

Private Sector Housing Strategy 2014 -2019

Regeneration and Housing

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1. Introduction

1. Private sector housing performs a vital role in supporting Ealing's economic viability and meeting housing need in the borough. It is therefore essential that the council work with our partners to both improve property conditions and to provide access to well managed private sector housing to help meet the housing needs of our residents.
2. Ealing Council's Private Sector Housing Strategy supports our over-arching Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2014-2019 and sets out how we will go about achieving our vision, which is:

To ensure the borough has an affordable, good quality private sector housing to meet the housing needs of our residents, ensuring Ealing is a thriving place to live and work.
3. To achieve this vision we have set ourselves the following 4 Strategic Priorities:
 - Increase the supply of private housing
 - Support residents to access affordable, well managed private rented homes
 - Improve the condition of private housing through regulation
 - Develop strong partnerships to support the private housing sector
4. With each of these priorities, we have identified our main aims (areas of focus) and the action we will take to achieve these. This is further detailed in our Delivery Plan at the end of the strategy.
5. The Private Sector Housing Strategy and accompanying Delivery Plan will cover the period 2014-2019. Actions will be reviewed annually to ensure that are still relevant and realistic. Progress towards the delivery of the Private Sector Housing Strategy will be reported annually to Cabinet.

2. The Strategy in Context

6. National, regional and local, policies and targets provide the council and its partners with a broad strategic framework to work within. The key policies that have driven the development of this Strategy are detailed below.

National Context

7. 'Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England'

A clear statement by the government on its approach and priorities to housing policy was made in the November 2011 strategy document "Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England". This focuses on creating a thriving, active but stable housing market which offers choice, flexibility and affordable housing. It recognises that the private rented sector (PRS) plays an essential role in the housing market offering flexibility and choice to people and supporting economic growth and access to jobs. The strategy encourages greater institutional investment into the sector, along with tough enforcement against rogue landlords.

8. 'The Private Rented Sector' – CLG Select Committee Report

In July 2013 the Communities and Local Government Select Committee published its report on the Private Rented Sector. The Committee recognised that 'the (PRS) market is a developing one which we need to help to edge its way towards maturity. This requires a careful balancing act which does not upset

the market developing naturally. It therefore requires not a single step but action across a number of different areas'. The Committees recommendations include:

- **simplify regulation** - provide a more straightforward regulatory framework
- **raise standards** - provide councils the flexibilities they require to enforce the law and raise standards, including more flexibility over landlord licensing
- **regulate agents** - develop new regulation to address sharp practice and abuses by letting agents
- **longer tenancies** - ensure that the market offers longer tenancies to those who need them, especially families
- **increase supply** - across all tenures of housing

'Taken together, these measures should lead to a more mature market and a sector that better meets the needs of those who live in it. It is important that private renting is seen as an attractive alternative to owner occupation'.

9. Welfare Reform Act 2012

The government's programme of welfare reform is the most comprehensive overhaul of welfare benefits since the Second World War. The Welfare Reform Act sets out a number of changes to welfare benefits that will impact the income of certain households living in private sector housing.

10. Localism Act 2011

The introduction of the Localism Act 2011 has changed the way in which Local Authorities deal with applications for social housing and homelessness applications. The Act enables Local Authorities to fully discharge their homelessness duty through an offer of accommodation in the private rented sector. Anyone provided with accommodation in the private rented sector as final discharge of a homelessness duty is no longer considered to have a 'Reasonable Preference' for an allocation of permanent housing by reason of homelessness.

11. Energy Act 2011

The Energy Act introduces the government's flagship Green Deal scheme, whereby homes will be given finance upfront to make energy efficiency improvements, which would then be paid for by energy bill savings. The Act also sets up a new obligation on energy companies to help the poorest and most vulnerable households with saving energy. A range of measures designed to improve energy efficiency are also introduced; such as facilitating the roll-out of smart meters, widening access to energy performance certificates and making information on energy bills clearer.

Details of how Ealing Council will implement current legislation relating to energy use in corporate and domestic buildings, and assisting vulnerable residents in both social and private housing is detailed in the Councils Energy Strategy 2013-2018.

