

## FOREWORD

By national standards, Huntingdonshire has a relatively good quality private sector housing stock. But this is no reason for complacency. If this situation is to continue, owners need to continue to maintain their properties, and to periodically improve them to modern standards of comfort, security and energy efficiency. Not everyone who owns a property is in a position to undertake these tasks.

This Strategy provides information on the initiatives the Council has introduced to encourage responsible home ownership and to assist low-income households. It also sets out how the Council assists people to access private rented housing, and the work undertaken to work with private housing providers, private landlords and letting agents. All these things together make up our Private Sector Housing Strategy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Bates', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Cllr. Ian Bates**  
**Executive Member**  
**Huntingdonshire District Council**  
**April 2003**

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## INTRODUCTION

This strategy provides an analysis of the condition of Huntingdonshire's housing stock and brings together, in one document, the wide range of services relating to the private sector provided by the Council and partner agencies.

This Strategy is a working document that will be reviewed on an annual basis. By circulating this Strategy document widely to partners it is hoped that the document will be used to inform joint working. This Strategy is one of a collection of supplementary documents related to the Council's Housing Strategy (2004-07), details of which are available on page 19.

## ABOUT THE DISTRICT OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Huntingdonshire District forms the most Westerly part of Cambridgeshire and has a population of approximately 156,954. It covers 360 square miles and has its administrative centre in Huntingdon. The District falls logically into three parts, the Valley of the Great Ouse, the 'Uplands' on the West side of the Great North Road and the Fens which have their own very distinct character. The Valley of the Great Ouse contains the main centres of population; Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neots and Godmanchester. West of the Great North Road is an area of undulating countryside bordering on rural Northamptonshire. The main centre in the West is based at Kimbolton. From Yaxley near Peterborough down through the east of the District to Earith is the Fen country, which stretches for miles across the Bedford level. With the exception of Ramsey this flat area is relatively sparsely populated. In addition to the main market towns there are over 80 villages in the District.

Although it is an area of ancient settlement, Huntingdonshire has expanded significantly in population size in the post-war period and particularly the 1960's, which saw considerable in-migration from London. As a consequence, approximately two-thirds of the District's stock was built in a 15-year period from the mid 1960's to 1980, whilst only approximately 7% pre-dates 1900.

**Table 1. Total Dwellings in District - April 2003**

Owner Occupied	45,927	(70%)
Privately Rented	6,561	(10%)
Social Rented	13,122	(20%)
<b>Total Dwellings in District</b>	<b>65,610</b>	

## CHAPTER 1 HOUSING IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

Our Aim is to:

- identify and quantify local housing need in order to plan housing provision.

Our Key Objective is to:

- use the private sector Stock Condition Survey data to inform strategy and policies, identify the condition of the stock, the need for repairs and to target Council resources.

The stock condition survey provides a major source of information for the development and monitoring of housing policies and for dealing with the repair, improvement, management and energy efficiency of the housing stock.

The external stock condition survey is nearing completion with 58,068 properties having been assessed leaving (after discounting new housing) approximately 5,000 rural properties to be assessed. Analysis to date shows that:

- there are no major concentrations of unfit stock but there are concentrations of dwellings in disrepair within market towns, which will require further detailed investigation;
- 252 properties have been assessed as unfit. When extrapolated it is anticipated that the overall total for the District will be 274;
- most of the unfit properties were built before 1900 and are located in the market towns; and
- 3599 properties have been found to be in need of major repair. When extrapolated, it is anticipated that the overall total for the District will be over 3900.

