

**“The Future of Housing in Torbay”
A Partnership Strategy 2003-2006
Final Draft 29th October 2003**

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2. Executive Summary

Key areas for Summary;

- Stress Housing Partnership Approach
- Unitary status and implications/differences

- Stock transfer and local set up
- Poor ratings and actions taken – huge number of influences for change at present

3. Foreword

4. Using This Strategy

(i) What is a housing strategy?

A housing Strategy is a document, which examines the housing and related issues in Torbay and sets out a plan for tackling these issues over a 3-year period.

(ii) Why does Torbay need a Housing Strategy?

The Government Office for the South West (GOSW) asks local authorities to produce a housing strategy, but even without this requirement, it is essential to have a widely consulted and well thought through plan in place to deliver housing services in Torbay.

The Local Government Bill has now received Royal Assent and it puts housing strategies on a statutory basis and also gives local authorities the option of streamlining the Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy and Housing Energy Conservation report into one document, improving the necessary links between the documents and reducing overlap

(iii) How long is the strategy for and when will it be reviewed?

The strategy is intended to cover a 3-year period from 2003 until 2006. It will be reviewed each year to see what has been achieved and to decide on new priorities for action for the next 3 years. This review will commence with an annual conference involving our partners and stakeholders.

(iv) How was the strategy prepared?

The new Torbay Housing Partnership consists of a number of agencies/bodies working with the Council to deliver housing related services. The first thing the partnership did was to hold a stakeholder conference to discuss the housing issues in Torbay. A number of themes arose from the conference.

- The Action Groups under our new partnership structure then produced individual Action Plans, based around their main issues.
- The themes and the Action Plans were worked up to form a draft strategy.
- We also carried out research into housing need, supply and market conditions in Torbay.
- A draft strategy was then widely circulated to our partners, stakeholders and residents for comment.
- The strategy was then amended to reflect any additions/comments, to become the final strategy.

(v) What about previous strategies?

There was a 3-year strategy produced in 2000, which was updated in 2001 and 2002

(vi) How can I easily access the information I want from this document?

There is a summary of the whole document at the beginning and information/appendices at the end. The six themes are highlighted individually in the main body of the document. Action plans are attached to each of the themes where required.

This strategy is available in paper form, or electronically, on the Partnership's web site at www.torbay.gov.uk/housingpartnership
If you would find it easier to access this strategy in a different language or format please call us on 01803 20 87 20 or e mail housing@torbay.gov.uk.

5. Setting the Scene – A Snapshot of Torbay

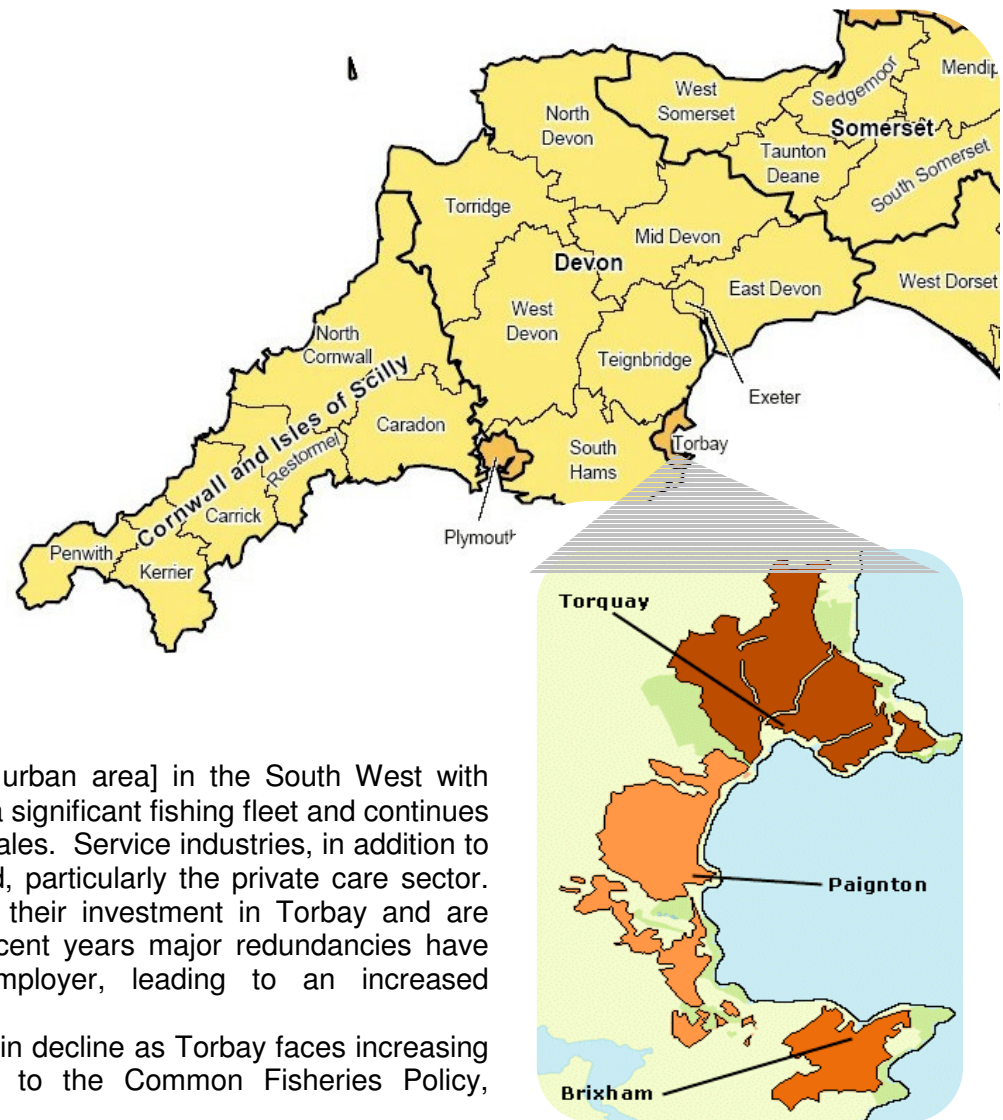
Location, Area & Transport - Torbay, the English Riviera, occupies a prime position on the South coast of Devon. It attracts visitors of all ages with a wide variety of interests and boasts an enormous variety of scenery and attractions. It is one of the UK's premiere holiday resorts, accommodating around 1.45 million visitors annually, with numbers rising sharply during the Summer.

Torbay's rural fringe and coastal area are designated zones of high landscape quality, with over 35km [22 miles] of coastline, cliffs, coves and beaches. Torbay covers an area of 63² km [25² miles]. It enjoys a mild climate, with little frost in the Winter and high amounts of sunshine for most of the year. Nestled around the natural bay are the three principal towns: Brixham, Paignton and Torquay. Each has a unique and well-defined character in terms of social and economic composition.

Regular train and bus services afford both local and national connections with express bus services providing links between Exeter and Plymouth.

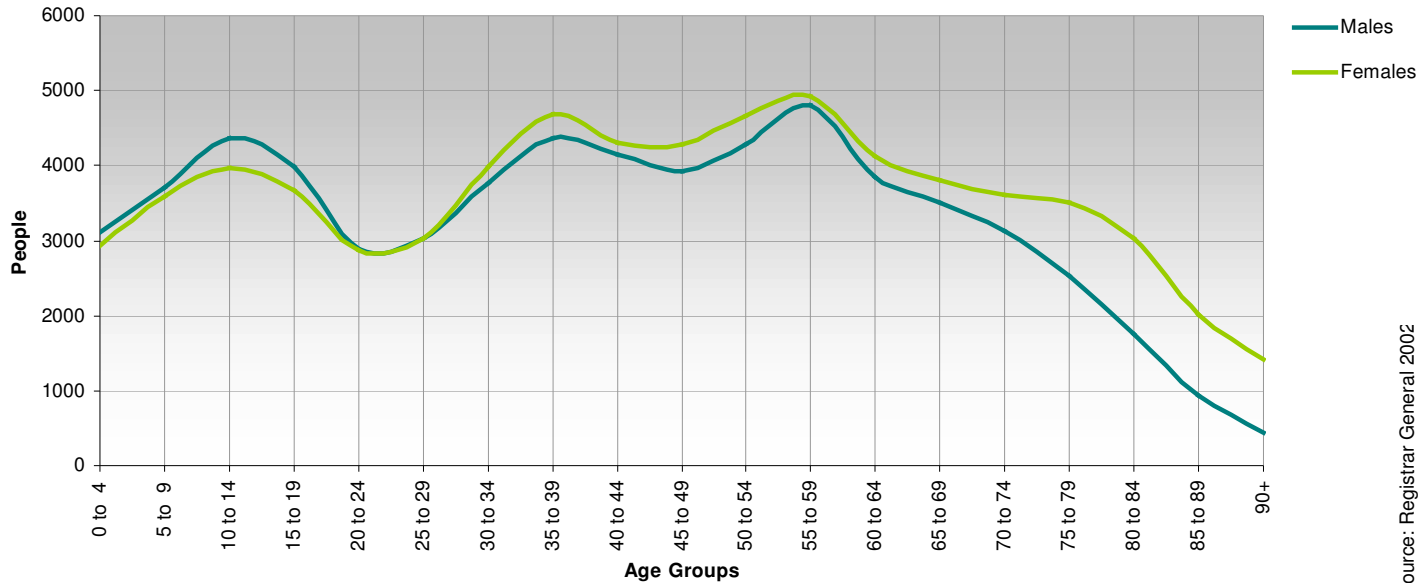
General - Torbay is the fifth largest conurbation [principal urban area] in the South West with Tourism the main source of employment. Brixham maintains a significant fishing fleet and continues to be one of the top fishing ports, by value, in England and Wales. Service industries, in addition to those associated with tourism, are also strongly represented, particularly the private care sector. More recently, high technology companies have increased their investment in Torbay and are bringing new opportunities to the area. However, during recent years major redundancies have been made by a principal electrical manufacturing employer, leading to an increased unemployment rate in contrast to other areas of Devon.

Although a leading resort, tourism, and visitor bed-nights are in decline as Torbay faces increasing overseas competition. Fishing is also on the wane due to the Common Fisheries Policy, decommissioning, competition and quotas.



Population –Torbay has an estimated resident population of 131,835, but numbers rise to over 210,000 over the peak summer period. This figure has risen by over 1,870 persons [1.4%] since the 2001 Census, the last fact-based population count. The graph shows the distribution of age groups in Torbay; the top heavy age structure supports the traditional stereotype of Torbay as a retirement area by the seaside with 29% of the population being over 60 years of age.

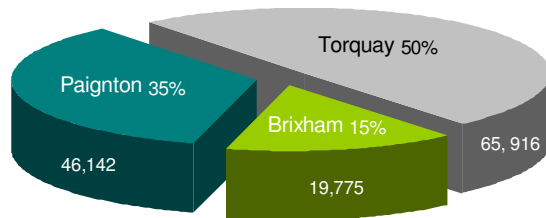
Torbay's Age & Gender Breakdown - Mid Year Estimates 2002



The latest projections based on 2001 estimates, provided by the Registrar General, indicate that Torbay's population is expected to rise to 132,537 by the year 2006. This is over 6,000 more than was predicted in the 1996 estimate and nearly a 2% increase since 2001. By 2021 the population is projected to rise to 139,811 an increase of 7% from 2001.

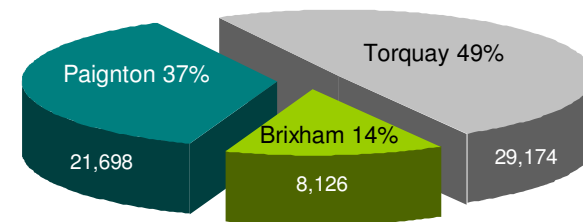
It is estimated that there are 59,000 households, totalling 60, 686 dwellings in the Torbay area.

Estimated Population of Torbay - 2003



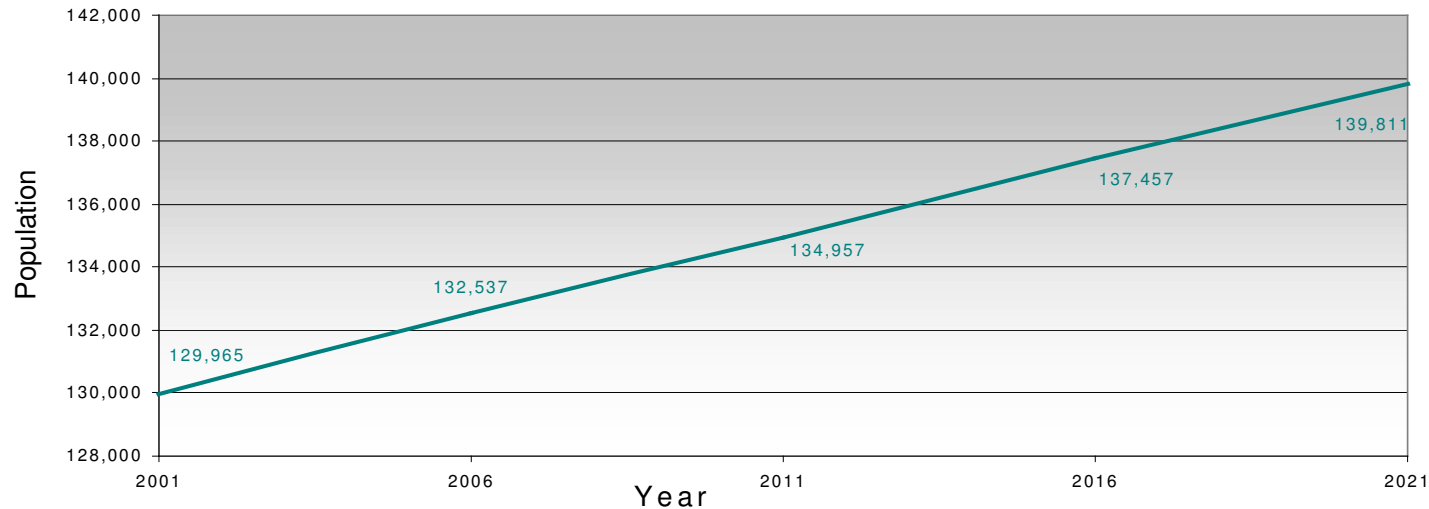
Source: Torbay Housing Partnership, based on figures from the ONS 2001 Census & S and W Devon Health Authority

Number of Households in Torbay 2003



Source: Fordham Research 2003

Population of Torbay from 2001 to 2021



Source: Registrar General & Corporate Information Services, Devon County Council

Economy - Tourism accounts for £227 million of spending per annum with hotels and catering contributing to 13.5% of Torbay's economy. The archaeological, cultural heritage and natural history of the area is becoming an increasingly important part of the industry with the number of conferences and exhibitions also rising. The large numbers of visitors means that the Council has to provide and maintain a wider range and level of services than would be required by the resident population alone.

There is currently a narrow economic base that is heavily dependent on the service industry that employs 82% of the population and is characterised by the seasonal nature of employment, part-time employment and below average wage levels. High unemployment and under-employment have contributed to the area's Gross Domestic Product [GDP] being 31% below the national average, the 11th lowest per capita and the second lowest GDP per capita in the South West. 39% of population classed as economically active with 56% in full-time employment, 20% part-time, and 22% classed as employers or self-employed.

Regeneration - 60% of population in wards eligible for European Funding and three wards are also able to obtain funding under the Single Regeneration Budget

Earnings - Torbay has the lowest earnings of the ten urban areas in the South West - 43% of employees are earning below £250 (gross) per week and 13% of in-work benefit claimants, the highest percentage in the South West.

Deprivation - Although Torbay does not have the depth of deprivation experienced in cities like Bristol and Plymouth it is more widespread. With the highest unemployment in the South West, average earnings below regional and national levels and 7 wards in the top 20% of the Government's Index of Deprivation it is the second most deprived local authority in the South West. It also suffers from structural decline, lack of affordable housing, poor access to services, few job opportunities, poor transport links and poor infrastructure.

60% of our population live in wards eligible for European funding and three wards are eligible to obtain funding under the Single Regeneration Budget.