12. The Housing Act 2004

The Housing Act 2004 introduced powers to improve the management of private rented sector properties through licensing, to bring long-term empty homes back into use, and to improve the health and safety of occupants in dwellings. Measures in force include:

- **The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)** - This a risk assessment tool used to assess potential risks to the health and safety of occupants, potential occupants and visitors to residential properties. The system is based on a risk assessment of 29 prescribed hazards. Once an assessment is made the hazards are scored as either Category 1 (serious) or Category 2 (less serious). The Council has a legal duty to take action if a Category 1 Hazard is found to exist in premises. Where there are numerous Category 2 hazards and/or high scoring Category 2 hazards, our discretionary powers may be exercised
- **Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)** - including a mandatory national licensing scheme to raise the standards of some of the highest risk properties with some of the most vulnerable people, whilst maintaining an adequate supply of rented accommodation.
- **Selective Licensing** - Discretionary powers enabling councils to improve local communities by ensuring landlords take greater responsibility for the management of their property and deal with anti-social behaviour.
- **Empty Homes** - Provides a mechanism to enable councils to bring back into use long-term private sector homes.

13. Key government reviews, policies and legislation which have impacted on the private rented sector are summarised in Appendix 1.

Regional Context

14. Homes for London: The London Housing Strategy 2013

On 25th November 2013 The Mayor of London launched his new draft London Housing Strategy for consultation. The strategy outlines 5 key themes to address London's housing challenges:

- Increasing the supply of new homes
- Improving design
- Improving existing homes and estates
- Supporting working Londoners
- Meeting a range of housing need

GLA data indicates that at least 42,000 new homes a year are likely to be required for the next 25 years. The majority (22,000) will be market homes for owner occupation. The GLA is also seeking to ensure that private and public sector developers build at least 5,000 long-term private rented homes a year.

To improve design, the focus is on building to the London Housing Design Guide standards and to the Lifetime Homes standards, with at least ten per cent of new homes wheelchair accessible.

In order to improve existing homes and estates the strategy focuses on improving energy efficiency and the key objectives are to:

- retrofit every poorly insulated home in London by 2030.
- Ensure that no more than one per cent of homes in London should remain empty for more than six months.

The draft London Housing Strategy recognises that the private rented sector plays a vital role in the economy and the latter two themes focus around delivering the Mayor's Covenant.

15. The Mayor's Housing Covenant: Making the Private Rented Sector work for Londoners'

The Mayor of London's Housing Covenant (December 2012) sets out the Mayor's three principal objectives for improving the private rented sector in London, these are:

- **to increase housing supply** – utilising the PRS to unlock stalled schemes, bringing forward new homes and jobs, and providing more customised housing designs for the next generation of renters;
- **to empower consumers** – promoting a culture of rights and responsibilities, encouraging a more consistent and professional offer across the sector, and supporting choice and flexibility in the rental market
- **to promote standards** – ensuring that poor conditions are tackled through better enforcement, encouraging investment in property improvements, and improving the energy efficiency of the stock.

Additionally, a central proposal contained in the Covenant is to publish a London Rental Standard. This aims to raise professional standards in the capital's private rented sector by providing a consistent standard of accreditation for landlords and agents

16. Rent Reform: Making London's Private Rented Sector Fit for Purpose'.

The GLA's London Assembly Housing and Regeneration Committee also undertook a review of the private rented sector and published a report in June 2013, 'Rent Reform: Making London's Private Rented Sector Fit for Purpose'. The report calls for a package of tough reforms to help banish rogue landlords from the London private rental sector and a package of measures to reform renting, which include:

- **rent stabilisation** - the Mayor should bring forward an effective mechanism to stabilise rents that are becoming increasingly unaffordable even for Londoners on average wages.
- **landlord registration** - landlords must have to register in order to operate in London.
- **higher penalties** - penalties for landlords breaching regulations must be reviewed, including the size of penalties and making the process of issuing penalties simpler.
- **longer tenancies** - homeless households placed in the private rented sector should have at least 24-month tenancies – and longer for families with children – instead of the current 6-month minimum.
- **improving housing** - the Mayor should look into setting up a Decent Homes Fund for the private rented sector. This will allow landlords to access low-cost loans to improve the quality of their property.

Sub- Regional Context

17. At a sub-regional level, Ealing Council is a member of the West London Housing Partnership which has sub-groups focusing on private sector housing, empty homes, homelessness and affordable warmth. The West London Housing Partnership has been very successful in terms of attracting investment and coordinating good practice across the region. The West London Housing Partnership priorities are:

- Improve conditions in the private housing sector to deliver decent homes and tackle climate change.
- Develop a common approach to enable efficient working and consistency across West London.
- Undertake research or action to support and inform West London activities in the private housing sector.
- Maximise the private rented sector to meet other key housing priorities and build credible partnerships with large portfolio landlords in West London.