**Table 2. Stock Profile by Age and Built Form (of those surveyed)**

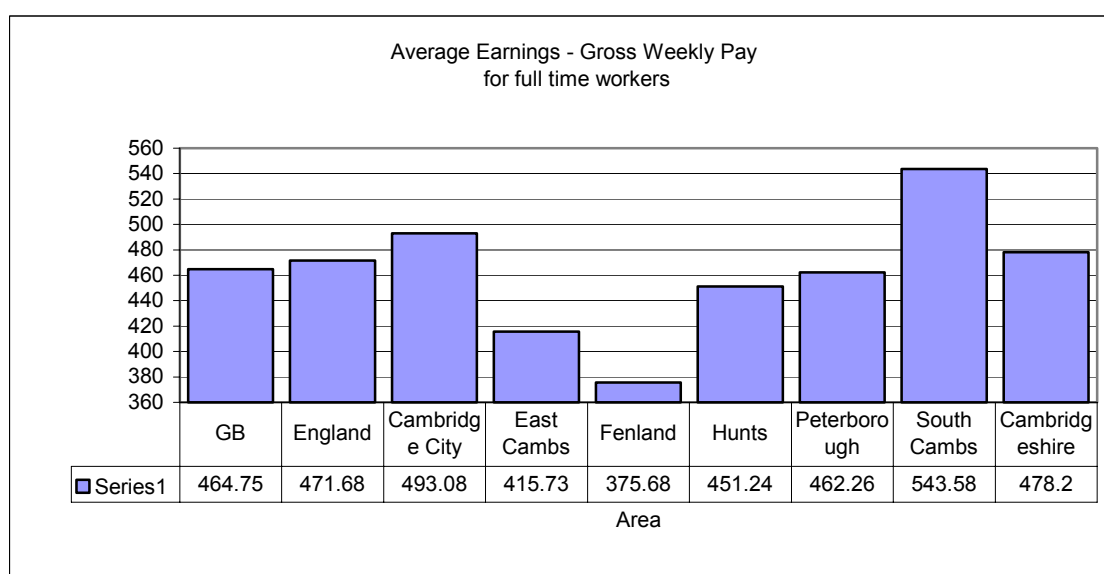
<b>Built Form</b>	<b>Detached</b>	<b>Semi-detached</b>	<b>Terrace</b>	<b>Flat</b>	<b>Total</b>
Pre-1900	2024	780	2350	610	5764
1900-1929	315	797	275	51	1438
1930-1949	878	1795	265	34	2972
1950-1965	1146	2484	891	153	4674
1966-1976	7455	6191	4643	1400	19689
1977-1981	5701	2654	3049	665	12069
Post 1981	6864	1634	1708	1256	11462
<b>Total</b>	<b>24383</b>	<b>16335</b>	<b>13181</b>	<b>4169</b>	<b>58068</b>

This information provides valuable data for the targeting of staff and financial resources at areas of greatest need. Whilst the number of unfit properties is not large, it is recognised that there is a need to address major repair requirements before these properties become unfit. The large proportion of the total stock built between 1965 and 1981 as shown in Table 2 will require action in the future as various building elements start reaching the end of the life cycle.

## Investing in the Private Sector

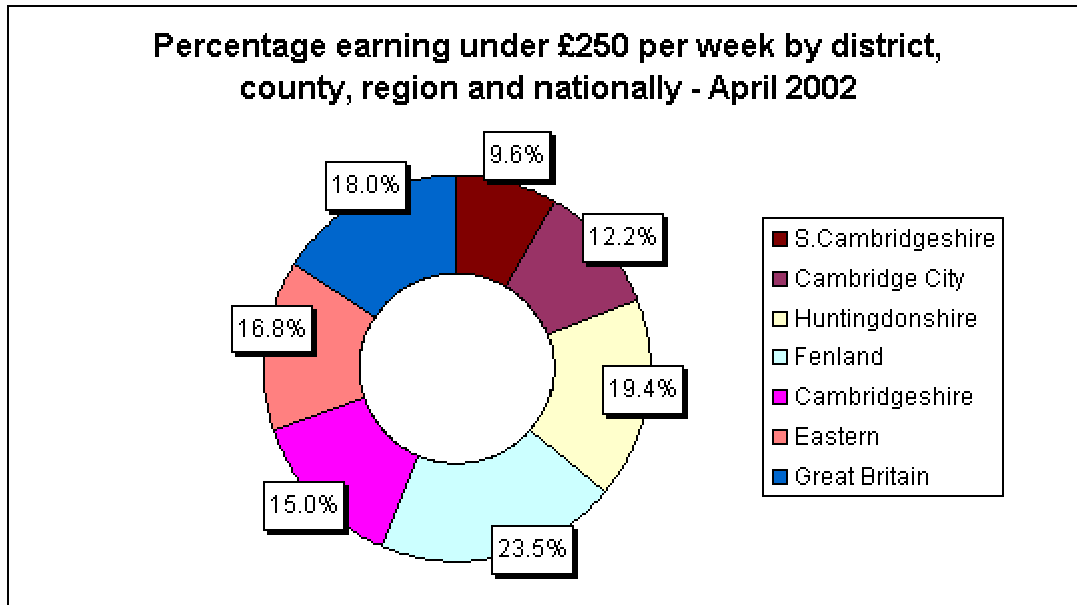
Results from the stock condition survey confirm that an area renewal strategy for the private sector is inappropriate, as there is no spatial concentration of properties in poor repair. However, demographic and other social and economic developments may lead to a growing private sector repair problem. Over the past two decades the right-to-buy for tenants, the contraction of the social rented sector, and an enthusiasm for home ownership has extended owner-occupation from 50% to almost 70% of all households. An important component of this tenure shift is an increase in the number of elderly home owners who, while owning outright an appreciating asset, have little by way of a disposable income. At the same time, rising house prices are driving less affluent younger households into the lower and less well maintained sector of the second-hand housing market. Table 3 provides information on the average gross weekly full time earnings for districts in Cambridgeshire in 2002.

