North Somerset Housing Strategy 2016–21

North Somerset Council

Contents

Foreword
Executive Summary

1. Introduction

2. National and regional context and challenges

3. Local context and challenges

4. Strategic Aim – Increasing the supply of homes

5. Strategic Aim – Improving homes

6. Strategic Aim – Providing housing solutions

7. Performance, monitoring and resources

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Action Plan
Appendix 2 – Key Achievements 2010–2015
Appendix 3 – Consultation
Appendix 4 – Supporting and Related Strategies and Plans
Appendix 5 – Glossary

Every effort has been made to avoid the use of jargon. However, to assist the reader explanations of specialist terms are included in a **glossary** as Appendix 5.

Note on hyperlinks: If you are reading the electronic version of this document you can highlight and then right click on the hyperlink, then select 'open hyperlink' and it will open the relevant web page. If you get a security message just press the cancel button and you should then go to the relevant web page.

Foreword

Since our last housing strategy we've achieved a great deal to improve housing provision across North Somerset, about which you can read more in an appendix to this document. But there is more to do, and given the scale and pace of change for housing we must have a clear strategic approach for the future. This document is forward-looking and ambitious, and will ensure we do not rest on our laurels.

We're at a time of major change for national housing policy, with a new Housing and Planning Bill and major and ongoing welfare reform. It is crucial we have a housing strategy that ensures North Somerset can embrace the new opportunities and overcome the challenges that this change brings.

The first of our three strategic aims is 'increasing the supply of homes'. This is not just about developing more homes, but as importantly ensuring we make best use of the existing provision. Housing will play a major part in our regeneration plans for Weston. Where we build new homes this must be balanced with protecting the amenity and character of our towns, village and countryside. Building homes must also be about building communities with the schools, medical centres, transport options and amenities residents need.

The second strategic aim is 'improving homes'. We know some parts of our district have pockets of poor housing conditions. This might include older owner occupiers who need help to continue to live independently, or private tenants in poorly maintained homes. We will continue to use our powers and influence to work with landlords, tenants and homeowners to raise standards and seek to ensure their safety. We look forward to maximising opportunities for improving energy efficiency to help tackle fuel poverty and reduce the district's carbon footprint.

Our third and final strategic aim is 'providing housing solutions'. This encompasses our work to prevent homelessness, provide housing advice and ensure the efficient allocation of the district's social housing. This is also about finding housing for those in crisis and helping vulnerable people access housing and employment and training opportunities.

This housing strategy sets the challenges we face and shows how we will work to meet them. Good housing is an essential element in people's lives and is crucial to ensuring resilient and prosperous communities where people want to live.

The whole council will work with a range of partners in all sectors to achieve the aims and ambitions in the strategy to enable positive housing outcomes and a better quality of life for the residents of North Somerset.

Cllr Elfan Ap Rees

Executive Member for Strategic Planning, Highways, Economic Development and Housing and Deputy Leader of the Council

North Somerset Housing Strategy 2016–21 Executive Summary

Our new housing strategy sets out how we will strive to meet the housing needs of communities in North Somerset over the next five years by delivering the strategy's vision, aims, ambitions and associated actions. It's an over-arching document developed using a robust evidence base and reflects issues and challenges raised during consultation. The diagram below shows a range of areas that housing impacts upon and which in turn affect housing. This illustrates why 'getting housing right' has such an effect on other aspects of life.

In our new draft Corporate Plan we set out our clear vision for North Somerset as:

"A great place to live where people, businesses and communities flourish. A council which delivers modern, efficient services and a strong voice for North Somerset".

The housing strategy has developed three strategic aims that will support the delivery of the Corporate Plan. These are increasing the supply of homes, improving homes and providing housing solutions.

The housing strategy is about meeting housing needs, including those of vulnerable people, housing affordability and improving the condition, and health and safety of existing housing.

This housing strategy is a separate document from the Core Strategy (part of the Local Plan), which along with the West of England Joint Spatial Plan, will set out the number and location of new homes to be built across the district over the next 20 years (including the number and type of affordable homes), with a view to accelerating the delivery of homes in sustainable locations. The Core Strategy also covers planning policy and standards for new housing.

We have aligned the housing strategy with the plans above and also the council's Corporate Plan.

The housing strategy establishes the national and regional context in which we are operating before focusing in on more local issues and challenges.

The strategy then concentrates on each of our three strategic aims and establishes, the ambitions and actions the council (in many cases with partners) will deliver to improve housing outcomes for the people of North Somerset. The **strategic aims** and ambitions are set out below:

Increasing the supply of homes

- Accelerating the delivery of homes in sustainable locations
- Making best use of existing housing stock
- Contributing to the regeneration of our town centres
- Increasing the supply of low cost, decent homes in the private rented sector (PRS) for those in most need

Improving homes

- Improving conditions in the private housing sector through assistance and loans
- Regulating housing conditions in the private rented sector
- Providing support to maintain independent living
- Improving home energy efficiency

Providing housing solutions

- Improving housing options for vulnerable households and people with support needs
- Working in partnership to tackle and prevent homelessness
- Ensuring the provision of adequate accommodation for homeless people
- Ensuring the allocation of social housing meets needs in the best way
- Improving training and employment opportunities linked to the development of housing

We will only be able to achieve many of our aims and ambitions by working in partnership and we have appreciated the support of our partners in developing the strategy. A detailed action plan which gives more detail on delivery and monitoring of the strategy is available from the contacts below. The housing strategy and action plan are live, evolving documents which will be updated as conditions change.

For questions regarding the Housing Strategy contact the Housing Development and Strategy Team

Email: **housing.solutions@n-somerset.gov.uk**

Phone: **01934 427 487**

Write to: Housing Development and Strategy, Town Hall, Walliscote Grove Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UJ

1. Introduction

Time for a new housing strategy?

This new housing strategy for 2016–21 sets out our vision to help meet housing needs in North Somerset. The following chapters outline the context in which we are working and the strategic aims and ambitions we will focus on. These were identified through consultation and research. There is an action plan to show how we intend to achieve our ambitions through a number of actions and to monitor their success through relevant performance measures.

The diagram shows the areas that impact on housing and which in turn housing affects. This illustrates why 'getting housing right' has such an impact on other aspects of life.

To deliver the strategy we will continue to work with a wide range of partners including investors, employers, private landlords, registered housing providers[1] and other agencies that can add to our district's housing offer.

The content of this strategy is informed by evidence and consultation. It is an overarching strategy which will give our partners clarity about our direction of travel and our aims and ambitions, whilst at the same time providing flexibility to re-align our plans as economic, political and social circumstances change. A number of specialist delivery plans sit underneath our strategy and give more detail about our approach (ref: appendix 4).

Reductions in public spending continue to be an important part of central government's plan to reduce the national deficit. Underpinning this strategy is the need to maximise efficiency and attract funding to North Somerset to achieve more with less. For housing, as with other council services, this includes transforming the way we deliver services and reducing the cost of 'back office' functions to free up resources for 'front line' service delivery. We have built into the appropriate parts of this strategy the expected outcomes from the Housing and Planning Bill announced in October 2015, the Autumn Statement – November 2015 and the Welfare Reform and Work Bill.

1 Also known as housing associations or social landlords

Role of the council's Housing Strategy and links to other key plans

The housing strategy is about meeting housing needs, including those of vulnerable people; it is also about housing affordability and improving the condition, health and safety of existing housing.

The housing strategy is a separate document to the Core Strategy (part of the Local Plan) and the West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP). The West of England Joint Spatial Plan (see below) will set out the number and location of new homes to be built across the district over the next 20 years. North Somerset will bring forward a new local plan in parallel with the JSP to deliver the new homes required, including the number and type of affordable homes, and planning policy and standards for new housing. The housing strategy will align with these plans and also the council's Corporate Plan (see below).

In addition, a number of delivery plans (e.g. our Homelessness Strategy) support the strategy and set more detailed and specialist actions. These are listed in appendix 4.

We are working with neighbouring councils and the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership to progress the region's economy and the infrastructure which supports it, such as housing and transport. Our region is already the most economically productive in the UK, but we will continue to seek opportunities and additional powers to improve opportunities for all our residents e.g. around housing and jobs. For more on this see page 13.

What we are setting out to achieve?

In our new draft Corporate Plan the council sets out its clear vision for North Somerset:

"A great place to live where people, businesses and communities flourish.* A council which delivers *modern, efficient services and a strong voice for North Somerset"

The new Corporate Plan identifies three key outcomes which the council wants to achieve for local people: Prosperity and Opportunity, Health and Wellbeing and Quality Places.

Under each of these outcomes specific ambitions have been identified, together with four cross-organisational 'enablers', which are the characteristics the organisation will need to deliver its ambitions:

Prosperity & Opportunity	Health and Wellbeing	Quality Place
• Drive growth in the North Somerset economy and local jobs • Ensure that all our town centres are thriving • Enable young people to fulfil their potential • Ensure that all our communities share in prosperity and employment growth	• Enable residents to make healthy choices and promote active lifestyles which reduce ill health and increase independence • Support families to give their children the best start in life • Commission or provide quality health and care services, which deliver dignity, safety and choice	• Enable sustainable housing growth which protects our natural and built environment and the special character of our villages • Build and sustain great places to live and visit – safe and accessible • Empower people to contribute to their community and communities to provide their own solutions

Cross Cutting Enablers

- A transformed council: modern, innovative and accessible
- Skilled and motivated staff, passionate about making North Somerset even better
- Excellence in resource management
- Strong, outcomes focused partnerships

The housing strategy will support the delivery of the council's Corporate Plan. The strategy sets out three strategic aims: increasing the supply of homes, improving homes and providing housing solutions, and the links to the Corporate Plan outcomes are shown below

Housing Strategy Aims	*links to*	Corporate Plan Outcomes
Increasing the supply of homes		Quality Places
Improving homes		Health and Wellbeing
Providing housing solutions		Prosperity and Opportunity

To achieve our strategic aims we have developed 13 ambitions that the housing strategy will deliver (see table on the next page).