Local Context

18. Private sector housing performs a vital role supporting Ealing boroughs' economic viability and meeting housing need. Out of 124,082 homes in Ealing, 79% are privately owned or rented. The private rented sector in Ealing has grown substantially by 74% between 2001 and 2011, with 34,182 households renting at the time of the 2011 census. During the same period, home ownership declined from 63% (74,375 households) to 51% (63,420 households). The proportion of households social renting remained broadly similar, seeing a slight increase in actual household numbers, but slight decline in the proportion.

19. A major issue in Ealing, like many London boroughs, is the affordability of private sector housing. To be affordable, housing costs should not take up more than 35-45% of net household income. Recent research by the Resolution Foundation (2013) indicates that both private renting and home ownership is unaffordable to the majority of lower income families in Ealing. Affordability is most acute for families needing larger (3 bedroomed plus) sized properties. Lower income households (with the lowest quartile of income) face the most difficulty in affording accommodation within Ealing and would need to spend up to 80% of net income on housing costs.

20. Renting and purchasing a home in Ealing is largely unaffordable for households with a below average income for the borough (£32,049, 2013 Paycheck). The issue is most acute for single people and families requiring larger properties, whose income is stretched through having one income or dependents.

21. Both house prices and rent costs are expected to continue to increase at a higher rate than household income over the next five years. The Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) recently predicted that house prices will rise by around 25% nationally over the next five years. In London, they are forecasting much higher rises of 43.5% by 2018 with the average price expected to reach close to £550,000.

22. The continued lack of affordability of home ownership is likely to create additional demand for affordable rented properties, placing further inflationary pressures on rent levels. This is reflected in the high level of demand for social

housing with around 9,000 households on the Council's waiting list as of April 2013. As most privately rented housing is unaffordable, this is likely to result in an increase in demand for housing related benefits and an increase in demand for shared housing.

23. Poor condition housing affects the health and quality of life of occupants and concentrations of such housing can undermine the sustainability of the communities in which they are located. An estimated 39% of Ealing borough's private housing stock is classified as non-decent, just above the national average. Higher levels of non-decency are found in rented properties. A substantial proportion of private homes in Ealing contain category 1 hazards (21.6%) and lack adequate thermal comfort (19.6%).

24. Ealing Council's Housing Commission Report

In February 2011, Ealing Council launched a Housing Commission to examine possible ways of providing more affordable homes and consider how new government policy might affect the borough housing priorities. The report produced by the Housing Commission acknowledged that most people in Ealing live in the private sector and a majority of residents aspire to affordable homeownership. The recommendations centred on supporting 'generation rent and the key recommendations relating to private housing include the following:

- Begin developing homes for private sale and rent to provide cross subsidy for social housing and help create sustainable mixed tenure communities.

- Sell a portion of one-bed social homes as low-cost homeownership, and use the receipts for other investment.
- Consider the purchase of street properties in areas of high churn and poor quality private rent. These could then be let at long term tenancies across different price points and tenure, to give greater stability to communities.
- Investigate private sector landlord licensing
- Consider directly providing housing for private rental as part of its own developments and regeneration schemes.
- Work with partners and advice agencies to warn people as early as possible if benefit changes are going to leave them less able to pay their rent.

25. Housing & Homelessness Strategy

Ealing’s overarching Housing & Homelessness Strategy sets out five strategic priorities for Ealing over the next five years. These are as follows:

- Increase the supply of affordable homes
- Improve the quality of housing & neighbourhoods in Ealing
- Support residents to access affordable, well managed social and market rented homes
- Meet the housing and support needs of vulnerable residents
- Prevent homelessness

26. Ealing Local Plan

The Local Plan is an emerging collection of documents that sets out how the borough will develop up to 2026. The Development Strategy 2026 (also known as the Core Strategy DPD) was adopted in April 2012 and sets out a vision for the future development of the borough and covers a 15-year plan period up to 2026. This includes plans to provide 14,000 additional homes by 2026. The majority of housing is planned for sites located along the Uxbridge Road corridor close to the new Cross Rail link.

27. The following table sets out the national and regional priorities alongside local priorities for Ealing.

Table 1: National to Local Private Housing Priorities

NATIONAL PRIORITIES	REGIONAL PRIORITIES	REGIONAL PRIORITIES
Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England	The Mayor’s Housing Covenant: Making the Private Rented	Ealing Council’s Housing & Homelessness Strategy
Increase housing supply. Reform social and affordable housing. Create a thriving private rented sector. Bring empty homes back into use. Provide choice and ensure a stable home is accessible for vulnerable households. Improve the quality, sustainability and design of housing.	Sector work for Londoners Increase housing supply. Empower consumers. Promote property standards and energy efficiency.	Increase the supply of affordable homes. Improve the quality of housing and neighbourhoods in Ealing. Support residents to access affordable, well managed social and market rented homes. Meet the housing and support needs of vulnerable residents. Prevent homelessness.