**Table 3. Average Earnings, Gross Weekly Pay for Full time Workers**



Source: Nomisweb, for the Financial Year 2002

**Table 4. Percentage earning under £250 per week**



Source: Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group

### House prices

Huntingdonshire's rate of house price inflation between the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2001 and the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2002 has lessened somewhat when compared with the rise over the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2000 to 2001, when the district experienced the highest rise of all Cambridgeshire districts, with the exception of Fenland, as Table 5 shows. Huntingdonshire's rate of house price inflation at £143, 540, is almost exactly the county average.

**Table 5. Average House Prices of Sales, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarters 2001 & 2002, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough**

District	4 <sup>th</sup> Q 2001	4 <sup>th</sup> Q 2002	% Change
Cambridge City	£179,560	£211,100	17.6%
East Cambridgeshire	£131,280	£161,580	23.1%
Fenland	£77,630	£103,310	33.1%
Huntingdonshire	£120,250	£143,540	19.4%
Peterborough City	£84,400	£104,920	24.3%
South Cambridgeshire	£181,200	£206,080	13.7%
<b>Cambs &amp; Peterborough</b>	<b>£120,820</b>	<b>£144,190</b>	<b>19.3%</b>

Source: Land Registry

The county reveals a dramatic north-south divide with northerly Fenland and Peterborough having an average house price only 50% that of southerly South Cambridgeshire. This north-south divide is highly significant for Huntingdonshire because, as ever, the average disguises a more complex picture. Because geographically it is the most extensive district in the country, Huntingdonshire is far less homogenous a market than any of its local authority neighbours. The north of our District shares many of the characteristics of Fenland, while the south is closer in character to South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge city itself. As a result of

averaging, house prices in the most sought-after and economically active parts of the District are considerably understated, while the most affordable housing is in the parts of the District the least well served by schools, shops and public transport and hence less accessible by, and acceptable to, lower income households.

### Unfit Housing

Although local levels of unfitness are well below the national level, the Council recognises that housing investment and intervention is required in specific cases to bring properties up to an acceptable standard and also to prevent further deterioration of the stock. In the private housing sector this is achieved by the use of enforcement and enabling powers.

The Council has dedicated Environmental Health Officers who deal with a range of private sector housing enforcement issues. Table 6 sets out the distribution of and developing trend for housing complaints and requests for service over the past 5 years:

**Table 6. Distribution of Private Sector Housing Requests**

<b>Request Category</b>	<b>1998/99</b>	<b>1999/00</b>	<b>2000/01</b>	<b>2001/02</b>	<b>2002/03</b>
Structural Defect	2	6	5	4	3
Nuisance	7		2	1	
Overcrowding			2	1	9
HMO		1	1	8	6
Vacant unfit				1	13
Immigration certificate	4	2	1	2	4
Housing (other)	32	27	16	14	20
Fitness inspection	82	77	157	76	93
Harassment/ Illegal Eviction	6	5	7	9	4
Demolition of Buildings				32	87
Insecure empty					2
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>241</b>

Unfitness is found across all tenures but tends to be associated with older properties. It is particularly prevalent in the private rented sector where it is commonly associated with housing occupied by vulnerable groups including ethnic minorities, the elderly and low-income families.

