsy Travellers and related services in the region (13) revealed the following points.

- Some local authority Gypsy Traveller sites that were originally developed as temporary sites have become permanent, thus resulting in a shortfall in “transit” spaces.
- Residents on local authority sites are generally satisfied with the sense of safety and lack of harassment but there is dissatisfaction with facilities (or lack of these) and with having higher costs than those living in council houses.
- There is a perception among some members of the Gypsy/Traveller community that local authorities offer them housing in bad areas. Better conditions and opportunities for their children are a strong motivation for Gypsy Travellers to move into a house, but they fear their possible exposure to drugs and crime in housing estates. Many returned to sites after disliking living in a house.
- The high incidence of health problems among Gypsy Travellers has implications for the provision of facilities on sites. Gypsy Travellers are aware of services and how to access them, with most reporting no difficulty in access and very good standards in some services, though there is some dissatisfaction with access to GP services.
- Gypsy Traveller parents prefer to look after younger children themselves rather than use nursery services, but generally perceive primary school education to be very good. However, racial harassment and bullying are a major source of concern, particularly in secondary education.
- Travelling and living in a caravan is important for young Gypsy Travellers’ sense of identity during the transition to adulthood. However, having a site address was seen as a problem, with some young Gypsy Travellers experiencing bullying and discrimination during education and when looking for employment.
- There is confusion over availability of funding mechanisms for adaptations to meet the health requirements of older people. There is a perception among site residents that problems they faced in obtaining adaptations to the facilities arose from an assumption that they should consider living in housing.

- Gypsy Travellers are facing difficulties in maintaining their culture and values. There is a decline in nomadism for practical reasons, and there is a two-way flow of residents between sites and housing, due to both push and pull factors.

The level of Gypsy Traveller representation has improved in recent years, but many Gypsy Travellers feel that this could be improved further. However, only a minority of Gypsy Travellers want to or feel able to become involved in planning for housing and service provision for their community and to do so would need training and support.

### **7.2.5.3 Disability and Independent Living**

As discussed in Section 6: Housing Community Care, there is a lack of information about disability, especially physical, in Angus. Although the Local Housing Strategy was developed with help from a range of groups involving or representing people with disabilities, it is recognised that more could be done in terms of engaging with a variety of client groups and being flexible about communication and how people with disabilities express their needs and aspirations.

From a sustainability perspective, it is important to provide a range of accommodation and housing support services in all settlements wherever practicable in order for local people to stay put and have their needs met. As a point of principle and of good practice, people with special needs should have the choice of living independently, without having to move away from their family or support networks.

Local social networks can also help households that experience poverty or ill health in old age. Studies have shown that older people who develop dementia in established communities, whether sheltered housing or mainstream housing, are supported and cared for by their neighbours, in contrast to older people with advanced dementia who are allocated into sheltered housing, who experience intolerance and avoidance (14). Similarly for housing or facilities for people with learning difficulties or mental health problems, the importance of local good will and continuity in a community should not be underestimated.

In terms of employment and economic inclusion, Angus Council does provide a guaranteed interview scheme, which provides an opportunity for people with a disability to address any preconceptions that recruiters may have. However, there are no equivalents for disability to the positive action schemes available for ethnic minorities or women.

### **7.2.5.4 Women**

The majority of people working in housing are women, and this is true of Angus Council but only 1 out of 7 senior staff is a woman. However, there are

opportunities for development and positive action for women within the Council, which go some way towards addressing the problem. A majority of tenant activists are women.

A more immediate problem for sustainable communities, homelessness and equal opportunities is the continuing incidence of domestic violence and the need for adequate provision of supported housing for victims of domestic abuse. There are two Women's Aid hostels in Angus with space for up to 8 families, which are regularly full. Following the Scottish Executive's strategy on preventing violence against women (15) and with a growth in women and dependent children leaving home to escape domestic abuse in Angus there is a need to expand the provision of refuges (16).

#### **7.2.5.5 Young People**

There are a number of youth focused voluntary groups in Angus and both Community Education and Community Planning are making strenuous efforts to engage with young people. There has been some interest in the LHS but there needs to be some work done with schools and youth groups to make the point that housing is an important issue and that young people need to get involved in initiatives like regeneration schemes to make real improvements in their lives.