Improving the Private Rented Sector – Recent Developments & Good Practice

28. There have been several recent reports detailing good practice examples for improving the private rented sector, some of which are summarised in appendix 2.

29. ‘The Private Rented Sector’ – CLG Select Committee Report

The CLG Select Committee report on the Private Rented Sector provides a comprehensive, overview of the private rented sector. As well as making recommendations to the government, many instances of good practice are outlined including the introduction of licensing regimes, the use of accreditation and the raising awareness of rights and responsibilities amongst tenants.

30. ‘Tackling rogue landlords and improving the private rented sector’ – Shelter (Sept 2013)

Shelter’s report Tackling rogue landlords and improving the private rented sector, identified emerging good practice in seven different local authorities. This report identified the following actions for councils to tackle rogue landlords and improve conditions in their private rented sector:

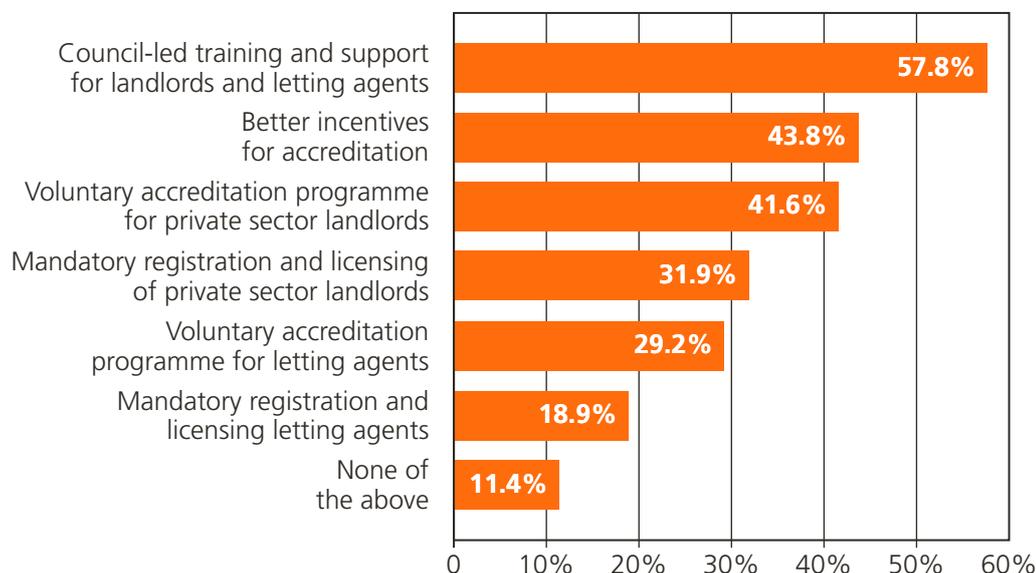
- Proactively manage and proactively inspect properties to make sure that they are appropriate homes for renters;
- Adequately resource and support their local enforcement teams;

- Take tough enforcement action against rogue landlords. And publicise their tough stance in the local press.
- Advise renters and give them the support they need to bring complaints to the council.
- Implement a clear complaints procedure and harness the skills of other agencies.
- Proactively manage their local private rented sector through accreditation and licensing schemes.
- Work to educate tenants and landlords of their rights and responsibilities.

31. House Proud: how councils can raise standards in the private rented sector (August 2013)

A joint Local Government Information Unit and Fire Council Report, House Proud: how councils can raise standards in the private rented sector also provides cases of good practice. As part of a survey, they found a broad consensus that the relationship between council and private rented sector was becoming increasingly important, with poor conditions being identified as one of the main drivers for better engagement. Respondents identified supportive action; in particular, providing training and support for landlords and letting agents as the most important sort of involvement from councils in the future. Around a third of councils surveyed were interested in pursuing mandatory registration and/or licensing of landlords.

Table 2: Types of involvement that landlords and tenants would like to see councils take



32. A key theme of all the recent reports is that both landlords and tenants were not sufficiently aware of their respective rights and responsibilities. The CLG Select Committee Report noted that:

'a number of existing groups, some of which are entirely voluntary, do an excellent job in providing advice to tenants. It is important that all tenants know that sources of advice are available and how they can be accessed'.

33. But it is also landlords who may not be fully aware of their rights and responsibilities and who may also need advice and support. Landlord accreditation schemes can play an important role in providing information and education.