The Council is a signatory to the Enforcement Concordat and is, therefore, committed to the principles of consistent and effective enforcement. Our Enforcement Policy Statement reflects this and elaborates on the enforcement actions available.

The Council recognises that it has a duty to consider the 'most satisfactory course of action' for dealing with unfit premises for which there are 5 potential remedies:

- Repair
- Closure
- Demolition
- Clearance
- Deferred Action

### **Housing in Disrepair**

Not all disrepair is sufficient to make a property statutorily unfit, but may cause tenants undue hardship. The Council will use powers to serve repair notices under the Housing Acts where appropriate or under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 if there is a statutory nuisance.

### **Harassment & Illegal Eviction**

The Council will investigate all complaints of harassment and illegal eviction under the terms of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977 (as amended). These complaints are commonly interrelated and constitute both criminal and civil offences.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour**

The Council recognise the importance of section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 on all decisions related to private sector housing and will work in partnership with other agencies to resolve anti-social behaviour problems.

### **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)**

The Council recognise that HMOs often comprise the worst living conditions and are frequently occupied by the most vulnerable members of society. However, they are an important part of the local housing market and are likely to increase in number. Currently, there are approximately 50 houses in multiple occupation in the District, all of which are programmed for inspection and assessment using a risk-based approach. The Council has a HMO registration scheme that came into force in November 2002 requiring HMOs across the District to be registered – with certain exemptions. Properties are required to be in good repair, have sufficient amenities and adequate fire precautions. An information booklet for landlords and tenants is being developed to provide guidance on relevant standards in HMOs.

### **Enforcement Action**

All decisions on formal housing enforcement action are taken in light of this strategy and the enforcement strategy. These decisions will include consideration of those involved, the character of the area, relevant economic, social and environmental factors appropriate to individual cases. Various notices can be served under the Housing Acts if an informal approach proves unsuccessful. The enforcement actions undertaken by the Council over the last 3 years are summarised in Table 7.



**Table 7 Summary of Housing Enforcement Action**

Notice	Year		
	200/01	2001/02	2002/03
Minded To *	15	10	18
Demolition			2
Repair	1	1	1
HMO Fitness	1		1
Abatement Notice **			1
Accelerated Nuisance Procedure***	3		
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>

- \* A preliminary notice served prior to notices requiring the execution of works.
- \*\* Can be issued if premises are dangerous to health, usually for tenants, and can also be applied to houseboats and caravans.
- \*\*\* Can be used instead of an abatement notice, to avoid unnecessary delays. Works can be commenced 9 days after service of this notice.

**Our Future Priorities are to:**

- complete the analysis of the stock condition survey to inform the future targeting of future surveys, advice, resources, and enforcement action
- to introduce the Housing Health and Safety Rating system when it comes into force
- implement the HMO Registration Scheme to introduce a local regulatory standard for all shared housing where there is a non-resident landlord
- target private sector housing grants at those properties in the poorest condition, and give advice to owners on how to improve local housing stock condition.

## **CHAPTER 2 SERVICES TO RESIDENTS**

**Our Aims are to:**

- **make the best use of all housing resources to meet needs**
- **encourage owner occupation where appropriate and support existing owners.**

**Our Key Objectives are to:**

- **provide advice to households on the range of housing services available to assist their decision-making**
- **improve the range and accessibility of information**
- **assist people with special housing needs to achieve or maintain independence**
- **continue to identify all empty property and encourage owners to bring properties back into beneficial use where appropriate.**

### **Promoting All of Our Services**

The promotion of our services is vital to ensure that residents are aware of what is available. When promoting a particular service, the opportunity to publicise other housing services that may be of interest to the same target audience is seized. For example, knowledge of community alarms and disabled facilities and repairs grants can be distributed in this way. A wide range of partner agencies, including the Police Crime Prevention Unit, work with the Council to distribute letters about the community alarms purchased with Prevention Grant funding. A database of local voluntary organisations has been compiled enabling information updates on new initiatives to be sent. It also provides contact points through which we can establish carer and user consultation about our services in the future.