Outwith participation and involvement, young people are often stigmatised as a nuisance, either as poor tenants or as youths hanging around street corners. This in part is a failure of agencies to address a number of lifestyle issues. A common problem is the mismatch between the aspirations of young people for independence and respect, expressed through a home of their own, and the problems some have with maintaining a tenancy or their independence in the real world. This is a sweeping statement and may only apply to a small minority of people but one of the commonly reported causes of anti-social behaviour, tenancy abandonment, homelessness and arrears. It is reasonable in some cases to argue that young people are expecting to leave home too early. It may also be a question of lack of information and training. This mismatch between aspiration and ability also concerns other agencies like health because there are also issues with safety in the home, substance abuse, unhealthy eating and lack of self-care (11).

#### **7.2.6 Community Safety**

Community safety is of prime importance to the Angus Community Planning Partnership and underpins a lot of the Local Housing Strategy. There are a number of initiatives within the current annual Community Safety Action Plan that can be developed within the Local Housing Strategy like: a new policy on Gypsy Travellers, child behaviour management training for parents and an Angus pilot for mediation services (17).

Anti-social behaviour is acknowledged as a problem on a localised basis in Angus, as most burghs have streets and areas that display these symptoms, created by the low demand for their housing. However, it must be noted that it is not just about social housing. Most antisocial behaviour complaints come from the private sector, where there are fewer remedies. In areas with poor community safety or reputations, there are some landlords who are operating on an “amateur” basis or have no interest in managing tenant behaviour. There are no easy answers to the issues of anti-social behaviour and “problem” families.

Fear of crime and violence is a direct threat to the development or maintenance of trust in a community and ultimately to its sustainability. If elements of the population can cause disruption and unease without a swift reaction from statutory bodies, people will move away and trust in neighbours and in agencies will rapidly evaporate and this can lead to low demand and stigmatised estates or communities. This is a particularly sensitive issue for older people but affects all members of a community. It also impacts on the economy, where local people find it difficult to find work due to an area’s reputation. It increases landlord costs and ultimately rent and, where there is a reasonable alternative supply of housing, it can lead to voids and abandonment across tenures. Older housing schemes and town centres are prone to anti-social behaviour, due to location and the types of household who end up living in these areas.

There are some specific social causes. The allocation policies of social landlords have tended to filter the desperate and the undesirable into some low demand estates but although Angus Council has tried through its local lettings plans to separate different incompatible lifestyles and avoid this concentration, people with chaotic lifestyles and an element of criminality have been concentrated in some small areas. Another factor in the concentration of social problems in certain areas is the prevalence of youth, particularly school age children, without adequate supervision. Sometimes this is a symptom of there being too few working and responsible adults as positive role models or parents finding it difficult to cope. To a certain extent groups of youths standing around street corners is just a manifestation of what teenagers do and no particular threat or problem, except in the perceptions of neighbours and people that feel themselves to be vulnerable. Another issue is the increasing problem of people finding it difficult to resolve disputes or misunderstandings face to face, leading to problems becoming magnified and trust undermined. In the extreme, areas with high turnover have an anonymous character that anti-social behaviour of all kinds will thrive on.

This can be described as a community out of balance, although it is recognised that communities are dynamic and a new estate may start off with young families but over a 50 year period may end up with a high proportion of older people.

There is also a physical element to this. Most housing estates built before 1990 were inadvertently designed in a way that made them prone to being insecure,

either in terms of house type or layout. With good intentions, both multi-storey housing and more suburban developments included common areas with sometimes no defensible space, a multitude of paths, secluded areas, unsupervised or overlooked entrances and a disregard for good lighting. Where other factors like social or generational mix, poverty, transient populations are present to combine with naive design this is a recipe for anti-social behaviour and criminality.

### **7.2.7 Active Citizenship**

Active Citizenship is one of the underlying principles of the Local Housing Strategy. It is recognised that the concept of citizenship goes beyond that of a customer or service user. It includes both service providers and citizens developing a shared understanding of the needs of their communities, but also recognising the constraints, which public sector agencies must work within.