Housing and Households	Number of households [%]	
	Torbay	England & Wales
One person households	33.7	30
Pensioners living alone	18.5	14.4
Other All Pensioner households	12.7	9.4
Contained dependent children	25.2	29.5
Lone parent households with dependent children	6.6	6.5
Owner occupied	74	68.9
Private rented or lived rent free	17.8	11.9
Without central heating	14.7	8.5
Without sole use of bath, shower or toilet	0.8	0.5
Have no car or van	26.8	26.8
Have 2 or more cars or vans	25.1	29.4
Average household size (number)	2.2	2.4
Average number of rooms per household	5.1	5.3

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

Economic Activity	Torbay	England & Wales
% Resident population aged 16 to 74		
Employed	57.1	60.6
Unemployed	4.1	3.4
Economically active full time students	2.1	2.6
Retired	18	13.6
Economically inactive students	2.6	4.7
Looking after home/family	6.2	6.5
Permanently sick or disabled	7.1	5.5
Economically inactive	2.8	3.1

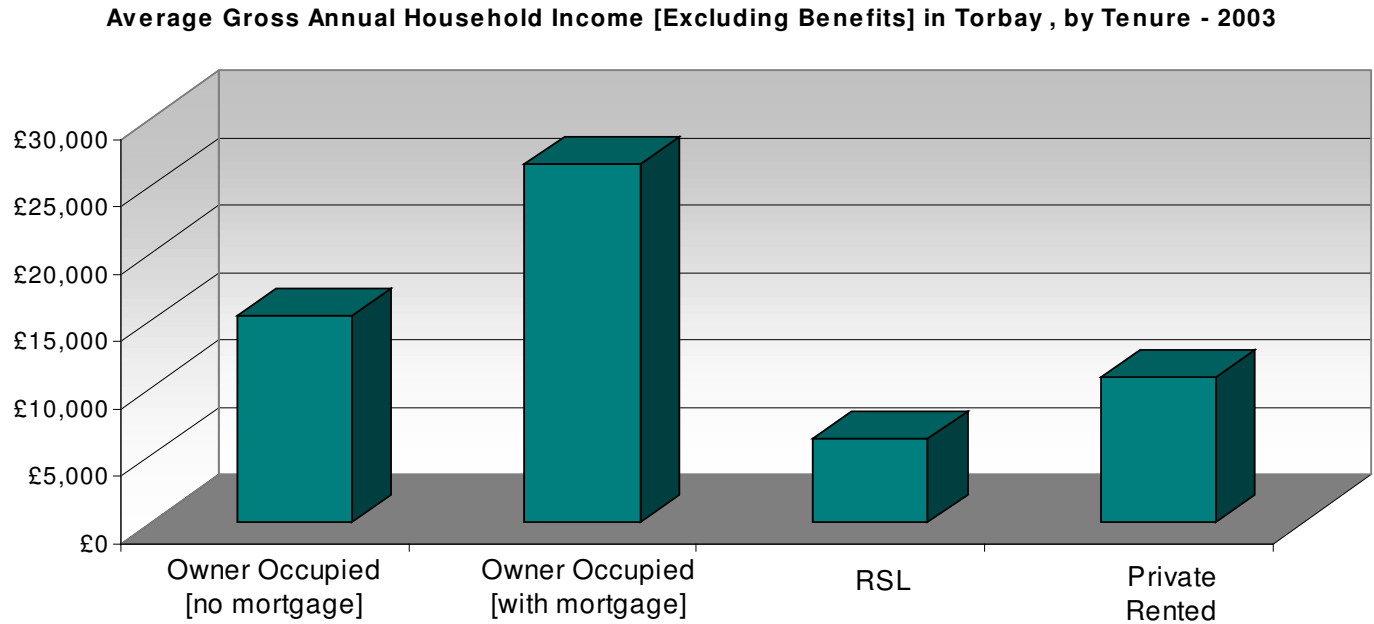
Source: 2001 Census, ONS

Housing Context - The tenure mix in the area is 77% owner-occupied, 12% private rented and 7% social rented, with the remainder unknown. This proportion of social housing is unusual, compared to 24% nationally and 17% regionally. The private sector housing and energy survey published in 2001 shows that 2.7% of private sector properties are unfit, with a further 7.8% with one or more defective components. The survey also noted that 3.6% of dwellings in the area are empty, below the national average and that over half of household heads earn less than £7,500 per year.

Housing Register - Demand for social housing is increasing; there were 986 households on the statutory housing register in April 2002 and 1,081 in June 2002. At the end of August 2002, Riviera Housing Trust had 1,612 households on its register, with 1,322 assessed as being in need; the association does not have a residence requirement while the Council has a 12 month residence requirement. During 2001/02, there were 434 homeless applications and 253 acceptances, up over 30% from 327 applications and 172 acceptances during 2000/01. Half of the social housing properties in the area have been sold under the Right to Buy Scheme.

The homelessness and housing advice service is provided by Torbay as part of its retained housing functions, while the administration of the statutory housing register is contracted out to Riviera Housing Trust. The service is delivered from the Council's offices in Oldway Mansions, Paignton.

Housing Affordability - A recently published report listed Torbay as one of the worst areas in the country for housing affordability with an average ratio of house prices to income of around 5.25:1. Torbay “disappeared from the list” when house prices were set against the income of key workers, indicating that it is not that Torbay’s housing is the most expensive in the country, but that average incomes are very low.



Source: Fordham Research 2003

House Prices - The average values for various types of property are as follows;

Minimum & Average property Prices in Torbay as of May 2003



Source: Fordham Research Survey of Estate Agents 2003

6. What should our strategy take into account?

(i) Government “Fit for Purpose” Criteria -

This strategy is designed to meet the Government’s 10 “Fit for Purpose” Criteria, which say that this strategy should;

1. Support and feed into the Council’s wider community objectives
2. Take into account national, regional and sub regional priorities
3. Show meaningful consultation with all stakeholder
4. Be based on a detailed needs analysis across all tenures
5. Include a realistic view of future resources
6. Ensure that stated priorities are justified and linked to needs
7. Proactively consider options available for delivering priorities
8. Have clear action plans with defined objectives
9. Report on progress against previous targets
10. Be accessible to a wide audience

(ii) National Influences

“Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future” (Feb 2003)

The Communities Plan focuses on creating sustainable communities. In particular, it stresses the need to get the right kind of houses in the right places to tackle the imbalance in supply and demand, but also to ensure that we are building thriving communities where people want to live. This has superseded the Government’s Housing Policy Statement “Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All - The Way Forward for Housing” published in December 2001. The key points and themes of Sustainable Communities which is available www.gosw.gov.uk; www.housingcorp.gov.uk; www.southwest-ra.gov.uk; www.communities.odpm.gov.uk

The main areas are summarised below:

- The establishment of “**Regional Housing Bodies**” chaired by GOSW responsible for Regional Housing Strategy, regional allocation of Housing Corporation Grant and regional allocation of Government housing grants and credit approvals
- **Local Strategic Partnerships** (involving the community and a wide range of other interested parties) at the heart of strategy to revitalise deprived neighbourhoods. “Plans to improve housing will be required to form part of a wider strategy for neighbourhood renewal and sustainable communities.
- **£350m to speed up planning** – Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG) Local / Development Plan timetable;
- Housing Bill proposed – Mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation; License private landlords in “low demand areas”;
- Home Office – new cross cutting **unit to tackle anti-social behaviour**;
- Private Housing – **extra £30m available in both 2004/05 and 2005/06 to help LA to fund new ways to fund repairs/improvements for vulnerable, elderly low income tenants/homeowners** through Regional Housing Body.
- Gap Funding – enable new housing in deprived areas;
- Home Ownership Task Force - **improve delivery and options for affordable home ownership**;
- Increasing English Partnerships role in enabling and assembling sites;
- **End use of Bed and Breakfast for homeless families by March 2004.**
- Expand key workers/starter Homes Initiative through regional

- housing body;
- Affordable Housing Guidance – Government will update with good practice and application in rural areas;
- Empty Homes – Government consulted in Spring 2003 to **give local authorities powers to lease long term properties in high demand areas;**
- End to discount on Council Tax for empty properties;
- Maintain Right to Buy;

- Discretion to levy up to 90% for second homes;
- Energy Efficiency – more financial measures proposed.
- Reform Local Authority Social Housing Grant and remove anomaly where debt free authorities could spend the money twice. Transitional arrangements will ease the impact of this change;

A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal – National Strategy Action Plan (2001)

This commits all local authorities to produce a **local housing strategy, to achieve decent homes by 2010 (see definition below)** and tackle issues of deprivation through partnership working and community development. A Decent Home - The revised definition and guidance for implementation (2002) Please refer to Theme 3 – Promoting Healthy Housing

(iii) Regional Influences

1. Sustainable Communities in the South West - Building for the Future (Feb 2003)

This highlights actions to address housing, planning and neighbourhood renewal issues. It recognises that there are over 200 market towns in the South West which act as economic and service delivery hubs for the surrounding rural areas.

The main issues for the South West are as follows;

- **High house prices, and low incomes,**
- **The need to provide more affordable homes of the right type and in the right location,**
- **The need to reduce the number of homeless people and rough sleepers, and to provide appropriate accommodation and support for those who are homeless**
- **Meeting the decent homes target for the social rented sector**
- **Making sure that vulnerable people in the private sector are living in warm and dry homes.**
- **Key Workers – widening the definition;**

- **Effective use of increased Council Tax raised from second homes.**
- **To achieve a more sustainable approach to development through the principles of "Rethinking Construction".**
- **Housing Development in the right location**
- **Target that 50% of new housing should be provided on previously developed land.**

The South West Action Plan will form the basis of the Regional Housing Body's work and will allow us to:

- Prepare a Regional Housing Strategy by 2004;
- Advise Ministers on the Strategic Housing Investment Pot for 2004/05 onwards;
- Link together the Regional Housing Body, private and public sector to tackle the region's housing needs together and more effectively.

2. South West Regional Housing Body - Strategic Housing Priorities in the South West. (June 2003)

The Regional Housing Body is intended to ensure that the South West is adequately promoted in terms of its affordable housing need. A key role of this body is the development of **the Single Housing Investment Pot (SHIP)** which brings together the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme (ADP) and Housing Investment Programme (HIP).

The draft Strategic Housing Priorities (June 2003) have been issued and are as follows;

- **First priority - more affordable homes for the South West**
- **Second priority - private sector renewal (supporting vulnerable people living in the private sector)**
- **Third priority - decent homes for tenants in the social sector**

Torbay is represented on the Regional Housing Forum by the Housing Services Manager, which advises the Regional Housing Board

The Council has responded to these published priorities with its comments and where relevant, the concerns of the Torbay Housing Partnership. These can be summarized as follows;

- The total funds available for the South West Regional Body to allocate are totally inadequate to meet the region's housing investment needs
- There is a disparity between the two research reports influencing the allocation of resources
- The newly formed SW Regional Housing Forum needs more identity and clarity of purpose.
- The findings of a Housing Needs Survey conducted in April / May 2003 for Torbay Council reports the need for 1816 net new affordable homes, of which 75% should be social rented. This further highlights the disparity between demand for and supply of, housing locally.
- Torbay's recent Housing Needs Survey compares Torbay to inner London, in terms of the level of need for affordable housing per 1000 residents.

3. The South West Regional Housing Strategy 2002-2005 (July 2003)

This is produced for the South West by the Government Office and the Housing Corporation. Torbay is part of the Western Sub Region. The main areas of the strategy are as follows;

Housing Demand

- Promoting methodology to monitor housing supply and demand
- Carry out Housing Needs Surveys in Local Authorities which comply with Govt good practice
- Defines main issues/characteristics of sub regional areas and housing markets

Housing Delivery

- Local plans should indicate the location and mix of social housing in the district
- Aim for 30-40 per Hectare and more in town centres/transport routes
- Supplementary Planning Guidance provides the detail for this
- Clear and consistent mechanisms required for negotiating and deciding S106 agreements
- Need strategies to bring empty properties back into use and convert others to residential
- The importance of partnerships with other Local Authorities
- Engage with Local Strategic Partnerships
- Resources/lettings to respond to BME needs
- Developers etc to join in the “Rethinking Construction SW” programme and share best practice
- Adoption of “Future Foundations” (sustainable construction charter)
- New homes to BRE “Ecohomes” standard. Existing homes to have heating and effective insulation

Regeneration and Renewal

- Renewal strategies - priorities;
 - Maintenance in pre 1919 properties
 - Design programmes to allow disabled/elderly to stay in their own homes
 - Fuel poverty and energy efficiency
 - Improve standards in private rented accommodation
 - Empty homes
- 1/3 reduction in “non decent” homes across the Region
- Investigate full range of financial and support resources available
- Promote Regeneration and Renewal with the Local Strategic Partnership
- Work with the “Centre of Excellence” for Regeneration and Renewal to make sure housing is key issue
- Relate the Housing strategy to economic improvement/education/training/crime

Supported Housing/Supporting People

- Explore Resettlement Services and promoting independence
- Engage in Local Health and Social Care agendas through Local Strategic Partnerships and Neighbourhood Renewal Areas
- Mechanisms for users to feed into the planning and delivery of services
- SP to be central to strategies concerning social exclusion, homelessness and community R&R
- encourage hard to reach groups to access these services

4. South West Regional Planning Guidance - RPG 10 (Sept 2001)

The South West Regional Planning Guidance sets out the strategic planning framework for the period up to 2016 – 2020.

Torbay is identified as one of 11 Principal Urban Areas [PUAs] in the South West, which are a high priority for new investment. However, Torbay is included in a category of PUAs which: *“for varying physical, environmental or other reasons are more constrained in terms of future development. More focused policies are necessary to recognise their specific circumstances. The policies for each PUA [in this group] recognise how encouraging major growth for its own sake in these PUAs could create problems of unbalanced and possibly unsustainable development” [paragraph 3.13, third bullet point].*

The strategy of restrained growth is reflected in the Devon Structure Plan housing provision of 6,200 dwellings over the period to 2011, significantly below the demographically implied provision for Torbay.

Section 7 and specifically Policy HO3 covers affordable housing, which is defined as 'both low-cost market and social housing'. The RPG notes that Local Authorities and social housing providers should aim to ensure that sufficient affordable housing is provided in order to meet community needs. Development plans should contain targets for the levels and types of affordable housing required. A partnership approach involving local authorities, social landlords, developers and other agencies is encouraged.

In particular RPG 10 notes that there is a low proportion of social rented housing in the region (Para 7.9). It notes that Right to Buy has outstripped new additions to the stock. Policy H03 recommends a site size threshold of 15 dwellings or 0.5 ha where justified by Local Housing Needs Surveys (Para 7.16 and Policy HO3 3rd bullet point).

The RPG puts forward a provisional target of 6-10,000 units of affordable housing a year, which would represent between 30-50% of new housing.

(iv) Local Influences

1. Torbay's Community Plan

Our Community Plan is **the result of a process of partnership working** that has been taking place in Torbay for some time, in an attempt to produce a coherent vision for the future of the area in the form of a 'Community Plan'.

A range of organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors has taken part, using their expertise to highlight the key issues in Torbay. A series of consultation events took place to confirm that the issues suggested were really those that concerned the **communities** of Torbay.

The vision for Torbay is to create;

“A healthy, prosperous community living, learning and relaxing in a safe and beautiful bay”

The Plan is based on the vision for improving the quality of life for everyone – making Torbay a place that is safer, healthier and more prosperous, and takes account of our responsibilities for the wider environment and for the future. It is about making Torbay a place where people choose to live, work, visit and socialise. It is a Torbay-wide strategy and is based around 5 themes;

1. Environment
2. Community Safety
3. Life Long Learning
4. Economy
5. Health, **Housing** and Social Care

The Plan focuses on a number of key priorities to ensure that they happen. As the Strategy evolves, targets within the priorities and indeed the priorities themselves may change in line with local people's concerns.

A lot of work, ideas, views of local people and organisations throughout Torbay have been brought together in this Plan and its actions. It is a powerful tool for the Council, voluntary agencies, public authorities, businesses, and local residents **to work together through the Torbay Local Strategic Partnership to tackle the important issues and thus improve the community and its quality of life.**

In the light of how we would like Torbay to be in the future, and the expected changes we need to address, there are five key underlying principles to how the Community Strategy is being developed and implemented.

The Local Strategic Partnership will:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • find new ways of working more effectively which cut across traditional boundaries in policy, strategy and practice • ensure sustainable development by addressing social, economic and environmental concerns at the same time • work proactively to meet the challenges of the future and take responsibility for the wider impacts of Torbay's activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involve local communities on their own terms and ensure we reach all communities • work in partnership

2. Governance –

The Council

Torbay Council became a unitary authority in April 1998. Torbay Council is comprised of 36 councillors who are elected by the residents of Torbay. Councillors are democratically accountable to the residents in their wards. The overriding duty of councillors is to the whole community, but they have a special duty to their constituents, including those who did not vote for them. Councillors have to agree to follow a code of conduct to ensure high standards in the way they undertake their duties.

Following the Local Government Elections on 1st May 2003 (which were based on the new ward boundaries), there are currently 27 Liberal Democrat Councillors and 9 Conservative Councillors.

The Council's Role in providing services

In the past, local authorities have involved themselves directly in a wide range of services. This has now changed. The Council must provide services that meet its legal obligations and prioritise its spending in discretionary areas. The Council's involvement will not necessarily take the form of a service provider: it can be involved in a number of ways:

- as advocate, representing the interests of the community to other organisations
- as facilitator, assisting with the provision of facilities or services
- as regulator, controlling activity in an area, and monitoring and enforcing compliance
- as funder, providing or securing financial assistance to enable provision of a service or facility
- as provider, providing programmes, facilities and assets, and undertaking projects to Modernise Local Government

How the Council operates

Since 1st March 2002, the Council has moved to a new model of decision making. The Constitution was updated following the change in the political leadership of the Council in May 2003. The Constitution of Torbay Council sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by the law, while others are a matter for the Council to choose.

Councillors continue to meet regularly to discuss Council business. The majority of these meetings are open for members of the public to attend. All councillors meet together as the Council to decide the Council's overall policies and to set the budget for each year. The Council appoints a Leader and up to nine Councillors who together with the Leader form the Council's Executive. The Council also appoints a number of regulatory and other committees, including a Standards Committee. The Executive is the part of the Council which is responsible for most of the day-to-day decisions. When major decisions are to be made these are published in the Forward Plan in so far as they can be anticipated. The Executive has to make decisions that are in line with the Council's overall policies and budget. If it wishes to make a decision that is outside the budget or policy framework, this must be referred to the Council as a whole to decide.