### **Advice and Support**

Good quality housing advice on the range of housing options available, and realistic prospects of a successful outcome, is essential. For some years, the Council has provided comprehensive advice to assist residents to remain in their own homes, through intervention with landlords or mortgagors, or by referral for improvement grants. Comprehensive advice is given on the availability of social rented housing and the likelihood of re-housing, and the Rent Deposit/Rent in Advance Scheme has assisted those seeking private rented housing. Advice is also available on house purchase where this is a feasible solution. All Housing Register applicants are visited in their home and advisory services are accessible to all residents in the District. Close links with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), which receives funding from the Council, and the Huntingdon Independent Advice Centre (HIAC), ensures that residents can obtain independent housing advice, and that there is a mechanism for challenging the Council's decision-making process in individual cases.

### **Court Advocacy Service**

Together with the CAB and HIAC the Council provides a Court Advocacy Service. This has been developed to assist households going through the Court process. The

provision of this service and the follow-up actions taken have prevented homes from being repossessed and had a positive impact on the prevention of homelessness. The service has been operational for 18 months and no repossessions have been granted when clients have been represented in court. The service will be expanded to cover extra court days.

### **Rent Deposit – Rent in Advance Scheme**

The Council's Rent Deposit/Rent in Advance Scheme helps low income households gain tenancies in the private rented sector, and has continued to successfully assist applicants in gaining access to this housing tenure. With a view to preventing rather than responding to housing crisis. Applicants do not need to be homeless or threatened with homelessness in order to access the scheme. Applicants do not need to be on the Council's Housing Register, the scheme aims to help households who have a preference for private renting but cannot afford the entry costs. To reduce the burden of repayment, a bond system has been introduced as an alternative option to a deposit loan. For qualifying applicants, this scheme now forms part of a co-ordinated approach to advice and assistance for people wanting to rent in the private sector.

### **Young and Single People**

The Council's specialist Housing Advice Officer (Young Persons) provides a valuable service to young people by negotiating with landlords and parents to retain or obtain accommodation. Work in schools with 15 and 16 year olds to advise them of the difficulties and costs of finding housing is raising awareness and contributing to the stated aim of preventing homelessness. The programme of introducing housing issues as part of the curriculum has been extended to other schools across the district in order to increase awareness with young people. This service will become increasingly valuable given the anticipated increase in the housing need of vulnerable young people as a result of the extension of the priority needs groups, which has been introduced by new legislation.

The Council has also piloted a mediation service for vulnerable young people faced with homelessness. The scheme, run by an independent agency, aims to avoid emergency homelessness situations as a result of breakdowns in family relations. The scheme and the referral system has been widely publicised with partner agencies, so that young people and their families may access the service with the aim of preventing homelessness wherever possible. The pilot will continue for the coming year, after which its successes will be evaluated.

### **Home Ownership**

Home ownership is one of a range of housing options discussed with those seeking housing. In the past year, local publicity of shared ownership initiatives has increased and there is now a database of interested people from the Housing Register with sufficient income and savings. As a result, the Council can fully assess local need and will be considering the inclusion of shared ownership properties on a number of new developments. Bids by RSLs to the Housing Corporation for Voluntary Purchase Grant will continue to be supported. The Council will continue to monitor the use of receipts by RSLs to ensure money is recycled into affordable housing provision, and it will continue to encourage applicants wishing to take up Homebuy initiatives.

## Home Maintenance

The Huntingdonshire Home Improvement Agency (HHIA) provides homeowners and private tenants with advice and support to obtain funding for repairs and adaptations to their homes. This is largely achieved through the use of disabled facilities grants, house renovation grants, and home repairs assistance grants. Advice is given to clients on alternative housing options as part of the Agency's role. The Council also produces a range of leaflets on basic home repair and maintenance.

## Empty Property

The Council's Empty Homes Strategy provides a close analysis of the local issues and the detail of the Council's plan to deal with it. The great majority of local homes empty for above six months are transactional voids that are cleared by the market in due course. There is a relatively small empty homes problem in Huntingdonshire with less than 0.1% of the stock (fewer than 60 properties) standing empty without apparent good reason. The 60 identified problematic properties are now the focus of the Council's attention. Of these, 2 have been brought back into use by a renovation grant under the Empty Homes Grant policy. The Council has the right to nominate a household from the Council's Housing Register to the tenancy and set a sub-market rent for 5 years.