3. Our Strategic Priorities

Priority 1: Increase the supply of private housing

34. The private sector is the most important source of housing for our residents, providing 79% of homes (2011 census). Access to home ownership is increasingly difficult, due to high prices and deposit requirements. Both these factors, along with a shortage of social rented housing and expansion of buy-to-let,

have driven an expansion of the private rented sector. Rising rental and house prices are evidence of the high demand for private houses to rent and buy. To provide affordable housing in the private sector, it is essential that we work with landlords, developers and other investors to increase supply in the borough.

Key Issues and Challenges:

Lack of Affordability:

- The average house price is £389,035 (Land Registry, March 2013) and average rent in the private rented sector is £1250 per month (Valuation Office Agency, Q3, 2013).
- Private sector housing in Ealing (to buy or rent) is largely unaffordable for households with incomes less than the median for Ealing (£32,049, 2013, Paycheck).
- Affordability issues are most acute for families and households in the lowest quartile income. (Resolution Foundation 'Home Truths', 2013)

Lack of Supply:

- There is an estimated shortfall of 1,994 affordable homes per year in Ealing (2013, SHMA)
- There was a net addition to Ealing's housing stock of 665 private homes in Ealing between October 2011 and October 2012. (council tax records)
- Between April 2012 and April 2013, 670 additional affordable new homes were delivered, including 231 for low cost ownership (2013 LAHS return)
- Social housing is scarce with only 359 lettings to new tenants in Ealing during 2012-13. (2013 LAHS return)

Tackling empty homes:

- As at February 2013, according to council tax records, there were 1816 empty properties. Of these, 483 properties had been empty for over 6 months.

High demand for housing

- Ealing is London's third most highly populated borough in London, with an estimated 2013 population of 344,458 residents (GLA population estimates)
- There were 9213 households on Ealing Council's housing register as of 1st April 2013. This included 1111 homeless households.
- Homelessness and associated B&B usage is rising. In the last 2 years, the number of households presenting as homeless increased by 24%. With the introduction of Welfare Reform it is expected that numbers will increase further as the impacts start to take effect.
- The number of households where Ealing Council accepted a homeless duty towards increased in Ealing by 5.1% between 2011/12 and 2012/13. There were 567 acceptances in 2013. (quarterly P1E government returns)
- Increased demand and competition for B&B in London has resulted in increased daily rates as well as an overall cost increase due to the rise in the total volume of places used.

35. Our main aims:

- To ensure there is an adequate supply of affordable homes for residents to buy or rent
- Make the best use of the existing private housing stock by minimising the number of empty properties

36. What we will do:

- **Bring empty properties back into use**

Ealing Council has an Empty Property Strategy (2010-2015) adopted by Cabinet in January 2010 and takes every step to assist owners of empty properties in bringing the accommodation back into use, through providing advice and grants to owners. We work in partnership with the West London Empty Homes Consortium, which has secured funding from the GLA to provide grant assistance to bring long term empty homes back into use as affordable housing.

The consortium offers an Empty Homes Affordable Incentive Grant Scheme, aimed at freeholders or leaseholders of residential properties that have been empty for a minimum period of six months. The purpose of the grants is to improve houses or flats that cannot be occupied because of the disrepair of the property, whilst also providing support for larger empty properties who wish to convert the property into flats. Under the Empty Homes Affordable Incentive grant, owners can receive a grant for 100 per cent of the repair works, up to a maximum of £30,000. In order to qualify for the grant, the property must be empty for a minimum period of 6 months, whilst the renovating works must be completed to the decent homes standards as well as conforming with both planning and building regulations. A condition of the grant is that the property is managed by a chosen Resident Social Landlord throughout an agreed period (generally at least 5 years). In certain circumstances, the landlord may manage the property themselves, but must still agree to let the property through the Council for a minimum of 5 years.

- **Increase the supply of quality, affordable private sector properties**

Our Development Strategy contains plans to provide 14,000 additional homes by 2026. At least 50% of these will be in the private sector for market sale, the other 50% will be affordable (with a 60:40 split between social housing and low cost home ownership) to achieve mixed communities with a range of housing types across the borough to meet need.

We have established a new build programme and to date 80 properties for affordable rent have been built. There are currently 135 homes under construction on sites in Southall, Northolt, South Ealing and East Acton, and these are all expected to be complete by March

2015. In March 2014 work shall commence on a further 80 properties of mixed tenure and shared ownership homes including 6 homes for private sale, in addition to social rented homes to help create revitalised, mixed communities for our residents.

We are also looking to encourage investment into private renting and we have started discussions with potential investors and look at working with them to develop new purpose built, good quality rented accommodation in the borough. Housing Associations and other registered providers also develop homes at market rental prices. We are working with these partners to encourage them to build properties available for market rent, as well as for affordable rent and low cost home ownership.