The Council has appointed an Overview and Scrutiny Board that supports the work of the Executive and the Council as a whole. The Overview and Scrutiny Board may appoint sub-committees and working parties to assist it in the exercise of its functions. These bodies may hold public inquiries into matters of local concern. Local people and witnesses may be invited to take part in these inquiries which lead to reports and recommendations which advise the Executive and the Council on its policies, budget and service delivery. Overview and scrutiny bodies also monitor the decisions of the Executive.

Any five members of the Council can "call-in" a decision that has been made by the Executive but not yet implemented. The Overview and Scrutiny Board may consider whether the decision is appropriate and may recommend that the Executive reconsider the decision. They may also be consulted by the Executive or the Council on forthcoming decisions and the development of policy.

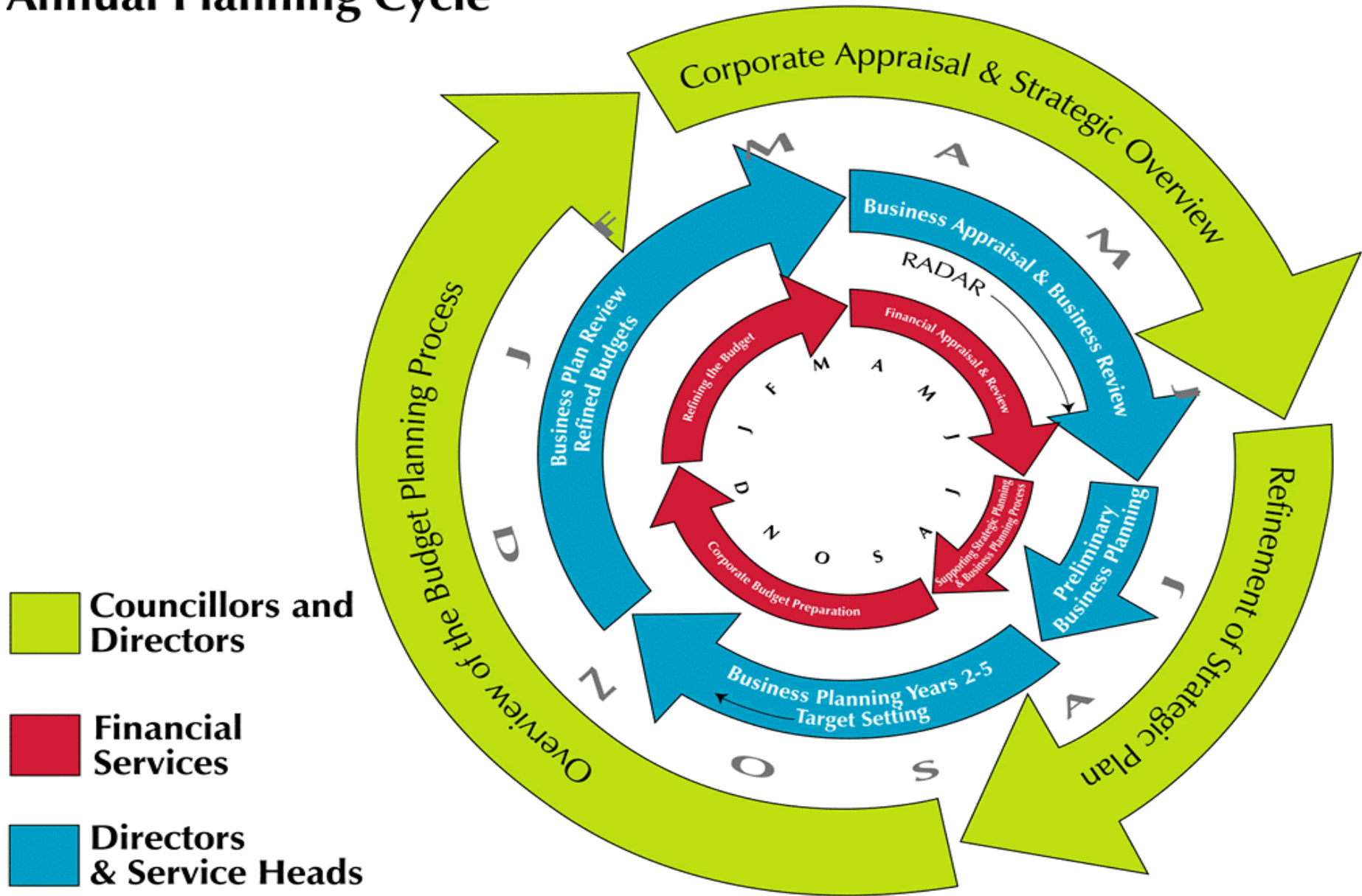
Torbay Council's Planning Process

Last year the Council produced its first five-year Strategic Plan, '**Looking Ahead - Looking Well Ahead**'. Within the framework of this five-year plan, the Council operates an **Annual Planning Cycle (APC)** and this is summarised in the diagram opposite. In April each year, the APC begins with a collection of information relating to the previous year, including results from consultation with the public, actual performance data, and financial information.

Simultaneously, individual services start the implementation of their business plans developed as part of the APC in the previous financial year. In May and June a series of Corporate Appraisals are undertaken by Councillors, Directors and Service Heads, to initially analyse and discuss the information collected above. Throughout June a series of events take place to determine the corporate direction for the Strategic Plan, including the Council's vision and mission, priorities and overall aims and objectives for the planning year in question (in detail) and for the next two years (in summary). This is achieved via initial face-to-face meetings between Directors and Councillors who hold the relevant executive responsibility for each service and an Annual Planning Day, where likely priorities and issues for the coming year are determined. July and August sees the preliminary communication and transfer of the Strategic Overview determined in the previous phase, into each service's individual business plans. This includes revisiting business plans developed in previous years and then taking account of any new aims, objectives, changes in legislation, etc.

Councillors and officers continue to develop priorities, which feed into the draft business plans. In September and October spending pressures identified through the determination of priorities are incorporated within the budget preparation process. A Spending Pressures Budget is produced outlining the total budget that would be required to deliver the priorities Torbay Council has identified.

Annual Planning Cycle



Torbay Council's Strategic Plan 2003-2008 – 'Transforming Torbay'

<p>OUR VISION - a desired future for Torbay</p> <p>Torbay Council is developing its vision in consultation with its key partners across all sectors of the community</p>	
<p>OUR MISSION - Torbay Council's purpose</p> <p>We will provide leadership and inspiration to improve the services we provide and support</p>	
<p>OUR CORE VALUES - the fundamental beliefs and principles of this Council</p>	
<p>CUSTOMER FOCUS</p> <p>Customer Care</p>	<p>SERVICE DELIVERY</p> <p>Sustaining the environment & the economy</p>
<p>We are committed to the courteous and fair treatment of our customers</p>	<p>In making decisions the Council will consider the long term implications on the built and natural environment, its impact on the community and the economic base of the Bay</p>
<p>Putting the public first</p>	<p>Challenging the current service</p>
<p>Our services will be tailored to meet the changing needs of our customers</p>	<p>We will continuously challenge the way our services are provided to ensure the most cost effective and efficient approach is adopted</p>
<p>Equality of opportunity</p>	<p>Public/Private Partnership</p>
<p>We will deliver services which do not discriminate against any sector of the community, but at the same time we recognise the need to reflect cultural differences in services.</p>	<p>We will work with the private sector, other agencies and organisations to deliver high quality services.</p>
<p>Open, responsive, accessible and accountable</p>	<p>Valuing and developing staff</p>
<p>We will ensure that the Council is transparent in its decision-making, has accessible services, is responsive to the needs of customers and has clear lines of accountability</p>	<p>We will provide high quality services by ensuring our staff, whether employed by us or our contractors, are well trained, dedicated and well motivated</p>

3. Restructuring the Council's Housing Resources

The Council has had a good look at its own resource levels to ensure that it can deliver the right service to its customers and partners. A recent report by a consultant working on behalf of the Council and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has recommended as follows;

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Housing Services and Housing Standards Teams are merged and become part of Social Services Directorate. 2. Merged team to be based at Oldway mansion. 3. A third tier housing professional to be recruited to report directly to Director of Social Services. 4. Recruit extra staff to ensure service delivery and performance improves. 5. Take short-term action to address immediate needs e.g. for homeless prevention and housing strategy delivery. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Increase budget provision for staff training and development. To fund ongoing professional development, and team development work during first year of establishment. 7. Agree processes for working together and for making referrals amongst merged team members. 8. Develop third interview room at Oldway. 9. Review respective roles and grades of team members before recruiting new permanent staff. (Not to delay recruitment to head of housing post) |
|--|--|

4. Torbay Council's Strategic Plan 2003-2008 – 'Transforming Torbay'

In the Torbay Strategic Plan June 2003 **Housing is one of the Council's top 5 priorities;**

Aim 5	To facilitate, in conjunction with our partners, improved access to decent affordable homes for the people of Torbay	
Objective 1	Increase availability of affordable decent homes for people in housing need	By
Key Activities	Develop a 'fit for purpose' Housing Strategy 2003-2006 with SMART targets, based on up to date housing needs statistics by October 2003	October 2003
	Strengthen the Council's housing functions by merging private and public housing functions and the provision of additional resources	April 2004
	Create a "Housing Partnership" to assist in the development of community plans and policies relating to Housing and Social Inclusion	August 2003
Objective 2	Increase the prevention of, and support to, those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness	By
Key Activities	To deliver the Homelessness and Housing Advice Improvement Plan by March 2004	March 2004
	Review homelessness and rough sleeping in Torbay and deliver a strategy to address with SMART targets by July 2003	July 2003
Objective 3	The Council with our partners, will increase the number of vulnerable people helped to live independently	By
Key Activities	To revise 5 year Supporting People Strategy by November 2003	November 2003
	To provide 50 additional supported housing units for vulnerable adults by March 2004	March 2004
Objective 4	Ensure a sustained reduction of B&B provision for families with children to meet national targets	By
Key Activity	To deliver 50 units of accommodation through a Private Sector Leasing scheme by March 2004 to reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast as temporary accommodation for homeless families	March 2004

5. Capital Strategy (2000, Updated July 2003)

The Council's Capital Strategy 2002 identifies the Council's objectives for housing as strategic enabler. Following transfer of the local authority stock to Riviera Housing Trust, the focus of future programmes is placed on making better use of existing accommodation and increasing the supply of affordable housing. Demand for accommodation linked to the Council's statutory duties for homelessness or when people wish to apply

for housing in the district remains at high levels whereas the supply of property from registered social landlords has not expanded to meet the needs. Pressure for accommodation will further increase as a result of the provisions contained in the Homelessness Act 2002. Preparation for the Supporting People policy initiative has identified gaps in the supply of supported housing for different need groups. Facilitating the provision of social housing by providing funding to registered social landlords is the priority. Grants will be available for tackling unfit, disabled requirements, regeneration and bringing empty property back into use. Consideration will be given to the future finance of community projects.

Stock Transfer – Background and Update

On the 19th February 2001 Torbay Council handed over its social housing of nearly 3,000 dwellings to a new company called Riviera Housing Trust. This was done through a process known as a stock transfer. When a council sells most or all of its homes, this is not just a matter for existing tenants and staff providing a landlord service; it affects the way the whole council works and all its housing services. At the point of transfer, the Council made a commitment to use 80% (£2.8 million) of the useable capital receipt for social housing schemes.

The offer document to tenants noted that Riviera would have provision within its Business Plan to spend approximately £11.86 million on the stock in the five years after transfer

6. The Torbay Supporting People Shadow Strategy

Supporting People is the **Government's new policy and funding framework for housing related support services to vulnerable people.** From April 2003, Supporting People will replace existing arrangements by bringing together current funding streams into a single grant to be administered at local authority level by a strategic partnership of Social Services, Housing, Health and Probation.

This Shadow Strategy for 2003/04 is the first step in putting the future Supporting People programme for Torbay into action. The Strategy provides a position statement on current supply of housing related support services and identified priorities to meet gaps in services for the first year of the programme.

Some of the housing priorities identified include;

- **Supporting older people** by providing opportunities to reduce social isolation and encourage the positive participation of older people in the community, through appropriate care services
- **Linking with younger people** by providing opportunities, recreation, employment and support
- **Creating and maintaining a safe healthy and happy community**
- **Ensuring households with support and care needs can live independently** in the community.

7 Crime & Disorder Strategy 2002-05

What are we going to do?

We aim to improve the quality of life by reducing crime and disorder and their social and economic costs.

Strategic aims

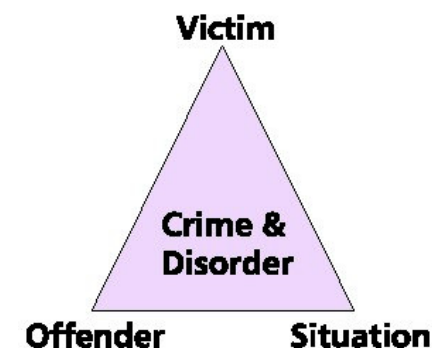
To reduce victimisation
To discourage/reduce offending behaviour
To improve the situation in the community

Priorities

Anti-Social Behaviour
Litter, Noise, Criminal Damage, Abandoned Vehicles, Harassment
Burglary
Drugs - Alcohol & Substance Abuse
Vehicle Crime
Violent Crime including Domestic Violence
Hate Crime - Racial and Homophobic

The Crime Triangle

For every crime that is committed three elements are always present. There will always be a victim, an offender and a situation that allows the crime to occur. Our strategy aims to tackle each of these elements in relation to the priorities by co-ordinating the resources and expertise of all members of the partnership. We aim to add value to the work that is already undertaken by organisation, focusing existing resources on areas of greatest need and empowering communities to help fight crime and disorder. We will continue to seek external funding to help support multi-agency working and community groups deliver projects throughout Torbay that will help to achieve our aims.



Action Plan relating to Housing issues

Project	Lead Agency/Dept	Measure
Secure stable accommodation for victims of domestic violence	Housing Services, Torbay Council	Funding Secured Number of panic alarms used
Secure the homes of people through the Safer Homes Project in Torwood, Tormohun and Ellacombe wards	Community Safety & Crime Reduction Team	Number of homes receiving free home security
Secure the homes of the most vulnerable across Torbay	Private Sector Housing, Torbay Council	Referral criteria established. Number of homes secured. Targets to be set upon completion
Develop a resettlement programme for offenders post-prison release	HM Prison Service, Probation Service	Resettlement programme established. Targets set upon completion
Develop a non-statutory drugs support service to improve access to drugs advice and counselling	Drug Action Team	Service established Targets set upon completion. Number of users
Establish a mechanism to identify young people at risk of offending	Education Welfare, Torbay Council	Mechanism established Targets set upon completion
Replace existing fragmented mediation service with a more widely available service to meet the needs of Torbay	Social Housing Providers	Programme in place Numbers accessing mediation service Targets set upon completion

Implement protocol for reviewing planning applications to secure by design principals	Planning Dept & Police	Number of applications reviewed. Number of developers trained Number of staff trained
Develop and support day drop-in service with the aim of diverting people from homelessness, substance abuse, street drinking and begging	Voluntary Sector	Number of people using service. Number of hours of counselling Days/hours of opening
To support and aid the development of the Street Warden Scheme	Environmental Health, Torbay Council	Number of street warden hours Number of residents assisted

8. The Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance

Key Points

- Torbay local Plan 95 – 2011 – now through enquiry stage with Inspectors report published April 2003.
- Local Plan modifications autumn 2003 with adoption in early 2004.
- Inspector’s recommendations on affordable housing are in the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Local Plan policy H5 targets 135 Units between 2001 – 2011
- The preferred mechanism for delivery is through S106 planning agreements with Housing Associations on unallocated ‘windfall’ sites capable of taking more than 15 Units (or greater than 0.5 HA in size)
- Developers to provide agreed % of affordable housing (Current is 30%)
- Developers can provide a “commuted sum” instead of providing units on site (in exceptional circumstances)
- Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) was adopted by Council in September 2003

Recent Government Guidance and Our Response

The Government has published a document in July 2003 which consults on the replacement of PPG 3 and circular 6/98

The Council has made representations as follows:-

- Site size thresholds should be reduced due to the number of small sites in Torbay
- Small unsubsidised units should be removed from the definition of affordable housing
- Strengthen guidance to require provision of affordable housing on Sites, and not to seek provision (as per Circular 6/98)
- There should be an assessment of unimplemented Planning Consents to ascertain likely future level of affordable housing.
- There should be a workshop between developers/Housing Associations and the Council to progress affordable housing issues

Planning -Other Influences

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister produced a report via its Action Advice Team, which included the following recommendations;

- Greater joint working between Planners and Housing
- The revised Supplementary Guidance should be strengthened by a statistical table on presentation and acceptance of homeless families and single people in recent years and of families seeking transfer to smaller or larger accommodation, as these are good indicators of contemporary housing need
- The Council is invited to reconsider the apparent blanket exclusion of all town centres’ flat conversions, which may not

help within the broader context of the Council's Homelessness Strategy.

