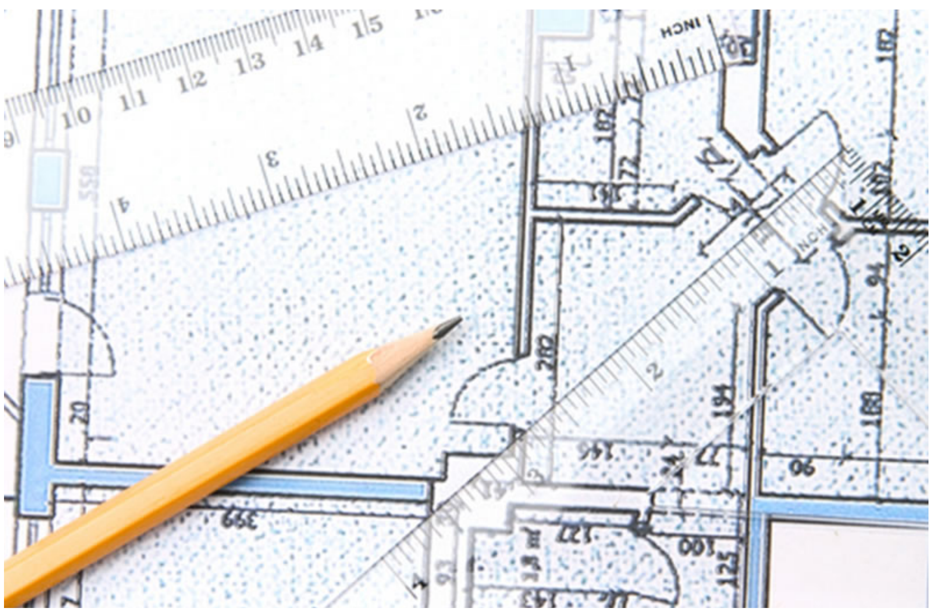
Review of Housing Needs in Tameside



Technical, Economic and Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel

Tameside Metropolitan Borough
Great lives, excellent services

October 2012

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Introduction by the Chair

I am very pleased to present this report of a review undertaken by the Technical, Economic and Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel into the work being done to address housing needs in Tameside.

Housing has a significant impact on the residents of Tameside and we need to ensure the housing needs of the residents and the community on a whole are met through effective strategies and monitoring.

With the increasingly growing population and the economic restraints we are currently experiencing, housing has experienced significant problems. Failure to address issues in relation to housing can have a much wider over arching impact on jobs, living conditions and leaves many young people without hope of owning their own home.

It was encouraging to hear of the continuity and development of close working relationships and co-operation between Tameside Council, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and private landlords with anticipation for the introduction of a ‘Landlord Accreditation Scheme’.

Housing strategies are being implemented at National, Regional and Local levels in order to address problems surrounding housing needs.

It was encouraging to hear from various sections of the Authority linked to housing and the approaches and work that are being carried out in order to address housing needs in Tameside.

On behalf of the Technical, Economic and Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel, I would like to thank all those who have participated in this review.

Councillor Alan Whitehead

Chair of the Technical, Economic and Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel

2. Summary

The review identifies the housing needs within Tameside through identifying current and predicted future trends.

This review focuses on the strategies and tools used to monitor and meet housing needs. It considers the role of the local authority and relevant partners i.e. registered providers and private landlords in ensuring that the Council's housing strategy is met and that housing accommodation in Tameside are to satisfactory standards. It appears that continuing with a partnership approach would be valuable in ensuring affordable rent and changes to the welfare system impact is minimised. This is reflected in the conclusions and recommendations of this report.

Tameside is in the process of developing varying strategies to deal with housing needs within Tameside. The Local Development Framework is under development and will provide a long-term plan for Tameside and will consider factors including housing, retail space, employment and education.

The Council is implementing varying strategies to within the housing arena for instance the Council's Affordable Homes Project 2010-2013 is working with registered providers and the Homes Community Agency (HCA) to jointly fund and deliver new affordable housing schemes.

The Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER), published in April 2009, states that Tameside sits in the weakest housing market area in Greater Manchester and therefore needs to develop a clear housing policy to achieve a local housing offer capable of attracting new residents with key skills.

Tameside Housing Strategy (2010-2016) addresses the housing issues experienced by local residents and connects these with other challenges that residents can face in terms of economic prosperity, educational attainment, health, climate change and overall sustainability.

The report recognises that further work needs to be undertaken in order to build a productive working relationship with the private rented sector. Through working with the private sector including landlords and developers Tameside Council will be able to have an impact on reducing housing issues within Tameside.

3. Membership of the Scrutiny Panel

Councillors Alan Whitehead (Chair), Councillor Clive Patrick (Deputy Chair).

Councillors Dorothy Cartwright, Janet Cooper, Paul Dowthwaite, Mike Fowler, Ann Holland, David McNally, Sean Parker-Perry, George Roberts, Michael Whitley, Robert Ambler.

Mr Anthony Moss (co-opted Member).

4. Terms of Reference

Aim of the Review:

To understand Tameside's housing market and how Tameside MBC and partners will meet the future housing needs in Tameside.

Objectives:

1. To understand housing market characteristics in Tameside i.e. dwelling and tenure profiles.
2. To understand the role of the local authority and partners i.e. Registered Providers, private landlords, private developers, in ensuring good quality housing and to explore what affordable housing is being built in Tameside.
3. To examine Tameside's 'Core Strategy' and its implications for Tameside.
4. To examine the strategies and tools used to monitor housing market demands and how these influence future housing plans in Tameside.
5. To explore the opportunity to understand housing best practice from other local authorities.
6. To produce workable recommendations for the Council and partners to ensure suitable and affordable housing is available.

Value for Money/use of Resources:

Modelling shows a shortage of houses at a national and local level. With a growing and ageing population this could increase demands in the number and types of houses required. Housing in Tameside must be both affordable to buy and rent. In a turbulent economic climate the detrimental impact of sub standard and expensive housing could result in: increased poverty, a detrimental impact to health, and deter inward investment. Effective strategies and tools for improving housing, reviewing current housing stocks and land use and considering the impact on the borough are crucial to meet the future housing requirements in Tameside.

Equalities issues:

Housing can impact on all sections of Tameside's communities. The review will consider strategies employed by Tameside and any relevant partners to ensure future housing needs in Tameside are met and are of a satisfactory condition being accessible by all groups and individuals.

Tameside Area Agreements:

The following targets from the new Tameside Area Agreement relate to the Housing Review.

Key Quality of Life Measures	
Healthy Tameside Supportive Tameside Attractive Tameside	- Life Expectancy - Poverty/ low income households

Supporting Measures	
Prosperous Tameside	- Enterprises/ new businesses
Healthy Tameside	- Affordable warmth/ Fuel poverty - Obesity/ Diet
Supportive Tameside	- Helped to live at home - Vulnerable people – achieve / maintain independent living - Homelessness

5. Methodology

5.1 The Scrutiny Panel met with Andrew Leah, Head of Housing and Planning Services, Tameside MBC, to scope out the review on housing.

5.2 The Panel met with the following participants in the review:

- John Hughes, Principal Housing Strategy Officer, Tameside MBC, to give an overview of the current housing market characteristics of Tameside.
- Nigel Gilmore, Group Engineering Manager, Strategic Planning, Transportation and Infrastructure, Tameside MBC, to give an overview of how planning processes work and how they ensure Tameside's housing needs are met.
- Simon Pateman, Senior Planning Officer, Tameside MBC, to explain how Tameside planning processes work and what strategies are employed by the Planning team.
- Kate O'Donnell, Service Unit Manager, Economic Strategy, Tameside MBC to explore Tameside's economic situation and look at the Core Strategy in detail.
- Representatives from New Charter Housing, to look at their role in contributing to the aims outlined in Tameside Council's Housing Strategy.

5.3 The Panel received an overview around Tameside Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) relating to the potential future housing development sites in Tameside.

5.4 The Panel was provided with current data on Housing in Tameside from the Economic Strategy team.

6. Background of the Review

Housing Strategy for England

6.1 This review focuses on Tameside's Housing needs and explores how the Council and its partners' will work to address the future housing needs of Tameside.

6.2 The Housing Strategy for England states that 'for decades in Britain we have under-built'. It states that the impact of the recent credit crunch has further compounded this challenge.

The economic and social consequences of this failure have affected millions: costing jobs; forcing growing families to live in cramped conditions; and leaving young people without much hope that they will ever own a home of their own.

6.3 The Housing Strategy for England suggests that the current housing market is not working. The Panel considered the following factors as part of this review:

- Buyers can't buy – with the average age of an unassisted first time buyer continuing to rise and families struggling to 'trade up'.
- Lenders are not lending enough – with high deposit requirements excluding young people and families from home ownership.
- Builders are not building – without consumers ready to buy and without enough land for development or access to finance.
- Investor's are not investing – without the right framework or incentives in place.
- Affordable housing can do more – to deliver new homes and support the social mobility and aspirations of tenants and communities.
- Tenants are struggling – as pressures increase in the private rented sector.