Priority 2: Support residents to access affordable, well managed private rented homes

37. The private rented sector has more than doubled over the last 10 years, both nationally and locally. Various research has established that the private rented sector is highly segmented and meets the needs of a diverse range of people; from those choosing the private rented sector as a lifestyle choice, to households priced out of home ownership, or unable to access social housing. Ealing Council work with landlords to support them to provide well managed homes providing secure and good quality accommodation to our residents. In working towards this priority, we intend to support landlords through providing training, promoting and development, advice and accreditation.

38. We will also work with residents living and working in the borough to ensure that they are supported with advice to help both access private rented housing and help prevent homelessness. Where informal action fails, we will use the range of enforcement and regulatory powers to tackle poor management standards. Private rented housing is an important resource for us to help accommodate homeless households due to new freedoms to house homeless households in the private rented sector. However, the implementation of Welfare Reform has meant that it is increasingly difficult to find affordable private rented accommodation within the borough for those affected by the changes.

Key Issues and Challenges:

There has been a substantial increase in people privately renting

- 27.5% of Ealing's housing stock is rented privately, an increase of 74% between 2001 and 2011 (census 2011).

Local authorities can discharge their homelessness duty into the private rented sector.

- As of 31st December 2013, 1018 homeless households were living in private sector accommodation in Ealing (quarterly P1E government returns).

Private sector tenancies have less security of tenure

- 43% of homelessness in Ealing during 2013 was caused by private rented sector tenancies being terminated (quarterly P1E government returns)
- 383 households were supported into private rented accommodation, preventing homelessness during 2013. More than half of were helped through deposit guarantee schemes or other incentives. (quarterly P1E government returns)
- A third of households renting in Ealing include children and around a quarter are shared households. (census 2011)

The local impact of welfare reform

- The overall benefit cap affects 1500 households in Ealing, including 748 private tenants and 366 tenants that have been placed by the council in private sector temporary accommodation. The majority of those households will be claiming 'out of work' benefits. (DWP data, 2013)

Changing demographic profile with a higher proportion of vulnerable people:

- • The number of people aged 65+ expected to increase by almost 13% by 2030 in Ealing (POPPI 2012)
- The number of 65+ population living alone is projected to increase by 31% by 2015 to almost 11,000 people (POPPI 2012).
- There are an estimated 24.8% of households containing a member with a disability or limiting long-term illness. (census 2011)

39. Our main aims:

- Prevent and support those at risk of homelessness
- Assist residents to secure sustainable private rented tenancies
- Raise management standards in the private rented sector
- Support residents affected by welfare reform
- Support vulnerable residents to enable people to live independently and remain in their home

40. What we will do:

- **Improve access & choice to private rented homes for households living & working in Ealing**

Private rented housing plays an important role in meeting housing need in the borough. For many households, it is a tenure of choice. There is very little social housing available and a long wait to be housed, even those with high levels of need. Home ownership is generally out of reach to those on below average incomes. To help support households access the private rented sector, we will be looking to create a local lettings agency to provide lower cost fees and additional security for landlords and tenants. This will operate with the existing West London Choice based lettings scheme and advertise private sector properties. We will also support tenants by helping to raise awareness of their rights and responsibilities in relation to tenancies.

- **Utilise the private rented sector to help prevent homelessness**

We increasingly work with private sector landlords to secure accommodation for those in housing need. We are offering a range of support and grants to landlords and in return are looking to offer tenancies of at least 2 years in formerly empty private sector properties. We are also looking to continue procuring private sector properties to provide accommodation to those at risk of homeless and have a target of procuring 600 properties. In addition, we will be looking to target sub-letting council leaseholders to encourage them to work with us to help us house homeless households. Lastly, we use our Targeted Housing Options website to manage expectations about realistic private rented sector options, including moving to a more affordable area outside Ealing.

- **Ensure private rented properties are well managed**

Given the private rented sector has undergone a substantial expansion; it is a priority to ensure that it is well managed. Voluntary landlord accreditation schemes help raise the professional standard of management and we work with landlords in the borough to promote good practice and an understanding of the landlord role by encouraging and incentivising landlord accreditation. Ealing Council currently offer a discount on our HMO licence fee for accredited landlords. It is also a requirement of our Empty Property grants for a landlord to become accredited within 6 months of receiving the grant.