- Development Control Planners and Housing should swiftly re-engage with the leading RSLs operating in the County, perhaps by formation of **a Housing & Planning Task Force**. (Set up)
- This Task Force should quickly identify capacity and potential of RSLs to respond to S106 opportunities and use of Council's own land that was held back from LSVT or has a housing use class.
- Local protocols must be developed to ensure early involvement of a designated RSL in negotiations where S106 opportunities arise within the 15 week window so that any developer is immediately pointed to the designated RSL
- Where there is housing need, Commuted Payments should be very much resisted by Planners.
- No in principle consent for a possible "Commuted Payment" on any housing or mixed use site offering more than 15 homes should be given without prior Member approval.
- Planners are invited to produce a simple statistical report for all sites of over 30 new homes (developed or to be developed) between 2001-5
- Audit outstanding planning applications to assess whether better value could be obtained by way of affordable homes for rent or enhanced Commuted Payments.

Torbay's Communication Strategy

'We will communicate clearly, openly and regularly with residents, our partners and with each other, to promote better understanding and to improve services for the people of Torbay'. - Chris Harris - Leader Richard Painter - Managing Director

PCT Delivery Plan

Annual Report of the Director of Health for Torbay – incorporated into Theme 3 – Promoting Healthy Housing

Our Partners and Stakeholders Views

The world of housing in Torbay involves a large number of people and organisations. The problems faced are complex and resolving them must involve a partnership approach. **The starting point is to agree what the issues are, then to see how we can tackle them together.**

On the 25th June 2003, **we held a major conference with all the people involved with housing in Torbay**, to look at housing issues "across the board". The event was wide ranging and involved representatives from the public and private sectors. This conference "paved the way" for a new Housing Partnership to emerge, and has been followed up by a number of further meetings, at which the structure of the partnership has been developed.

The emerging partnership has made a good start, but still has a long way to go and needs to widening its membership to include a greater number of stakeholders, particularly residents. The partnership has set out what it needs to do in the action plan attached to theme 1, and has agreed that it will hold an annual conference to review progress and set new targets.

Six themes arose as a result of the Housing Conference in June and subsequent meetings of the emerging Housing Partnership. **These themes have been developed in the light of corporate and other priorities and have been sent out to our stakeholders and customers and also to voluntary groups for comments.**

National

Sustainable Communities – Building for the Future [Feb 2003]
 A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal [2001]
 HOMES Bill
 Homelessness Act 2002



Regional

Sustainable Communities in the SW – Building for the Future [Feb 2003]
 SW Regional Housing Strategy [July 2003]
 SW Regional Planning Guidance [to 2016]
 Strategic Housing Priorities in the SW [June 2003]
 Draft Affordable Warmth Strategy for Devon



Local

Torbay's Community Plan [October 2003]
 Torbay' Council's Strategic Plan
 Torbay' Council's Capital Strategy [July 2003]
 Torbay's Supporting People Shadow Strategy [Sept 2002]
 Community Safety Strategy 2002-2005
 NHS Delivery Plan [August 2003]
 Public Health Annual Report 2003
 Torbay Council's Local Plan & Supplementary Planning Guidance



Partnership Strategy

Priorities	National	Regional	Local
Theme 1 – Improving Communication, Participation and Consultation			
To develop and maintain a housing partnership which is focussed, co-ordinated, transparent, efficient and accountable, to deliver housing options which meet the needs of Torbay's communities	✓	✓	✓
Theme 2 – Enabling Regeneration and Affordable Homes			
Increase the availability of decent affordable homes for people in housing need as part of a co-ordinated approach to regeneration	✓	✓	✓
Theme 3 – Promoting Healthy Housing			
Address the links between housing situation/condition and the underlying determinants of health and deal with related long term causes of health inequalities across all tenures	✓	✓	✓
Theme 4 – Tackling Homelessness			
Increase the prevention of, and support to, those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness	✓	✓	✓
Theme 5 – Contributing to Sustainable Neighbourhoods			
To involve all local communities in the sustainable future of their neighbourhoods	✓	✓	✓
Theme 6 – Assisting Independent Living			
To improve the quality of life of vulnerable people in Torbay through provision of well planned, high quality housing and related support services based on individual needs and which enable people to live independently	✓	✓	✓

7. Strategy Mission and Themes

Partnership Strategy Mission Statement:

‘To deliver improved access to good quality affordable homes and related services for the people of Torbay by way of a balanced, community based, inclusive partnership’

Theme 1 – Improving Communication, Participation & Consultation

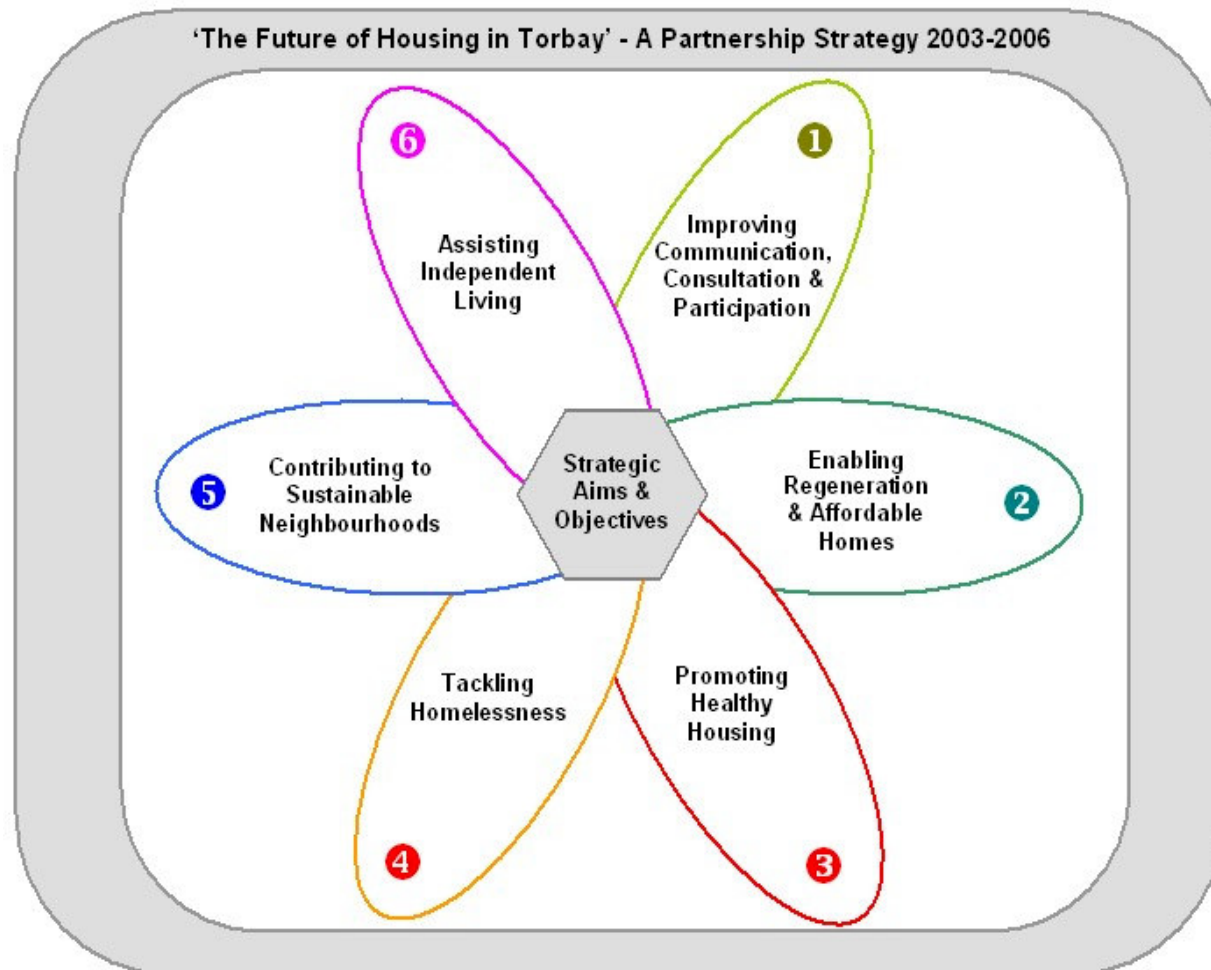
Theme 2 – Enabling Regeneration and Affordable Homes

Theme 3 – Promoting Healthy Housing

Theme 4 – Tackling Homelessness

Theme 5 – Contributing to Sustainable Neighbourhoods

Theme 6 – Assisting Independent Living



Theme 1 - Improving Communication, Participation and Consultation

What sort of partnership do we want to be?

- One which is focussed, co-ordinated, transparent, efficient and accountable in order to deliver housing options to meet the housing needs of the communities in Torbay
- One with a partnership structure which provides for clear definitions between strategic and operational issues
- One which reviews progress and refocuses its activities on a regular basis

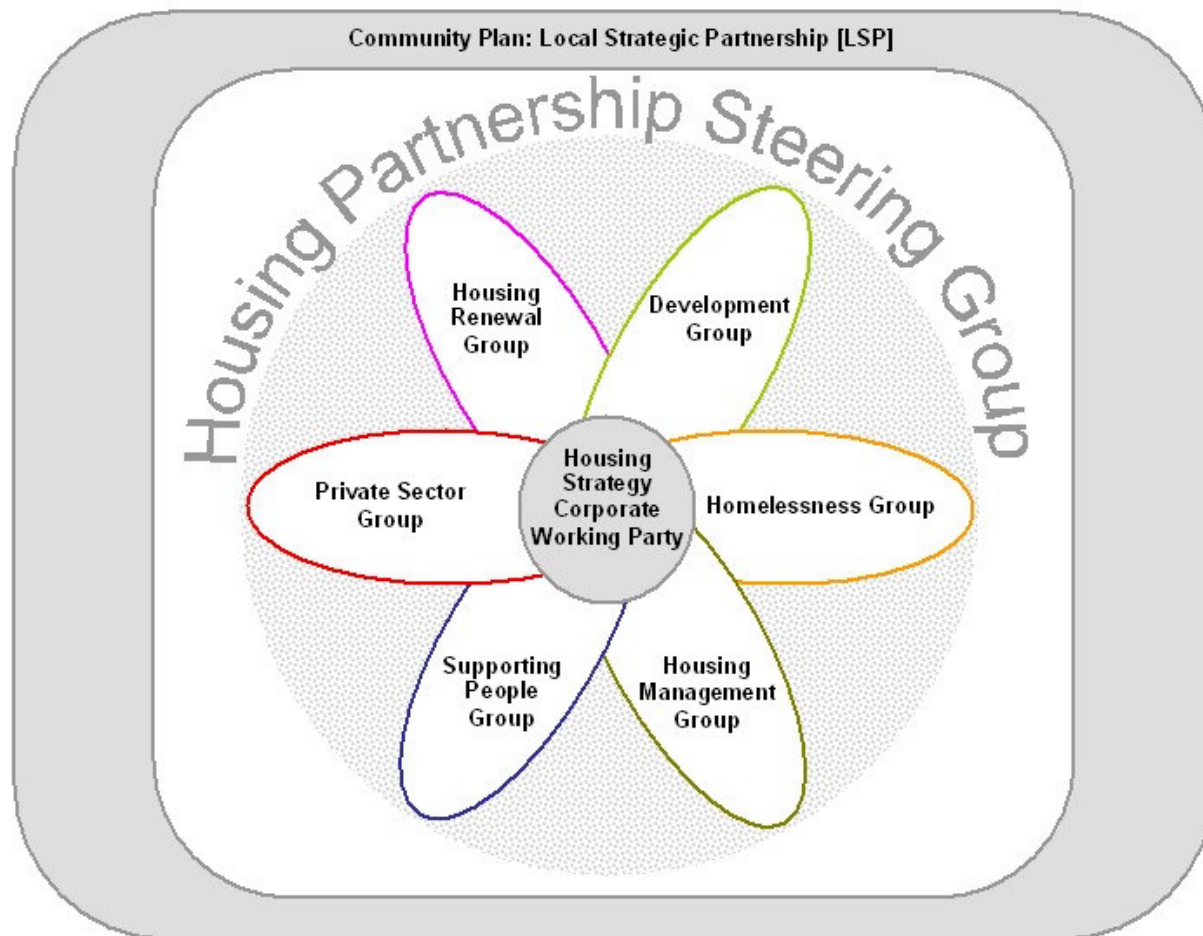
What does the Torbay Housing Partnership hope to achieve?

- To maximise the amount of social housing provided within Torbay through more effective use of the planning system; maximising funding opportunities, making best use of available funding and through a strategic approach to development
- To improve housing advice and options within Torbay across all tenures
- To maximise best use of existing stock and its overall condition in Torbay
- To help more vulnerable people live independently
- Increase the prevention of and support to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- To ensure a sustained reduction in B&B provision for families with children to meet national targets
- To revisit Torbay's approach to renewal to ensure an integrated approach with the private sector

2. Position Statement

The Torbay Housing Partnership - Roles and Structure

Set out below is a chart, which outlines the partnership structure, which has emerged. There are six linked “action groups” radiating from a central Corporate Working Party. A Partnership Steering Group steers and monitors the work of the sub groups to ensure consistency and focus.



Appendix ** lists the organisations within the partnership and details the partnership meetings which have taken place as part of the housing strategy consultation.

Date	Main Group	Sub Group
30-Apr-03	Torbay Housing Partnership	All
17-Jul-03	Torbay Housing Partnership	All
26-Aug-03	Torbay Housing Partnership	Management Group
11-Sep-03	Torbay Housing Partnership	All
24-Sep-03	Torbay Housing Partnership	Management Group
26-Sep-03	Torbay Housing Partnership	Development Group
8-Oct-03	Torbay Housing Partnership	Development Group
11-Oct-03	Torbay Housing Partnership	Steering Group
26-Nov-03	Torbay Housing Partnership	Management Group

Customer Involvement and Feedback

We are keen to know what our customers think about the way we work and to improve what we do as a result of feedback received. We commissioned Shelter to carry out a baseline survey of our clients in July 03. This has been followed up by a survey of clients since the last survey to find out what improvements we had made over the 3 month period, and to set targets for service standards in the future.

The Shelter survey format is now being used by our staff internally to see what clients think of our service on an ongoing basis.

The summary results of the survey are set out in Appendix **;

Involving the Private Sector

It is fundamental that the private sector plays a key role in the delivery of housing solutions for Torbay. There are a number of ways in which this is being achieved;

1. Involvement of private sector representatives on the Housing Partnership Steering Group
2. The Private Sector Leasing Scheme
3. Close working generally with the South Devon residential Landlord's Association and the Landlord's Forum
4. Closer working with developers over planning issues (see theme 2)

3. Priorities and Action Plan

Theme 1 aim – ‘To develop and maintain a housing partnership which is focussed, co-ordinated, transparent, efficient and accountable, to deliver housing options which meet the needs of Torbay’s communities’

Priorities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a partnership structure with clear definitions between strategic and operational issues 2. Increase Participation 3. Involve stakeholders in shaping the future of partnership and the strategy 4. Maintain the increased profile of affordable housing 5. Increase involvement of private sector across all tenures in the housing partnership 6. Review progress and refocus our activities on a regular basis 7. Maintain appropriate and adequate resources within the partnership 8. Following publication, to disseminate the strategy to a wider audience 9. To provide good quality accessible housing advice 10. Brief all staff across the council, PCT and Probation on the role of Supporting People 11. Develop a 5 year strategy for Supporting People in Torbay

Priority	Action	Ownership	Target	Progress	Links and Comments
1. Create a partnership structure with clear definitions between strategic and operational issues	Build on the draft framework for the partnership structure and adopt at next steering group meeting	Housing Services Manager	Jun 2004		
	Rework the Social Housing Agreement for adoption by steering group	Development Group Management Group	Mar 2004		
2. Increase Participation	Develop the Strategy through wider consultation with stakeholders				
3. Involve stakeholders in shaping the future of partnership and the strategy	Commission a formal annual independent review of customer satisfaction to inform the partnership’s direction	Housing Services Manager	Dec 2003		
	Examine ways of including residents within the partnership	Steering Group and Executive Member	Feb 2004		
4. Maintain the increased	Develop an approach to improve the profile of	Housing	Dec 2004		

Priority	Action	Ownership	Target	Progress	Links and Comments
profile of affordable housing	social housing (link to iN Business for Neighbourhoods in theme 5)	Partnership Steering Group			
5. Increase involvement of private sector across all tenures in the housing partnership	Set up a private sector group	Housing Services Manager	Apr 2004		
	Set up administrative support to facilitate wide involvement in private sector group	Housing Partnership	Apr 2004		
6. Review progress and refocus our activities on a regular basis	Review and monitoring procedures to be agreed	Steering Group	May 2004		
7. Maintain appropriate and adequate resources within the partnership	Strengthen the Council's housing function by the provision of additional resources and by merging private and public housing functions	Managing Director	May 2004		
	Address locally the nationwide trend for social housing to be seen as an unattractive career, to avoid a shortage of trained and experienced housing staff.	Project Lead Housing Management Group	Aug 2004		
8. Following publication, to disseminate the strategy to a wider audience	Investigate use of a specialist team to present the strategy to resident groups to seek additional views/comments and develop wider involvement	Housing Services Manager and Executive Member	Feb 2004		
	Develop an interactive web based strategy format	Housing Partnership Officer	May 2004		
9. Provide good quality accessible housing advice	Review Performance indicators for housing advice (link to theme 4, Homelessness Strategy and broader Advice Forum)	Housing Services Manager	Dec 2003		
10. Brief all staff across the council, PCT and Probation on the role of Supporting People	Arrange two half day training sessions	Supporting People Manager	Jan 04		
11. Develop a 5 year strategy for Supporting People in Torbay	Link the development of the strategy to Torbay's Housing Partnership Strategy and the results of the Housing Needs Survey.	Supporting People Manager	Nov 04		