Increasing the supply of homes	Improving homes	Providing housing solutions
• Accelerating delivery of homes in sustainable locations • Making best use of existing housing stock • Contributing to the regeneration of our town centres • Increasing the supply of low cost, decent homes in the private rented sector (PRS) for those in most need	• Improving conditions in the private housing sector through assistance and loans • Regulating housing conditions in the PRS • Providing support to maintain independent living • Improving home energy efficiency	• Improving housing options for vulnerable households and people with support needs • Working in partnership to tackle and prevent homelessness • Ensuring the provision of adequate accommodation for homeless people • Ensuring the allocation of social housing meets needs in the best way • Improving training and employment opportunities linked to the development of housing

Consultation

Understanding the needs and priorities of our residents, partners and stakeholders was important in the development of the strategy. Consultation was carried out at various stages in its development, by:

- a housing strategy event with a wide range of stakeholders
- specific housing surveys and two opportunities to comment on the strategy as it developed through our e-consult system.

The feedback from the consultation was key in shaping this strategy.

Equality and diversity

To make sure our services reflect the needs of the community we carry out a programme of equality impact assessments on all strategies, policies, plans and services to identify their potential impact on our residents and staff. The equality impact assessment for this strategy is available as a separate document.

2. National and regional context and challenges

This chapter identifies the national and regional drivers for our strategy. It is common for national policy direction to change during the life of a strategy and our annual review will keep the strategy up to date

National context

Housing has been high on the political agenda for some time. The supply of housing is subject to national debate with 243,500 new homes per year calculated as being needed to meet the national shortage.[2] The new government chose its first budget to convey its priorities for housing and further welfare reform. Registered Provider (housing association) partners will be directly affected by the introduction of the voluntary extension of the Right to Buy to their tenants and the proposals to reduce social housing rents by 1% a year, for four years from 2016

More detail about the government's proposals have emerged in the Housing and Planning Bill of October 2015 and the Joint Spending Review and Autumn Statement November 2015. These highlighted the government's national aspiration for the delivery of at least 400,000 affordable homes (200,000 of which are to be Starter Homes), 135,000 new Help to Buy Shared Ownership homes and 10,000 Rent to Buy homes over the life of this parliament. The proposals mark a major shift towards helping first time buyers rather than investing in other parts of the housing market. In addition to the target above there is a new Help to Buy an ISA savings account, Help to Buy Equity Loans are continuing until 2021 and there is an extra 3% in stamp duty levelled on those buying a second home or 'Buy to Let'. It may take some time for the implications of the government's new policies to become clear, especially the shift to new 'affordable' homes being predominantly Starter Homes or other intermediate products rather than social rented homes. The Bill also sets out the government's proposals to increase local authority regulatory powers to tackle 'rogue landlords'.

The Welfare Reform and Work Bill includes a range of changes including lowering the benefit cap, freezing rates for a number of benefits for four years, making changes to tax credits and loans for mortgage interest, and reducing social housing rents by 1% per year for four years from April 2016. The Government also announced in the Joint Spending Review and Autumn Statement that the Housing Benefit rules for housing association tenants would change to become better aligned with those applying to tenants in the private rented sector. This would include new social housing tenancies from April 2016 capping the amount

2 National Housing Federation estimated 974,000 homes were needed 2011–14, but figures from England's 326 councils showed 457,490 were built.

payable at the relevant local housing allowance (LHA) rate and capping the amount payable for single people under the age of 35 without dependent children at the shared accommodation rate.

There have also been recent national planning reforms aimed at simplifying the planning process and boosting supply. The key policy guide for planning is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which signalled:

- a shift in emphasis towards a presumption in favour of sustainable development
- councils identifying the full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable homes in their area
- councils responding positively to wider opportunities for growth
- that there should be a significant boost in the supply of housing

Further planning changes are included in the Housing and Planning Bill as follows:

- a register of those wishing to self-build or custom build and requirement on local authorities to meet this need
- a tighter timetable for determining planning permission
- more powers for the government to intervene e.g. if not enough Starter Homes are being built or the granting of planning permission is judged to be too slow
- planning permission in principle for sites of certain types e.g. brownfield

The NPPF also sets a definition of affordable housing for planning purposes; this definition is likely to be reviewed in light of Autumn Statement announcements. North Somerset Council's (NSC) Core Strategy sets the local context for the delivery of housing objectives and has shaped our policies for the delivery of high quality, well-designed homes.

Funding for affordable housing

Since our last housing strategy, building costs have increased whilst the availability of government grant (per unit) to subsidise the development of affordable housing has reduced. With the announcement in the July 2015 budget of a reduction in social housing rents by 1% from 2016/17 for four years, registered provider partners have concerns that they will not be able to develop as many affordable rented homes as they had planned. Many registered providers are currently reviewing their business plans and associated development programmes.

Transformation of health and social care reform

The provision and commissioning of health and social care nationally is undergoing fundamental transformation. Housing can have a significant impact on improving health and well-being. The Care Act 2014, which recognises the role of housing in the provision of care, overhauls the social care system in England and integrates housing into the assessment and meeting of care needs.

Regional partnerships

Councils have a **duty to cooperate,** to find solutions for issues that cross council boundaries. **The WoE Planning, Housing and Communities Board,** comprises council Executive Members with responsibility for planning and housing from each of the four councils. They work together to:

- oversee regional planning and development
- deliver levels of growth proposed by Local Plans
- support the delivery of housing and employment land allocations
- achieve balanced housing markets
- invest in public and private housing to address existing and future need

West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)[3] – working together, businesses and councils (Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire) are supporting economic growth and attracting new homes, jobs and investment to the region. The Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) will set the housing requirement for the West of England region. Our aspiration for the JSP is that it will also be the vehicle for a streamlined policy approach, enabling accelerated housing delivery by for example:

- assisting in the delivery of strategic sites where the market is unable to do so
- if necessary introducing a development corporation and development zones
- encouraging the density and quality of development which meets the region's economic aspirations
- putting infrastructure in place first to support accelerated growth
- making better use of public land including council's own sites, and have more influence with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)

In September 2015 the West of England Unitary Authorities together with the LEP, made an ambitious submission to government to devolve powers to invest in infrastructure to support growth and to have greater say in the development and delivery of skills and employability programmes. The submission also includes measures that would speed up the rate of house building, particularly on those sites with planning consents, and powers to intervene when developers do not deliver sites within agreed phasing plans on strategic sites. At present negotiations are ongoing with government.

We have also been working closely with partners on other housing and planning initiatives and projects, for example the recent **Wider Bristol Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)**[4], June 2015 and the establishment of the **HomesWest Partnership (HWP)** in 2015. The HWP specifically focuses on delivering new affordable housing (AH)

3 Link to web site: http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/

4 Link to web site: http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/place/duty-to-cooperate-planning/assessment-review

across the region. The HWP partners[5] work with each council to help meet their local AH priorities and have agreed to a series of delivery standards to ensure excellence in the delivery of new homes, housing allocations and ongoing housing management. The partnership's aims are to:

- increase the supply of good quality, sustainable AH in the WoE region
- explore new and innovative routes to the delivery of AH
- target the use of funding to meet priority[6] housing needs

We also continue to work with Sedgemoor, Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils on issues of common concern, including the housing impact and appropriate mitigation measures for the proposed development of a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point in West Somerset.

5 Link to HWP partners: https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/Housing/affordable_housing/Documents/HomesWest%20contacts%20(pdf).pdf

6 1996 Housing Act expanded the definition of 'priority need' to include: a pregnant woman, dependent children, someone vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or handicap or physical disability or other special reason

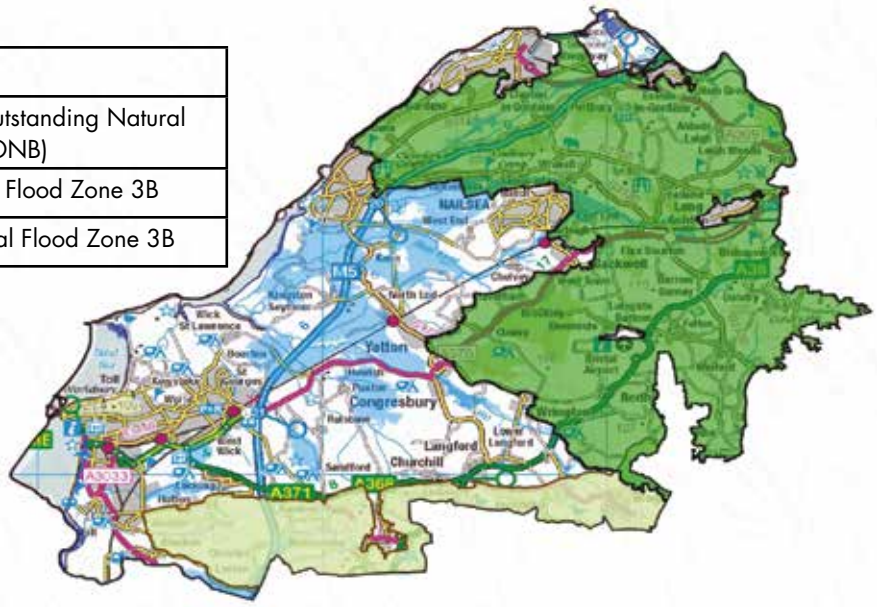
3. Local context and challenges

Housing key facts

- Following a challenge to the council's Core Strategy, the housing target for North Somerset has been set at 20,985 new homes between 2006 and 2026.
- There are significant environmental constraints on development: the Green Belt covers 40% of our district, the AONB covers 10% and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) flood zones cover 12%[7]

Land constraints

	Green Belt
	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
	SFRA Tidal Flood Zone 3B
	SFRA Fluvial Flood Zone 3B



- The average price of a property in August 2015 was £197,528 or almost seven times average full time earnings
- Over a quarter of private rented homes do not meet the decency threshold, with a high concentration of these homes in the Weston-super-Mare central area
- In the last 12 months, 928 households were added to the HomeChoice register for social housing which was more than double the number of lettings in the same period
- The health and life expectancy of people in North Somerset is generally better than the England average[8]. However, there are large inequalities in health (see life expectancy under deprivation section below).

There is a high level of out-commuting from the district, with 35% of the working population travelling to jobs outside of the district[9]. Employment growth is considered a high priority alongside housing growth, to reduce the district's dependence on employment elsewhere and reduce traffic congestion.