## Private Landlords' Forum

Private landlord forum membership has grown to 48, of which around 10 - 15 attend the meetings held every 2 months. Forum members value the Council's interest in the private sector and have been impressed by the willingness of officers from Housing, Benefits and Environmental Health to make changes to policies and practices where a good case for change has been made. In the coming months, the Forum's views will be sought on whether the landlords would support a voluntary landlord accreditation scheme for the District.

## Letting Agents' Forum

The Council's relationship with the local letting agents is a good one. Agents frequently use the Council's rent deposit scheme and are keen to provide information on the state of the local market for the Council's various strategy documents. In the current buoyant lettings market almost all local agents refuse to accept people who claim housing benefit and, as professional and generally well-trained housing managers, local agents are not usually in need of the same basic legal, financial and tenancy management advice that many of the small landlords find so valuable.

## Our Future Priorities are to:

- **develop further the debt counselling advice service and court advocacy service with local partner agencies**
- **ensure that housing advice and information is accessible to black and minority ethnic residents**
- **encourage and promote the provision of a healthy private rented housing sector**
- **integrate the Empty Homes Strategy into other corporate policies with a view to achieving a year-on-year reduction in the number of empty homes.**

## **CHAPTER 3      PROMOTING HEALTHY HOMES**

**Our Aims are to:**

- **minimise the risk to health by encouraging safe, healthy homes and environments**
- **maximise individuals' life chances by reducing poor housing conditions and social exclusion**
- **encourage the repair and improvement of the District's housing stock**
- **maximise external partnerships for improving thermal comfort.**

**Our Key Objectives are to:**

- **increase partners' awareness of the effect of poor housing on health and the range of housing solutions through joint working**
- **continue to provide loan/grant funding, particularly for low income households, to improve living conditions and maintain independent living**
- **continue to target resources and services at those in most need and at properties in worst condition in conjunction with partner agencies**
- **continue to promote energy efficiency measures to reduce cold and dampness; and to promote thermal comfort**
- **achieve a steady improvement in the energy efficiency of the District's stock.**

### **Our Strategic Involvement**

Housing has a major role to play in people's safety and well being. The Council recognises the responsibility it has for sustaining the environment in which people live. The existence of a safe, warm and healthy home maximises the life chances of local residents.

Housing, environmental health, health promotion, home energy efficiency, community safety and community initiatives officers all actively participate with the Police, Cambridgeshire Health Authority, Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), Social Services and voluntary sector at both District-wide and County level in a number of joint planning groups.

The county-wide, multi-disciplinary Public Health and Inequalities Advisory Group has the responsibility of advising and supporting the Cambridgeshire HimP. Sub-groups take detailed work forward. Outcomes include a shared understanding of the ways in which housing impacts on the health of individuals and families, providing examples of best practice and identification of the scope for partnership activity.

### **Enabling Affordable Warmth**

The Council is committed to reducing the occurrence of ill health, making residents' lives more comfortable, improving energy efficiency across all tenures and promoting environmental sustainability through reducing energy consumption in housing. This is achieved by systematically incorporating energy efficiency measures into renovation and repairs grants, and by accessing Warm Front and Energy Efficiency Commitment grants as appropriate so that a full package of measures can be

delivered. Promotional initiatives are organised with both public and private sector partners.

The Council continues to promote energy efficiency to the public, concentrating its efforts at existing local fairs and community events to which it is now routinely invited and where energy efficiency can be explained in the context of wider environmental objectives. Energy awareness is also promoted through a variety of media such as community newsletters, local press, schools and by attendance at local events such as the St Neots Green Fair. Full details of work carried out under the Council's Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) strategy and a progress report updating the Fuel Poverty Report (2000), will be presented in the 7<sup>th</sup> Progress Report (2003) under the Home Energy Conservation Act (1995).

Older and disabled groups are also targeted for publicity. Specialist assistance and demonstrations are given to the visually impaired and to arthritis sufferers, in conjunction with British Gas, the local energy advice centre and a central heating control manufacturer. The Council has also been working with Cambridgeshire Constabulary in their distraction burglary campaign, which is aimed at the elderly, disabled and their carers. Everyone attending the presentations is provided with a low energy lamp and advice pack. The presentation raises awareness of bogus firms promising council grants for insulation work and the mis-selling tactics used by some individuals to get homeowners to fuel switch.