The Need for New Homes

6.4 England's population is growing, with the number of households set to keep on rising in the years to come. Currently, the number of households in England is projected to grow to 27.5 million in 2033, an increase of 5.8 million (27 per cent) over 2008, or 232,000 households per year[1].

6.5 International migration contributes around 40 per cent towards this projected increase in households.

6.6 Our population is also ageing fast. Of projected growth in households to 2033, 60 per cent is made up of households aged 65 years and older.

North West Regional Housing Strategy (RHS)

6.7 Tameside Council must consider both national and regional strategies. The overall vision of the Regional Housing Strategy is:

"To create balanced housing markets across the North West that support economic growth, strengthen economic and social inclusion and ensure that everyone has access to appropriate, well-designed high quality, affordable housing in sustainable, mixed and vibrant communities."

Conclusions

1. The Housing Strategy for England states that for decades in Britain we have under-built.

2. England's population is growing, with the number of households set to keep on rising in the years to come. Our population is also ageing fast.

[1] A Housing Strategy for England, 2011.

7. Review Findings

Tameside Housing Market Drivers and Characteristics

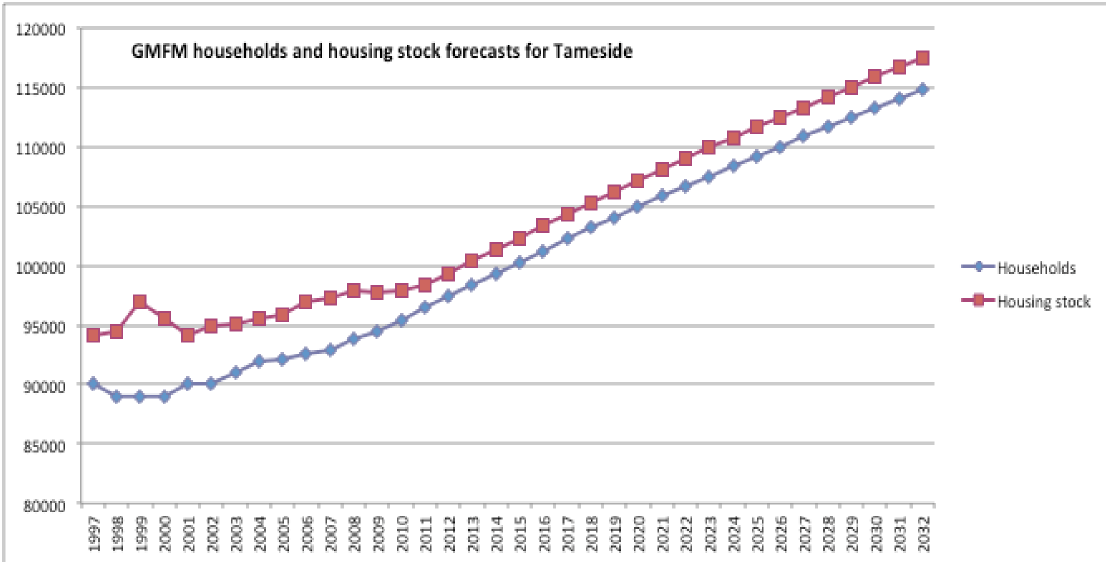
7.1 The Panel initially met with John Hughes, Strategic Housing Officer, Tameside MBC, who presented an overview of housing market characteristics in Tameside. Information focused on household numbers, economic trends and future affordability.

7.2 The Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER), published in April 2009, concluded that Greater Manchester has the potential to become the second economic centre for the UK after London. To contribute to this ambition an appropriate housing offer needs to be developed. The review states that Tameside sits in the weakest housing market area in Greater Manchester and therefore needs to develop a clear housing policy to achieve a local housing offer capable of attracting new residents with key skills. A failure to attract new residents combined with the ageing population and our current low skill base could threaten the economic sustainability of the Borough.

7.3 Tameside has a population of around 215,000. ONS projections predict that population is predicted to increase to 238,000 by 2033, an increase of 9.7%. Tameside is the 56th most deprived council area in England (out of 354), with 10 out of 141 Super Output Areas amongst the 5 per cent most deprived in England. There are areas of wealth, but also of poverty in parts of Ashton, Denton and Hattersley.

7.4 By 2033 Tameside will see a demographic shift with the number of older people. Our population of residents aged 85 and over is predicted to double. The vast majority of older people (74.7%) want to continue to live in their current home with support when needed. A minority would consider other forms of housing such as sheltered accommodation (28.8%) and new forms of older persons' accommodation including older persons' apartments (13.8%) and properties in a retirement/care village (12.7%). Amongst older person households planning to move, there are traditionally market aspirations towards two bedroom bungalows and flats

7.5 The Greater Manchester Forecasting model predicts that in terms of housing stock, Tameside currently has around 100,000. This will need to increase in the future to match population growth. The following graph shows the GM Forecasting Model for Tameside between 1997 and 2032:



YEAR	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Households	92629	92955	93786	94451	95455	96428
Housing stock	96912	97210	97885	97730	97980	98337

Chart One: Greater Manchester Forecasting Model: Tameside's past and future predicted Household and Housing Stock Totals

7.6 Chart one shows housing stock, as individual "dwellings" or physical buildings for residential use. Households are "family units", these can include units from one person households/families and upwards. The reason that there is more housing than households is because there are a number of empty dwellings in Tameside. This is discussed in section 7.10 of this report.

Tameside Strategic Housing Market Assessment

7.7 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) includes important information on the wider economy, for example travel to work and shopping patterns that influence the housing market. The Greater Manchester SHMA study (December 2008) identifies four housing market areas for the sub-region with Tameside located in the Northern Housing Market Area, along with Rochdale, Oldham and part of Manchester. It is important that this group of authorities work together on strategic housing issues.

7.8 The Council completed its own SHMA during 2008. Developers were included in the process. Arc4 (Affordable Research Communities) were commissioned to update the housing needs assessment component of the 2008 SHMA. Research included a household survey, of which 4,230 were returned, and interviews with stakeholders including local authority representatives and estate agents. A review of data included the 2001 census, house prices and housing associations lettings data.

7.9 Updates to the housing needs assessment included: house prices and rents, the extent to which the overall requirement for affordable housing amongst existing and newly-forming households has changed and changes in the supply of social rented and intermediate tenure.

7.10 In 2007 the average house price in Tameside was £138,000. In 2010 this fell to £123,000, a decrease of 10%. In comparison, Greater Manchester average house prices have fallen by only 2%. The first and second quarter of 2011 saw the average house price in Tameside drop further to £122,394 and £118,849 respectively.

7.11 There are around 4,500 households headed by a BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) resident, with around one third living in Ashton. 6.1% of BAME households were in housing need, with costs of accommodation, difficulty in maintenance and households having to share facilities. The three largest household groups are couples with dependent children, couples with no children and single people aged under 60.

7.12 The Borough contains 97,207 properties. The tenure mix is 20,833 socially rented and 76,374 are private. More than 70% of residents live and shop in the same area. Around 45% of residents in employment commute outside the borough. The Council was the first metropolitan council to transfer its housing stock (2000) to an RSL, New Charter Housing Trust.

7.13 The 2008 Household survey identified a total of 269 households who were either under threat of homelessness or were living in temporary accommodation and this has been used as a baseline for the 2011 Affordable Housing requirements update (as discussed in section 7.6).

Housing Stock Dwelling and Tenure Profiles

7.14 Out of all dwellings within Tameside: 37% are semi-detached, 33% terraced, 13% flats and 6% (5.5%) bungalows. Tameside has a greater number of terraced housing in comparison to Greater Manchester. 71% of properties are owner-occupied, 21% (21.8%) are social rented and 6% (6.8%) private rented (6% as a level may fluctuate between townships and could be significantly higher).

7.15 Improving the quality of stock across all tenures, especially in the private sector is a key challenge. This will help to match the economic development offer and promote long term community sustainability and quality of life.