Active Citizenship in the context of the Local Housing Strategy encompasses the following (18):

- Participation in the political, community and social spheres
- Engagement by citizens in policy formulation
- Link to democratic governance i.e. decision making processes that affect wider society
- Social responsibility towards others/on behalf of others
- Enjoying rights and exercising responsibilities
- Rights and Responsibility of business organisations as corporate citizens.

There is also a strong central government drive to open up local government and other service providers to citizen or customer scrutiny and involvement. Enshrined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 are tenant rights of access to information and rights of involvement in the development of housing services. But it is recognised that tenant or customer consultation and engagement is not just about meeting a statutory duty but is sound business sense in an increasingly competitive and challenging environment for social housing.

Given that most of the “excluded” are social sector tenants, it is up to landlords like Angus Council and local housing associations to take tenant participation and customer consultation to the heart of their businesses, in order to ensure that service development is meeting aspirations and needs and as a social good, encourage engagement as part of confidence building. Although it is appreciated that more citizens getting involved is more resource intensive but it can ultimately enhance delivery.

Tenant participation is a specific form of active citizenship but apart from groups of tenants coming together for recent regeneration or improvement schemes, there has been little history of it in Angus. However, Angus Council and local housing associations have been making significant improvements in tenant participation and there are now a number of fora that tenants are involved in. Tenant and community participation tends to be driven by single issues and so support needs to be flexible in approach and available on two levels: activist and single issue. It is vital that interest is maintained by providing a range of opportunities to engage, feedback, and visible action on agreed outcomes is essential (19).

In addition to the issues that the Angus Social Inclusion Strategy raises there are some more housing specific problems for communities: imbalances in supply and demand, the impact of market decline which are dealt with in Section 2: Supply and Demand.

### **7.2.8 Community Ownership**

Another aspect of active citizenship, an extension of tenant participation, is community ownership. The Scottish Executive are promoting it as a preferred model for the renewal of social housing in council ownership and one mechanism for levering in the investment required to ensure that all social housing meets the new Scottish Housing Quality Standard (20). Where a local authority has significant problems with the level of debt attached to its stock, high rents and poor stock condition, transferring all its houses and tenants to housing associations may be the only option. Angus Council has low rents, good quality stock and a low level of debt and so it can consider all the options from full scale stock transfer, through partial transfer of some areas, to full stock retention. Although a formal stock options appraisal has not been carried out, Angus Council considers that wholesale or partial stock transfer can only be justified if it brings significant additional value and benefits to tenants and other direct customers of the social housing service provided.

From a social sustainability perspective, the benefit would be from developing community ownership in its real sense, through locally based housing associations or co-operatives. Through significant or majority tenant membership of the management committees governing these bodies, communities would have a strong sense of ownership of the housing they lived in. The question is whether existing community based housing associations would deliver this level of community involvement and whether, in taking over a large amount of stock they would lose their community focus. Angus Council stock is spread out over many communities and, even in the towns, has been developed in relatively small estates, so the central belt model of a community based housing association or co-operative working in a homogenous area of 1,000 houses is difficult to envisage. The current financial climate suggests that

it would not be possible to create the appropriate number of smaller co-operatives or associations to match the Angus pattern of communities.

Where there are clear investment needs and a community that requires social regeneration, as is the case in Clifftown, Angus Council will work with tenants and the broader community to look at stock options including partial stock transfer. However, there has been no general call for stock transfer from tenants of Angus Council. It is recognised that widespread consultation with tenants and other customers on the long term future of council housing in Angus needs to take place in the period of the Local Housing Strategy.

### **7.2.9 Rural Angus**

There is a distinctive rural perspective to sustainability, across all three themes, where small settlement size and dependence on fragile services makes them vulnerable and highlights the fact that housing, economy, transport, services and social infrastructure are all interlinked (21). Opportunities exist to further develop sustainable rural communities by building on the work of Angus Rural Partnership and other partners, including the communities themselves, in implementing Angus Council's Rural Strategy. The Angus Local Plan strategy directs rural development towards settlements in order to safeguard current services. But there remains interest in innovative methods of providing homes in the rural areas.

There are many technical or economic problems to overcome in order to improve the viability of small villages or settlements. As a first step, there has been a pilot community appraisal in Westmuir and the scope for expanding this approach in the Sidlaws is being investigated. The issue of appropriate employment or services to help sustain rural communities requires further investigation.