7 Note there is some overlap between these percentages

8 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2012

9 2011 Census

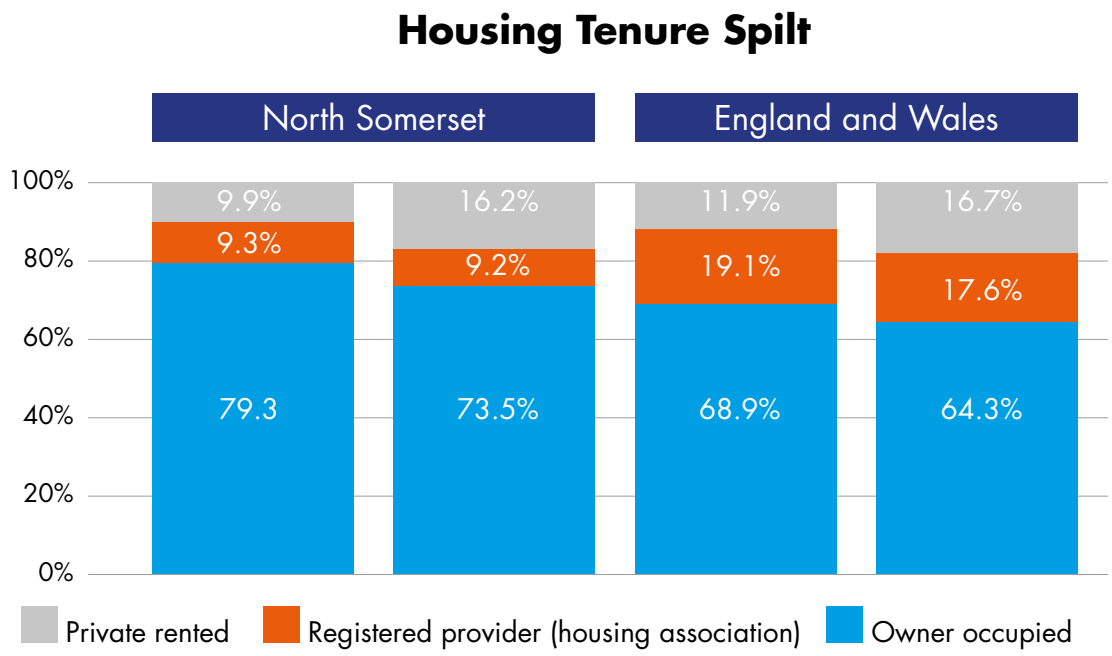
Deprivation

The district has the seventh largest inequalities gap - the gap between our wealthiest and poorest communities – in the country. One stark example of this is life expectancy, which is nine years lower for men and six and a half years lower for women in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived area in the district.[10] This inequalities gap presents us with one of our greatest challenges and we will work hard to narrow it by ensuring all our communities share in prosperity and employment growth. Many housing interventions will contribute to narrowing this gap.

Housing profile of North Somerset

Tenure mix

In common with the rest of the country, the percentage of owner occupiers has fallen as the private rented sector (PRS) has grown. In North Somerset the growth in the PRS has been from 7,958[11] homes in 2001 to 14,270 in 2011 (a 79% increase). The graph below shows how the housing tenure split has changed in the district compared to the England and Wales picture.



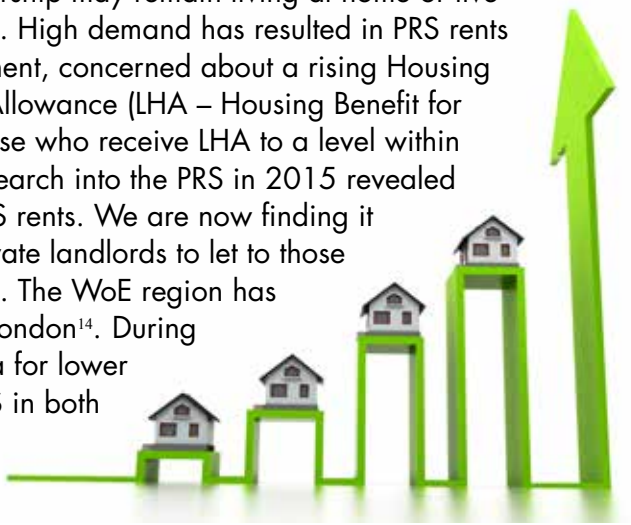
Source: Census 2001 and 2011, excludes living rent free so does not add to 100%; owner-occupied includes shared ownership

10 Dept. of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) English Indices of Deprivation 2010 – March 2011

11 Assumption of rent free dwellings at the same rate as 2011 to make this figure comparable

Housing costs and affordability

The South West of England has the third highest house prices after London and the South East, and the WoE region has the third highest house prices in the South West after Dorset and Gloucestershire[12]. Households on low to middle incomes are as a result finding it harder to afford owner occupation. The average price of a property in North Somerset in August 2015 was £197,528 or almost seven times average full time earnings. Lower quartile house prices in the district are 7.68 times greater than lower quartile incomes, making affordability a real issue. Although this is not significantly higher than ten years ago (6.62[13]), the deposit required by lenders to access a mortgage is now much greater making it more difficult for first time buyers to enter the housing market and fuelling the growth in Buy to Let .



Households unable to access home ownership may remain living at home or live in the PRS, the so called 'generation rent'. High demand has resulted in PRS rents rising and the previous coalition government, concerned about a rising Housing Benefit bill, reformed the Local Housing Allowance (LHA – Housing Benefit for private tenants). This restricts rents for those who receive LHA to a level within the bottom 30% of the rental market. Research into the PRS in 2015 revealed that the LHA is not keeping pace with PRS rents. We are now finding it increasingly challenging to persuade private landlords to let to those who need to access HB to afford housing. The WoE region has had the highest PRS rent increases after London[14]. During May 2015 we reviewed HomeTrack data for lower quartile rents (the bottom 25%) in the PRS in both Portishead and Weston-super-Mare (Weston) and compared them with the respective Broad Market Rental Area (BMRA)[15] figures (the bottom 30%). With the exception of one bedroomed homes in Weston, all average rents were higher than the BMRA. This highlights that the PRS is becoming unaffordable for those on HB unless they have other income to 'top up' their rent. This in turn has placed pressure on our homelessness service where it is becoming increasingly difficult to help people threatened with homelessness to access homes in the PRS.

Housing conditions

The 2012 Private Sector Housing Condition Survey highlighted that significant improvement has been made in the condition of private housing since the last survey in 2005:

- The percentage of non-decent homes has reduced from 37.7% to 29.5%
- The number of vulnerable households living in decent homes has increased from 58.3% to 68.6%

12 National Housing Federation (NHF) Home Truths

13 Both lower quartile house prices to lower quartile income figures from DCLG Table 276

14 NHF Home Truths

15 The BRMA is the limit for the amount of rent the Local Housing Allowance will cover; it is higher for the Bristol area (which includes Portishead) than the Weston area

Despite this welcome improvement, there are still areas of concern, particularly, the number of older owner occupiers living in poor housing, relatively high levels of fuel poverty and the poor condition of the private rented sector, especially in Weston. Five wards in the district have levels of non-decency of 32% or above. Three are in Weston and these wards also have the highest concentration of fuel poverty.

Housing need and demand

We have a responsibility to assess local housing needs and to develop partnerships and strategies to meet those needs. The main evidence bases we use are a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), our HomeChoice register, specific surveys, e.g. rural housing, and information from partner agencies. The June 2015 SHMA for the wider Bristol Housing Market Area (i.e. the NSC, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire council areas) identified that there was a need for 85,000 new dwellings in the period 2016–36. This figure will be tested through the development of the WoE region's Joint Spatial Plan (page 13). The SHMA indicated that the total affordable housing need for the same period is 29,000 homes across the Bristol Housing Market Area

The HomeChoice register records the number of eligible people needing affordable housing. In the last 12 months[16] the number of new applicant households applying to join the register with at least one priority housing need[17] was 928, which compares to an average 444 lettings per year.[18]

Older and disabled people

The district is home to an above average proportion of older residents, with the 65–84 age group estimated to increase by 41% by 2031 to 55,000 residents and the 85+ group to double to 14,000[19]. This growing older population presents significant challenges in terms of ensuring access to appropriate housing choices. We recognise that the vast majority of older people wish to live as independently as possible in homes of their own rather than moving to residential care. For some, this means a move to more specialist accommodation in later life – for example sheltered or extra care housing – however, the majority of older people continue to live in general needs housing, partly due to the limited supply of accommodation where care and support is available. In addition, some of the sheltered housing provided in the district is no longer suitable for meeting today's needs and suffers from low demand. See chapter 6 for more on this.

16 Sept 2014 to Sept 2015

17 Under section 167(2) of the Housing Act 1996

18 Average for the three years 2012/13 to 2014/15, in the same period an average 246 lettings per year were to existing affordable housing tenants who transferred

19 ONS 2013

4. Increasing the supply of homes

This strategic aim focuses on achieving the following ambitions:

- Accelerating the delivery of homes in sustainable locations
- Making best use of existing housing stock
- Contributing to the regeneration of our town centres
- Increasing the supply of low cost, decent homes in the private rented sector (PRS) for those in most need

As set out in our Corporate Plan, we want to build and sustain great places to live, that are safe, accessible and flourishing, ensuring housing growth protects our natural heritage and the special character of our towns and villages.

Accelerating delivery of homes in sustainable locations

The West of England Authorities are developing a Joint Spatial Plan which will set out the number and location of new homes to be built across the region over the next 20 years. This will be complemented by a new Core Strategy for North Somerset which will set out in more detail our policies and approach to the development and location of new homes. In Chapter 2 under Regional Partnerships we set out expectations of the JSP. Through our JSP and Core Strategy we will aim to accelerate the delivery of new homes in sustainable locations. We recognise that housing on its own without access to employment and appropriate infrastructure such as transport is not sustainable.

An illustration of the 'communities not just homes' approach is Weston Villages, an ongoing strategic development comprising two new communities located to the east of Weston. Together they will form sustainable communities comprising around 6,200 homes alongside supporting infrastructure and employment. Through the provision of local employment opportunities we want to ensure 33% of the workforce live locally[20] and (over 15 years) that 1,000 apprenticeships are created. Ensuring the provision of affordable homes and homes for first time buyers within these new communities is also key to their sustainability.

We will support the achievement of this ambition by improving access to the housing market for first time buyers and supporting the delivery of new affordable housing

Improving access to the housing market for first time buyers and supporting the delivery of new affordable housing

20 Within North Somerset or a 20 mile radius of the site

We work in partnership with registered providers and private developers to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing (AH). NSC currently has a target to deliver a minimum of 150 affordable homes per year and the recent SHMA indicated a need for 4,800 homes over the period 2016–36 (an average of 240 per year). This includes rented housing as well as intermediate housing solutions such as shared ownership products.