Market Characteristics

7.16 The following table shows the market characteristics of each township in Tameside. There are variations in dwelling type, tenure and household characteristics:

Attribute	Distinctive Attributes by Townships								
	Ashton	Audenshaw	Denton	Droylsden	Dukinfield	Hyde	Longdendale	Mossley	Stalybridge
Tenure	High % private rented	High % private rented	Low % private rented	High % private rented	Reflects District profile	Low % Private rented	High % Social rented	Low % Social rented	Reflects District profile
Property type	Low % Bungalows	High % semi-detached	High % of semi-detached and bungalows	High % semi-detached; low % terraced & bungalows	High % of flats	Reflects District profile	High % of detached and terraced	High % terraced, Low % detached and flats	High % detached
Property size	Low % 5+ beds	Reflects District profile	Reflects District profile	Low % 1-2 beds and very low 5+ beds	Very low % of 5+ beds	High % 5+ beds	High % 5+ beds	High % 1-2 beds	High % 5+ beds
Property prices	Lowest median price							Highest median price	
Household income	Low income area						High income area	Highest income area	High income area
Satisfaction with Neighbourhood				Lowest % of satisfaction				Highest % of satisfaction	
Household mobility	Higher than district average	Higher than district average	Lower than district average	Lower than district average	Higher than district average	Higher than district average	Lower than district average	Higher than district average	Higher than district average
Self-containment	Most self contained: 55.1%	Least self contained: 27%	47% moving from within Township	50% moving from within Township	44% moving from within Township	48% moving from within Township	35% moving from within Township	38% moving from within Township	53% moving from within Township
Migration from outside District	Linkages with Oldham	Linkages with Manchester and elsewhere Gtr Man	Linkages with Stockport and Manchester	Linkages with Manchester and elsewhere Gtr Man	Most movers (90%) from within Tameside	Linkages with Stockport	Linkages with Oldham and elsewhere Greater Manchester and highest % from High Peak	Strong linkages with oldham	Linkages with elsewhere UK
Workplace	Highest % working within district	High % working outside district, Manchester and Gr Man	High % working outside district, Stockport and NW	High % working outside district, Manchester and Gr Man	High % working within District	High % working outside district, Stockport and Derbyshire	Predominantly Tameside, with a high % to Stockport and Derbyshire	Predominantly Tameside, with a % to Gr Man and Derbyshire	Predominantly Tameside
Shopping Patterns	High % to Oldham	Mainly within Tameside (Denton in particular)	Mainly within Tameside, with around half shopping in Manchester and Stockport	Mainly Tameside with 61% shopping in Manchester	Mainly within Tameside, with 44% shopping in Manchester	Mainly within Tameside, with around half shopping in Manchester and Stockport	72% shop in Hyde and 58% in Glossop	Around half shop in Oldham and Manchester	Mainly within Tameside, with around half shopping in Manchester
Household type/age	High % lone parents		High % older HHs	High % of 'other' HHs		High % couples		High % couples	High % lone parents
BAME HHs	High proportions of BAME HHs				Lowest proportion of BAME HHs				

Table Two: Key Market Characteristics by township (Source: Tameside Household Survey 2008)

General Market Demand

7.17 National Planning Policy Guidance (PPS3) required Local Planning Authorities to identify how it can achieve the right mix of properties through planned development. Results indicate that just under 9,000 households in Tameside (10%) intend to move in the next year. 87% require 2 and 3 bedroom semi-detached and detached homes, and 40% require 2 and 3 bedroom bungalow homes. Modeling indicates a shortfall of 304 dwellings each year in Tameside.

7.18 The following table shows the aspirations of existing and newly forming households planning to move in the open market:

Property type preferences	% who would consider property type	
	Existing Households	Newly forming Households
House	**86.9**	**53.8**
Detached	26.1	
Semi-Detached	31.9	
Smaller Terraced	11.2	
Larger Terraced	17.7	
Flat	**17.7**	**39.6**
Bungalow	**40.3**	**6.6**
Detached	16.5	
Semi-Detached	15.3	
Terraced	8.6	
Base	8,951	509

Table Three: Household Aspirations (Source: Tameside Household Survey 2008)

7.19 The greatest demand is for houses (86.9%), in particular detached and semi-detached, bungalows (40.3%) followed by flats (17.7%). Newly forming households are more likely to consider occupying a flat.

7.20 Across Tameside the study showed that demand generally exceeds supply. Overall, there is pressure on all types of housing, with the exception of terraced housing. There are shortfalls of detached houses, bungalows and flats/apartments. There is a shortfall with regards to all bedroom sizes, but more so towards one and four bedroom and above.

Affordable Housing

7.21 National planning policy guidance (PPS3) provides definitions of affordability and affordable housing.

- Affordability, is a measure of whether housing may be afforded by certain groups of households. It is measured on the basis of gross household income and:

- An owner-occupied or intermediate tenure property is unaffordable if it costs more than 3.5x a single or 2.9x a joint gross household income. Households entering owner-occupation are also assumed to have at least a 5% deposit;

- A rented property is unaffordable if it costs more than 25% of gross household income.
- Affordable housing, includes social rented and intermediate housing (e.g. shared equity), provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met in the market.

7.22 Given the scale of annual imbalance between supply/demand, the requirement for affordable housing, and in comparison with other areas within Greater Manchester, it has been deemed that an affordable housing target for Tameside of 20% is appropriate. This target is subject to an economic viability assessment in line with PPS3 requirements.

7.23 A detailed analysis of affordable housing requirements using a methodology advocated in Government Guidance has been carried out. Analysis indicates that across Tameside is an annual net shortfall of 424 affordable dwellings.

7.24 The following table shows housing requirements by designation, property size and township and details annual affordable housing imbalances for 2007/2008 to 2011/2012. Identifying the number of bedrooms from one to four plus rooms within a specific township.

	Number of bedrooms and designation						
	General needs				Older person		
Township	One	Two	Three	Four or more	One	Two	Total
Ashton	0	94	15	21	0	8	**138**
Audenshaw	0	7	2	4	0	0	**12**
Denton	0	17	7	0	2	5	**32**
Droylsden	0	6	65	2	0	1	**74**
Dukinfield	0	7	8	2	0	2	**19**
Hyde	0	46	34	0	0	0	**80**
Longdendale	0	10	14	0	1	3	**27**
Mossley	0	4	2	0	1	1	**9**
Stalybridge	0	5	15	8	0	5	**32**
Total	**0**	**197**	**152**	**38**	**6**	**31**	**424**

Table Three: Annual affordable housing imbalance 2007/08 – 2011/12

7.25 Within Greater Manchester, Tameside ranks fourth in terms of affordability, as measured by lower quartile house prices to lower quartile incomes. Trafford, Stockport and Manchester are less affordable than Tameside. Within Tameside 65% of households receive under £300 per week. In the open market rent group 86% cannot afford rent, in the affordable rent group 78% cannot afford rent and in the social rent group 61% cannot afford rent. The social rented sector has capacity to house 21% of households in Tameside.

7.26 The impact of the recession is placing more pressure on the need for affordable homes. Although house prices are not high in Tameside, income levels are lower than those for Greater Manchester and regional averages. Therefore some people are unable to afford a home in Tameside. The Council is responding to this issue, helping to set up three 'Homebuy Direct' schemes in Stalybridge and Hyde. These schemes allow homebuyers to buy at below market prices with the developer owning a share of the property. Other financial incentives include 'First Buy' shared ownership schemes and government incentives for new home developments.

7.27 The Council's Affordable Homes Project 2010-2013 is working with registered providers (previous registered social landlords) and the Homes Community Agency (HCA) to jointly fund and deliver new affordable housing schemes. The peer review (discussed in section x) identified that Tameside needs more affordable homes. The Council is investing £1.1m from its capital programme to leverage funding to build on a portfolio of identified land. This will create affordable homes by helping those individuals on lower incomes to live in communities, often where their families also reside.

7.28 The need in Tameside for additional affordable housing is estimated to be over 400 homes per year if all needs are to be met over the next 5 years. This priority is also strongly reflected in the views of stakeholders and residents. Given the context of the 900 per year total new building target, it is felt that it would not be the right balance for the economy or sustainable communities to aim for 400 additional affordable homes per year as a target. If so, this would imply 45% of all new provision to be affordable. The Council feels that it is more appropriate to aim for 20% of all new housing provision, or 180 new homes per year subject to improved overall housing market conditions.

7.29 The mix of affordable tenures will have to take account of market conditions and the affordability of the assisted home ownership options, but our starting point will be 77% social rent and 23% intermediate tenure, such as shared ownership as identified in the SHMA. We may also consider intermediate rental options provided these would be at prices that will meet the housing needs of households that cannot access market housing. Affordable provision should span all needs, including families, older people and people with special needs. Larger developments will normally provide for a cross-section of needs.

7.30 The Council will aim for a mix of types and sizes of affordable housing provision that will match identified needs. Based on the findings from the SHMA, this comprises:

- 33.6% smaller (two bedroom) general needs.
- 52.8%larger (three and more bedroom) general needs.
- 13.6% older person (one and two bedroom).

7.31 The actual provision will vary site by site. The Council will take account of evidence about local needs. New provisions must complement existing provision in the area to broaden the overall mix available. This affordable housing target is a large increase from the number delivered through traditionally National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP).

7.32 Whilst the Housing Service hasn't directly bid for funding recently Tameside were heavily involved in the last two bidding rounds to the affordable housing programme which have been successful. The 2010 round produced funding for 72 new affordable units and the 2011-15 round which has just been completed and will deliver at least 160 new builds plus buy backs of former right to buy properties. The bids are made by Registered Providers but would not be successful without the Council's input.

Conclusions

3. It is important that neighbouring authorities work together on strategic housing considerations.

4. Tameside's future housing plans consider housing market needs focusing on household numbers, economic trends and future affordability.

5. Despite the wealth of information used to create the chart showing Tameside's future predicted housing stock, the economy has changed significantly since the forecasts were developed and these forecasts may not be as positive as they would at first appear.

6. A failure to attract new residents combined with the ageing population and our current low skill base could threaten the economic sustainability of Tameside.