Theme 2 - Enabling Regeneration & Affordable Homes

1. Context – National, Regional and Local

National

- £350m to speed up planning – Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG) Local / Development Plan timetable
- Revise PPG1 – design out crime;
- Private Housing – extra £30m available in both 2004/05 and 2005/06 to help LA to fund new ways to fund repairs/improvements for vulnerable, elderly low income tenants/homeowners through Regional Housing Body.
- Gap Funding – enable new housing in deprived areas
- Home Ownership Task Force - improve delivery and options for affordable housing;
- English Partnerships role - £521m to assemble sites;
- Empty Homes – Government consulted in Spring 2003 to give local authorities powers to lease long term properties in high demand areas;
- Regional development Agency and English Partnerships produce Brownfield Action Plans and link to Regional Housing Bodies;
- Commission for Architecture and Built Environment/Countryside Agency – improve quality of design;
- Local Strategic Partnership at heart of strategy to revitalise deprived neighbourhoods. “Plans to improve housing will be required to form part of a wider strategy for neighbourhood renewal and Sustainable communities. Housing providers to work closely with Local Strategic Partnerships;

Regional

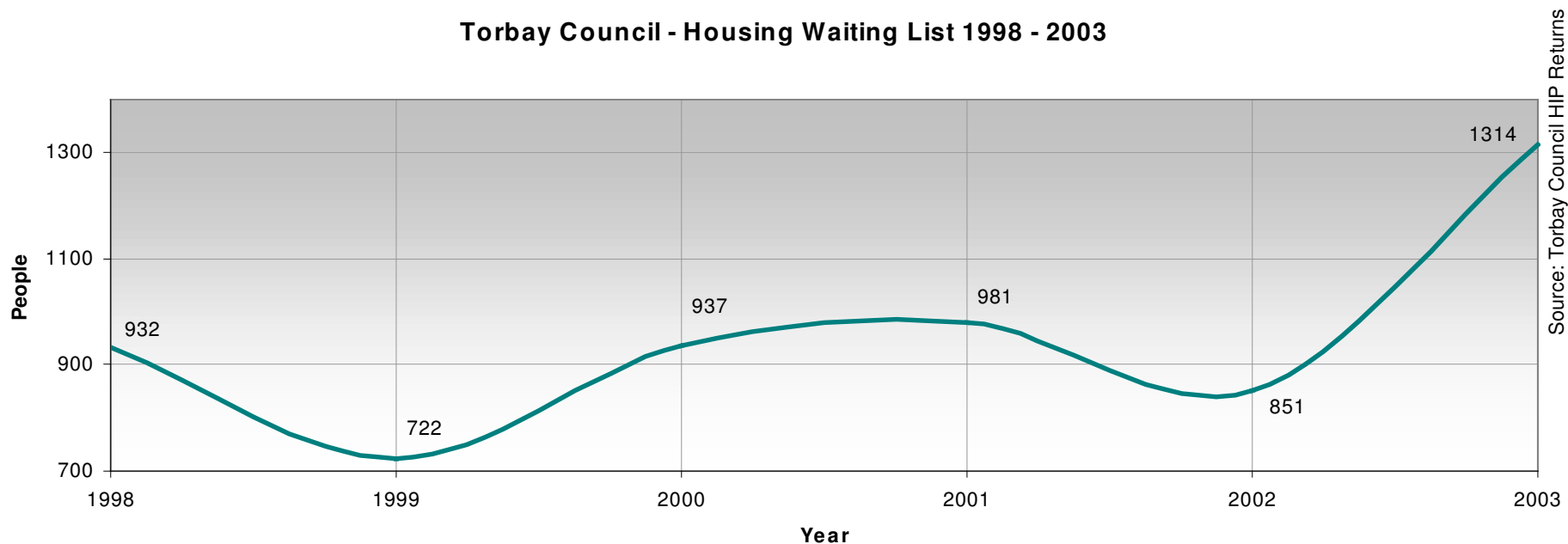
- SWHB 1st priority – “More Affordable Homes for the South West. Torbay current funding almost £3m. Future funding to be agreed
- SWHB Second priority - private sector renewal (supporting vulnerable people living in the private sector)

Local

- Recent Housing Needs Survey says 1800 new homes per year are required, but the local Plan only allows for 135 homes per year through the planning system
- House Condition and Energy Survey Produced
- “Supplementary Planning Guidance has now been issued on affordable housing via private development

3. Position Statement

Torbay Council - Housing Waiting List 1998 - 2003



Torbay has no direct access to temp provision other than Bed and Breakfast, and therefore it needs a steady supply of permanent social housing. The supply is limited due to a number of factors, which include;

- Funding
- Land supply and the volume of development being carried out

The partnership includes a number of active Housing Association development partners, who have produced a number of new social housing units over the last few years. **Appendix **** shows details of these development partners and the schemes they have produced.

Conference Outcomes – 25th June 03

Summarised below are the main points from the Partnership Conference held in June which relate to this theme;

Area 1 - Design

- We shouldn't be frightened by new agenda of higher density development.
- We need to bring in urban designers/highway engineers and landscape architects to work with architects.

Area 2 - Planning

- Number of homes needed is 5½ times number to be built over 5 years!
- Can we bring forward more green-field sites? (Note - although this would appear to be a logical solution to lack of land for affordable housing, there are significant constraints in doing so, both in terms of national planning guidance and local policy)
- "Windfall" sites are essential to alleviate Torbay's housing targets. Planning conditions are needed to secure affordable housing, with a "cascade" approach to ensure that the houses go to the right people.
- Do we need to pay education contributions (for planning) from affordable housing?
- Some Councils will only accept social rented housing from developers. This can result in developers saying, "this isn't viable".

- Other planning obligations can lead to competing aspirations
- We need certainty in Local Plan Policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Site specific local plan policies
- Use of Negotiating Team (housing, planning, engineers, legal staff and education representatives?).
- Supplementary Planning Guidance is very good, but it misses out the financing of Affordable Housing on site.
- Any future development should include an element of affordable housing.
- We should try to create an inclusive partnership including landowners and developers.
- Council has leadership role here – and should use its planning policies to achieve results.

Empty Homes

The guidance – "Empty Property – Unlocking the Potential" prepared on behalf of the ODPM points out that underused accommodation includes former commercial buildings such as warehouses, storage areas over shops and factory units. These have the potential for conversion to dwelling usage. The need to reduce the number of empty homes is supported in the Regional Strategy Statement and is a shared goal in the planning guidance PPG3 (Housing).

As the General Needs survey pointed out **Torbay has a serious shortage of affordable housing**. Bringing long-term vacant homes back into use and the conversion of other buildings will contribute towards easing this burden.

From the House Condition Report 2001 it is estimated that 3.6% of Torbay's housing stock is empty compared with 3.9% nationally. Of the 2,173 empty dwellings only 104 were classified as being long term vacant. The vast majority was in the course of sale or modernisation and had been empty for less than 6 months.

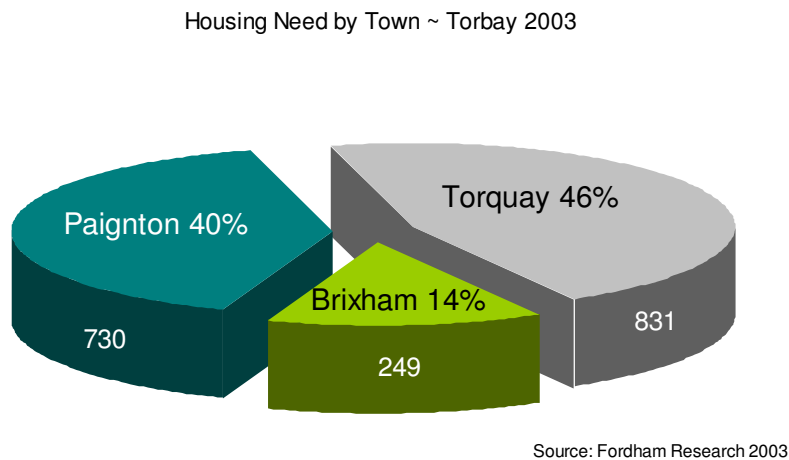
In the last 2-3 years the Council have grant-aided (at £5,000 per unit) the restoration or creation of 22 flats in former commercial accommodation. These have either been in or adjoining an area of improvement activity, or have been in premises that are uneconomic to convert. Grant aid has not been given for the conversion of former hotels to flats, as this would have been, in effect, subsidising a commercial venture.

Effective service delivery will depend upon a co-ordinated and systematic approach to the owners and potential partners.

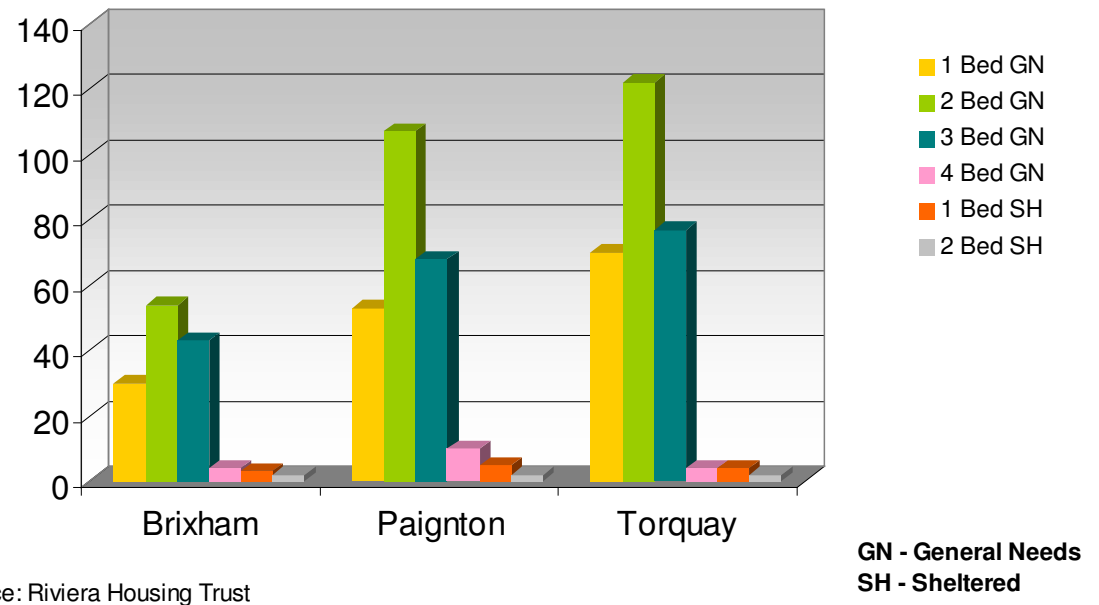
The Government are considering powers to enable local authorities to place management orders on empty homes for their long term leasing In order to further develop the strategy more complete information is required on:

- The location and condition of long term empty homes
- The location and scope for conversion of under-used commercial accommodation

4. Needs Analysis



Proportional Demand for dwellings, by Size ~ Torbay as of August 2003



The Housing Need Survey

A Housing Needs Survey Was carried out by Fordham research in (date). The survey covered all areas and tenure groups in Council area and analysis of need based on 1919 responses, weighted to make census info also used re Household size. Some key findings for Torbay;

- 59,000 Households
- 75% owner occupiers,
- 7.7% social renting tenants
- 17.3% in the private rented sector.
- Average Household income was found to be £18,000 P.A. against a regional average of £21,000 and national average of £23,000.
- Average private rent income £11K

- Average social housing income £6K

Amount of New Affordable Housing Required

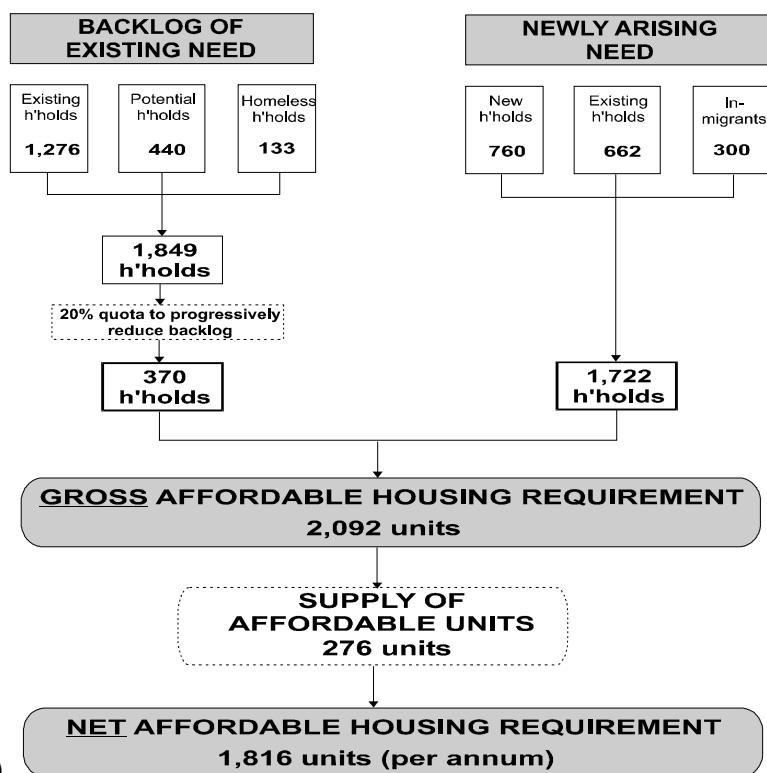
Extract from the Fordham Housing Needs Survey;

“Having made estimates of the numbers of households currently in need and those projected to fall into housing need in the future along with projected supply it is possible to arrive at an estimate of the total requirement for additional affordable housing to meet housing need.

The first element is the backlog of existing need. This is an estimated 1,849 households – made up of 1,276 existing households, 440 potential households and 133 homeless households. The final stage is to include a quota to progressively reduce this backlog. A reduction in the backlog of need of 20% per year has been assumed in Torbay. The annual need to reduce the backlog is therefore 370 dwellings per annum.

The newly arising need is estimated to be 1,722 households per year – this is made up of 760 from household formation, 662 from existing households currently living in the Council area and 300 in-migrant households.

*In total it is estimated that there is an annual need over the next five years for 2,092 affordable homes (370+1,722). The supply to meet this need is estimated at 276 dwellings per annum. **Therefore there is an estimated annual shortfall of 1,816 affordable homes.***



Summary of housing needs situation (per annum)

Policy recommendations from Housing Needs Survey

Generally developers are asked to provide a percentage of the homes on their site for affordable housing. Historically (from custom and practice) this has been a percentage of total build rates, and is currently set at 30% for Torbay. Fordham believes that any percentage target would be justified in Torbay due to the very high need identified.

Another key area is the concept of “threshold levels”. Government guidance is that a requirement to provide social housing should only apply to sites of 25 dwellings or more, or sites over 1 hectare in size. The Local Plan was reviewed by a Planning Inspector who has supported the Council’s view that the threshold should be 15 dwellings and above, or 0.15 hectare in size. Fordham think that Torbay is an exceptional case and that any threshold would be justified – i.e even very small developments would have to provide social housing.

Main recommendations from Fordham;

- That the Council should try and secure as much additional affordable housing as possible, and should secure a reasonable percentage of all allocated sites as affordable housing. (Also through 100% “social housing” sites and conversions/empty homes)
- The private rented sector can be used short term to make up for the shortfall but this is not a long-term solution.
- In the owner occupied sector, the council should encourage building of smaller 1 & 2 bedroom homes only.
- Intermediate housing should cost only a little more than social rents or a series of separate products is needed covering the fullest range of affordability.