Since the last housing strategy, government funding for AH has considerably changed and now relies more heavily on revenue from rents as well as private finance and borrowing. This revised model makes income streams critical and with the welfare reform changes, tenants not in work are considered higher risk and some are finding it harder to find accommodation as a result. The proposed national social rent reductions over the next four years will make it more difficult for registered providers to supply new affordable rented homes. This, alongside the government's announcement that the majority of new affordable homes over the life of this parliament will be Starter Homes, marks a major shift away from affordable rented housing. To complement this approach, we will develop a home ownership strategy for North Somerset, establish new targets for the delivery of affordable housing as part of the development of the Joint Spatial Plan and the North Somerset Core Strategy, and revise our Affordable Housing Delivery Plan.

We also consider the housing needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities. The existing council owned Gypsy and Traveller sites have been extended and improved over the last five years and Elim Housing Association now manage these sites along with their own new 24 pitch site in Weston. A new assessment of the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers is currently being undertaken and this evidence will inform future planning policy for new pitch provision.

For supported housing see chapter 6.

Making best use of existing housing stock

Empty homes

At the end of November 2015 there were 250 homes that had been empty for six months or more in North Somerset; this include properties subject to major alterations/ repairs or in probate. The Housing and Planning Bill includes proposals to simplify the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process and it is hoped this will make it easier to bring these wasted homes back into use. We will update our Empty Properties Delivery Plan and will continue to provide owners with advice, information and support to bring their homes back into use and to take enforcement action where the property is having a significant impact on the community (the worst 'top ten' empties).

Under occupation

Under occupation of social housing is also a concern in North Somerset, particularly as in many cases it results in a shortfall between the rent payable and benefit received. This highlights the importance of implementing measures to deal with under occupation and we will continue to work with registered providers to do this.

Contributing to the regeneration of our town centres

We want all our town centres to be places with an excellent range of homes which support and are supported by employment, retail, education, digital, transport and leisure offers. Our initial emphasis will be on Weston town centre and our ambitions are captured in a housing-led regeneration project called 'Prospectus for Change'. In terms of housing this will deliver:

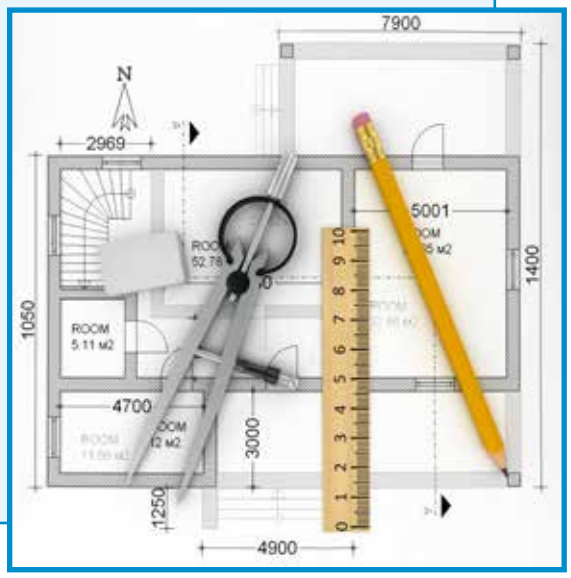
- significant growth and investment (2–3,000 new homes in and around the town centre plus new student accommodation)
- investment in diversifying the housing offer in the town centre
- bringing empty commercial and residential space back into use

Increasing supply of homes in the PRS

The private rented sector (PRS) continues to rise and in 2011 was 16.2% of all the homes in North Somerset. As less people can afford to buy their own home or access social housing, this tenure will continue to play an important role in the supply of housing, but many people on a low income are finding it harder to access this sector. We will review the opportunities to increase the supply of lower cost homes for those in most need, including through the possible development of a private sector leasing scheme, joint work with other services and the provision of incentives. See chapter 6 for more on this.

'What We Will Do' – Summary:

- Adopt and implement a Home Ownership Strategy
- Work with planning, registered providers and regional colleagues to establish and deliver new targets for affordable housing; maximise HCA and other investment
- Ensure quality housing is a major part of the town centre regeneration programme
- At any one time, prioritise the top ten empty properties[21] in the district for action; update our Empty Properties Delivery Plan
- Work with registered providers to reduce under occupation
- Review the potential of schemes to access more good quality PRS accommodation for those in most need



21 Top ten as defined by: the length of time a property has remained empty, its condition, its social impact on the neighbourhood, the number of complaints received and any action we may have taken against the owner previously

5. Improving homes

This strategic aim focuses on the following ambitions:

- Improving conditions in the private housing sector through assistance and loans
- Regulating housing conditions in the PRS e.g. self-regulation, enforcement
- Providing support to maintain independent living
- Improving home energy efficiency

Improving housing conditions in the private housing sector through assistance and loans

The private sector accounts for the majority (91%) of residential accommodation in North Somerset and we act to ensure that these homes are as healthy and safe as possible. As set out in chapter 3, the Private Sector Housing Conditions Survey highlighted that whilst there has been considerable improvement in the condition of private housing since 2005 there are still areas of concern – the high numbers of older people living in poor housing and the poor condition of many homes in the private rented sector. These poor conditions can impact on the health and wellbeing of the occupiers and it is therefore important that the service helps owners improve their homes.

By improving private sector housing conditions we make an important contribution to reducing levels of health inequality in the district. We work closely with colleagues in public health and other health services to achieve this. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment[22] sets out the joint partnership assessment of health and wellbeing in North Somerset, including a major survey in 2014. We also work with a range of other partners including private landlords, West of England (WoE) Care and Repair, registered providers, the voluntary sector and individual homeowners.

Property repairs are primarily the responsibility of the homeowner. However some homeowners are unable to access the resources they need to maintain their home in a healthy and safe condition, and some vulnerable people may also need help in arranging repairs to their homes.

22 Link to web site: http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/community/partnerships/Pages/Joint-strategic-needs-assessment.aspx

The main service we provide for these homeowners is to offer low cost loans through our partner Wessex Resolutions[23], to enable essential property repairs and improvements to be undertaken. We also commission a Home Improvement Agency Service through WoE Care and Repair that provides advice and support for older and disabled people in undertaking essential repairs to their homes. We will also develop and deliver targeted approaches to improve housing conditions in the owner occupied sector to ensure we are reaching those people in most need.

Park homes or mobile homes

Park homes generally offer poor thermal insulation standards and are in most cases occupied by elderly, vulnerable residents on a low income, so fuel poverty can be a real issue. Our current Private Sector Housing Delivery Plan identified that there was a need to tackle this. As a result, we have commenced a project to evaluate the scale of the problems faced by occupiers and to develop a strategy to tackle them. There is also an issue with standards in park homes which are being occupied permanently when they are only intended to be used seasonally.

Our private sector team is continuing to take a proactive approach to raising standards of condition and management (of park homes and sites generally) and tackling fuel poverty in these homes. See next section for regulation of sites issues.

Regulating housing conditions in the PRS and on mobile home sites

The private rented sector (PRS) in the NSC area grew by 79% in the years between the 2001 and 2011 Census. The sector was 16.8% of all North Somerset's housing stock in 2011 and is anticipated to grow to 22% by 2025. It provides homes for a variety of people at different stages in their housing careers, including aspiring first time buyers, people who enjoy the flexibility of short tenancies, those who cannot access social housing and those who we have helped into the sector so as to prevent them from becoming homeless. The growth in the PRS presents a number of challenges relating to housing quality, management and the insecure nature of tenancies.

The housing service plays a key role in regulating the quality of the PRS. Our approach is to empower landlords to 'help themselves' with encouragement to: e.g. join a professional landlord association, or be part of the district's Private Sector Housing Forum. Our intention is to support good landlords and encourage professionalism in the sector, thus allowing the housing service to focus our limited resources and use of enforcement powers on those landlords who provide poor quality, unsafe housing which is detrimental to tenants' health.

The Housing and Planning Bill proposes additional powers for councils to help tackle the small number of landlords who adopt poor practice. We will take the opportunity presented by any additional powers to help us achieve our aims. A new banning order and a national database of banned landlords is proposed which would make it much harder for such landlords shift their operations to another locality. It is also proposed that there will be powers to check landlords have placed tenants' deposits in third party schemes and issue fines instead of pursuing prosecutions. For bona fide landlords the Bill proposes being able to obtain possession of a property without a court order in prescribed circumstances such as a tenancy abandonment.

23 Full name: Wessex Resolutions Community Interest Company

We will continue to use our enforcement powers to ensure substandard homes comply with statutory requirements. We will undertake a review of the need for additional discretionary licensing schemes to help in the regulation of privately rented homes and to contribute to the regeneration of Weston town centre. We will also place a stronger focus on self-regulation by landlords of standards in their homes, including by implementing the WoE Rental Standard.

We fulfil our statutory duty for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) through licensing and multi-agency work, to tackle anti-social behaviour and crime arising from multi-occupied properties. Our in-house survey has indicated 49% of those living in HMOs have concerns over drug or alcohol abuse by other residents.

Along with our duty to licence certain large HMOs, we currently have a discretionary HMO licensing area in a part of Weston which previously received the highest number of complaints about poor housing and had a high concentration of poor quality HMOs. The licensing area came into force in 2014 and lasts for five years, and its progress is reviewed at regular interval to ensure we achieve the purposes of the scheme.

The council is responsible for licensing all residential mobile home sites. We will continue to regularly review standards on sites and ensure compliance with licensing conditions. We will work with planning services to target unregulated sites.

Providing support to maintain independent living

We work to assist older, disabled and otherwise vulnerable homeowners to remain living in their own homes, for as long as they wish to. To achieve this we help ensure that homes are accessible, safe and warm as set out above. In addition we also work with and support WoE Care and Repair and partners such as local hospitals to facilitate the safe discharge of patients from hospital and provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs).

There is an increasing demand for DFGs at a time when resources are constrained and the older population is growing. DFGs are grants for adaptations to enable disabled people to obtain access to their home and use the facilities. Grants are mandatory and must be approved for eligible applicants. We will improve the efficiency of the process through the development of contracting for works and the expansion of our in-house agency. We will continue to transform the delivery of adaptations for disabled people by improving service quality and value for money. Working alongside social care services and the Home Improvement Agency service provider, we will introduce new ways of working, including maximising the benefits arising from our equipment demonstration centre.

Improving home energy efficiency

Fuel poverty is defined as "a household living on a lower income in a home which cannot be kept warm at reasonable cost". Our stock condition survey revealed 14% of NSC's households experience fuel poverty (previous national definition). Fuel poverty can have a detrimental effect on a person's health and wellbeing.