7. Improving the quality of stock across all tenures, especially in the private sector is a key challenge.

8. National Planning Policy Guidance (PPS3) required Local Planning Authorities to identify how it can achieve the right mix of properties through planned development.

9. The Panel feels that market demand for housing relies heavily on people's aspirations. If those aspirations are not lived then demand maybe significantly more/less.

10. The impact of the recession is placing more pressure on the need for affordable homes.

Recommendations

1. That the Council, neighbouring authorities and its partners work closely to take forward the work to meet Tameside's housing needs as identified in the SHMA.

2. That over the next few years Tameside's housing market is closely scrutinised to assess the impact of changing housing market characteristics. Data should be regularly collated and analysed to monitor any patterns or deterioration and the Partnership Information (PIP) should be used as a housing data hub.

3. That careful consideration is given to future affordable housing across the borough and these are developed into a comprehensive affordable homes policy.

4. That the Council continues to support schemes such as 'Homebuy Direct' to allow homebuyers to buy at below market prices and to meet affordable home needs in Tameside.

5. Survey work and modelling has been performed before the recession hit the UK, as such Tameside should ensure its current and future strategies take into account the current economic situation in addition to the modeling.

Housing Peer Review

7.33 A peer review on the housing function was completed in February 2009. The findings were considered as part of this Scrutiny review. The peer review team included local government professionals with experience in both strategic housing and economic development.

The Council commissioned the peer review to:

- Comment on progress on the Housing Improvement Plan.

- Review and assess the strategic housing cross-working links to spatial planning and economic development.
- To take account and assess the principal sub-regional working arrangements as they affect housing.

7.34 The peer review team were highly impressed by Tameside MBC stating that extremely good delivery work is being achieved and the Council is continuously seeking to improve and to make savings. There was a strong recognition of excellent leadership and management across the Council. The review showed that the housing service is working well and has developed strong partnership and delivery working arrangements with New Charter Housing Trust. There are strong partnership arrangements both locally and sub-regionally.

7.35 The peer review also suggested areas where some improvements could be made, these included:

- A need to ensure that emerging economic and regeneration strategy is shared with the wider council.
- A number of partners have said they would like to see Tameside MBC play a stronger role in AGMA to ensure Tameside's needs are fully incorporated in sub-regional policy framework and that the Council fully contributes.
- The Council understands the need to work on two fronts – with an eye to the future and at the same time working with current issues and delivering good services.
- For a number of officers it was viewed as a matter of urgency for the Council to get its Core Strategy agreed so as there was a clear plan on sites, and their potential for development, to enable serious discussions with potential inward investors. The work to complete the Core Strategy is significantly behind schedule and behind that of most Greater Manchester authorities – some of whom are likely to have their core strategies approved during 2011.
- The review team believes that this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency and would be assisted by establishing a Member LDF advisory panel to also incorporate the themes of housing and economic development, which would supervise the production of the Core Strategy and supporting LDF documentation.

7.36 The peer review identified that the Council is making good use of data and evidence, in particular through Mosaic. This is a geo-demographic segmentation modelling software using consumer household and individual data collated from a number of governmental and commercial sources. This provides the Council with a detailed profile of its communities and customer base.

The Local Development Framework

7.37 The 'Local Development Framework' (LDF) is currently under development and will be at the heart of the vision for Tameside, reflecting the aims of several other plans including the Tameside Sustainable Community Strategy. The LDF will eventually replace the borough's current land-use plan the 'Unitary Development Plan' (UDP). It provides a long-term plan for Tameside and contains policies for sustainable development across the borough. It will consider key factors including housing, retail space, employment and education and will be aligned to the emerging 'National Policy Planning Framework'.

7.38 Tameside will introduce a planning policy, as part of LDF, to seek a contribution to meeting the affordable housing target from the developers of new housing. The level of affordable housing requirement will be established at a realistic level in a supplementary planning document, and will take account of an assessment of the impact of affordable housing and other planning requirements on the economic viability of new residential development. Planning anticipate the affordable housing target will be 20%.

The Core Strategy

7.39 The Core Strategy is the key strategic plan at the heart of the Local Development Framework. It will determine how much housing development is intended to happen, where, when and by what means for the duration of the plan period (2013-2028). The Core Strategy will be the document that contains the key decisions about the distribution of housing development and will establish clear guidance for the later Site Allocations Supplementary Planning Document.

7.40 The first stage in the production of Tameside's 'Core Strategy' is currently underway with public consultation on the Core Strategy 'Issues and Options' taking place in February and March 2012. The development of the Core Strategy will be an ongoing process with an adoption date expected to be 2013/14 following an independent assessment at an examination in public.

7.41 New options for delivery, planning, changes to land use and development opportunities are being reviewed. The 'Core Strategy' involves collaborative working between services and partners. This should help to meet the housing, education, and transport requirements of Tameside residents and attract new families to the borough.

7.42 The role of the 'Core Strategy' is not to allocate sites for housing but to identify broad areas or types of land for housing. The Panel was informed that it is a requirement of the planning system that the preparation of the 'Core Strategy' must be informed by an up-to-date evidence base on key aspects of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of an area. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) will inform the 'Core Strategy'. It will estimate how much development can be accommodated.

7.43 The 'Core Strategy' along with the draft economic strategy 'Enterprising Tameside' will have a significant impact providing the correct partnerships are formed to take forward associated actions. It is important that every sector is involved, which means that the council can make the best use of the resources available in Tameside.

7.44 The strategies both emphasise building on existing strengths, growing aspirations, skills and opportunities and making Tameside a more desirable place to be.

7.45 Housing in Tameside is more available and affordable compared with other parts of Greater Manchester. However, the lower wage economy and lower skills base mean that investment is required to provide land for business development along with a creation of more diverse residential properties available in Tameside.

Strategic Housing Land Availability

7.46 Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) requires Local Planning Authorities to identify specific sites to deliver housing over a 5 year period and should also identify a further supply of specific, developable sites for years 6-10 and, where possible, years 11-15. The primary role of the SHLAA is to:

- Identify sites with potential for housing.
- Assess their housing potential.
- Assess when they are likely to be developed.

7.47 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is one of a number of background supporting documents to the Local Development Framework (LDF) and will be updated on an annual basis. It will feed into the preparation of the LDF in two key ways:

1. Inform the Core Strategy.
2. Identifies sites that might be suitable for inclusion in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD).

7.48 Allocation for housing and the granting of planning permission will be determined through preparation of the LDF and through the development management process. The SHLAA is a 'live' document and will be constantly changing as sites drop out and new potential sites become available. The document will be updated on an annual basis – the figures and tables used in this report will be updated in May/June 2012.

7.49 Various sources of information were used as part of the desktop review of existing information on potential sites. A 'Call for Sites' exercise took place in January 2009 to invite landowners, developers and the public to put forward sites for inclusion in the SHLAA. A total of 35 sites were put forward for consideration. This is a low number but could be attributed to the problems the housing market and development industry were experiencing in 2009. Many of the larger house builders at this time were solely concentrating on existing schemes and had scaled back perspective development and land buying.

7.50 The 15 year projected SHLAA period takes the plan up to 2026 giving a housing requirement of 11,250 units. With Tameside's cumulative shortfall (1,411) added to this the total housing requirement for Tameside to deliver between 2011 and 2026 is 12,661 dwelling units. The results of the SHLAA show that there are some 775 sites providing land for a potential 12,606 dwelling units. Table six sets out the summary of the site categories contributing to the housing supply identified in the Tameside SHLAA.

Source of supply	**Timeframe**			**Total**
	0 - 5 Years	**6 - 10 Years**	**11 - 15 Years**	
Sites Under Construction	1,124	0	0	1,124
Sites with Planning Permission	2,408	0	0	2,408
Housing Site Allocations and Other Sites	737	0	0	737
Potential Housing Sites	0	3,885	4,452	8,337
Total Number of Potential Units	**4,269**	**3,885**	**4,452**	**12,606**

Table Six - Summary of Tameside SHLAA findings

7.51 Sites that are included in the 0-5yrs of the supply are generally the sites with existing planning consents, being most likely to deliver new residential development in the short term. Other land which may come forward within the short term, but don't currently have planning permission, could potentially be some of the redundant school sites – they are Council owned and we are anticipating that some of these sites will deliver an element of housing.

7.52 Table seven indicates that there is the potential to accommodate 16,445 units between 2003 and 2025 (of which 3,839 units have already been provided). This falls approximately 1 year short of the 15 year plan period (up to 2026). However, the housing supply does not take in account an allowance for windfall housing. It is envisaged that over the plan period sufficient windfall sites will come forward to make up for any shortfall in the supply.