Fordham also produced a “Possible Solutions” document to the housing needs problems identified. The Executive Summary is attached at [Appendix **](#), and the content of the document has been included in the “Options and Resources” section below

5. Priorities and Actions

Theme 2 aim – ‘Increase the availability of decent affordable homes for people in housing need as part of a co-ordinated approach to regeneration’

Priorities

1. Maximise the number of high quality new affordable homes delivered in Torbay over the strategy period by effective use of funding opportunities and the planning system
2. Make the best use of existing stock to meet the need identified
3. Ensure an integrated approach between affordable housing provision and the private sector
4. Provide innovative new housing solutions

Priority	Action	Ownership	Target	Progress	Links and Comments
1. Maximise the number of high quality new affordable homes delivered in Torbay over the strategy period by effective use of funding opportunities and the planning system	Identify and maximise all possible funding sources for new build housing, renewal and regeneration, including particularly Single Housing Investment Pot funding from the South West Regional Housing Body	Development Group	Jan 2004		
	Develop 2 year/10 year development programmes	Development Group	Dec 2003		
	Map Recycled Capital Grant Funds available for Torbay develop a disposal policy	Development Group	Dec 2003		
	Examine what Council resources can be used to assist in the provision of social housing, including land holdings and put recommendations to Housing Strategy Working Party for consideration as part of Corporate Asset Management bid round 2003	Housing Services Manager / Estates Manager	November 2003		
	Investigate consortium bidding arrangements in line with Housing Corporation Guidance	Development Group	Nov 2003		
	Liaise with English Partnerships to establish what funds/landholdings they may have available in Torbay for brownfield regeneration	Housing Services Manager	Feb 2004		
2. Make the best use of existing stock to meet the need identified	Identify the extent of overcrowding and under-occupation within the stock, and develop strategies to optimize occupation, balancing the Homelessness Strategy with the need to establish and maintain stable communities	Management group	May 2004		Links to the homelessness strategy

Priority	Action	Ownership	Target	Progress	Links and Comments
	Investigate incentive to Tenants in order to encourage them to move to more suitable homes.	Management group	TBA		
	Produce remodeling proposals for low demand stock to meet strategic priorities	Management group	TBA		
	Finalise the consultation process to inform the new Housing Renewal Policy.	Housing Standards Manager	Dec 2003		Links to renewal strategy
	Agree new Housing Renewal Policy	Housing Standards Manager	Apr 2004		Links to Renewal Strategy
3. Ensure an integrated approach between affordable housing provision and the private sector	Revise and agree Empty Homes Strategy to assist with the accommodation of households on waiting list & to regenerate local areas	Housing Services	Sept 2004		Link to Private Sector Division
	Include developers in Development Group and agree a collaborative way of working	Development Group	Dec 2004		
	Carry out research to advise on the practical implications for developers in delivering the terms of the SPG for developers in order to construct a transparent, sustainable mechanism for future joint delivery of affordable housing through the planning system	Torbay Council Housing Planning Taskforce	Apr 2004		
	Review Supplementary Planning Guidance and agree standard planning conditions for RSLs	Development Group / Housing Planning Taskforce	June 2004		
	Develop proposals to increase the use of mixed use development opportunities	Development Group	Dec 2004		
4. Provide innovative new housing solutions	Ensure that social housing can be retained "in perpetuity" where appropriate	Housing Planning Taskforce	Apr 2004		
	To work with the community to empower self-build housing schemes	Development Group	June 2005		
	Investigate off-site manufacture of affordable homes	Development Group	Jun 2004		

Theme 3 - Promoting Healthy Housing

1. Context – National, Regional and Local

National Priorities - Health

- **Vulnerable Groups - Older people and the very young**
- **Cold related deaths** (60,000 per year nationally)
- **Injury in the home** (more than 4000 people die every year nationally following accidents)

Key interventions which will contribute to **closing the life expectancy gap** include; “Improving housing quality by tackling cold and dampness and reducing accidents at home”

The Government Strategy “**Tackling Health Inequalities**” has 4 themes;

1. Supporting families, mothers and children
2. Engaging Communities and Individuals
3. Preventing Illness and providing effective treatment and care

Its aims relating to housing and communities are as follows;

- Improved Social Housing and reduced fuel poverty among vulnerable people

Research by the Audit Commission has highlighted the risks to children and families of living in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. The Homelessness Act 2002 aims to ensure that no Local Authorities have families in Bed and Breakfast after March 2004. Torbay has embarked on a Private Sector Leasing Scheme, which will provide suitable accommodation for such families. The homes being leased have to meet a minimum standard.

National Priorities - Housing Standards

The 2002 Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order

This confers on local housing authorities a new power to improve living conditions in their area and allows:

- The acquisition of living accommodation, as an alternative to adapting, improving or repairing it.
- The adaptation, improvement, repair, alteration, conversion or enlargement of living accommodation.

- **Damp homes** (children in are up to three times more prone to coughing and wheezing than children in dry homes)

Key interventions which will contribute to **closing the gap in infant mortality** include; “Improving Housing Conditions for children in disadvantaged areas”

4. Addressing the underlying determinants of health and dealing with the long term underlying causes of health inequalities

- Improved access to public services in disadvantaged communities

Assistance can be in the form of grants, loans, equity release, and the provision of materials. The new power is not exercisable until the Council has adopted and published a policy, and the power must be exercised in accordance with that policy.

Decent Homes Legislation

A decent home is one which is wind and weather tight, warm and has modern facilities. It reflects what social landlords spend their money on. To set a national target a common definition of decent is needed so all social landlords can work towards the same goal.

A decent home meets the following four criteria:

a – It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing

Dwellings below this standard are those defined as unfit under section 604 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by the 1989 Local Government and Housing Act).

b – It is in a reasonable state of repair

Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those where either:

- one or more of the key building components are old *and*, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair; or
- two or more of the other building components are old *and*, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair.

c – It has reasonably modern facilities and services

Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those which lack *three or more* of the following:

- a reasonably modern kitchen (20 years old or less);
- a kitchen with adequate space and layout;
- a reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less);
- an appropriately located bathroom and WC;
- adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem);
- adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.

d – It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

This criterion requires dwellings to have both effective insulation *and* efficient heating.

Regional

SW Housing Body - Second priority - private sector renewal (supporting vulnerable people living in the private sector)

- Private sector homes (86% of the region's 2.16 million homes) have significant levels of disrepair and 5.6% do not currently meet minimum statutory fitness standard, having poor amenities and low energy conservation. In the private rented sector, poor management and tenant insecurity often exacerbate these problems.
- The most vulnerable groups are often dependent on this sector, living in the poorest conditions and worst managed properties. The government has therefore extended the decent homes target to cover private sector properties occupied by vulnerable groups.
- The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order, which came into effect on 18 July 2003 provides authorities with much greater flexibility in devising a strategy to deal with private housing in poor condition
- £30 million of SHIP funding has been allocated in 2004/05 to help local authorities support new ways to fund repairs and improvements to the homes of low income and vulnerable homeowners/tenants, especially older people.
- This will be increased to £50m for 2005/06 to reflect the high proportion of privately owned stock in the region.

- The SWHB has commissioned innovative bids from local authorities, for the Private sector Renewal Funding Scheme, which focus on the use of loans (including equity release) These resources will be in a separate sum (in the form of standard Basic Credit Approvals (BCA) under the existing capital expenditure control system) within the single capital pot framework.

Local

Include report on restructure of health and social services and the setting up of a member commission

Housing Related Priorities in the Report by the Director of the Torbay NHS in her Annual Report

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting those with mental health problems • Improving access to public services and facilities for those with learning disabilities and the homeless • In conjunction with the Housing strategy to identify a plan of action to address local needs for disadvantaged communities |
|---|
- Supporting targeted intervention - working across agencies to raise awareness of grant opportunities for those on benefits to improve insulation and heating to reduce fuel poverty and excess winter deaths

3. Position Statement

Fuel Poverty in Torbay

Living in cold damp houses that cannot be heated adequately leads to an increased burden of preventable illness such as respiratory infections, premature heart disease, asthma, stroke and exacerbated mental health problems.

Excess winter deaths in the UK are higher than in colder countries such as Scandinavia, where fuel poverty is virtually unknown.

Fuel Poverty – *“The inability to afford to adequately heat the home”* occurs when people need to spend more than 10% of disposable income on energy to achieve adequate levels of warmth in their home.

Main reasons for Fuel Poverty are, low income, poor quality housing, inefficient and expensive heating systems, and increased demand for warmth because of age, ill health or disability.

(Housing and Health, building for the future BMA May 2003)

The total number of homes in Torbay estimated to be at risk of fuel poverty is 15,627, or 26% of the total number of private sector households. This has more recently increased to 27% against 24% of households in Devon. 3 wards have a %age excess of 30% - Tormohun, Coverdale and Ellacombe

The elderly living alone are at greatest risk of fuel poverty. 63% of single pensioner households experience fuel poverty, compared with around a quarter of pensioner couple households.

Since the passing of the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 Governments have required Councils to promote and encourage overall energy efficiency in the home. The main purpose is to reduce waste of limited fuel resources, and at the same time provide homes that can easily be maintained at a comfortable level of warmth.

There is considerable concern at the number of excess winter deaths, most noticeable in the elderly and housebound who cannot afford to heat their homes properly. The **Government's Warm Front Scheme** is specifically aimed at grant aiding thermal insulation and central heating works for the elderly and vulnerable. Local authorities in Devon have combined to have a County wide approach through the Heat Devon partnership. This enables co-ordinated working with Government agencies, energy providers and shares funding on promotions.

In 1998 Torbay Council adopted the mission statement "To achieve excellence in home energy conservation throughout the Borough".

- We intend to continue promotional work with our Devon partners; further develop links with the energy providers and trade on insulation measures, and the use of energy efficient goods. and to discuss energy saving/economic heating measures with RSLs on an area basis.
- We will develop, in conjunction with PCT and other partners, an effective means of improving living conditions, and particularly standards of heating for the most vulnerable groups.
- We will consider, in the general revision of renewal policy specifically the introduction of a loan or equity release scheme for improved heating/insulation works in those homes not qualifying for other assistance.
- We will systematically implement with partner agencies a rolling programme of identifying vulnerable persons living in greatest need and give appropriate advice and assistance on improving conditions.

We will continue to work with Heat Devon and partners in promoting the strategy.

Housing Renewal Policy

A summary of this policy is set above in the "national influences" section, and **Torbay is embarking on a consultation process with respect to the wider Housing Strategy**, presenting an opportunity to include the necessary consultation relevant to the development of the housing renewal policy.

The consultation period is likely to conclude towards September of 2003. It will be necessary therefore to approve an interim housing renewal policy from July, pending the outcome of the consultation process. The policy will include;

- Grants to make unfit dwellings fit for habitation.
- Grants for emergency repairs to dwellings where health or safety is at risk.
- Conversion of properties to provide dwellings (where "gap funding" is necessary for economic viability), or to renovate the exterior (within a "block repair" scheme).
- Grants for special initiatives,

The House Condition Survey identifies **2.7% of dwellings as unfit, and 7.8% as needing substantial repairs**. Both of these are below national averages, but need addressing nonetheless.

Torbay's CPA Improvement Plan sets targets for housing performance, under the heading "Strengthening Local Delivery – Improving Areas of Performance": Objective 4.5.1 of the Plan gives a target for BVPI 62 (unfit dwellings made fit) of 6% for 2003/04 (up from 4% for 2002/03).

This target is reflected in **Transforming Torbay – Making Change Happen**, under theme 2 – Protecting and Enhancing Torbay’s Environment, Aim 2.9, Objective 1(4) – **Make fit 6% of unfit dwellings and bring 6 empty properties back into use.**

The Policy was formally adopted on 18th July 2003, as an interim measure. It will be developed throughout late 2003 and early 2004, subject to consultation with key stakeholders, and the further development of regional/national guidance/initiatives. The target date for the revised renewal policy is July 2004.

Capital resources for the year 2003/04 will be £450000. This amount is available for all housing renewal grants, and contributions to capital works administered by other agencies (e.g. Heat Devon, Crime and Disorder Partnership). It does not however include Capital funding for Disabled Facilities Grants.

Revenue support of £55k will also be provided to the Anchor Staying Put Home Improvement Agency

4. Needs Analysis

House Condition and Energy Survey

This survey was commissioned by the Council in 2001 and was carried out by Consultants.

A random sample of 1500 property addresses was taken, and, the area was sub-divided into 3 three study areas in which wards were grouped to give comparably sized dwelling populations. The summary findings on a “credit and Debit” basis are set out below. More detailed information from the survey is contained in **Appendix ****

On the “Credit” Side

- Torbay is situated in the on the South Devon Coast in an area known as “The English Riviera”.
- Torbay receives over 1.5 million visitors per annum and boasts the wide range of attractions associated with the title of Britain’s premier holiday resort, to which it lays claim.
- Made up of three principal towns (Torquay, Paignton and Brixham) Torbay is the main conurbation in this part of Devon and the area administered by the Council covers 24 square miles, has a population of approximately 123,000 and a coastline of 22 miles.
- Torbay is well placed for quick and easy access to all parts of the country via the motorway, rail, air and sea networks. For example, London is 3.5 hours away by rail and European air and sea connections are available from Exeter and Plymouth.
- Most property was been built since World War II (55%) with under half that amount (25.9%) being constructed before 1919.
- The cost per house to remedy unfitness (£2,519) is lower than the national figure for all dwellings (£5,233).
- The overall energy efficiency of the private sector stock is close to the national average with an average NHER of 5.6 and an average SAP of 46 (compared to the national averages of NHER between 4.0 and 4.5 and SAP about 44).

On the “Debit” side

- 2.7% of Torbay’s housing stock is classified as unfit.

- Levels of substantial disrepair (7.8%) are recorded across the District. This stock requires urgent investment and intervention to halt the decline towards unfitness.
- The private sector requires an immediate investment of £4.09 million to deal with backlog repairs as a minimum i.e. to just make fit.
- To deal with urgent repairs as well increases the financial burden to £23.73 million.
- With general repairs needed in the next five years the costs escalate to £46.61 million
- Private rented tenants are five times as likely to live in unfit conditions than owner-occupiers.
- Wage levels are low. Over half of household heads earn less than £7,500 per annum. Taken with rising house and land prices there is clearly a need for affordable rented housing.
- The total number of homes estimated to be at risk of fuel poverty is 15,627, or 26.0% of the total number of private sector households.

Barriers to Good Health and Housing

The “Future of Housing IN Torbay” Conference in carried out workshop sessions to identify the main barriers to good health and housing

Top priority

Barriers	Suggestions	Who?
Lack of co-ordination & sharing of knowledge	Torbay council to take a leading role with link to Local strategic partnerships & Torbay Partnership committee. Build on local implementation groups; establish a directory of contacts especially web-based. Join up strategies e.g. anti-poverty strategy.	Particularly Social services, Primary Care Trust.
Low wage economy	Income maximisation Skills training	Job centre. Pensions agency.

Medium priority

Barriers	Suggestions	Who?
Resistance to change	Enable community to say what their needs are	Local strategic partnership, SRB programme, pilots, Community plans, conference plan.
Actual mix of housing locally Quality of local stock	New homes – well designed, density, eco friendly, Homes for life (Egan compliant). Green homes – pilot in Torbay. Low cost in use heating.	
People suffer in silence. Lack of knowledge of what is available.	Information available and accessible – GP surgeries, day centres, libraries.	Torbay partnership committee
Lack of funding / short term finance	Credit union	
Transient / temporary accommodation	Private rented sector – enforcing standards	

Targets are not joined up	Joint training/workshops – knowledge sharing, learning together. Processes to link practice to strategy and vice versa. Positive feedback. Decent homes target. Housing strategy.	
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Lower priority

Barriers	Suggestions	Who?
Healthy seaside image masks reality. Perception of climate.	“Healthy Torbay image” – for local people as a council priority as well as tourists. Lobbying and use of media.	
Size of vulnerable population	Target resources using census data.	
Data protection	Adopt protocols	
Over reliance on voluntary sector	Serious access to long term funding for voluntary sector It is an opportunity for creativity so is it a bad thing?	Torbay local partnership group.
‘Silo’ working so people and their needs fall into the gap		

5. Priorities and Actions

Theme 3 Aim – ‘Address the links between housing situation/condition and the underlying determinants of health and deal with related long term causes of health inequalities across all tenures’

Priorities – Theme 3

1. Achieve excellence in home energy conservation throughout the Borough
2. Bring all Housing Association properties up to the “Decent Home” standards by 2010
3. Improve housing conditions and support for the priorities/groups identified in the Government’s strategy “Tackling Health Inequalities”:
4. Take steps to reduce accidents at home
5. Maximise the opportunities presented by the 2002 Regulatory Reform Order
6. Identify a plan of action to address local needs for disadvantaged communities

Priority	Action	Ownership	Target	Progress	Links and Comments
1. Achieve excellence in home energy conservation throughout the Borough	Develop an agreement on a uniform approach to improving housing standards and energy efficiency across all tenures	Housing Standards Manager / Management group / Private Sector Group	Dec 2004		Link to Private Sector Team
	Develop links with home energy providers on insulation measures and energy efficient goods	Housing Standards Manager	April 2005		
	Develop a policy for energy saving/economic heating measures within Housing Association stock	Housing Standards Manager	June 2005		
2. Bring all Housing Association properties up to the “Decent Home” standards by 2010	Produce a yearly progress report to the Housing Partnership Steering Group	Management Group / Housing Standards Manager	June 2004		

Priority	Action	Ownership	Target	Progress	Links and Comments
<p>3. Improve housing conditions and support for the priorities/groups identified in the Government's strategy "Tackling Health Inequalities":</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting families, mothers and children • Engaging communities and individuals • Improved social housing and reduced fuel poverty among vulnerable people • Improved access to public services in disadvantaged communities • 8. Assisting those with mental health problems 	Systematically implement with partner agencies a rolling programme of identifying vulnerable persons living in greatest need and give appropriate advice and assistance on improving housing conditions	Housing Standards Manager Housing Management group	**per year ??		
	Develop, in conjunction with Primary Care trust (PCT) and other partners, an effective means of improving living conditions, and particularly standards of heating for the most vulnerable groups	Primary Care trust Housing Standards Manager	May 2005		
	Carry out equipment safety checks in Houses in Multiple Occupation, particularly for Fire Safety	Housing Standards Manager	**per year??		
	Consider the implementation of the proposed "Health and Safety Hazard Rating Scheme" for Housing Associations	Housing Standards Manager	Dec 03?		
4. Take steps to reduce accidents at home	Consider, in the general revision of renewal policy, the introduction of a loan or equity release scheme for improved heating/insulation works in those homes not qualifying for other assistance	Housing Standards Manager	Dec 2004		
	Collect property condition information to enable a rolling programme of neighbourhood renewal initiatives	Housing Standards Manager	June 04		
5. Maximise the opportunities presented by the 2002 Regulatory Reform Order					
6. Identify a plan of action to address local needs for					

Priority	Action	Ownership	Target	Progress	Links and Comments
disadvantaged communities					

From Action Plans

Fuel Poverty

- Focus on improving housing conditions for the elderly, and those with young children
- Take action to prevent overcrowding of households
- Achieve excellence in home energy conservation in the Borough (26% of the total number of households are at risk of fuel poverty – i.e where households need to spend more than 10% of income on heating costs.)
- Carry out equipment safety checks in Houses in Multiple Occupation, particularly for Fire Safety
- Establish a co-ordinated approach with RSL's to develop an agreement on a uniform approach to housing standards, HECA, and anti-social behaviour
- Work with RSLs to bring properties to the “Decent Home” standards. This goes beyond the basic level of a fair state of repair and includes the provision of modern kitchen and bathroom facilities.
- Work with RSLs, consider the implementation of the proposed “Health and Safety Hazard Rating Scheme”, which will require attention to be given to hazards from fall, fire safety, risk of burns and scalds, gas safety radon and noise transmission.