One area of concern is the pattern or direction of Scottish Water investment originally identified by the Scottish Executive for dealing with development constraints. There are currently a number of drainage embargos in rural settlements that constrain development, but it is not clear when investment will be made to clear them or what Scottish Water's priorities are. The crucial role that Scottish Water plays in rural development and sustainability suggests that an active participation in community planning at an Angus or local level would be helpful. A joined up approach to development is seen as the principal way of overcoming obstacles in delivering rural sustainability.

For rural areas, local measures should be tailored, through community appraisal, to local needs, across a variety of services or areas, eg. allocations policies and planning guidelines. The Housing Needs Assessment suggests that two thirds of sales in the Carnoustie, Monifieth and Sidlaws area are to people from outside Angus. For the Sidlaws communities especially, there is the additional problem of aspirational pressure from Dundee City on any affordable housing and there needs to be positive action in terms of allocating locally to sustain small

settlements. This could be based on local employment or economic activity, or the need to move back to family networks to give or receive support. Investment in these areas will do nothing to meet a community's needs without a return to using local connection as part of a needs assessment or allocation, whether it be affordable housing for rent or sale.

### **7.3 Economic sustainability**

Economic growth or its pursuit alone does not constitute sustainability and in some ways growth can in fact undermine it. Therefore, when considering the economy, sustainability should address: how economic exclusion operates, income inequality, unpaid work and the impact on the environment. The most appropriate measure of this is the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW) (22) rather than Gross Domestic Product, and although this level of analysis is beyond this first Local Housing Strategy, we can use ISEW to help identify some of the ways in which housing affects or is linked to the economic sustainability of a community? The following are the most important themes or issues.

#### **7.3.1 Affordable Housing**

The cost and availability of housing is an influence on the supply of labour. Angus is reliant on poorly paid sectors like tourism and agriculture and also makes significant use of migrant labour in those industries. High rent levels and house prices cause a problem for these industries, as does the lack of affordable housing in many rural and small urban communities. Past central government policy to minimise public subsidy for new social housing involved inflating housing association rents and this approach could be counter-productive in Angus in excluding those in the low wage economy from new "affordable" housing. The cost of housing also includes running costs like heating and maintenance, and this is particularly stark when considering some older private lets, where heating costs can cause fuel poverty.

#### **7.3.2 Infrastructure**

Changes to infrastructure like water supply, sewage treatment and road systems have implications for housing and the economy, as a threat and barrier to development or as an opportunity (21). The impact of road changes has a complex influence on housing and the immanent dualing of the A92 between Dundee and Arbroath may attract more people to live in the West end of Arbroath with the hope of a more buoyant housing market and new customers for social housing. However, it also will lead to more pressure on the Monifieth and Carnoustie, reinforcing their inclusion within the Greater Dundee Housing Market. The resultant increase in commuters will further inflate house prices and undermine the ability of indigenous communities to afford housing in the future.

### **7.3.3 Private Rented Sector**

The Private Rented Sector (PRS) plays a number of roles in Angus including providing the temporary direct access and seasonal accommodation that is particularly important for seasonal industries and in rural areas with little or no social housing. It is a significant tenure with 12% of Angus housing stock, if tied housing and other private arrangements are included (23). Increasing pressure from legislation and house prices may lead to a decline in numbers that could cause significant problems for rural sustainability and for industries like tourism, agriculture and food processing that rely on its flexibility.

The PRS is sometimes its own worst enemy, with an image that is tarnished by bad publicity, a perception that some landlords lack a professional approach, that it is inefficient in managing its stock and in need of better management and physical standards. Responsible landlords are not recognised and for those on the margins of financial viability, recent regulation is considered too heavy handed.

### **7.3.4 Construction**

The construction sector is of interest for two reasons: the Local Housing Strategy needs to be confident that it is able to deliver the outcomes we want across all our objectives but it is also a significant employer, even in rural areas, and this impacts on sustainability. Angus has lost a number of small and medium sized general builders over the past 5 years and is increasingly reliant on Dundee based companies.