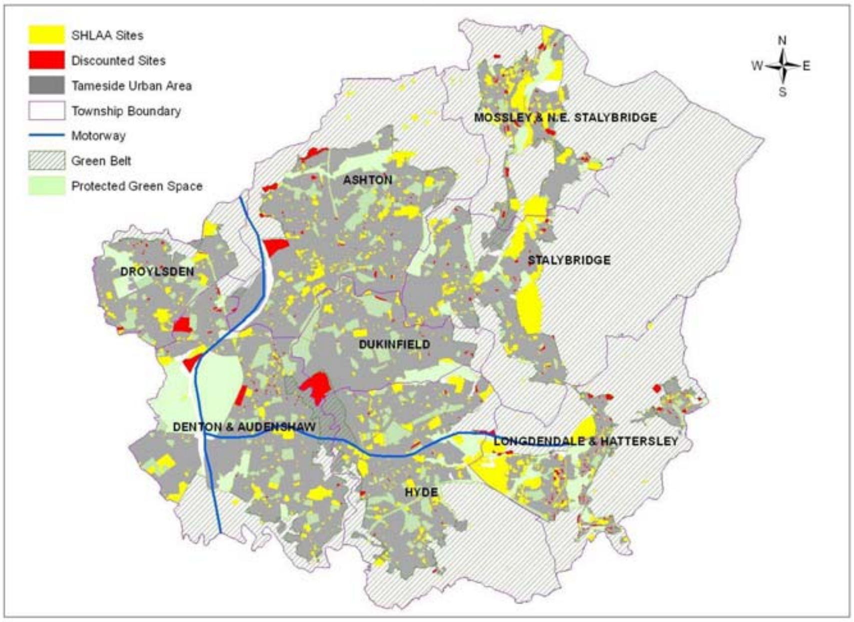
Source of supply	**Number of Units**	**Years Supply (750 units per year)**
Net Completions (2003 to 2010)	3,839	5.12
Sites Under Construction	1,124	1.45
Sites with Planning Permission	2,408	3.21
Housing Allocations and Other Sites	737	0.98
Potential Housing Sites	8,337	11.12

Total	16,445	21.88

Table Seven - Housing supply in Tameside

Location of SHLAA sites

7.53 The following map (Map Eight) shows that the vast majority of sites in the categories included in the SHLAA are located within the existing urban area or adjoining it on the urban fringe. Chart Nine shows the greatest potential housing sites are in and around the towns of Stalybridge, Audenshaw, Denton, Ashton and Hattersley.



Map Eight: Location of SHLAA Sites

7.54 Chart 9 and table 10 below show how the SHLAA supply is distributed across each of the eight Tameside townships.

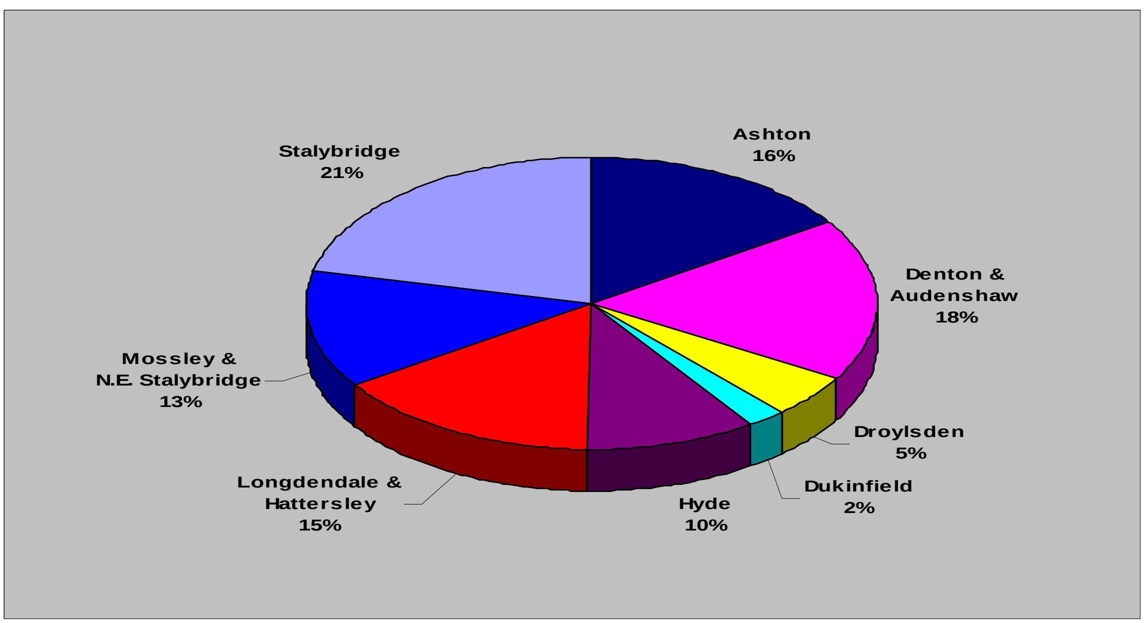


Chart Nine: Split of SHLAA sites between townships in Tameside

Township	Under Construction	Planning Permission	Allocations & Other	Potential Housing Site	Total
Ashton	48	551	104	1,269	**1,972**
Denton & Audenshaw	280	317	48	1,644	**2,289**
Droylsden	277	44	23	233	**577**
Dukinfield	32	86	51	123	**292**
Hyde	228	322	7	660	**1,217**
Longdendale & Hattersley	2	579	0	1,350	**1,931**
Mossley & N.E. Stalybridge	66	310	212	1,050	**1,638**
Stalybridge	191	257	292	1,977	**2,717**
Total	**1,124**	**2,466**	**737**	**8,306**	**12,633**

Table Ten: Housing Supply split by township

Employment Land Review (ELR)

7.55 Selected sites identified as "poor quality" in the ELR have been included in the SHLAA. The Council has a requirement to ensure it upholds a healthy supply of employment sites and resists other forms of development on employment land. As a result existing sites identified as "medium quality" or "high quality" employment sites have not been included in the SHLAA supply due to their strategic importance for meeting the employment needs of Tameside.

Open Space, Sports and Recreation Survey

7.56 A comprehensive review of all recreation land and open space within Tameside was completed. Strategic Planning have included a broad strategic policy on the Environment in the Core Strategy Issues and Options paper which is due for consultation Feb/March 2012. This covers green infrastructure, parks, open countryside, protected green space, biodiversity, geodiversity. This policy will evolve in more detail over the coming 18 months and will be linked to developing management policies which will help to guide and regulate development. This strategy will help to identify if any potential recreation sites or open spaces are of such a poor quality that their release for residential use could be warranted.

Conclusions

11. With the recent abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy Tameside is currently consulting to re-assess its requirements in terms of housing delivery.

Recommendations

6. That identified employment land is kept for this use where possible, to protect Tameside’s future business development opportunities.

7. That the benefits of having open and green spaces are carefully considered when designating land for development potential.

Housing and Planning

7.57 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North West, adopted in September 2008, set Tameside's average rate of housing provision (net clearance) at 750 dwellings per annum for the period 2003-2021. The following table shows the Councils housing land supply at 31 March 2011. The number of dwellings completed between March 2003 and March 2011 are presented. 2011 figures are provisional.

Year	Number of Dwellings Completed	Number of Dwellings lost from Clearance, Conversions and Changes of Use	Net Change	Cumulative Net Change	RSS Cumulative Net Target	Cumulative Shortfall (compared to RSS Target)
2003-4	610	95	515	515	750	-235
2004-5	574	191	383	898	1500	-602
2005-6	940	256	684	1582	2250	-668
2006-7	675	112	563	2145	3000	-855
2007-8	1164	375	789	2934	3750	-816
2008-9	921	269	652	3586	4500	-914
2009-10	347	94	253	3839	5250	-1411
2010-11 (provisional figures)	321	35	286	4125	6000	-1875
Total - April 2003 to March 2010	**5552**	**1427**	**4125**			

Table Five: Tameside Councils housing land supply as at 31 March 2011

7.58 During the eight years from 2003 to 2011 there was a net increase of 4,125 dwellings (average 515 per annum), giving a cumulative shortfall of 1,875. Tameside's actual figure of 4,125 was considerably lower than the 6,000 dwellings required by RSS. Since the formation of the Coalition Government in May 2010 the intention is to abolish regional planning. Tameside is reviewing what the new target will be as part of the LDF.

7.59 The Council requires any new build development site to offer a proportion of affordable new homes. As part of the Core Strategy development the necessary planning policy can be put in place to achieve this. Planning conditions for new developments can require developers to contribute to: education, open space and highways. Conditions need to be balanced so as not to be too costly to a developer, as this could potentially deter developers from investing in Tameside. Also, the Council, as part of the 'Residential Design Guide' and building regulations requires and encourages low carbon buildings and sustainable developments.

Conclusions

12. The Local Development Framework is under development and will provide a long-term plan for Tameside and will consider factors including housing, retail space, employment and education.

13. The Core Strategy is expected to be implemented around 2013/14.

14. During the eight years from April 2003 to March 2011 Tameside has failed to meet the 750 dwellings per annum target set by RSS. This has resulted in a cumulative shortfall in Tameside housing totalling 1,875.

15. Since the formation of the coalition Government in May 2010 the clear intention is to abolish regional planning.

Recommendations

8. That the council and partners work together to address the recommendations outlined in the peer review.

9. That planning conditions ensure that affordable homes are provided in the borough, though these conditions need to be balanced so as not to be too costly to a developer, as this could potentially deter developers from investing in Tameside.