Collect property condition information to enable a rolling programme of neighbourhood renewal initiatives

Theme 4 - Tackling Homelessness

1. Context – National, Regional and Local

National

The government published '[More than a Roof – a report into tackling Homelessness](#)' in March 2002, which outlines their key objectives:

- To strengthen the help to people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness.
- To develop more strategic approaches to tackling homelessness.
- To encourage new responses to tackling homelessness.
- To reduce the use of B&B hotels for homeless families with children.
- To sustain two-thirds reduction in rough sleeping.
- To ensure the opportunity of a decent home for all.

The Homelessness Act of 2002 imposed an obligation on all Local Authorities to conduct a review of homelessness and formulate a five year Homelessness Strategy for their area by 31st July 2003. Local authorities are required to consider the following as part of their Homelessness Review:

- The levels and likely levels of homelessness in the borough
- The services provided that help to prevent homelessness, help to find accommodation, or provide support for them, including support to prevent them from becoming homeless again
- The resources available to the authority and to social services, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other agencies for providing these services.

The key themes of the Strategy are to consider the supply of accommodation and other related services for homeless people, the prevention of homelessness, joint working with other agencies and assessing the support that is available to enable people to sustain tenancies. This initial review will identify gaps in current provision, leading to an action plan for improvement. The five-year strategy must be published by 31st July 2003, and must set out clearly defined SMART targets for improvements that can be easily monitored as to their effectiveness. (Source: DTLR, Feb 2002, [Homelessness Strategies: A good practice handbook](#))

The requirement to have a separate Homelessness Strategy is not an ongoing requirement, once the Housing Strategy is judged 'fit for purpose' by the Government Office, so although detail is currently held in a separate Homelessness Strategy subsequent Housing Strategies will contain all objectives and actions in relation to homelessness.

Regional and Local

Sustainable Communities in the South West – Building for the future - February 2003

- To reduce the number of homeless people and stem the rise in the number of families being housed in bed and breakfast accommodation. In June 2002, the South West had 1,300 families housed in bed and breakfast accommodation, and 61 people sleeping rough. In 2001/02, the South West had the third highest proportion of homeless people in England – 5.3 per thousand.
- We will work with local authorities to stop families being housed in bed and breakfast accommodation, except in emergencies, from March 2004, and to sustain the reduction in rough sleeping, so that from 2002 onwards it remains at or below two thirds of the 1998 level.
- To reduce crime and the fear of crime. People should be able to go about their daily lives in the knowledge that they will be safe.
- To ensure the South West is a region where diversity is valued and celebrated.
- We will work with Crime Reduction Partnerships and Drug Action Teams as they merge to bring a greater focus to tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and drug misuse in the region.
- We will reduce the fear of crime in the region by developing the neighbourhood wardens and street wardens schemes, with funding for the South West totalling £2.3m for 2002/03.
- We will improve access to opportunity for people at risk of disadvantage or discrimination for reasons of race, sex, age, sexuality, disability and faith. Regional partners are consulting on setting up a single regional equality organisation, Equality South West, covering all six equality strands.

2. Position Statement

Torbay Council's Housing Advice and Homelessness Service was inspected in November 2002 and rated as a fair service (one star) with uncertain prospects for improvement. Since the inspection Torbay has been implementing its improvement plan to address the recommendations of the report. The Homelessness Strategy Group, which has been in existence since September 2001, was expanded in February 2003 and a review and strategy published July 2003, detailing actions against the key objectives outlined above. Action Groups were formed from the strategy group in September 2003 to revisit action plans and develop proposals for consideration in December 2003.

The Council has been keen to move to a preventative approach to homelessness, as demonstrated in the previous housing strategy and with the injection of government grant funding via the Homelessness Directorate and additional Council resources the team has been expanded and has a dedicated Prevention Officer representing clients in court and receiving referrals from Housing Associations, the Court, the South Devon Residential Landlords Association and the wider team. There has been a corresponding reduction in the rising trend in homeless applications and resulting acceptances. The Council is cited in the Homelessness Directorate's publication Reducing B&B use and tackling homelessness – What's working: A Good Practice Handbook.

- 88% increase in homelessness applications between 1999 and 2003
- Rising numbers (over 200 households), and length of stay in temporary accommodation
- Increase in people with high support needs
- Shortage of accommodation options for a range of client groups and levels of support provided
- Need for multi-agency approach especially referrals
- Lack of independent housing advice
- Increasing reluctance of private landlords to accept and keep housing benefit recipients

Torbay Council has developed a private sector leasing scheme in partnership with Westcountry Housing Association to provide better temporary accommodation for families and is on target to meet the government's target that no families should be placed in B&B unless in an emergency and then for a maximum of six weeks.

3. Needs Analysis

Torbay Homelessness Review – key issues of Concern

- Increasing reluctance by landlords to accept Housing Benefit clients.
- Landlords need to be made aware of the Housing Advice Service.
- Council needs early notification of potential threat of homelessness so intervention can take place.
- Landlords' reluctance to accept Council's rent deposit guarantee scheme and lack of awareness of the scheme by landlords.
- Lack of accommodation available to benefit claimants, shortage of emergency hostel accommodation, particularly for women and young people, lack of a furniture scheme in the Bay and improvements needed regarding co-ordination of services and communication.
- Lack of referral mechanism between Housing and Social Services Financial Assessment and Benefits Team. Lack of up to date directory of services available to staff and clients.
- CAB run over capacity, which means some clients are not seen. Some people are not represented at possession hearings.
- Ongoing mediation service is needed.
- Bed blocking could lead to imposition of fines on Social Services. Cross-boundary Protocol between Housing, Health and Social Services needs to be updated.
- Lack of accommodation on discharge for young single men.
- Lack of processes to ensure move on from supported housing schemes

As at 30th September there were 218 households to whom the Council owes a full housing duty to and are awaiting permanent housing.

The breakdown of those in temporary accommodation awaiting a permanent home as at 28/10/03 is as follows (not including households in Stonecourt (21) and Steepway (7) Schemes:

Area	1 Bed		2 Bed	3/4 Bed	Total
	Total	Of which 16-17			
Brixham	2	0	7	1	10
Brixham/Paignton	1	1	1	2	4
Paignton	16	2	30	9	55
Paignton/Torquay	3	1	8	8	19
Torquay	29	9	33	26	88
Any area	10	6	9	6	25
Unspecified	10	5	6	1	17
	71	24	94	53	218

Source: Council Nominations Record

	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4*
Torbay Council homeless acceptances	253	339	352
Total Housing Association Lettings to homeless households	152	182	138**
Of which 2 plus bed	116	103	84**
Unmet Need	101	157	214

* Projection based on half year

**Projection based on 1st quarter

4. Priorities and Actions

Objectives of Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008

- To shift the focus of agencies' services to the proactive prevention of homelessness
- To secure that sufficient and appropriate accommodation is and will be available to meet the needs of people in Torbay who are or may become homeless
- To secure the satisfactory provision of support services for people who may become homeless or who may have been homeless and need support to stop them becoming homeless again
- To review, develop and adequately resource multi agency referral and assessment protocols and monitor and review their effectiveness
- To improve communications, consultation and awareness of homelessness issues throughout all relevant organisations and the wider community
- To make sure that appropriate structures and processes are in place to monitor and review implementation of this strategy

Torbay Council's Strategic Plan 2003-2008 – 'Transforming Torbay' - Homelessness related objectives and actions

Objective 2	Increase the prevention of, and support to, those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
Key Activities	To deliver the Homelessness and Housing Advice Improvement Plan by March 2004
	Review homelessness and rough sleeping in Torbay and deliver a strategy to address with SMART targets by July 2003
Objective 4	Ensure a sustained reduction of B&B provision for families with children to meet national targets
Key Activity	To deliver 50 units of accommodation through a Private Sector Leasing scheme by March 2004 to reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast as temporary accommodation for homeless families

Theme 5 – Contributing to Sustainable Neighbourhoods

1. Context – National, Regional and Local

National - Quality and choice: a decent home for all: the way forward for housing – summary - December 2000

Promoting choice through lettings in social housing

18. In the Housing Green Paper we said that social landlords should provide a more customer focused service. We proposed reforms to lettings policies which would offer choice, tackle social exclusion, help create sustainable communities and encourage the effective use and management of social housing.

19. We will do this by:

- legislating in 2000/01 to facilitate choice-based lettings policies;
- providing £11 million over the next three years to fund pilot lettings schemes that are customer-focussed and choice-based; and
- promoting choice based lettings schemes more generally.

New forms of tenure

23. The Housing Green Paper confirmed our belief that the security of tenure enjoyed by social housing tenants should not be reduced. We proposed to look at the benefits of, and options for, a new single form of tenure for the social rented sector and also at creating new flexibilities for landlords to make better use of their stock. Of those who commented on our proposals for a review the majority supported the case for a single form of tenure. We will consider these proposals further but do not propose any significant change to the Right To Buy.

Moving to a fairer system of affordable social rents

24. The Housing Green Paper set out our aim of bringing greater fairness and coherence to the structure of social rents. We also gave a commitment to keep social rents at affordable levels, well below rent levels in the private sector. A more coherent pattern of rents would support our wider aims to give tenants more choice and more of a say over the homes in which they live.

25. There was broad agreement that the current structure of rents is incoherent and desperately in need of reform. But it has proved less easy to secure consensus on the means to the end.

26. We have developed an approach which bases a property's rent on its size, its value compared to other social properties and the earnings in the surrounding area. In future, people who live in properties which are smaller, in poorer condition, or in less attractive locations should have lower rents than those in more advantageous circumstances. There should not be arbitrary differences in rents between similar properties in similar areas.

27. The new approach will be put in place over a ten-year period. Some tenants will see their rents go down. There will be rises for others, but any rises will not exceed £2 a week in any year above normal inflation-linked increases. Landlords will have some flexibility over how changes are implemented and we will expect them to consult their tenants. Housing Benefit will continue to meet in full the eligible rents of tenants on income support or Job Seekers' Allowance.

28. These reforms will help to create a social sector where rents are fair. We are looking to landlords to ensure that, in partnership with their tenants, our policy to develop a fairer and more reasonable pattern of rents is successfully delivered in detail at the local level.

29. We also want to achieve the right balance between the average rents charged by local authorities and registered social landlords. Achieving this balance will require local authority rents to rise slightly faster than the rate of inflation over the next ten years or so but still at a slower rate than in recent years. This will coincide with the continued improvement of the condition of local authority stock to ensure that all unsatisfactory council housing is brought up to a decent standard within ten years.

30. In summary, the key elements of our rents policy are:

- keeping social rents below market levels and based on size, relative property values and local earnings;
- ensuring that no tenant's rent increases by more than £2 per week per year above the normal inflation-linked increases;
- that overall rent increases for registered social landlords should be no more than 1/2 % above inflation in any year from 2002/03; and
- achieving a coherent structure for social rents within ten years, but giving social landlords some flexibility over detailed implementation.

Improving Housing Benefit

31. Housing Benefit has an important role both in terms of our welfare to work and social exclusion agenda and our wider housing objectives. We have listened and have concluded that there is a need for action on two main fronts:

- to raise standards in administration - by raising standards across the board, but also helping struggling authorities improve; and
- to simplify the system - by reforming the Single Room Rent and exploring scope for simplifying both the claims process and the 4 parallel schemes that are currently in place.

32. Action on both these fronts will promote better administration and better work incentives.

33. Our key measures are:

- raising standards in Housing Benefit administration and promoting work incentives, working with local authorities;
- setting up an expert team to help struggling local authorities tackle immediate problems, along with action to improve the situation of registered social landlords;
- developing and implementing a new performance management framework to raise standards across the board and link local authority performance to funding;
- promoting work incentives for young people through reform of the Single Room Rent;
- making Housing Benefit both easier to administer and easier to claim by streamlining and simplifying the process for making claims, and ensuring the rules are compatible with Tax Credits; and
- simplifying Housing Benefit by further exploring simplification of the 4 transitional protection schemes.

34. In addition, we are giving further consideration to options for reforming housing support over the long-term. For example, we will look in more detail at the issues raised by respondents commenting on a scheme with a flat-rate element, as well as listen to ideas raised during our consultation on the Pension Credit.

Local

Equality Issues

The Council acknowledges its statutory duty to promote equal opportunities and good race relations under Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976, as reinforced by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and its responsibilities under the European Directive on Racial Discrimination.

The Council has a Race Equality Scheme and Policy and is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity in all of its service provision, recruitment and employment practices. As part of this commitment the Council will ensure that all its dealings (as employer, service provider or

community leader) are free from racial discrimination. The Council will accordingly afford equal access to employment and services and will not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places general and specific legal duties on public sector employers.

The General Duty states that Authorities must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful race discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity *and*
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups

The Specific Duties state that Authorities must:

- Produce a Race Equality Scheme and state which functions and policies are relevant to the General Duty. Functions identified shall be assessed for adverse impact every 3 years.
- Carry out impact assessments by assessing and consulting upon the impact of a policy and monitoring policies for adverse impact (where racial groups are disproportionately disadvantaged)
- Publish results of consultation, assessments and monitoring
- Ensure public access to information and services
- Train staff
- Monitor employees (applicants for jobs, training, promotion; outcomes of appraisal; involvement in grievance and disciplinary; training received; leavers)

2. Position Statement

In February 2002 the number of people in each ward considered to be in a minority ethnic group (classification not White British, White Irish or White Other) was Torbay 856 people 0.72% Torquay 593 people 0.99% Ellacombe 57 people 0.56% Torwood 112 people 1.21% Tormohun 154 people 1.53 %.

There are no specific schemes in Torbay for BME groups. Torbay is not currently housing asylum seekers. The Supporting People team will continue to work to identify groups which may require Supporting People services and to consult with these groups in order to ensure that identified needs are met appropriately.