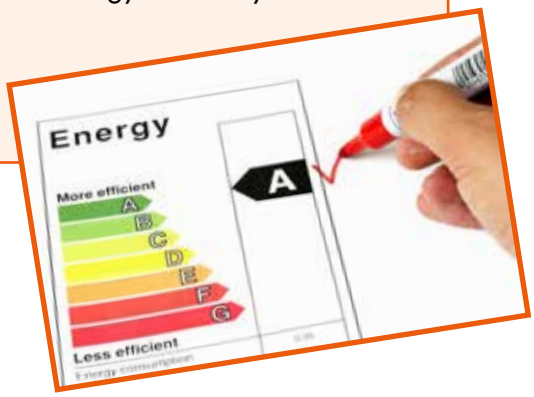
To reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency, we work in partnership with agencies across health, environment and community safety. We maximise external income from utility companies and from government schemes, and will maximise the opportunities to improve homes from any new schemes introduced following the recent government announcement to end the Green Deal. We will continue to target those in greatest need and those homes with the poorest energy efficiency ratings. In response to public health guidance issued by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) on tackling cold homes, we are preparing a new strategy focusing on improving health outcomes. It will be illegal to let private rented properties with energy efficiency certificates rated F and G (the lowest ratings) after 2018, so we are getting that message out to landlords and will work with them to improve ratings.

Energy efficiency campaigns for vulnerable people are regularly run in North Somerset Life. There are also regular electric blanket checking events and a scheme by which public service staff visiting the homes of vulnerable clients 'check and connect'. That means checking for hazards such as inadequate heating or the risk of falls and connecting the clients to the right services to assist them.

Everything in this chapter will be covered by and expanded on in a new Private Sector Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan, which will be developed during 2016.

'What We Will Do' – Summary:

- Complete the review of the Strategic Private Sector Housing Delivery Plan
- Provide advice, information and low cost loans for owner occupiers, targeted on those in most need
- Ensure the health and safety of residents living on mobile home sites through the delivery of licensing schemes
- Improve self-regulation of standards by landlords in PRS housing, including by implementing the WoE Rental Standard
- Improve PRS housing through the use of enforcement powers, including licensing schemes, targeted on the poorest housing conditions and management, and to support the regeneration of Weston town centre
- Transform the delivery of adaptations for disabled people, improving service quality and value for money by working with social care services and the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service provider
- Evaluate emerging opportunities to improve home energy efficiency and promote improvements across all tenures
- Eliminate the worst energy performing properties from the PRS



6. Providing housing solutions

This strategic aim focuses on achieving the following ambitions:

- Improving housing options for vulnerable households and people with support needs
- Working in partnership to tackle and prevent homelessness
- Ensuring the provision of adequate accommodation for homeless people
- Ensuring that the allocation of social housing meets needs in the best way
- Improving training and employment opportunities linked to the development of housing

Improving housing options for vulnerable households and people with support needs

We recognise three categories of vulnerable people defined by the Department for Communities and Local Government: people seeking to maintain independence with support; people requiring support with care; and people who are socially excluded. Whilst these categories encompass a number of different social groups, we currently prioritise meeting the needs of older people, care leavers and young homeless people, people with learning disabilities and people with enduring mental health needs.

Empowering vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes is a central feature of government policies relating to housing, health and social care and this is reflected in our priorities too. To do this, we work closely with North Somerset's Supporting People team and adult and children's social care teams. The council's Third Sector Commissioning Strategy includes Supporting People funded services. Across many of the vulnerable groups outlined here, we have a challenge with being able to move on service users from more generic accommodation such as hostels and 'Bed and Breakfast' to more suitable accommodation with support where needed.

We will continue to research and develop the evidence base for supported housing and work in partnership (including with commissioning bodies) to deliver additional/remodelled supported housing schemes to meet identified needs. Developing new solutions for these vulnerable groups will also consider the needs of, and how to support carers.

Supporting people with learning disabilities

Approximately 80 people with learning disabilities have been identified who will require accommodation over the next 10 years. Most of these individuals either live in residential care or with family, however a small number already live independently, but will require different accommodation in order to meet their needs. From 2009 until the end of 2015, 154 individuals have been helped to move into independent accommodation, whereas in 2009 only 37 individuals were living independently. This transformation to independent living has been achieved by the Community Team for People with Learning Disabilities and housing teams working together with external partners to plan ahead to meet future needs and enable the delivery of a range of tailored independent living solutions.

Supporting people with mental health needs

The delivery of tailored independent living solutions to people with learning disabilities is now being extended to those with enduring mental health needs. The work is in its early stages, but already approximately 30 people have been identified who are living in residential care or supported lodgings who may benefit from independent living. This is likely to rise as further evidence comes forward. Alliance Homes are developing a block of flats in Weston specifically for use by people with mental health needs and when this comes on stream it will house around seven of those already identified. The flats will be based on a 'core and cluster' model successfully used for people with learning disabilities in the district and will include 24 hour support.

Supporting older and disabled people

The district is home to an above average proportion of older residents (ref: chapter 3). The recently completed Strategic Housing Market Assessment indicates that an additional 4,600 homes specifically for older people with varying levels of support ranging from leasehold schemes for the elderly through to housing for people suffering from dementia will be required over the period 2016–36. In light of this, it will be important that we enable a wider range of housing solutions to allow older people to live independently for as long as they wish. We will work with partners and commissioners to plan and develop new supported housing schemes and to remodel existing schemes to ensure we are best placed to meet future needs.

Whilst we provide a range of home adaptations for disabled people through Disabled Facilities Grants, we recognise there is a need for supported housing solutions, for example for people who are suffering from progressive and limiting conditions. We will also work with providers and commissioners to better understand this need and bring forward solutions.

Supporting care leavers and young homeless people

The council has a particular responsibility for ensuring care leavers and young people have suitable housing and support. Recognising this wider duty, our housing advice service has specialist officers who work with Children and Young People's Services teams to commission tailored solutions to the housing needs of these young people. The need for emergency and supported housing solutions and move-on accommodation is increasing and we will work with partners to plan and bring forward new solutions to better meet needs.

Working in partnership to tackle and prevent homelessness (includes rough sleeping and begging)

Homelessness prevention is defined as 'activities that enable a household to remain in their current home where appropriate, or that provide options to enable a planned and timely move to help sustain independent living'. North Somerset has a strong record in tackling and preventing homelessness, enabling people where possible, to remain in their existing homes using a variety of methods including negotiation with private landlords, mortgage lenders or families, and liaison with colleagues assessing Housing Benefit. In 2014–15 we prevented homelessness in just over 82% of cases

The council's housing advice service is constantly striving for improvement and will be working to achieve the government's 'Standard' for homelessness prevention and housing advice. As part of this process the service has recently taken part in a peer review and scored 77% which was the highest in the region.

The table below details the number of households assisted by the service over the past five years. The number of households prevented from becoming homeless and those where a full homelessness duty has been accepted (figures in brackets) has increased over the past five years.

Housing advice continues to be a priority to enable clients to resolve their own housing issues at an early stage.

Year	Households provided with housing advice	Household where homelessness prevented	Homelessness applications received (accepted)	Total
2010/11	1,764	473	187 (79)	2,424
2011/12	1,507	573	268 (82)	2,348
2012/13	2,477	597	219 (99)	3,293
2013/14	2,300	664	264 (83)	3,228
2014/15	1,600	647	268 (104)	2,515

Finding solutions

Increasingly people who present as homeless have other contributing issues, for example addiction and/or anti-social behaviour problems. Our housing advice service works closely with other agencies such as mental health services, advocacy services and supported housing providers[24] to make sure these households get the support they need to make their housing 'sustainable'. The service also has a dedicated floating support officer who can help service users remain in their own home, but can also help with resettlement if they have no choice but to move.

We recognise that some groups of people are more likely to be affected by homelessness than others and the need for multi-agency work to successfully tackle and prevent homelessness. In response to this the housing advice service has a range of jointly funded specialist officers to work with groups such as 16/17 year olds, care leavers and people with learning disabilities. A housing benefit officer is embedded within the service to deal with complex enquiries, which also acts as an incentive for new landlords to work with the service in accommodating those we have a duty to house.

We also provide a lead officer for the 'Home from Hospital' service that works with the community outreach practitioner and the hospital discharge team at Weston Hospital to ensure people being discharged from hospital have somewhere suitable to live and have access to appropriate healthcare and support. A specialist nurse works specifically with homeless clients.

We have transformed the way housing advice services are accessed with first contact through the customer service Gateway, which is run in partnership with the council's service delivery partners Liberata and Agilisys. Customers are assisted with basic housing advice enquiries, but can be referred on to the housing advice service if the query is more complex or if homelessness prevention or a homelessness application is necessary.

To ensure rough sleeping in the district stays at a low level, North Somerset is an active partner in the Avon and Somerset Rough Sleeper Steering Group which is a collaboration of seven local authorities. The Group was awarded approximately £450,000 as part of the government's 'No Second Night Out' initiative to improve services available to rough sleepers.

24 Many funded by our Supporting People programme (page 25)

Bidding for external/extra resources for our district around homelessness has been particularly successful. North Somerset, Bristol and Bath and North East Somerset also successfully bid for £240,000 to provide further assistance to single homeless clients and now provides intensive outreach services across the region to complement the work already carried out by our local outreach worker. A particular challenge has been the increase in begging in North Somerset and whilst our research has shown that very few of the people who are begging are homeless, the public perception is often different. We are working with partners to support genuine rough sleepers and address the issues associated with begging. In the Autumn Statement of 2015 the government have indicated there may be more funding for homelessness and domestic violence projects. We will monitor this closely and make bids when the opportunity arises.

Our Homelessness Strategy will be updated in 2016 and will review the range of services and interventions we use and set detailed actions to enable us to continue to prevent and tackle homelessness.

Ensuring the provision of adequate accommodation for homeless people

We rely on the private rented sector as the main source of accommodation for those we have a duty to house, however, the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy (in the private rented sector) is the main reason households present as homeless. We work closely with and incentivise private landlords and letting agents to secure accommodation for those we have a duty to house, where we are unable to prevent homelessness from occurring. Dedicated staff work with both landlords and tenants to find suitable accommodation at an affordable rent. In light of the welfare reform changes and the high demand for rented accommodation in North Somerset, a key challenge is finding accommodation that households can afford and landlords willing to accept households in receipt of Housing Benefit.