10. That Tameside Council commits to a new building numbers target, but does not readily adopt targets without a certain degree of scrutiny.

11. That the Council continues to promote low carbon buildings and sustainable developments.

Tameside Housing Strategy

7.60 Tameside Housing Strategy (2010-2016) addresses the housing issues experienced by local residents and connects these with other challenges that residents can face in terms of economic prosperity, educational attainment, health, climate change and overall sustainability.

7.61 The strategy also shows how Tameside must complement the wider emerging City Region Housing Strategy, and take account of NW regional and national policies. It will complement the Greater Manchester (GM) Housing Strategy. The central priority for the Strategy is "creating quality places to meet the needs of a competitive city region".

The strategy responds to this by focusing on 3 key objectives:

- Achieving the right quantity of new housing.
- Continuing to raise the quality of the existing housing stock, services and neighbourhoods.
- Connecting people to the improved housing offer.

7.62 The Housing Strategy includes a delivery plan and was subject to widespread consultation, in particular the use of focus groups, a household survey and input from RSLs, letting agents, developers and builders.

7.63 Tameside has developed a detailed Strategic Delivery Plan, these actions are discussed further throughout the review. Delivery teams and delivery partnerships will develop the actions; they include SMART targets, and are reflected in the staff appraisal system. The overall Strategy will remain valid for several years, but inevitably circumstances will change and this will be handled by amending the Delivery Plan.

7.64 The Council is working with partners and the wider community for the policies and programmes set out in the Strategy to ensure these are met. Beyond this, the Council is working with the Homes & Communities Agency and the Tenants Services Authority, the new national investment and regulatory bodies for affordable housing, to deliver much needed homes and to place residents at the centre of decision making processes. The Housing Strategy 'Delivery Plan' will be reviewed annually to respond to changing circumstances.

Conclusions

16. Tameside has developed a detailed Strategic Delivery Plan to deliver actions which address issues identified in the Housing Strategy.

Recommendations

12. That Tameside Housing and Planning Service implement all policies and programmes in the Housing Strategy and review their 'Delivery Plan' annually, presenting and engaging at the Prosperous Delivery Board.

Partnership Working

7.65 Tameside's Housing Partnership met formally for the last time in July 2011. The partnership has now become part of a Tameside Prosperous Delivery Board. The new Board is due to meet as soon as possible, membership and governance structures are still being confirmed. In addition to this, Housing representatives and partners sit on other strategic partnership groups including the Safeguarding Boards for both Adults and Children, and the Partnership Business Group, which is linked to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. A number of strengths around Partnership working were commended in the Strategic Housing Peer Review in February 2011.

7.66 The Housing Strategy is being taken forward by the former Housing representatives reporting to the TSP Board. The former Housing Partnership had a number of sub-groups reporting to it. These still exist and include forums for: RSLs, Homelessness, Supported Housing, Young People's Accommodation and Complex Needs.

AGMA

7.67 The Council works closely with the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA). There is a Greater Manchester Strategy which has a key objective of driving economic growth in the sub region. This strategy is the over arching strategy for the various work streams and these work streams are headed by a number of Commissions. One of these Commissions is the Planning and Housing Commission which has a work programme aimed at contributing to delivering the aims of the Greater Manchester Strategy.

7.68 This work programme is delivered by a Greater Manchester Housing Officers Group and a Greater Manchester Planning Officers Group which are made up of an officer from each of the ten local authorities. This ensures that Tameside is engaged with and can influence the wider sub regional agenda as well as allowing local Tameside issues to be taken into account when wider decisions are made at AGMA level, which have an impact on our locality. Tameside has certainly benefited in its success in obtaining funding for affordable homes by demonstrating that we are working as part of a wider organisation that has a clear strategy and that can deliver across the whole conurbation.

7.69 The peer review found that a number of partners said they would like to see the Council play a stronger role in AGMA to ensure Tameside's needs are fully incorporated in the sub-regional policy framework. It will be important to clearly set out the Tameside unique selling point (USP) for town centres, large employment sites and housing (type and location) to AGMA colleagues and how this will contribute to Greater Manchester economic growth.

Economic Regeneration

7.70 The Council has a clear focus on economic regeneration. Restructuring in April 2010 took place to allow the economic regeneration team to work alongside housing and planning to work collectively to support delivery of this vision. Collaborative working will be important to recommend, for example, the numbers and location of future social, market and affordable housing, as well as commercial and industrial sites, with the inward investment and supervising strategies to enable economic prosperity. However, at the same time there is recognition within the council that there is more to do to improve these working arrangements.

7.71 The new draft strategy 'Enterprising Tameside' focuses on how the council will respond to the adverse economic climate up until 2026. Local government budget cuts have lead to a loss of public and private sector jobs across the borough and a general decrease in investment. 'Enterprising Tameside' aims to tackle such issues over the next decade and beyond.

7.72 It is important that Tameside attracts the required investment to help maintain and grow its economy. Due to the large presence of manufacturing in the borough it is essential that Tameside attracts more businesses in areas such as finance, IT, transport and communications. In turn this will help improve the diversity of the workforce and help attract people with a higher skill base to live in the borough.

7.73 There are sites in the borough that have been earmarked for investment in employment rather than housing. Figures show that Tameside currently has the lowest number of businesses per head of population in Greater Manchester. The Council currently has bids in place for investment in local companies through the regional growth fund.

7.74 There has been an ambitious programme of neighbourhood regeneration with all the programmes in the five priority neighbourhoods having a significant housing element. Regeneration has been heavily invested in St Petersfield. The peer review team was impressed by the work that the Council and partners have carried out in Hattersley. Being achieved with a combined partner investment of £250m and working to a Master Plan for physical and community regeneration. The regeneration schemes have been characterised by the council working effectively with partners, in particular the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and the North West Regional Development Agency, to assemble funding for this work.

7.75 Other elements of the regeneration scheme included a new park, a Sure Start centre and a series of streets where the needs of pedestrians are placed ahead of those of car drivers. The affordable housing scheme won the National Home Improvement Council award for the "most outstanding development using recycled urban land or buildings", as well as a Silver Standard in the Building for Life awards.

Conclusions

17. Housing representatives feature in many Partnership Groups such as the Safeguarding Boards for both Adults and Children and the Partnership Business Group which is linked to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

18. A number of strengths were listed around Partnership working by the Peer Review Team when the Strategic Housing Peer Review was carried out in February 2011.

Recommendations

13. That the Strategy and Delivery Plan are reported to the Prosperous Delivery Board and the TSP Board on an annual basis.

Empty Homes

7.76 The Council is currently writing its Empty Homes Strategy. This is unfortunately behind schedule due to staff changes following the recent voluntary severance programme. The main aims of the strategy will include providing pro-active advice and assistance to owners of empty homes; dealing with nuisance voids; returning long term voids to beneficial use such as affordable homes for households in need; and improving our intelligence on empty homes.

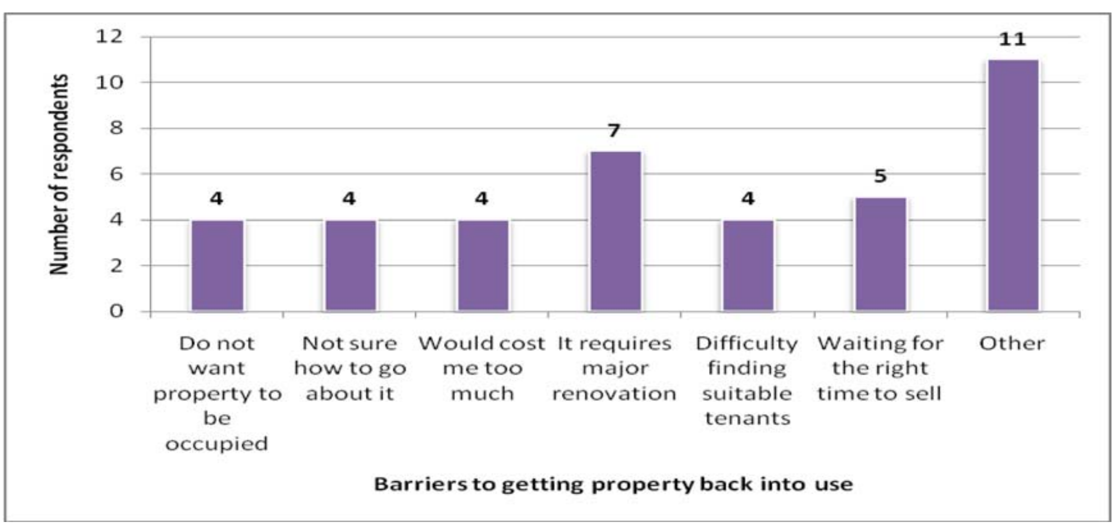
7.77 Empty properties can be of poorer condition and costly to bring them back up to meet satisfactory standards. During 2009 and 2010 the Council had some intervention work on 42 properties. During 2010 and 2011 interventions work took place on 17 properties. The Council does not record whether the property is returned to use for a tenancy or sold, just occupied. In these cases the empty properties may not be in a rentable condition. The numbers are quite low as a result of the Empty Property Officer being vacant part way through the last year. The Council will aim to bring back 60 to 70 homes to satisfactory standard and tenancy each year through the EPO. The authority manages a continually changing portfolio in the region of 1700 long term private sector empty properties. In October 2010 there were 1874 empty properties in the borough decreasing to 1709 in October 2011 showing a reduction of 8% (8.80%).