3. Needs Analysis

4. Priorities and Actions

Aim - To involve all local communities in the sustainable future of their neighbourhoods

- Create a balanced Community by use of Nomination Protocols and a balanced mix of new homes through the planning process
-)Improve housing advice and options within Torbay across all tenures – this needs to go in but is this the right place?
- Maintaining the balance by responsive and effective management through partnership and participation
- Social Housing Agreement

Priorities – Theme 5

1. Deliver greater choice by improving accessibility to a wide range of housing options
2. Develop a partnership approach to diversity issues, and empower Housing Associations to deal effectively with harassment
3. Look at new ways of dealing with antisocial behaviour, by working more closely with the police and others
4. Increase the use of mixed development opportunities to achieve wider community regeneration and balanced communities
5. Raise the profile of social housing to support the work being carried out by the NHF “In Business with Neighbourhoods” project

Priority	Action	Ownership	Target	Progress	Links and Comments
1. Deliver greater choice by improving accessibility to a wide range of housing options	Review the systems for allocating social housing and the way the waiting list operates, focussing on opportunities for a Torbay-wide partnership approach which delivers informed choice	Housing Partnership Steering Group	Dec 2003		
	Develop and agree a new system for letting social housing in Torbay	Housing Partnership Steering Group	Apr 2004		
	Implement the agreed new system for letting social housing in Torbay	Housing Partnership Steering Group	May 2004		
	Set up a process to share good practice and identify opportunities for Housing Associations to work with each other and with residents, to maximise community involvement in decision-making affecting Torbay neighbourhoods.	Housing Management group	Sept 2004		
2. Develop a partnership approach to diversity issues, and empower Housing Associations to deal effectively with harassment	Develop policies to help deal with all forms of harassment	Housing Management group	Dec 2004		

Priority	Action	Ownership	Target	Progress	Links and Comments
3. Look at new ways of dealing with antisocial behaviour, by working more closely with the police and others	Develop a Torbay Forum to tackle anti social behaviour	Housing Management group	May 2004		
	Develop further partnership working on anti-social behaviour, building upon the successful information-sharing protocols with the Police	Housing Partnership Steering Group	Sept 2004		
	Extend developing mediation service to include community mediation	Housing Management group	Sept 2005		
4. Increase the use of mixed development opportunities to achieve wider community regeneration and balanced communities	Share information on tenancy terms, tenures/security offered, shared ownership leases, policies on shorthold, under-age and probationary tenancies, and explore the merits of a more standardised approach across the bay	Housing Management group	Mar 2006		
	Explore and develop initiatives around play and training	Housing Management linked in to Council's Play Strategy development	Dec 2003		
	Develop formal links between agencies working within social housing neighbourhoods, including Child Protection and the Primary Care Trust	Housing Management group	Apr 2004		
	Investigate extension of the street warden scheme from Hele to other estates	Housing Management group	Dec 2003		
5. Raise the profile of social housing to support the work being carried out by the NHF "In Business with Neighbourhoods" project	See Theme 1				

Theme 6 - Assisting Independent Living

1. Context – National, Regional and Local

2. Position Statement

Supporting People “Pipeline Schemes”

Shadow Strategy. The following services are in development:

- Two projects for young people
- Extra sheltered housing for the frail elderly
- Accommodation for women at risk of violence

- Accommodation for single homeless people
- A project for people with learning disabilities

Supporting People service reviews may result in the award of “steady state” contracts. Where services are not of a reasonable quality, or found to be not strategically relevant or not achieving value for money, reviews may result in the re-modelling, re-commissioning or de-commissioning of services.

3. Needs analysis

All Supporting People Administering Authorities must complete a needs analysis by March 2004 and a 5 year strategy by November 2004. In September 2002 a Shadow Supporting People Strategy for Torbay was produced. The strategy included information on supply that identified:

- The provision of housing related support to some of the most vulnerable and socially excluded groups, such as, the single homeless, teenage parents, offenders and those with alcohol and substance misuse problems, is low when compared with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister’s (ODPM) “typical” supply profile.
- There are also comparatively fewer services in Torbay providing floating support to vulnerable people in independent housing compared to nationally. (Taken from local need surveys of Offenders/Substance Misusers carried out by Probation and other commissioners in July 2002).
- Support services for older people make up 74% of the supported provision in Torbay.
- There is a lack of very sheltered housing (accommodation that bridges the gap between residential and independent provision) for older people
- In Torbay supported accommodation for people with mental health problems forms 10% of the total supply of supported accommodation
- There are gaps in provision for younger people under 25, particularly those who were previously in the care of the Local Authority

The 5 year Supporting People Strategy

Torbay's Supporting People Strategy has a role in the delivery of many other local and national strategies, such as:

- Social inclusion
- Prevention of homeless and rough sleeping
- Torbay's Housing strategy for People with Learning Disabilities
- NHS framework, including targets on health improvement, delayed hospital discharge teenage pregnancy, harm reduction and prevention of suicide, improving the quality of life for older people
- Drug and alcohol strategies
- Community safety/Crime and disorder strategies

- The council's duty of wellbeing
- Corporate parenting

Reduction of offending, including youth offending:

- The resettlement of offenders
- Child protection
- The protection of vulnerable adults
- Neighbourhood renewal

5. Priorities and Actions

Theme 6 Aim - 'To improve the quality of life of vulnerable people in Torbay through provision of well planned, high quality housing and related support services based on individual needs and which enable people to live independently'

Priority	Action	Ownership	Target	Progress	Links and Comments
Supporting People - Improving access to public services and facilities for the homeless and other vulnerable people	Use the Supporting People programme to deliver high quality, value for money housing-related support in the areas of resettlement and tenancy sustainment.	Supporting People Manager	April 2006		
	Produce 5 year Supporting People Strategy by November 2004	Supporting People Manager			
	Review Supporting People services to ensure strategic relevance to objectives on health improvement, social inclusion, community safety, valuing diversity and prevention of homelessness.				

Priority	Action	Ownership	Target	Progress	Links and Comments
Develop the role of Torbay's Home Improvement Agency to ensure Supporting people services cover the private and home owner as well as the social housing sectors in Torbay	<p>Complete a Supporting People service review of Torbay's Home Improvement Agency with a view to bidding for additional funding from ODPM to extend the scope of housing related support to home owners.</p> <p>Investigate sources of match funding for the bid. Disabled Facilities Grant work?</p> <p>Audit of adapted/adaptable/accessible accommodation in Torbay?</p>	Supported Housing Manager			
Provide suitable accommodation and related support to meet the needs of care leavers, in line with the Council's Corporate Parenting Responsibilities					
Deliver actions from the Learning Disability Housing Strategy Action Plan	Report to Torbay Partnership Committee	Helen Toker-Lester			
	Develop more needs, supply and cost information	Jane Goodwill			
	Learning Disability Housing Conference	Housing Sub-group			
	Develop a range of housing options, including Shared Ownership and Neighbourhood Networks	Housing Sub-group			
	Plan(s) for people living with older carers	Stuart Robinson			
	Plan(s) for people who have a profound disability	Stuart Robinson			
	Plan(s) for school leavers	Jane Goodwill			
	ILF take-up campaign	Sue Fordham			
	Protocol for sharing information and referrals between Housing and Social Services	Simon Sherbersky/ Helen Toker-			

Priority	Action	Ownership	Target	Progress	Links and Comments
		Lester			
Make written information easier to access	'Better Care Higher Standards' for learning disability Easy read housing application form Easy read housing leaflet	Housing Sub-group/Housing Services Manager			
Ensure that staff are adequately trained and up to date with best practice	Review training arrangements for housing staff	Jane Goodwill			
Provide needs led services through working effectively in partnership	Involve service users, providers, carers and staff	Housing Sub-group			
Develop high quality support services through effective monitoring and review		Supporting People Lead Officer			
reduce social isolation and encourage the positive participation of older people in the community by the provision of appropriate support					
Consider housing and support options for very vulnerable people for whom all other housing options have failed					
Support younger people by providing opportunities for accommodation and support linked to recreation, employment and training	Complete further needs analysis by March 2004				
Ensure homeless households with support needs can live independently in the community	Improve risk management and identification of the support needs of prospective tenants				
Develop a resettlement support service for homeless people					
Review the demand for and accessibility of social housing					

Priority	Action	Ownership	Target	Progress	Links and Comments
for vulnerable and disabled persons					
Increase support to those with disabilities or chronic illness, adapting homes as needed					
	Provide 50 additional supported housing units for vulnerable adults by March 2004				
	A service for offenders				

8. Resources and Options

The 2003 Needs Survey by Fordham Associates identifies that a figure of 1816 new affordable homes are required each year in Torbay. The methodology for arriving at this figure is set out in theme 2. This target provides the Council with its greatest challenge in terms of resources.

There are four main areas of resource available to the Council to meet this identified need;

1. The existing supply of housing (mainly comprising re-lets from existing stock)
2. External Grant/subsidy funding from the South West Regional Housing Body termed Single Housing Investment Programme (SHIP).
3. The future supply of land available for affordable housing through private developers via S106 planning agreements. (underpinned through the Supplementary Planning Guidance recently adopted by the Council)
4. Direct subsidy from the Council in cash or “in kind”

1. Existing Supply of Housing

Fordham believes that the most significant resource available to the Council to address housing needs identified in the Needs Survey lies with relet opportunities, i.e. voids, from the existing stocks of RSL rented accommodation. The Council has revised its Allocations policy to ensure legal compliance with Homelessness Act 2002 and increased the number of points awarded to homeless households to ensure they are provided with assured tenancies through the waiting list. The Council and Riviera Housing Trust have revised the nominations approach to ensure that the Council receives its full 75% nomination rights on all property types, by operating a size based procedure of 3 nominations to the Council followed by 1 for Riviera Housing Trust.

At April 2002 the stock of accommodation comprised a total of 4,644 dwellings. Fordham have used information on the bedroom size profile of the Riviera Housing Trust stock, that formerly owned by the Council, to estimate a size profile for the total stock as set out in the table below;

Council and RSL rented stock by size

Number of bedrooms	<i>RSL rented stock</i>	
	Number	<i>Percent of total</i>
<i>Elderly (OPD + sheltered)</i>	1,188	25.6%
<i>other 1 bedroom</i>	482	10.4%
<i>other 2 bedroom</i>	1,094	23.5%
<i>3 bedroom</i>	1,760	37.9%
<i>4+ bedroom</i>	119	2.6%
TOTAL	4,644	100.0%

Source: Torbay Council Housing Solutions Analysis 2003

The analysis in the Housing Needs Survey suggested that a figure of 276 relets from the RSL stock should be assumed for future years. For convenience this has been rounded to 275.

Fordham have developed a likely size profile, drawing on detailed lettings information for Riviera properties, and assuming that turnover in the other RSLs' stock behaves in a broadly similar way. The table below sets out the detail;

Relets of Council & RSL rented stock by size

Number of bedrooms	<i>RSL rented stock</i>	
	No of relets	<i>Assumed turnover rate</i>
<i>Elderly (OPD + sheltered)</i>	87	7.3%
<i>other 1 bedroom</i>	40	8.3%
<i>other 2 bedroom</i>	89	8.2%
<i>3 bedroom</i>	52	3.0%
<i>4+ bedroom</i>	7	5.9%
TOTAL	275	5.9%

Source: Torbay Council Housing Solutions Analysis 2003.

If these figures are correct, they suggest that overall the rate of turnover within the RSL rented stock is a fraction under 6%, and thus only nominally outside the range of 6-7.5% Fordham has typically found elsewhere.

Within the overall figure there are significant variations by dwelling size, with the smaller units, and particularly those for non-elderly households, turning over more quickly, and the larger, family sized dwellings more slowly, than average.

Fordham have commonly found this pattern in other areas. However, it does mean that in the area the supply of family sized accommodation through relets is quite limited.

The RSL rented stock also provides opportunities for transfers. The available data suggests that over the last few years transfers within the RSL stock within Torbay may have fluctuated to some degree. Fordham have assumed for the present analysis an average of around 75 cases per year. The bulk of such transfers will take place within the Riviera stock.

3. Annual Programmes of Grant/Subsidy Funding

The SHIP fund is comprised of Approved Development Programme (ADP) funding via the Housing Corporation for affordable housing and the Basic Credit Approval (BCA) allocation to Torbay termed Housing Investment Programme (HIP) that forms part of the single capital pot allocated via the Capital Strategy.

Implications for Torbay

Considering the above, the likely external funding for Torbay is as follows;

The South West Regional Housing Body have 30% discretion as to the level of HIP funding to allocate to Local Authorities in the form of Basic Credit Approvals and it has chosen to maximise its discretion and supplement the ADP programme with 30% of HIP funding.

Torbay Approved Development Programme (ADP) for 2003/04 is £2,98m (which is 108% of average for the last 5 years) The new Strategic Housing Investment Pot (SHIP) ADP funding for Torbay for 04/05 is likely to be around £3-£3.5m. It is estimated that this will produce up to 65 new units based on grant levels in 2003/4.

The HIP (Housing Investment Funding for 2004/05 for Torbay based on 70% of the General Needs Index (GNI) for 03/04 is proposed by South West Regional Housing Body to be £918,000 for 04/05 and £942,000 for 2005/06, which has to be agreed by ODPM. It is estimated that this will allow the improvement of approximately 110 properties next year (Fordham Solutions Analysis). Targeted renovation of existing homes represents a low cost option to meet housing need.

In addition, funding is anticipated for Disabled Facilities Grant which is hoped will total around £255,000 for 2003/4. (This was the figure for 2002/3 and represents 60% of the total funds required. The other 40% is taken from the HIP funding, and should be deducted from the total figures of £918,000 and £942,000 above.)

4. Land available for affordable housing through private developers via S106 planning agreements.

The number of units produced via this route will depend on:

- The number of sites coming forward for development
- The proportion of affordable housing sought (30% of total under SPG);
- The site size threshold which is applied (now 15 units or above under SPG)

The analysis by Fordham has been based on information provided by the Council in connection with the HNS and upon a Consultation Draft version of Affordable Housing SPG issued in June 2003.

In addition, for comparison purposes, the Development and Conservation Planning Division are conducting an audit of past schemes to determine the number of affordable units which could have been produced had the new threshold of 15 units been applied over recent years

The Council has estimated that the application of a 30% target to allocated sites and to an estimated level of windfall sites, with a size threshold of 15 dwellings or a size greater than 0.5 ha, could deliver a total of 629 affordable dwellings over the 8 year period 2003-2011. This represents on average about 75-80 units per year. This overall number achieved will depend on negotiations with developers on individual sites.

5. Direct subsidy from the Council in cash or “in kind”

Taking the information set out above, a rough annual snapshot of the position would be as follows;

Number of units through re-lets	275
RSL stock – Transfers	75
New homes through grant funding	~65
Units provided via the planning system*	75

Total likely Supply

440

* (Dependant upon individual negotiations)

The Housing Needs Survey figure of 1816 is net of supply, so the figure potentially achieved is 140.

Some adjustments to the mix and tenure of the units identified in the existing sources of supply (above) could have a small effect, but it is unlikely that the provision mechanisms noted above (1-4) can provide any more affordable housing. Indeed, the numbers may well reduce in reality, as a result of negotiation, delays and other factors, such as the Right to Buy.

Having exhausted its more “traditional” funding routes, the Council is now considering other measures to see if a significant impact can be made on the 1816 annual need figure. The following options are being looked at carefully to assess their potential;

A) Use of Council Tax receipts from Second Homes

There are around 130 second homes in Torbay. Based on an approximate calculation on 2002/3 Council Tax levels, this could provide funds of around £500,000 pa which could be ring fenced for social housing. This could potentially provide 15 units pa based on the average grant rate in 2003/4.

B) Right to Buy receipts

The Council transferred its stock to Riviera Housing Trust in February 2001. The arrangements include a partial “claw-back” of receipts from right to buy sales, where 25% of the receipt can be used by the Council. Once again, this could be ring fenced and set aside for housing. This provided a total of approximately £200,000 in 2002/3 and the estimate for 2003/4 based on half yearly figures to date is £250,000. This could provide approximately 6 units based on the average grant rate in 2003/4.

Social Housing units lost through Right to Buy

Year	Number of units
2001/2	61
2002/3	48
2003/4 (projection)	48

Source: Riviera Housing Trust – note these are all 2/3 bed houses

The chart below sets out the figures in more detail

Right to Buy receipts received from Riviera Housing Trust by Torbay Council (including 25% re useable capital resource)

Year	Total Receipt (£)	25% re useable (£)
2001/2	550,992	137,748
2002/3	797,142	199,285
2003/4 (estimate based on ½ yr)	1,000,000	250,000

C) Expansion of the Council’s Rent Deposit Scheme

The scheme is currently restricted to rent guarantee and is not seen as attractive to private landlords. The homelessness strategy proposes reviewing the scheme and expanding it to provide rent in advance payments, as suggested by the ODPM ‘critical friend’. A budget pressure item has been submitted to resource this. This represents excellent value for money compared to the cost of temporary accommodation, as demonstrated by the current projected overspend of the temporary accommodation budget £250,000 for 2003/4.

D) Contributions in kind – Council land holdings

See Theme 2 action plan for detail

Any comparisons being made in this context should take into account the likely cost to the council of not tackling the identified need appropriately – i.e. the additional costs of unsuitable temporary accommodation etc.

4. Other resources

A) Enabling/infrastructure works by English Partnerships

English Partnerships have a remit to provide funding and support to “enable” sites to come forward, particularly in principal Urban Areas. Investigations have revealed that they do not have any landholdings in Torbay, and that funding may be limited. Further discussions are being held with English Partnerships.

B) Innovative ways of working with developers to mutual advantage

This is an area, which should be considered by the new Planning/Housing Task Force

C) Maximizing resource potential through an effective partnership structure

Already done, but will undoubtedly be enhanced by ongoing Council contributions

D) Prudential Accounting

The Council is at the initial stages of assessing its capacity for additional borrowing, which may provide a further funding mechanism.

The main change from April 2004 is that Local Authority borrowing will no longer be limited by the annual announcement of Basic and Supplementary Credit Approvals, which will disappear. Instead there will be a new duty, under Section 3 of the 2003 Act, for Authorities to determine their own “affordable borrowing limit”.

The new freedoms will give Council’s the opportunity to borrow, **without Government support**, for major projects which will enable delivery of their Strategic Plan objectives **provided they can afford to do so**.

Affordability will be demonstrated by considering the effect on the Revenue Budget and the level of Council Tax of paying the interest and repaying the debt on any new borrowing undertaken which is not supported by Government Grant. Based upon this, the Council will set its annual limits for “affordable borrowing” which must not be breached.

9. Consultation, Monitoring and Review

10. Appendices

Any other info which does not logically belong in the “Information” section
Add Appendices as follows;