A construction industry problem that affects both areas is the lack of skills capacity, in joinery, plumbing, heating, bricklaying and even semi-skilled general building operatives (24). Apprenticeships are rare due to lack of financial incentive for contractors, the lack of work continuity and the sector's reliance on sub-contracting for most trades. To add to the current problem, the industry nationally is under stress as investment in schools across Scotland and in housing in the Lothians, Glasgow and the central belt, places unsustainable demands on the available contractors and trades people. As the skills follow the money, this is likely to lead to fewer and higher tenders for local projects.

Angus Council and its many partners command construction investment that is significant enough to lever more apprenticeships into the industry but this has been hampered in the past by a lack of co-ordination between clients, contractors and education and a mix of national and European legislation which appeared to rule out contract clauses or procurement routes that included apprenticeships and training as a condition. This may now be changing with the repeal of Compulsory Competitive Tendering legislation and the introduction of new powers to promote "community wellbeing" (25).

In the voluntary sector, housing associations' greater freedom of action has allowed local labour clauses in construction contracts, but to be effective in

stimulating apprenticeships it requires continuity of work and this has been difficult to achieve with the annuality of funding. There are already initiatives to address this eg. Hillcrest Housing Association apprenticeship scheme and the Tayside Local Labour Initiative but they can struggle to get volunteers. This is because the construction industry has significant image problems: not meeting school leavers' aspirations; being dirty; outdoors; dangerous and initially poorly paid. However, it actually has a number of career paths and currently high wages for manual and skilled work. For regeneration schemes, there is the additional problem of motivation as potential apprentices from under achieving estates have significant problems with confidence, life skills, a ghetto mentality and a need to go back to basics with regard to training & capacity to work.

### **7.3.5 Economic Development and Regeneration**

There are a number of areas in Angus that are in need of regeneration or renewal. Angus Council's rolling programme of modernisations and selective demolition of obsolete housing in those areas where the problem was building quality has been largely successful. However, for those areas with complex problems and a concentration of both poor housing and social exclusion we recognise the need to develop a more holistic approach to regeneration. In Regenerate! North Arbroath, with European aid, a broad alliance of deprived communities, statutory agencies and the voluntary sector is developing a regeneration programme to address these complexities.

Regeneration is more than just the physical reconstruction of deprived communities; housing investment can bring added value in grants, training and leverage as it opens up opportunities for the development of social business and entrepreneurialism, as is currently proposed in North Arbroath. New and modernised housing can also help develop a positive community spirit, drive social change, introduce tenure diversification and address housing quality problems. Housing stock can also constitute an asset with a positive sale value that can be invested in an area.

One barrier to the development of a local economy that can sustain a community is the lack of local financial capital. Banks are increasingly centralised and their lending policies determined at a national level. There may be informal economies at play but, although these are important and necessary, there is a need for sources of local investment and a formal economy to support enterprise.

Communities Scotland and local housing associations are developing a wider role in addressing social inclusion and economic development. One example of good practice is the Hillcrest construction apprenticeship scheme mentioned above but there are many more examples of social infrastructure and regeneration initiatives being promoted by Communities Scotland's new wider role. It is hoped that Angus Housing Association's involvement as an active partner in community and economic development in North Arbroath will be a role model for other areas in Angus in need of wider regeneration.

On the back of new or modernised housing projects, there may be opportunities to develop local enterprises, even utilities, eg. by using group heating and combined heat & power but this raises the problem of projects needing to be self financing from the start because of restrictions in the use of Angus Council's Housing Revenue and General Fund monies. With the development of home working and the need to foster small enterprises within regeneration, there is a lack of flexibility in some housing estates to accommodate workspace. Although businesses are more mobile than households, the provision of opportunities for families to develop small enterprises with limited risk is a legitimate option for housing led regeneration. In an increasingly knowledge based economy it is imperative that there is a supply of "smart" workers for a "smart" economy (26) but there is also a need to provide vocational training for the trades that support other economic sectors. The Housing Department and housing associations that have local offices are significant employers but when working in deprived areas there is a missed opportunity in offering training and a career ladder for people in regeneration.