7.78 During June 2011, Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council carried out an online survey with owners of empty homes in the borough. Forty nine people responded to the online survey. The research objectives were to understand how respondents come to own an empty home; to identify why the respondents properties are empty; to explore the respondents expectations for the property and the respondents concerns for the property being empty; to determine whether there are any barriers to getting properties back into use; and to investigate the viability of the housing options proposed by the Council.

7.79 Respondents came to own (or be responsible for) an empty home for a number of different reasons; the most frequent being buying it for themselves to live in, buying the property as an investment with the intention of letting it and also through inheritance. Properties were currently empty for a range of reasons. Most of the reasons were related to the property needing or is currently being renovated and repaired, trying to sell or waiting for the right time to sell.

7.80 The majority of respondents (65.2%) described the property's general condition as requiring non-structural renovation, improvement or redecoration, while nearly a quarter (23.9%) described the property's general condition as ready for occupation (N = 46). The vast majority (76.1%) of empty homes included in the survey were not ready to get back into use.

7.81 One of the research objectives was to explore any barriers that could be preventing properties from getting back into use. Those respondents that would like the property to be occupied in the future were asked to state the barriers preventing their property being occupied from a number of options. Graph eleven shows the number of respondents and the barriers that they identified.



Graph Eleven: Number of respondents and barriers to getting property back into use

7.82 Seven respondents stated the property needed major renovation, and five were waiting for the right time to sell. On the follow up question for 'other', a diverse range of responses were given, most of which referred to renovation work being needed.

7.83 It is estimated that each property may need approximately £5k to bring them up to standard. The Council is looking at the possibility of offering homeowner loans on a pay back scheme to recover such costs. A further consideration is that this initiative might be led by registered providers who would manage the programme and liaise with the property owner. For example, Ashton Pioneer Homes and New Charter Homes can manage and rent properties providing owners with a regular source of income.

7.84 The peer review team felt that the Empty Homes Strategy will make a difference and recommend that this is adopted and moved to delivery mode as soon as possible. This could also be a sub-regional opportunity for AGMA to promote a Greater Manchester empty homes strategy and combine resources for delivery.

7.85 The Council is currently working with two Registered Providers, St Peters Partnership and Ashton Pioneer Homes, working on a bid for Government funding which has just been made available for tackling empty homes. The bid for funding is in conjunction with New Charter and AGMA.

7.86 The AGMA bid involves individual authorities within Greater Manchester identifying specific projects they require funding for. Tameside is currently looking into funding to tackle empty homes through property based loans for properties in conditions that need attention and have not been occupied for long periods of time.

Conclusions

19. There are a significant number of empty properties in the borough.

20. Bringing back empty homes makes only a small difference to the overall housing demand.

21. The majority of properties included in the survey were in need of renovation and improvement, as opposed to being ready for occupation.

Recommendations

14. That the Empty Homes Strategy should be completed as soon as possible.

Registered Social Landlord Providers

7.87 The Council's housing stock was transferred in 2000 to New Charter Housing Trust who manages approximately 75 per cent of the social housing stock in Tameside. There are more than 20,500 occupied social rented dwelling across Tameside, comprising 14,347 New Charter Housing Trust properties and 6,233 other registered provider (RP) properties. The Council has formed a strong partnership relationship with New Charter Housing Trust.

7.88 The Council has a good working relationship with other registered providers. Examples include: Ashton Pioneer Homes, Irwell Valley, Accent Group and Peak Valley Housing Association. The peer review team agreed that having 24 registered providers operating in the borough was too many. A recommendation was that if this number can not be reduced over time then the council may need to consider its partnership communication arrangements with RSLs to ensure effective engagement.

7.89 The Council are working to develop stronger partnership working with social housing providers, looking for their support through investing land resources and long-term funding to maximise the delivery of additional affordable housing.

7.80 The dominant target relating to the quality of social housing over recent years has been to achieve the Decent Homes Standard (DHS). This is now close to being achieved by most Social Housing Landlords, for their Tameside stock.

New Charter: Affordable Rents

7.81 The introduction of Affordable Rents (AR), to be implemented late 2012, is an attempt by the Government to ensure that there is a continuation of new supply into the social housing sector despite the current economic difficulties which prevail.

7.82 The model switches a proportion of the cost of providing new homes on to the new tenant whilst also ensuring that Registered Providers (RP's) use all of their assets, maximise their income, dispose of obsolete assets and uplift rents where appropriate before turning to government for financial assistance (grants) in order to produce new homes.

7.83 In the North West, the exercise has seen a 50% drop in the grant levels which will be paid to any RP for new homes.

7.84 As part of the overall reduction in cost to provide new homes the Government expects local authorities and other public bodies to play a greater part. Examples could include LA's to "invest" their land for development rather than sell it. LA's are under increasing pressures to maximise their income opportunities, therefore the government is suggesting that land be made available for development at no initial cost to the RP, but with the expectation that as and when each individual property is sold then a plot value will be returned to the LA.

7.85 New Charter is working closely with local authority partners, especially Tameside and Oldham, to ensure that we can continue to provide new homes for the residents.

New Charter's roles and responsibilities in delivering Affordable Rents

7.86 A national competition was held to determine which Registered Providers (RP's) would be permitted to develop new homes for AR. All bids had to be submitted by May 2011. The Boards of New Charter decided that it was something that they wished to pursue. The bid was included in a consortium together with other RP's from around Greater Manchester. The bid was successful, attracting £20M in total, with £7.7M available for New Charter.

7.87 New Charter must produce 252 new homes between now and March 2015 in return for this money. This equates to a grant rate per property of circa £24,750. To achieve this New Charter will invest £23M of its own resources.

New Charter's development plans

7.88 The Boards of New Charter approved a new funding package to enable us to go further than provision of AR. In November 2011 this funding package was delivered and New Charter has committed to develop a further 160 homes over the next four years. The funding will enable New Charter to purchase through its highly successful Right to Buy Buy-Back scheme a further 210 properties of the same period. The net result of this activity will be a further 644 properties being available of the next 3 to 4 years.

New Charter's proposed conversion plans

7.89 As part of the AR initiative RP's are permitted to convert an agreed number of existing properties to a higher rent to generate a declared sum of additional resource. To provide a framework on how Affordable Homes will be delivered a 'Tenure Policy' has been developed around conversions and the principles which will support affordable rent requirements. Exclusions will apply and these are still being decided.

7.90 New Charter undertook an exercise to determine which of the 14,000 properties were capable of conversion. This significantly reduced the number of properties to circa 5,000. For instance; bedsits, sheltered units and 1 bed flat were largely discounted. New Charter will report the figures on conversions each month to the Housing Communicates Association. By the end of the 4 year programme we expect to have converted less than 4% of the overall stock.

New Charter: Response to Localism

7.91 The Localism Act and recent case law will enable registered providers to reshape how properties are offered through Choice Based Lettings schemes. The changes to Housing Benefit for working age people who under-occupy property will have a big impact, but it will also increase the opportunity for New Charter to incentivise downsizing to free up under-occupied homes and help financial inclusion. A toolkit to facilitate downsizing is currently being developed.

7.92 As part of the Governments' Localism Act, there is the freedom and flexibility for RP to use fixed term tenancies as well as lifetime tenancies within the Social Housing Sector. The proposal is for RP's to provide a short term solution to some new tenants with tenancies for 5 years.

7.93 It is important to New Charter that they help improve and sustain communities by keeping a mix of old and young, new and established tenancies rather than maximising the occupancy of dwellings.

Conclusions

22. Over the last eleven years the Council has had a strong partnership relationship with New Charter Housing Trust.

23. The Peer Review team agreed that having 24 RP's operating in the borough is too many.

24. The changes to Housing Benefit for working age people who under-occupy property will have a big impact.

Recommendations:

15. If the number of RSLs in Tameside cannot be reduced over time, then the Council should consider improving its communication arrangements with all RSLs.

Private Sector Housing

7.94 There are approximately 6,500 private rented households in Tameside (SHMA Assessment). Evidence suggests that just under a quarter of households are dissatisfied with the condition of their rented accommodation.

7.95 Tameside Council's aim is to increase the satisfaction of tenants, the conditions of homes and to increase the opportunities for households in housing need to access good quality homes in the private sector.

7.96 The results of the 2008 Private Sector House Condition Survey suggest that generally the stock in this sector is in good condition. However, we are aware that there are certain areas in the borough where quality and conditions are poor. Where poor quality combines with deprivation, housing markets are weakened, and it is crucial that action continues to focus on these areas. There are approximately 75,000 private sector properties in the borough:

- 8.6% are privately rented compared to the North West average of 11.2%. The remainder is in owner occupation, including shared ownership.
- A high proportion, 43%, is terraced housing compared to 29% in the North West.
- 32.4% fail the decent homes standard, somewhat better than England at 38%. It will cost £5,593 per property on average to make them decent. The highest proportion of failures by far is in terraced stock in the private rented sector.
- The average energy efficiency rating of the stock is 63, which is significantly better than the national average of 47 measured in 2006.
- 2.9% of private sector homes have been empty for more than 6 months compared to 2.14% in the region.