In order to make best use of its resources and to broaden access to the target audiences, the Council has been working in partnership with neighbouring local authorities and the local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (EEAC) when running promotions. It participated in a weeklong promotion for Energy Efficiency Week in October 2002 by doing interviews, giving advice, and running adverts on local radio (X-CEL FM) along with a radio roadshow for one day in each of the authorities involved. This attracted over 500 visitors in one day, all of whom received a low energy lamp, advice on the energy efficiency of their home as well as being entered into a prize draw to win an 'A' rated energy efficient fridge freezer.

Energy efficiency was also promoted at the East of England Show in partnership with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Government Office East and with neighbouring local authorities, providing advice and low energy light bulbs to the public. The Council has developed a range of promotional material, such as 'Warmometers', children's hand-held windmills and promotional 'fuzzies' that enable it to attract the attention of a wide variety of age groups. The Council takes an active role each year during Energy Efficiency Week and uses various incentives to promote energy efficiency. The effectiveness of different types of publicity events has been analysed using software developed by the Leicester EEAC. This complements the use of a database to calculate successive years' savings of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

The Council has also developed an Environmental Educational Resources leaflet, which has been sent out to schools. This allows schools to see the educational resources the Council can offer to children to understand the issues surrounding waste management, litter, energy and transport and the positive impact they can have on their own environment and in their homes.

### **Accident Prevention in the Home**

The Council has contributed to multi-agency "*Child Safety Action Zones*" which have proved to be very popular and two more are planned in the District. It will contribute

to these with the Food Safety and Home Safety stand, and the Dog Warden will attend to give advice on dog care and management. The Trustees of the Moor Community Centre, Sapley Square have taken over the management of the Community Action Safety Equipment (CASE) project previously managed by the Primary Care Trust. The CASE project provides access to low cost fire guards and stair gates, to families with small children on low income.

The over 75's check by GP's and the NHS Trust Falls Project continue to be explored through the PCT as methods by which those vulnerable to falling may be identified and referred to agencies, including housing, for preventative intervention. A home safety common assessment tool for health professionals working with the elderly is under development by Social and Health Services in partnership, and a pilot project is underway at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

A multi-agency project led by the Accident Prevention Group in partnership with Oxmoor Community Action Group, targets high risk Oxmoor residents for life-long smoke alarms. Through schools and community groups vulnerable young families, the elderly and disabled are identified for targeting purposes. Some 60 alarms have been installed and the Group are seeking further funding from the SRB Community Chest Fund (which has been established to support low-cost local initiatives) to continue these works.

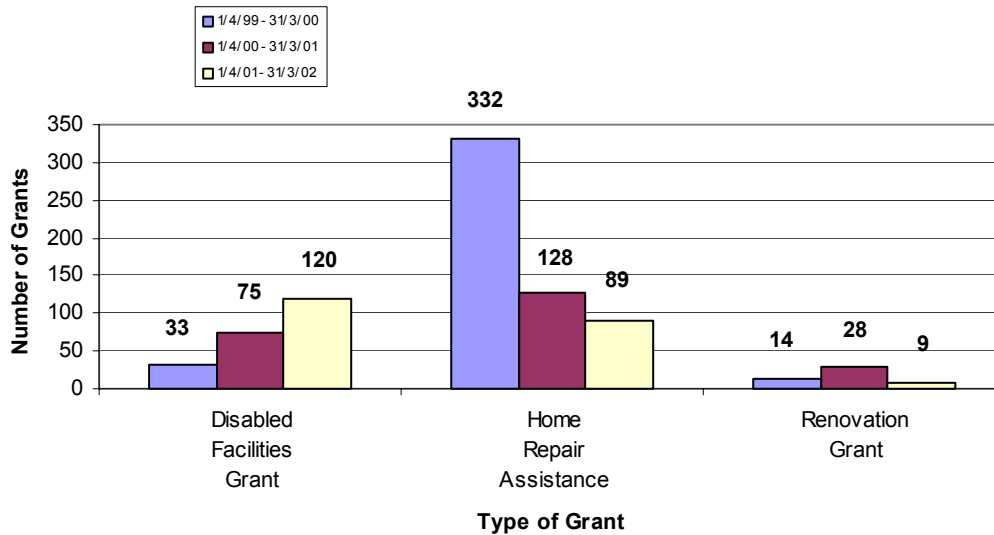
### **Maintaining Vulnerable People at Home**