To help address this we provide access to a deposit or rent in advance for prospective tenants, but there is often a shortfall between the amount PRS landlords charge and the level of Housing Benefit (HB) available for the size of property. We are currently reviewing our incentives to see what else we can do to persuade more PRS landlords to work with us. Failure to access the PRS can have a knock-on effect by increasing the number of households having to be placed in temporary accommodation.

To enable us to meet the challenge associated with providing sufficient housing for homeless people we will review temporary and emergency accommodation needs and will investigate a range of options to increase supply, as set out in chapter 4

Ensuring the allocation of social housing meets needs in the best way

As a housing option, the HomeChoice register enables people seeking housing association housing to bid for properties of their choosing and for which they are eligible. This system is transparent and allows tenants and potential tenants to make decisions over the locations and properties they would like to live in. At 1 December September 2015 there were 3,310 households on the register.

Types of households on register

Age of head of household	Number on HomeChoice	Percentage
Under 25	460	13.9%
25–59	2,250	68.0%
60 and over	600	18.1%
Total	**3,310**	**100%**

Register by Priority Band

Age of head of household	Number on HomeChoice	Percentage
Band A	99	3.0%
Band B	421	12.7%
Band C	2,176	65.7%
Band D	614	18.5%
Total	**3,310**	**100%**

We will regularly review our HomeChoice policy to ensure it is effective in providing choice and meeting local needs, and that it is easily accessible to those that need it. We will also introduce measures to ensure the delivery of more tailored housing solutions for people who have very high levels of housing need, some of whom are experiencing long delays in accessing housing because properties with a suitable level of adaptations are not often available.

Improving training and employment opportunities linked to the development of housing

The housing on offer in a community can contribute to the economic success of that community. Achieving the right housing, including affordable housing, is vital in attracting and retaining a skills base that will encourage inward investment. Research highlights the long-term health problems and low educational attainment that are associated with poor quality housing increase the likelihood of a person being unemployed or working in a low-paid job.[25]

25 Shelter (2006) Chance of a lifetime: the impact of bad housing on children's lives

Through partnerships such as Team North Somerset[26], major employers and housing associations are helping vulnerable people (especially young people) into employment/ apprenticeships/training. There is also an opportunity to provide training and employment as part of the development of new housing and many housing associations provide work experience, training and apprenticeships during the construction of new homes.

There is a lack of work experience and training opportunities within the district for those without qualifications and there is a particular problem of youth unemployment. NSC already offers an award winning and nationally recognized apprenticeship scheme in partnership with Weston College and Agilisys[27]. NSC and partners are now looking at establishing a Public Services Academy. The idea is to increase the number and diversity of apprenticeship opportunities in North Somerset by public services (and potentially private sector) employers working together on a joint apprenticeship scheme.

We will also look at the potential to improve opportunities for employment and training in affordable housing developments. With Knightstone HA and the Community Self-Build Agency, the council is currently developing a 'Train and Build' scheme for ex-service personnel where they will build their own homes, learning construction and related skills as part of the process in partnership with training providers. On completion of this project we will evaluate it to see if the model can be used for other groups including young people.

'What We Will Do' – Summary:

- Research and develop the evidence base for supported housing
- Work in partnership to deliver additional/remodelled supported housing schemes to meet identified needs
- Review temporary and emergency accommodation needs
- Review, develop and implement a new Homelessness Strategy
- Undertake a review of the HomeChoice policy
- Develop further train and build schemes for young/unemployed people to provide training and employment opportunities

26 A partnership of 11 public, private and voluntary/community organisations

27 The agent for NSC's admin and entry level functions

7. Performance, monitoring and resources

Performance and monitoring

It is important for us to manage and monitor the progress we make against this housing strategy. This will be overseen by the multi-agency Strategic Housing and Planning Group. We will also monitor the delivery plans that will sit under the strategy e.g. Homelessness Strategy. We want to ensure their success in delivery, as well as to make certain their continued relevance amongst potential changes in national, regional or local policy.

As these delivery plans will be developed in line with this strategy, ensuring successful delivery on their actions will enable us to make real progress on delivering the vision, aims and ambitions set out in the strategy as well as corporate outcomes.

Member involvement

The Executive Member with the portfolio for housing is actively engaged in service development and monitoring, and will be provided with regular reports on strategy and related delivery plan progress, as will the People and Communities management team. Policy and Scrutiny Panels will be offered updates on the progress.

Customer feedback

We will encourage feedback from residents and partners on the housing strategy, to gain ideas and thoughts on how to further progress against our actions. Residents will be able to keep up to date on housing achievements and issues through the housing pages of the council's website and through North Somerset Life magazine.

Learning from experience and good practice

We continuously learn from our successes and failures and adapt our services and processes as a result of those experiences. We also learn and improve through sharing information and ideas with our partners, both locally and regionally.

Value for money

Local authorities are responsible for public funds and need to demonstrate value for money. As a Strategic Housing Service we strive for continual improvement and we will ensure by review that the actions undertaken to achieve the aims of the housing strategy are cost efficient and effective.

Resources

There are considerable pressures on the amount of resources that are available to deliver the ambitions of this strategy, and resources are likely to be further reduced in the future. Our own capital and revenue budgets are limited as the council has to achieve considerable savings and our proposals are set out in our Medium Term Financial Plan.

We will seek innovative solutions to increase resources. This will include working closely with partners to look for opportunities to pool resources and bid for funding. For each of our ambitions we will seek to maximise the resources available. Alongside other council services and our partner service providers (Liberata, Agilisys) we will improve service efficiency and service delivery through the implementation of digital solutions – customer self-service, mobile working and 'digital office'.

For questions regarding the Housing Strategy contact the Housing Development and Strategy Team

Email:	**housing.solutions@n-somerset.gov.uk**
Phone:	**01934 427 487**
Write to:	Housing Development and Strategy, Town Hall, Walliscote Grove Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UJ

Appendix 1 **Action Plan for Housing Strategy 2016–21**

Ref.	Ambitions	Actions and performance measures	Target Date	Lead (and partners)
Strategic Aim: Increasing the supply of homes				
4.1	**Accelerating the delivery of homes in sustainable locations**	No. of homes built	To 2026	Development Management Team/Housing Development and Strategy Team
4.1a	Improving access to the housing market for first time buyers; enable the development of new homes; promote low cost home ownership products and work with partners to develop new options to access this tenure	Home Ownership Strategy adopted and implemented No. of Shared Ownership and new Starter Homes built and occupied No. of first time buyers supported by the council to access home ownership	Mar 2016	Housing Development and Strategy Team[4] Help to Buy South / developers
4.1b	Supporting the delivery of new affordable homes; including by contributing to the development and implementation of the North Somerset Core Strategy[1] and West of England (WoE) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Joint Spatial Plan (JSP)[2]	Affordable Housing (AH) Supplementary Planning Document (commence updating[3]) Complete Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment AH and Gypsy and Traveller pitch targets established AH Delivery Plan updated and delivered in partnership with RPs New affordable homes delivered Number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches delivered	Apr 2016 Apr 2016 Apr 2016 Dec 2016	Housing Development and Strategy Team / Development Management Team Registered Housing Providers (RPs)[5] / Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) / developers

1 Summer 2016 with revised housing completion figures
2 Will be finalise early 2018
3 Dependent on government consultation, see AH definition page 46
4 Indicated lead team, support from other housing teams and other parts of the council will be accessed as necessary
5 Also known as housing associations or social landlords

Ref.	Ambitions	Actions and performance measures	Target Date	Lead (and partners)
4.2	**Making best use of existing housing stock**			
4.2a	Reduce the number of long term empty homes by encouraging and supporting owners to bring them back into use including through the use of enforcement in high risk/impact cases	Survey of long term empty homes completed Empty Properties Delivery Plan updated Support RPs to address difficulties with letting sheltered housing	Feb 2016 Jun 2016 2016–21	Housing Development and Strategy Team /Private Sector Housing Team RPs
4.2b	Reduce under occupation of housing through partnership working	Support RPs to develop initiatives to reduce under occupation in social housing and share best practice Provide information and support to enable owner occupiers who are under occupying to downsize	2016–21 2016–21	HomeChoice and Housing Advice Team RPs/West of England (WoE) Care and Repair
4.3	**Contributing to the regeneration of our town centres**	Support the regeneration of Weston-super-Mare Town Centre by contributing to the delivery of new homes on key sites (No.) No. of new homes to be built – 900	2016–21	Housing Development and Strategy Team / Development Management Team Town centre stakeholders / developers
4.4	**Increasing the supply of low cost, decent homes in the private rented sector (PRS)** for those in most need; and to mitigate the impact of the Hinkley C development	Review strategic opportunities to increase supply including through the development of a social lettings agency, joint work with the Impact Team and the provision of incentives and implement delivery plan No. of households housed in the private rented sector by the housing service	2016–21	HomeChoice and Housing Advice Team / Private Sector Housing Team Private landlords

Ref.	Ambitions	Actions and performance measures	Target Date	Lead (and partners)
Strategic Aim: Improving homes				
5.1	**Improving housing conditions in the private housing sector through assistance and loans;** inc. providing advice, information and low cost loans for owner occupiers, targeted on those in most need	Develop and deliver targeted approaches to improving housing conditions in the owner occupied sector Complete review of the strategic Private Sector Housing Delivery Plan No. of homes occupied by vulnerable people improved No. of older people enabled to stay put	2016–21 Sep 2016	Private Sector Housing Team WoE Care and Repair/Wessex Resolutions/ private landlords / tenants
5.2	**Regulating housing conditions in the private rented sector (PRS); and on mobile home sites**			Private Sector Housing Team
5.2a	Improving self-regulation of standards by landlords in PRS housing, including by implementing the WoE Rental Standard	Launch the WoE Rental Standard Review NSC housing enforcement policy in the light of the WoE Rental Standard No. of Landlords accredited	Jan 2016 Dec 2016	Private landlords
5.2b	Improving PRS housing conditions through the use of enforcement powers, including licensing schemes, targeted on the poorest housing	Undertake a review of the need for additional discretionary licensing schemes Continue to deliver existing licensing schemes and implement new schemes depending on the outcome of the review Proactively target the poorest PRS housing outside of licensing schemes Complete review of the strategic Private Sector Housing Delivery Plan No. of Houses in Multiple Occupation improved No. of privately rented homes improved	Annual 2016–21 2016–21 Sep 2016	 Private Sector Housing Team Private Sector Housing Team

