

# **Herefordshire and Shropshire Joint Housing Strategy – summary**

## **Overview**

The purpose of the Joint Housing Strategy is to identify housing challenges and opportunities in Herefordshire and Shropshire and to set out how we will tackle these problems and take advantage of opportunities.

This Joint Housing Strategy covers all types of housing as well as housing support; therefore it is an important document for all of our residents.

Although Herefordshire and Shropshire Councils are producing this document, it will take into account opportunities for partnership working with housing providers, other services within each council and providers of other services such as health and the Police.

The Strategy is currently at a draft stage and we are seeking the views of our residents and partner organisations before we finalise this document.

Consultation on the Strategy ends at 5pm on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011. The Strategy will be published by the end of 2011.

## **What is the Joint Housing Strategy?**

The Joint Housing Strategy establishes the vision and sets the housing priorities for Herefordshire and Shropshire to 2015.

This enables our resources to be targeted on where they will have greatest impact in meeting housing need and achieving positive outcomes for our residents.

## **What is the vision and main priorities for housing in Herefordshire and Shropshire?**

The Joint Housing Strategy aims to take account of the overarching issues affecting public services including reductions in central Government funding and the introduction of the Localism and Big Society agendas.

The way that public services, including housing, are delivered in the future will change significantly. This means that local residents will have more control over how services are delivered in their areas.

It will also mean that some services which are currently delivered by the public sector will, in future, be delivered by other organisations such as private companies, social enterprises and by communities themselves.

It is within this context that the consultation draft housing strategy has been developed.

**Vision:**

**Housing in Herefordshire and Shropshire will be more appropriate and affordable for local people, supporting community cohesion; sustainability and helping to establish healthier and more empowered communities. Housing will be of a high quality, increasingly energy efficient and meet the long term needs of our diverse communities.**

**Priorities:**

<p><b>Priority 1:</b> Adequate and appropriate housing is provided in partnership to meet the current and future needs of local communities</p>	<p>Herefordshire and Shropshire has a balanced and flexible housing market which can respond to changes in demand, changes in the economy and support regeneration. In particular, ensuring that housing is as affordable as possible to local people, is safe and healthy and that there is a choice of housing options available across all tenures.</p>
<p><b>Priority 2:</b> Existing stock is of a high quality and used effectively</p>	<p>The condition of homes across all tenures are improved across Herefordshire and Shropshire and opportunities are taken to reduce the number of empty dwellings and to limit the impact of fuel poverty and climate change.</p>
<p><b>Priority 3:</b> Residents are empowered through having access to appropriate and timely housing support and advice about housing options</p>	<p>Appropriate and timely housing advice is available relating to all tenures. Those who wish to live more independently are supported to do so by appropriate advice and support which meets their needs. Homelessness is prevented where possible through appropriate advice and support.</p>

Under each of these priorities, each Local Authority will produce an action plan which will set out in detail what we will do to fulfil these priorities. These action plans will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

## **Why produce a Joint Housing Strategy?**

The Joint Housing Strategy is being produced by Herefordshire and Shropshire Councils in recognition of the significant shared characteristics of our housing markets and the challenges we face. It also builds upon the existing working relationships between the two areas and a strong tradition of sub-regional partnership working and will further strengthen our joint approach to tackling our housing challenges over forthcoming years.

The Strategy does not extend to Telford and Wrekin as that Council has very recently published a long term local Housing Strategy.

However, the Joint Housing Strategy will provide a framework for partnership working between all three Authorities. It is envisaged that this will lead to the development of a full sub-regional Housing Strategy in the future.

## **Housing issues and challenges in Herefordshire and Shropshire**

The main housing issues and challenges in Herefordshire and Shropshire include:

- A lack of affordable housing together with particular difficulties in accessing the housing market due to low average wages in predominantly rural communities and high average house prices
- High levels of fuel poverty
- Disrepair in the private sector
- A growing elderly population with increasing housing and support needs

The challenges ahead are significant and we therefore need to be clear how we will shape our services and work with our partners and our local communities to continue to deliver effective services which provide positive outcomes in the future.

## **How we will measure progress**

Based on the three identified priorities, we will develop timetabled action plans to meet our objectives. The action plans and overall Housing Strategy will be reviewed every year and progress will be reported.

## How can I make comments on the Joint Housing Strategy?

The consultation period for the Joint Housing Strategy is 8<sup>th</sup> July – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011. The full consultation draft document and response form is available at the West Housing Market Area Partnership website: [www.westhousingpartnership.co.uk](http://www.westhousingpartnership.co.uk) from 8<sup>th</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> September.

Copies of the Strategy are being issued to key stakeholders and residents groups and copies are also available at libraries and Council headquarter main receptions

Additionally, copies of the Joint Housing Strategy and response form can be made available at the contact below.

## Further information

The Joint Housing Strategy and consultation response form are both available on the West Housing Partnership website at [www.westhousingpartnership.co.uk](http://www.westhousingpartnership.co.uk) between 8<sup>th</sup> July and 30<sup>th</sup> September

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If you have any queries about the Joint Housing Strategy or require this publication or the Joint Housing Strategy in large print, Braille or on audio tape or another language or want more information, please contact:

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