The Huntingdonshire Home Improvement Agency (HHIA) has a vital role to play in helping vulnerable people to remain in their own homes. The desire of older and disabled people to remain living at home has long been accepted. The significant contribution that the Agency has made to the prevention of admission to residential or hospital care has also been recognised by Health and Social Services.

In April 2003 the Council published its Housing Renewal Assistance Policy as a response to the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. It reaffirms the policy to target funding at the most vulnerable members of the community in accordance with the principles outlined in *Sustainable Communities: building for the future*. The policy also demonstrates how the award of public money will now need to be justified against the twin criterion of the ability of the owner to self-finance repairs, and the extent to which any grant brings benefit not just to the owner but the community. The following chart shows the number and type of grant provided since May 2000.



## Total Number of Grants provided since May 2000



Most of the Disabled Facilities Grants completed during 2001-2002 were for stair-lifts, and level access showers. In addition to the Disabled Facilities Grants the Agency has also completed nearly a hundred repairs to the homes of people who are on gateway benefits such as Income Support and Housing Benefit. Most of these were to make the properties weather-tight, and for heating systems.

### Our Future Priorities are to:

- participate in the implementation of the local Health Improvement Plan (HimP) and Health for Huntingdonshire Partnership with other stakeholders
- pursue the implementation of community regeneration and community safety initiatives in the Oxmoor area of Huntingdon
- continue to promote the HHIA as a means of helping increasing numbers of vulnerable people to remain in their own homes
- continue to raise the awareness of energy efficiency benefits, such as enabling affordable warmth, with local partner agencies.



# **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY**

## **ACTION PLAN**

**2004-2007**

## PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

Title	Future Priorities	Comment/Target
<b>Housing in Huntingdonshire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the analysis of the stock condition survey to inform the future targeting of future surveys, advice, resources, and enforcement action.</li> <li>• To introduce the Housing Health and Safety Rating system when it comes into force.</li> <li>• Implement the HMO registration scheme to introduce a local regulatory standard for all shared housing where there is a non-resident landlord.</li> <li>• Target private sector housing grants at those properties in the poorest condition, and give advice to owners on how to improve local housing stock condition.</li> </ul>	<p>Survey is 90% complete</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<b>Services to Residents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop further the Debt counseling Advice Service and Court Advocacy service with local partner agencies.</li> <li>• Ensure that housing advice and information is accessible to black and minority ethnic residents.</li> <li>• Encourage and promote the provision of a healthy private rented housing sector.</li> <li>• Integrate the Empty Homes Strategy into other corporate policies with a view to achieving a year-on-year reduction in the number of empty homes.</li> </ul>	<p>April 2004</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<b>Promoting Healthy Homes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in the implementation of the local Health Improvement Plan (HimP) and Health for Huntingdonshire Partnership with other stakeholders.</li> <li>• Pursue the implementation of community regeneration and community safety initiatives in the Oxmoor area of Huntingdon.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Title	Future Priorities	Comment/Target
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to promote the HHIA as a means of helping increasing numbers of vulnerable people to remain in their own homes.</li> <li>• Continue to raise the awareness of energy efficiency benefits, such as enabling affordable warmth, with local partner agencies.</li> <li>• Improve and increase the range of information leaflets on home repair and maintenance.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

For details on resources and links with corporate objectives please see the Housing Strategy 2002-07 Action Plan.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

If you would like additional copies of this Private Sector Housing Strategy or any of the following related documents please contact us.

Housing Strategy 2004-07  
Housing Strategy Summary 2004-07  
Reading the Housing Market July 2003  
BME Strategy 2003-04  
Homelessness Strategy 2004-07  
Home Energy Conservation Act – 6<sup>th</sup> Progress Report (2002)  
Empty Homes Strategy

If you have any comments on any of our documents or you would like to be involved in the ongoing consultation we undertake on any of the District's Strategies please contact us.

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