Ref.	Ambitions	Actions and performance measures	Target Date	Lead (and partners)
5.2c	Ensuring the health and safety of residents living on mobile homes sites through the delivery of licensing schemes	Deliver existing annual licensing scheme for mobile homes Work with Planning Services to target unregulated sites Site improvements completed within agreed timescales	2016–21 2016–17	Park home residents and site owners
5.3	**Providing support to maintain independent living**	Transform the delivery of adaptations for disabled people, improve service quality and value for money (VFM) by working with social care services and the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service provider Introduce NSC agency scheme for bathroom adaptations	Dec 2016 2016–17	Private Sector Housing Team WoE Care and Repair / Wessex Resolutions
5.4	**Improving home energy efficiency;** and implement the Climate Local commitments by targeting improvement measures	Evaluate emerging opportunities to improve energy efficiency and promote improvements across all tenures Implement the NICE[6] guidance in respect of cold homes, subject to resources, and contribute to the delivery of multi-agency Winter Warmth campaigns. Affordable Warmth Plan produced Target and eliminate the worst energy performing properties from the PRS Private rented sector homes (energy rated F and G) improved No. of energy efficiency improvements completed HECA[7] Further update report published Deliver Climate Local targets	2016–21 2016–17 2016–21 2016–18	Private Sector Housing Team Adult Support and Safeguarding, Clinical Commissioning Group, North Somerset Community Partnership

Ref.	Ambitions	Actions and performance measures	Target Date	Lead (and partners)
Strategic Aim: Providing housing solutions				
6.1	**Improving housing options for vulnerable households and people with support needs**	Research and develop the evidence base for supported housing, including for people with learning disabilities, people with mental health needs, older people, disabled people and young people Work in partnership to deliver additional/remodelled supported housing schemes to meet identified needs All new affordable housing to Lifetime Homes standard, 8% to mobility standard	2016–21 2016–21	Housing Development and Strategy Team[8]/ HomeChoice and Housing Advice Team/ Private Sector Housing Team People and Communities Directorate/ RPs/Support Providers
6.2	**Working in partnership to tackle and prevent homelessness**	Review, develop and implement a new Homelessness Strategy Implement Rough Sleeping initiatives and develop interventions to prevent future rough Sleeping Achieve government ('Gold') standard for homelessness prevention % of homeless households in priority need where homeless is prevented % of homeless or potentially homeless young people prevented from becoming looked after	April 2017 2016–21 Dec 2018	
6.3	**Ensuring the provision of adequate accommodation for homeless people**	Review of temporary and emergency accommodation needs Delivery plans established with providers and commissioners including Supporting People (SP) Reduce no. of households placed in temporary accommodation (TA) (by % to be determined)	Apr 2017 Ongoing Apr 2017	HomeChoice and Housing Advice Team

6 National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

7 Home Energy Conservation Act

Ref.	Ambitions	Actions and performance measures	Target Date	Lead (and partners)
6.4	**Ensuring that the allocation of social housing meets needs in the best way**	Undertake a review of the HomeChoice policy	2016–17	HomeChoice and Housing Advice Team
6.5	**Improving training and employment opportunities linked to the development of housing**	Develop further train and build schemes for young/ unemployed people to provide training and employment opportunities	2016–21	Housing Development and Strategy Team / Development Management Team Team North Somerset/ RPs/Weston College/ Employers

Appendix 2
Key Achievements 2010–15

Some of our key achievements since our last Housing Strategy include:

Private rented sector

- Section 106 agreement to mitigate housing impact of Hinkley C established in conjunction with Sedgemoor and West Somerset District Councils.
- 1,200 potentially homeless households assisted to move into the PRS (2010–2015)
- Localpad website commissioned - free website to enable landlords to advertise homes
- Private sector leasing scheme established – 46 homes leased by partner Registered Provider

Homelessness

- Successful bid for single homelessness and rough sleeper outreach funding with partner LAs
- Multi agency work developed for the following groups of homeless service users:
    - Victims of domestic violence
    - People with mental health needs
    - 16/17 year olds
- 87.6% of all homelessness prevented
- 77% score for peer review - highest in the peer group for the region

Housing quality

- Selective HMO licensing area declared in central Weston
- Park Homes licensing introduced (90% occupied by older people), using Mobile Homes Act powers
- Agency scheme established to improve how we deliver aids and adaptations
- Accreditation for landlords being re-launched – WoE Rental Standard
- Range of projects delivered to help older people stay safe and warm during winter
- £2.7m energy efficiency funding bid for and won in partnership with WoE partners

Demand/Supply

- Exceeded affordable housing target
- New Supplementary Planning Document developed for affordable housing
- Homes West Partnership established – partnership with registered providers to deliver new affordable housing

Vulnerable groups

- New Extra Care scheme for older people being developed at Ebdon Court in partnership with Alliance Homes
- Proactive approach developed to securing independent living options for people with learning disabilities – approximately 150 people helped to move into independent accommodation (2009–2015)
- 26 new pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households developed in partnership with Elim Housing, and two council owned sites refurbished

Employment

- Train and build scheme developed involving 10 ex-service personnel
- Local labour – joint working with Registered Providers to enable the employment of local people and provision of training through the building of new homes

Customer service

- High levels of customer service achieved (92.9% satisfaction 2014–15)
- New customer gateways established at the Town Hall and Castlewood in partnership with the Police

Appendix 3
Consultation

Consultation began with a launch event in January 2015 attended by over 50 stakeholders from a range of organisations. Information gleaned from this event formed the basis for developing the key issues and proposals for the new strategy.

52 of the delegates attending took part in a number of workshops to inform the strategy. Of the 52, 42 were from external organisations including housing associations, private landlords, private developers, an energy provider, the Police and the voluntary sector.

The most popular questions discussed at the launch were:

- improving standards in the private rented sector
- better housing outcomes for people with a disability
- better housing options for young people

All these concerns have been reflected in the strategy.

In June 2015 a Proposals and Issues paper informed by the launch was posted on the council's public eConsult consultation web page for six weeks. In October 2015 a consultation draft of the main body of the Housing Strategy was put on eConsult also for six weeks and in both cases a list of stakeholders, all Councillors and NSC managers were informed. Councillors were also consulted through an All Councillor Briefing in December 2015. The stakeholder database includes 107 external housing and related organisations and individuals.

We achieved a range of responses to these two consultation opportunities; there were formal responses from the following:

A number of individual North Somerset residents	Members of North Somerset Council
NSC Corporate Management Team	Colleagues in Children and Young People's Services
Colleagues in Library Services	Colleagues in Public Health
Colleagues in Support and Customer Services	Colleagues in Supporting People
Alliance Homes	Campaign for the Protection of Rural England
Knightstone Housing Association	South Gloucestershire Council

The main issues raised were:

- the need to emphasise affordability issues facing both working and non-working households
- that the current funding is not sufficient to produce the amount of affordable rented housing the district (and region) needs. The HomesWest Partnership is charged with trying to develop new, innovative ways of financing such housing
- need to regenerate the district's town centres and build on brownfield land first
- avoid the use of 'bed and breakfast' type accommodation especially for 16/17 year olds
- the need to consider the balance of housing including intermediate housing, housing for older people, different property types e.g. one bed homes
- a need to be aware of health and physical disability issues when people are seeking housing
- a shortage of supported housing in some areas of need
- the potential impact of the Weston town centre regeneration on accommodation occupied by some vulnerable households
- the need for more training for private landlords and tenants on their responsibilities and rights
- the need to support employment generally and not just narrowly focus on apprenticeships
- the need for the Housing Strategy to be aligned with the agenda of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership

These points have been considered in the development of this housing strategy and are reflected in the ambitions and actions we have identified. In some cases they are more appropriately dealt with in the plans and strategies which support the Housing Strategy (see Appendix 4), e.g. 'training for private landlords and tenants' would also feature in our revised Private Sector Housing Strategy and 'the need to be aware of health and physical disability issues when people are seeking housing' will be reflected in our new Homelessness Strategy (which encompasses housing advice).

Appendix 4
Supporting and Related Strategies and Plans

Key Related Documents

Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2011–15 Φ

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), adopted 2013

Core Strategy, adopted 2012 Φ

Corporate Plan 2015–19 Φ

Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy 2011–15[28]

Empty Properties Delivery Plan 2011–15

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Action Plan, ongoing

Health and Wellbeing Survey 2014 and Health and Wellbeing Strategy Φ

Home Energy Conservation Act Φ report 2015

Homelessness Strategy 2011–16

Joint Learning Disabilities Strategy 2015–20

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (Health) Φ

People and Communities Board Strategy 2013 (including Health and Wellbeing)

Private Sector Housing Delivery Plan 2013–15

Third Sector Commissioning Strategy (including Supporting People) Φ

(Emerging) West of England Joint Spatial Plan 2016–36 Φ

Wider Bristol Housing Market Area, Strategic Housing Market Assessment, adopted 2015 Φ

Φ = fuller explanation of this document in the Glossary at Appendix 5

28 Early intervention means to avoid more serious intervention at a later date e.g. hospital admission

Appendix 5
Glossary

Affordability	The relationship between a household's income and their ability to buy or rent appropriate housing to meet their needs.
Affordable housing (AH)	Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local prices. AH housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative AH provision (definition from NPPF; please note this may change as being consulted on by government 2016).
Affordable Housing Delivery Plan	Sets out our priorities and actions for the development of new affordable housing in the district.
(NSC's) **Affordable Housing Web Page**	Link http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/Housing/affordable_housing/Pages/Affordable-housing.aspx
Affordable Rent	A new rent level for social housing above social rent set at 80% of the local market rent.
Autumn Statement	One of the two statements HM Treasury makes each year to Parliament upon publication of economic forecasts, the other being the annual Budget.
Black and Minority Ethnic	The terminology normally used in the UK to describe people of non-white descent.
Broad Market Rental Area	See Housing Benefit.
Buy to Let	Purchase of a property specifically to let out i.e. that is to rent it out. A buy to let mortgage is a mortgage specifically designed for this purpose.
(NSC) **Capital Programme**	Identifies agreed capital schemes, showing the total cost of schemes and the projected phasing of those schemes over current and future financial years.
(the) Care Act	Act which reformed the law relating to care and support for adults and to support for carers.