7.97 The survey findings revealed 55.2% of vulnerable households live in a decent private sector home, compared to the North West at 59.3%, and the national target of 70%. The Council has specific aims for support to vulnerable households: To increase the proportion of vulnerable households living in Decent Homes from the present 55.2% to the national target of 70% by 2015.

- To help more older people to live independently at home through provision of Disabled Facilities Grant, the "staying put" scheme and Handyperson service.
- To assist vulnerable households to resolve unacceptable housing conditions, in particular Category One Health & Safety hazards (even if the extent of works does not bring the home to Decent Home standard).
- To eradicate fuel poverty by 2016, by working in partnership to deliver Tameside's Affordable Warmth Strategy.
- Prioritising vulnerable households in the private rented sector for advice, support and, if necessary, enforcement action against poor landlords.

Working with Private Landlords

7.98 Work needs to be done to build a productive working relationship with the private rented sector, which represents nearly 7 per cent of the total housing market

7.99 It was acknowledged that across the borough there are pockets of poor quality rented housing accommodation where private landlords rely on benefit dependent tenants for their rental income. These properties are often of poorer condition. It was noted that in areas where there is higher economic growth and where individuals move around due to their careers, that the standards of the rented housing tend to be better.

7.100 We work with the National Landlords Association and a number of private landlords who have properties in Tameside. Some of whom work in conjunction with our Housing Advice Centre and our Rent Deposit Bond scheme to enable people coming through the homelessness route to access housing. A voluntary 'Landlord Accreditation Scheme' is shortly to be introduced to raise standards of rented housing. The Council is currently working with a number of private sector landlords to become accredited. Tameside's 'Housing Advice Centre' will facilitate home seekers finding suitable housing.

7.101 A Landlord Forum exists, however the peer review highlighted that the feeling of representatives is that it only meets "when the council wants to talk to us". The peer review recommended that the forum should be used to explore areas of mutual interest and, in particular, to ensure that the private rented sector is able to play a full role in delivering a balanced housing market.

7.102 The Landlords forum has not met for some time as the Council has been developing the Accreditation scheme which is going to operate across Greater Manchester. The Council is due to have a soft launch with existing landlord partners early 2012.

Working with Private Developers

7.103 Tameside held a housing event in July 2011. Developers and members of the community were invited along to discuss and challenge the figures. The Council have pre application discussions on sites that they are considering developing to advise on the type and mix of housing we would like to see. This year the Council has met with Jones Homes and Countryside Properties to discuss their products and any ambition they have for working in Tameside.

7.104 The Council has in place pre-development meetings with developers. The peer review identified that in the current economic climate housing market developers were clear that there has to be different ways of doing things (land swaps, equity stakes, land auctions for example). It was felt that this could mean the Council missed out on inward investment and housing opportunities.

7.105 The Housing Strategy enables intervention with developers through the regulatory reform policy and the Council have identified that funding and resources have become an issue, however by continuing to provide an adaptation service, and the Landlord Accreditation Service and by offering advice and assistance where possible the partnerships between the Council and Private developers is continually being developed.

Conclusions

25. The concentration of poor conditions in the private rented sector at a national and local level suggests particular attention should be paid to this area.

26. In areas where there is higher economic growth and where individuals move around due to their careers, the standards of the rented housing tend to be better.

27. A Landlord Forum exists in Tameside, however the group has not met for sometime due to the Council developing the Landlord Accreditation Scheme. This is due to be launched launch early in 2012.

Recommendations

16. That the Council expedites the production of a Private Sector Housing Strategy and shares this with the private sector.

17. That the Council continues to engage with private sector landlords and works to get them signed up to the accreditation scheme.

8. Conclusions

8.1 The Housing Strategy for England states that for decades in Britain we have under-built.

8.2 England's population is growing, with the number of households set to keep on rising in the years to come. Our population is also ageing fast.

8.3 It is important that neighbouring authorities work together on strategic housing considerations.

8.4 Tameside's future housing plans consider housing market needs focusing on household numbers, economic trends and future affordability.

8.5 Despite the wealth of information used to create the chart showing Tameside's future predicted housing stock, the economy has changed significantly since the forecasts were developed and these forecasts may not be as positive as they would at first appear.

8.6 A failure to attract new residents combined with the ageing population and our current low skill base could threaten the economic sustainability of Tameside.

8.7 Improving the quality of stock across all tenures, especially in the private sector is a key challenge.

8.8 National Planning Policy Guidance (PPS3) required Local Planning Authorities to identify how it can achieve the right mix of properties through planned development.

8.9 The Panel feels that market demand for housing relies heavily on be people's aspirations. If those aspirations are not lived then demand may be significantly more/less.

8.10 The impact of the recession is placing more pressure on the need for affordable homes.

8.11 With the recent abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy Tameside is currently consulting to re-assess its requirements in terms of housing delivery.

8.12 The Local Development Framework is under development and will provide a long-term plan for Tameside and will consider factors including housing, retail space, employment and education.

8.13 The Core Strategy is expected to be implemented around 2013/2014.

8.14 During the eight years from April 2003 to March 2011 Tameside has failed to meet the 750 dwellings per annum target set by RSS. This has resulted in a cumulative shortfall in Tameside housing totalling 1,875.

8.15 Since the formation of the coalition Government in May 2010 the clear intention is to abolish regional planning.

8.16 Tameside has developed a detailed Strategic Delivery Plan to deliver actions which address issues identified in the Housing Strategy.

8.17 Housing representatives feature in many Partnership Groups such as the Safeguarding Boards for both Adults and Children and the Partnership Business Group which is linked to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

8.18 A number of strengths were listed around Partnership working by the Peer Review Team when the Strategic Housing Peer Review was carried out in February 2011.

8.19 There are a significant number of empty properties in the borough.

8.20 Bringing back empty homes makes only a small difference to the overall housing demand.

8.21 The majority of properties included in the survey were in need of renovation and improvement, as opposed to being ready for occupation.

8.22 Over the last eleven years the Council has had a strong partnership relationship with New Charter Housing Trust.

8.23 The Peer Review team agreed that having 24 RP's operating in the borough is too many.

8.24 The changes to Housing Benefit for working age people who under-occupy property will have a big impact.

8.25 The concentration of poor conditions in the private rented sector at a national and local level suggests particular attention should be paid to this area.

8.26 In areas where there is higher economic growth and where individuals move around due to their careers, the standards of the rented housing tend to be better.

8.27 A Landlord Forum exists in Tameside, however the group has not met for sometime due to the Council developing the Landlord Accreditation Scheme. This is due to be launched early in 2012.

9. Recommendations

9.1 That the Council, neighbouring authorities and its partners work closely to take forward the work to meet Tameside's housing needs as identified in the SHMA.

9.2 That over the next few years Tameside's housing market is closely scrutinised to assess the impact of changing housing market characteristics. Data should be regularly collated and analysed to monitor any patterns or deterioration and the Partnership Information Portal (PIP) should be used as a housing data hub.

9.3 That careful consideration is given to future affordable housing across the borough and these are to be developed into a comprehensive affordable homes policy.

9.4 That the Council continues to support schemes such as 'Homebuy Direct' to allow homebuyers to buy at below market prices and to meet affordable home needs in Tameside.

9.5 Survey work and modeling has been performed before the recession hit the UK, as such Tameside should ensure its current and future strategies take into account the current economic situation in addition to the modeling.

9.6 That identified employment land is kept for this use where possible, to protect Tameside's future business development opportunities.

9.7 That the benefits of having open and green spaces are carefully considered when designating land for development potential.

9.8 That the Council and partners work together to address the recommendations outlined in the peer review.

9.9 That planning conditions ensure that affordable homes are provided in the borough, though these conditions need to be balanced so as not to be too costly to a developer, as this could potentially deter developers from investing in Tameside.

9.10 That Tameside Council commits to a new building numbers target, but does not readily adopt targets without a certain degree of scrutiny.

9.11 That the Council continues to promote low carbon buildings and sustainable developments.

9.12 That Tameside Housing and Planning Service implement all policies and programmes in the Housing Strategy and review their 'Delivery Plan' annually, presenting and engaging at the Prosperous Delivery Board.

9.13 That the Strategy and Delivery Plan are reported to the Prosperous Delivery Board and the TSP Board on an annual basis.

9.14 That the Empty Homes Strategy should be completed as soon as possible.

9.15 If the number of RSLs in Tameside cannot be reduced over time, then the Council should consider improving its communication arrangements with all RSLs.

9.16 That the Council expedites the production of a Private Sector Housing Strategy and shares this with the private sector.

9.17 That the Council continues to engage with private sector landlords and works with rewards and sanctions to get them signed up to the accreditation scheme.