### **7.3.6 Owner occupation**

Owner occupation has shown itself to be a powerful economic driver since the first private housing boom in the 1930's, increasing investment in housing and stimulating the economy. However, it can also exacerbate an economic downturn, through negative equity, repossessions and debt. Although, because Angus is a relatively stable housing market, there are no examples of the kind of boom and bust experienced by the South of England. It would appear that in most places when the market quietens down, prices plateau. The current housing market is catching up with trends in the Lothians, Fife and Perth and Kinross, with recent rapid price rises in Montrose and South Angus. An overheated housing market can also bring problems of access and affordability. There is broad agreement on the economic desirability of a stable house buying market, with steady rates of turnover and slow price inflation, reflective of changes in the cost of living.

In addition, from the economic development perspective the provision of the right mix of housing can bring both growth and sustainability, for example, high quality executive housing in the right place can encourage economic growth by bringing highly motivated entrepreneurs into an area and stimulating the development of services reliant on their spending power, promoting the re-location of offices and businesses and bringing inward investment. Where the right mix is missing, housing can be a barrier to economic vigour if the structure of a housing market within a settlement does not include a full range of property values for a mix of workers and a mixed economic community.

### **7.3.7 Affordable Housing Policy**

How does an affordable housing policy affect sustainability? There is an argument from the house building industry that an affordable housing policy has a detrimental effect: reducing profitability and constraining the range of housing available as house prices rise to accommodate the added development cost. There is truth in this where an affordable housing policy is applied to land where the developer has already purchased on the basis of housing use, although few developers part with money until they are sure of planning permission. The argument does not stand scrutiny where a change of use takes place after the affordable housing policy is applied. Where land values are high and where house prices are high and unaffordable to most, government intervention is needed to ensure that some affordable housing, either for sale or rent, is provided to ensure continuity and balance in the community and sustain family and social networks. Where land values can increase by 30 times through change of use and there are few opportunities to address a housing need, it is reasonable for the community or society to use planning policy to share the added value through planning gain. What a community needs or wants most as planning gain depends on circumstances but as a general policy there should be a number of levels of intervention based on the betterment of the land in question and objectives with the community. It is hoped that central government will assist in clearing up the matter of affordable housing policy by introducing more explicit guidance and ideally a new use class for affordable housing.

## **7.4 Environmental sustainability**

One of the great shibboleths of European social democracies is the beneficial nature of growth and its necessity. However, there is a strong argument against this from the point of view of environmental and economic sustainability. For instance, in pursuit of a mobile workforce and flexible working patterns, we now have a huge increase in travel to work times. In pursuit of greater sales there is more built in obsolescence. In pursuit of competitiveness and cheaper products, primary production and manufacturing is now sourced in the developing world. Although tackling these issues is mostly outwith the scope of the Local Housing Strategy, it is recognised that thinking local is an option for housing as a consumer. Within Community Planning, there is a preference for the delivery of services locally (3). Within the timescale for the Local Housing Strategy it is likely that strategic environmental assessments will have to be carried out for developments in the public sector (27).

### **7.4.1 Sustainable Design**

Communities Scotland's Sustainable Design Guide sets a standard for the use of materials, layout and services that minimise the impact of construction on the environment (28).

However, there is still a conflict between those sustainable ideals and the financial benchmarks that housing associations have to meet in bidding for capital investment. The investment programme is still obsessed with unit and

cost targets that do not take into consideration the additional cost of energy efficiency or sustainable materials or techniques. Sustainable design is still considered a soft target when savings have to be made. At the core of the argument is an investment framework based on tender costs when sustainability is primarily about the whole life cost of a building including the cost of production, repair and disposal.

Where economic, social and environmental sustainability all meet is the construction industry, where travel to work and import distances, endemic wastefulness and the energy expended on making many components is incompatible with them. Lack of local skills, expertise or competitiveness can lead to sub-contractors being brought in from all over Scotland and undermines local businesses. The specification of softwoods or ceramic materials reliant on overseas sources causes significant waste in distances travelled but also does nothing to develop indigenous sources and industry.

#### **7.4.2 Sustainable Planning - Local Agenda 21**

The Angus Local Plan and the Tayside Structure Plan promote sustainable development and as such can present barriers to the development of housing but the broader community has to protect “green belt”, countryside development, encourage the local vernacular architecture, especially within conservation areas and encourage the use of traditional materials.