Core Strategy	See Local Plan
Corporate Plan	Sets out the council's aims and priorities for the next four years. It provides the long-term vision for the area, and the work of the council.
Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO):	A legal power that allows certain bodies including a council to obtain land or property without the consent of the owner. It may only be used if a proposed use or development is considered one for public betterment or where a home has been empty for a long period of time and the owner has no plans to bring it back into use. A legally prescribed process must be followed which includes compensations for the owner.
Customer Service Gateway	NSC 'front of house' teams that deal with all initial enquiries, passing more complex cases on to more specialist teams as required.
Decent Homes Standard	A technical standard introduced by the government. It underpinned the Decent Homes Programme which aimed to provide a minimum standard of housing conditions for all those housed in social housing. It can and is also used to assess conditions in the private rented sector.
DFG (Disabled Facilities Grant)	A grant from the council to provide specialist adaptations and other facilities to the homes of disabled people.
Discretionary Housing Payment	A limited term, additional sum of money that can be paid to a housing benefit (HB) claimant (by the local council administering HB on behalf of the government) if they require additional help to meet their housing costs. Designed to help those who are major losers from reforms to HB.
eConsult	Web pages on the council website on which all major consultations are posted for comment.
Equality Impact Assessments	A process designed to ensure that a policy, project or scheme does not discriminate against any disadvantaged or vulnerable people.
Executive Members	Elected Councillors that are members of the Executive. The Executive is the main decision making body of the council, responsible for implementing its budgetary and policy framework. Each of the seven members also has individual responsibility for a particular grouping of council services and policies

	e.g. one grouping is: housing, transport, strategic planning and economic development.
Extra care housing	Housing for older and disabled people, where individual care needs are provided for on-site.
The Green Deal	A UK government policy launched by government in 2012 to permit loans for energy saving measures. Scheme no longer operational.
Health and Wellbeing Strategy	In North Somerset this is part of the People and Communities Board Strategy and is informed by a Health and Wellbeing Survey. The Strategy sets out the ambitions and priorities for the Board with the overall vision to improve the **health and wellbeing** of people in North Somerset.
Hinkley Point C	A project to construct a new nuclear power station with two reactors in Somerset, at the site of an existing nuclear power station.
HomeChoice Register	A system for the assessment of housing need and the allocation of social housing, designed to offer more choice and involvement for customers in selecting a new home. It is a more open, transparent and customer based approach. Available social rented housing is let by being openly advertised, allowing customers to 'bid' or 'register an interest' in those homes.
Home Energy Conservation Act	This Act places responsibility on the council to produce HECA reports outlining practical, cost effective measures for achieving energy saving in homes in their area.
Home Improvement Agency	See West of England Care and Repair below.
Homelessness	The 1996 Housing Act states that a person is homeless if there is no accommodation that they are entitled to occupy, or they have accommodation, but it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy this accommodation.
Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)	Established by government as the national housing and regeneration agency for England. Provides funding for affordable housing, brings land back into productive use and aims to raise standards of the physical and social environment. Also regulates Housing Associations.

HomesWest Partnership (HWP)	A partnership of the four West of England councils and housing associations focussed on the delivery of key local priorities for affordable housing, as well as meeting the strategic affordable housing delivery aims of the region.
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	Property in which more than one household shares basic amenities, such as kitchens and bathrooms (e.g. bedsits). Regulations exist to control the repair standards and provision of amenities in these properties.
Housing and Planning Bill 2015	The government has published this Bill setting out its proposals to increase home ownership and levels of house building. General aspects of the Bill are outlined on pages 10 and 11 of this housing strategy and more specialist aspects on pages 19 and 22.
Housing association	A non-profit-making organisation providing housing for rent or shared ownership for those in need. Housing associations are either registered as charities or friendly societies and most are registered with the HCA.
Housing Benefit	An allowance to persons on low income (or none) to meet in whole or part their rent. Housing Benefit for private tenants is determined according to a formula called the Local Housing Allowance and rents allowable in each area are based on geographic areas called Broad Market Rental Areas e.g. one for Weston and its' environs and one for Bristol (which includes Portishead and Clevedon).
Housing Needs	Refers to households lacking their own housing or living in housing which is inadequate or unsuitable, who are unlikely to be able to meet their needs in the housing market without some assistance.
Independent Living	A way of organising care/support and housing to ensure that an individual is able to live in their own home, in a standard tenancy, with support provided from external providers. It allows individuals to have a greater degree of choice in regard to their housing by separating the tenancy from the support, and provides a higher level of independence and flexibility of care. The housing is sourced through standard pathways, including social housing and private rented properties, and the care is usually funded by social care and provided by a range of independent providers.

Joint Spending Review

A review of all central government spending, informs both the Autumn Review (see above) and the Budget.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

Primary Care Trusts (health service commissioners) and local authorities are required (Health Act 2007) to produce an assessment of the health and well-being needs (including the wider determinants of health) of their local community. They then respond with effective commissioning of services to properly meet those needs.

Learning disability (LD)

LD affects the way a person understands information and how they communicate. Around 1.5m people in the UK have one. They can have difficulty understanding new or complex information, learning new skills, coping independently. It is thought that up to 350,000 people in the UK have severe learning disabilities. This figure is increasing.

Local Housing Allowance

See Housing Benefit.

Local Plan

The Local Plan sets out the principles on which every other local development document is built, regarding the development and use of land in a local planning authority's area. The **Core Strategy** is the key compulsory document specified in UK planning law. Link to NSC planning web page: http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/Environment/Planning_policy_and-research/localplanning/Pages/localplanandproposalsmap.aspx

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

A non-departmental body within the Department of Health. It serves both the English and Welsh National Health Service and produces guidelines in four areas: the use of health technologies (e.g. the use of new and existing medicines); clinical practice (appropriate treatment and care of people with specific diseases and conditions); guidance for public sector workers on health promotion and ill-health avoidance; and guidance for social care services and users.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out government's requirements only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It is a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

No Second Night Out	Launched in 2011, a set of good practice aimed at ensuring those who find themselves sleeping rough for the first time need not spend a second night on the streets.
Prospectus for Change	Ambitious plans for the future of Weston-super-Mare town centre. The council wants to build on recent successes and help Weston become a lively university town where more people want to live, learn and spend their leisure time. This means with partners creating outstanding places for quality urban living, business growth and learning, and providing a range of activities for people to enjoy their free time. A more prosperous Weston will have wider benefits for the whole North Somerset area and beyond.
Private sector	Property or finance controlled by private individuals or business and not local authorities, central government agencies, voluntary organisations or housing associations.
Private Sector Housing Condition Survey	A periodic survey on changes in housing conditions in the private sector, e.g. the number of vulnerable households living in non-decent homes. The findings help the council make informed decisions regarding the targeting of resources and to comply with its statutory duties towards this sector.
Private Sector Housing Forum	An independent group open to anyone who has an interest in private sector housing. Council representatives attend and it is an opportunity for people to have their say on services that relate to the sector. The Forum is regularly consulted on key issues affecting private rented housing and provides an excellent opportunity for networking and exchanging views.
Public Services Academy	An academy to increase the number and diversity of apprenticeship opportunities in North Somerset by public services working together on a joint apprenticeship scheme.
Regeneration	Projects that seek to improve neighbourhoods through major enhancements to the physical environment, community development, renovation or construction of housing and public works.
Right to Buy	The right conferred upon certain social housing tenants to purchase the dwelling in which they are living, at a discount, after a minimum period of time.

Shared ownership	Where a person buys part of the value of a house from a housing association and pays rent on the other part, and the housing association keeps part ownership.
Social housing	A general term for social rent, Affordable Rent and shared ownership housing not provided for profit by e.g. local authorities, housing associations, almshouses etc.
Supplementary Planning Document	Planning documents which set out the policy of a district in more detail than the Local Plan around a particular issue e.g. the distribution of high rise buildings, affordable housing.
Supported housing	The term describing housing with support for a particular client group e.g. older people, people with a disability, those suffering from mental illness, recovering from addiction etc.
Supporting People	The system for funding the supported housing (see above) that is provided for people with support needs to go alongside their housing needs.
Sustainable and sustainable development	Where the environmental impact of new building takes into account transport, landscape, wildlife, waste disposal and social issues.
Third Sector Commissioning Strategy	Covers the procedure for grants to and commissioning of services from the Third Sector. The Third Sector is non-governmental and non-profit-making organizations, including charities, voluntary and community groups, cooperatives, etc.
Team North Somerset	A pioneering partnership which supports the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in North Somerset into sustainable employment. Comprises public, private, voluntary and community organisations including the council, Weston College, housing associations, Bristol Airport, Rapide Systems suppliers and Voluntary Action North Somerset.
Train and Build	A project to provide training and skills in construction and enhancing life skills through self-build housing. Specialist training in a trade equips participants with the necessary experience and qualifications to open up employment opportunities for the future as well as having a good quality, affordable home in which to live.

Universal Credit	A welfare benefit launched in the UK in 2013 to replace six means-tested benefits and tax credits: Jobseeker's Allowance, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support.
Welfare Reform and Work Bill	Now an Act since 2016, covering progress towards full employment, the apprenticeships target; reports on the effect of certain support for troubled families; to make provision about life chances, the benefit cap, social security and tax credits, loans for mortgage interest and other liabilities, and social housing rents.
Wessex Resolutions Community Interest Company	A Community Interest Company working in partnership with councils providing loans across 20 local authority areas, supporting vulnerable home-owners to maintain and live in warm, safe, "decent" homes through the home improvement loan scheme.
West of England	The region covered by four councils – Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire
West of England Care and Repair	A home improvement agency, which assists older and disabled homeowners to repair or improved their homes.
West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP)	The Plan will consider through joint working the outputs of the new Wider Bristol SHMA (see below) alongside other evidence and technical studies. The distribution of housing development will be determined through the JSP policy framework, involving, where appropriate, cross boundary agreement. The plan area will be the West of England region (see above) and the Plan period 2016–2036.
West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)	A partnership of business, local authorities and the voluntary sector to support business growth and work to attract new jobs and infrastructure to Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare and the surrounding countryside. http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/
Wider Bristol Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	A study jointly commissioned by the West of England local authorities (LAs) to identify the functional Housing Market Areas (HMAs) covered by the four LAs. The study supports the LAs in objectively assessing and evidencing the need for housing (both market and affordable) across the WoE region for the period 2016–36, and provides other evidence to inform local policies, plans and decision making.

Council documents can be made available in large print, audio, easy read and other formats.
Documents on our website can also be emailed to you as plain text files.

Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English.

For more information contact

The Housing Development and Strategy Team

01934 427 487

North Somerset COUNCIL

26409 02/16