Angus Local Agenda 21 and the Angus Rural Strategy both promote sustainable development as a means for improving quality of life 'locally', recognising that sustaining healthy local communities and vibrant economies also requires environmental safeguards. The aims of sustainable development where it affects housing in rural areas can be broadly summarised as:-

- reduction of the environmental impact of economic activities taking place in rural areas
- the strengthening of the rural economy and of rural communities, particularly the provision of local employment and services
- improvement in equity including the quality of life of the least advantaged members of rural society
- involvement of the whole community in rural areas in planning for and meeting these aims

In a practical way, the development and design of housing in Angus needs sustainable sources for materials, sustainable production, reduction in distances travelled and consideration of energy efficiency, both power supply and insulation standards (29).

Within the Angus Agenda 21 Strategy there are thirteen “Themes of Sustainability” of which the following have implications for the Local Housing Strategy:

1. Resources are used efficiently and waste is minimised by closing cycles.
2. Pollution is limited to levels which natural systems can cope with and without damage.
4. Where possible, local needs are met locally.
5. Everyone has access to good food, water, shelter, and fuel at reasonable cost.
6. Everyone has the opportunity to undertake satisfying work in a diverse economy. The value of unpaid work is recognised, whilst payments for work are fair and fairly distributed.
7. People's good health is protected by creating safe, clean, pleasant environments and health services, which emphasise prevention of illness as well as proper care for the sick.
8. Access to facilities, services, goods and other people is not achieved at the expense of the environment or limited to those with cars.
9. People live without fear of personal violence from crime or persecution because of their personal beliefs, race, gender, or sexuality.
10. Everyone has access to the skills, knowledge and information needed to enable them to play a full part in society.
11. All sections of the community are empowered to participate in decision-making.
13. Places, spaces, and objects combine meaning and beauty with utility. Settlements are 'human' in scale and form. Diversity and local distinctiveness are valued and protected.

Angus has developed its Local Agenda 21 strategy to support sustainable development as a continuing process of developing with communities local policies on environmental safeguards that are concerned with environmental sustainability as well as economic and social sustainability in society as a whole, not just within the countryside (30). The related Home Energy Conservation Act strategy deals with some of these themes and its priorities in terms of the energy efficiency and fuel poverty.

## **7.5 A Vision for Sustainable Communities**

Desired outcomes and a vision for sustainable communities within the Local Housing Strategy are split between economic, social and environmental spheres.

### **Economic**

Angus needs stability and balance in each of the housing markets, with sufficient affordable housing and a full range of private housing provision for industry and employment, and measure of steady growth in house prices. For areas currently in decline, regeneration will reduce voids and turnover to the Angus average. With restrictions on growth in some areas, this will take more than one plan period to meet.

To deliver housing objectives, the local construction and house building industry will have addressed shortages of skilled trades people, will increase local employment and sub-contracting and, in a two way process, develop closer working and problem solving relationships with clients and statutory bodies.

Housing led regeneration, will bring with it the development of facilities, the formation of local businesses and social enterprises, in disadvantaged communities.

### **Social**

Target communities in North Arbroath will be largely regenerated by 2009, with improved quality of life and deprivation indicators, reduced fear of crime and improved community involvement, health, and customer satisfaction with social housing services. New measures will be introduced to improve how agencies and communities deal with both the physical and social aspects of community safety and the housing environment.

Fuel poverty across Angus will come down from the current 16% to 8% by 2009, with more significant reductions in areas of high deprivation.

### **Environmental**

Housing development, especially for affordable housing will see an increase in the use of local materials in construction, and wider use of the sustainable design guide for social sector provision.

### **Objectives**

1. To maximise the contribution that housing investment makes to sustainability.
2. To enhance how secure people feel in their neighbourhoods.
3. To promote healthy living conditions in the home.
4. To reduce housing turnover to the Angus average in low demand areas across all tenures by 2013.
5. To increase involvement in neighbourhood community organisations.
6. To reduce fuel poverty by 50% in the Strategy period.

### **What are we going to do about it?**

The Implementation Plan in Appendix 1 describes exactly what we intend to do about sustainable communities and when we want to do it. The information and views expressed above are referenced below should the reader wish to look at the arguments or statistics in more detail.

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