Ealing Council is a partner in both the London and UK Landlord Accreditation Schemes (LLAS &UKLAS). The London Landlord Accreditation Scheme (LLAS) is by far the largest accreditation scheme in London and is central to the success of the Greater London Authority's London Rental Standard. We are fully supportive of the LLAS and facilitate their landlord training by running courses at Ealing Council on a regular basis. Accreditation is gained once landlords have attended a training course and passed a written test (an indication of their roles and responsibilities under the law and knowledge of good practice). Through our annual Landlords Forum Day and information detailed on our webpage we will continue to promote membership to the LLAS or alternative accreditation schemes which are compliant with the London Rental Standard.

We will also be looking to establish a Tenancy Relations Service for landlords to ensure compliance with the law. This will ensure landlords are supported both in terms of being provided with affordable legal advice in terms of managing tenancies, minimising unlawful eviction and supporting landlords to respond to problem tenants.

- **Support residents affected by welfare reform**

The government is in the process of implementing a major reform of the benefit system. Ealing is one of the most affected local authorities in London. With our partners, we are taking a coordinated programme of support to households affected living in private rented accommodation and temporary accommodation. One of the key actions has

been to raise awareness by contacting those affected most to ensure they are able to access help and advice. We are also helping resident's access work and training opportunities, so that they are not affected by the overall benefits cap. Where households can no longer afford to stay in their homes, we are providing advice about options, such as moving to more affordable accommodation or accessing hardship funds.

- **Provide housing related support and advice to help vulnerable tenants remain or return to their home**

Whilst undertaking physical adaptations to properties may help some vulnerable tenants live independently, some households require additional support to help them sustain tenancies and live independently. This could involve measures such as: fitting a community alarm or support in budgeting to help sustain a tenancy or manage bills. Ealing Council, along with our partners in the voluntary sector, also provide assistance to help maximise benefit take-up. This can also help those on low incomes meet their fuel costs. We are also developing an Occupational Therapy Service to deal with hospital discharge cases to help identify any adaptations required to enable residents to be released from hospital and return back home safely.

Priority 3: Improve the condition of private housing through regulation

41. Poorly managed properties can impact both the tenants living in them and the wider, local community. The links between housing and health are well established. Good quality, suitable housing can prevent many health issues from arising, reduce hospital admissions and help people live independently. Older people and those with disabilities are particularly vulnerable and tend to live in accommodation in the worst condition, which is expensive to heat. We intend to focus our activities and funding on vulnerable households to help provide better, more decent homes.

42. We have a comprehensive range of information on property conditions in the borough, which enable us to target assistance and enforcement action to improve the condition of housing and neighbourhoods in Ealing. A particular focus of our work is on addressing the issues arising from concentrations of shared

housing. Concentrations of privately rented accommodation, particularly houses in multiple occupation can affect the character of an area and often lead to higher levels of anti-social behaviour and nuisance. They also tend to be in poorer condition and not as well maintained. We therefore intend to continue our work in identifying these properties and explore setting up a selective licencing scheme.

43. One of the most common issues in private sector housing is a lack of thermal efficiency and excess cold. Improving energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty is priority and we are developing an Energy Strategy which will focus on reducing carbon emissions and to help ensure homes are cheap to heat and keep cool. We are also working in partnership setting up a Green Deal provider through a Community Interest Company, 'Green Deal Together'.

Key Issues and Challenges:

Poor safety record of private rented sector

- An estimated 22,150 (21.6%) of private sector homes contained a category 1 hazard (Ealing Housing Private Stock Condition Survey, 2010)
- By far the most common category 1 hazards were falls on stairs (40.5%), excess cold (37.9%) and falling on level surfaces (37%). (Ealing Housing Private Stock Condition Survey, 2010)

Poor property conditions

- An estimated 39% of private dwellings are non-decent. Levels of non-decency are higher (51.7%) in HMO dwellings. (Ealing Housing Private Stock Condition Survey, 2010)
- There were 2647 households on the Ealing Council's housing register who were occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions as of 1st April 2013 (LAHS return, 2013)

Poor property condition of Houses in Multiple Occupation:

- Property conditions for HMO's are much worse, 51.7% failed the Decent Homes Standard, compared to 39% for private sector housing as a whole (2010 Private Sector Stock Condition Survey).
- There are over 650 HMO's in Ealing subject to mandatory licencing, as of April 2013 (Regulatory Services records)
- There are an estimated 4690 HMO's in Ealing, as of April 2013. The majority of which are not licensable. (LAHS return, 2013)

Poor thermal comfort in the private sector:

- The Energy Act: The Energy Act 2011 included a new law introducing a legal minimum energy efficiency standard for homes rented from a landlord from 2018.
- The average EPC rating of private sector stock was 55 (an EPC rating of D)- (Ealing Housing Private Stock Condition Survey, 2010)
- An estimated 8% of private dwellings have an EPC rating of below D (Ealing Housing Private Stock Condition Survey, 2010)
- An estimated 20,080 private homes (19.6%) had a poor degree of thermal comfort. (Ealing Housing Private Stock Condition Survey, 2010)
- The private rented sector has a higher proportion of properties (23.2%) with poor thermal comfort than for owner occupied dwellings (17.6%) (Ealing Housing Private Stock Condition Survey, 2010)
- A significant number (1886) of homes in Ealing lack central heating (2011 census)

Tackling Fuel Poverty:

- An estimated 14425 (12%) of households in Ealing are in fuel poverty (DECC, 2011)
- Ealing had a higher Excess Winter Deaths Index (17.7) than the rest of London (14.8) and England (15.2) between 2002 and 2009 (WMPHO 2011)
- 1886 dwellings were without central heating (census 2011)
- Private homes with low SAP ratings are more likely to be single person households and contain pensioners, vulnerable households and have low incomes (Ealing Housing Private Stock Condition Survey, 2010).
- The number of people aged 65 plus living alone is expected to increase by 31% between 2011 and 2015 (POPPI, 2012) increasing demand for support and adaptations

Vulnerable Households are more affected more by poor property conditions:

- An estimated 36.3% of households with a disabled resident had an income of below £10,000. (LAHS return, 2013)
- 39% of vulnerable households live in non-decent housing-(Ealing Housing Private Stock Condition Survey, 2010)
- Much higher proportions of households containing a disabled person had a category 1 hazard (32.0% compared to the borough average of 21.6%)-Ealing Housing Private Stock Condition Survey, 2010
- An estimated 8,450 disabled adaptations are required. The most needed are straight or curved stair lifts (2070) followed by redesigned baths (1,140)-Ealing Housing Private Stock Condition Survey, 2010

44. Our main aims:

- Provide safe homes and communities for residents
- Improve the standard of private sector homes through an effective range of tools such as education, advice and enforcement.
- Increase the number of homes which are energy efficient
- Identify and support fuel poor households
- Target grants and other resources to vulnerable residents in greatest need

45. What we will do:

- **Regulate and take enforcement action where unauthorised outhouse developments are identified**

Partnership working has been a key area of achievement in tackling outhouse developments. A dedicated council team works in partnership with organisations including the police, fire brigade, UKBA, HMRC and St Mungo's to identify outhouse developments being used as residential accommodation. The work is supported by a detailed data sharing protocol. A range of different types of action is taken jointly with our partners, including targeting rogue landlords and other illegal activities, referring vulnerable people onto the appropriate support agencies, installing smoke detectors, and providing housing advice and support.

- **Improve the standard of private sector homes**

Ealing Council aim to secure the repair and improvement of properties through the provision of education and professional advice. However, there will be instances where formal enforcement action is warranted. We also have a legal obligation to take action where category 1 hazards are identified and are committed to good enforcement practice, as detailed in our Corporate Enforcement Policy applying across all service areas.

- **Reduce over-crowding**

Our Regulatory Services team inspect accommodation and assess hazards using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Crowding and Space is one of the 29 hazards assessed. Where identified officers can take action in recognition of the situation. Such action may vary from the service of a Hazard Awareness Notices to a Prohibition Order where needed. Households are also provided with housing advice to help them find alternative accommodation in the private sector.

- **Provide effective regulation & enforcement for houses in multiple occupation (HMO's)**

In recent years, local authorities have been provided with additional regulatory tools to tackle the problems caused by high concentrations of houses in multiple occupation. The Housing Act 2004 introduced licensing for certain types of HMO's. Licensing is mandatory for all rented properties where any part of the building comprises of three storeys

or more, is occupied by five or more persons living in two or more single households. Our mandatory licensing scheme now has nearly 400 licensed properties. Houses in multiple occupation which are subject to mandatory licensing tend to be in poorer condition.

In addition to the mandatory scheme, Ealing Council has an additional licensing scheme operating in 6 wards in the borough for 2 storey plus houses that have at least 4 unrelated tenants. This scheme runs until 2015 and will be subject to further review. As part of the review of the licensing, we will be exploring licensing options for the borough. This will include looking at the possibility of introducing selective licensing of all private rented accommodation in those areas experiencing higher crime levels and anti-social behaviour connected to high concentrations of poorly managed privately rented accommodation and houses in multiple occupation.

- **Enhance personal safety & security within the home environment**

It is often our most vulnerable residents that live in poorer condition, higher risk properties. We will use the Housing and Health Safety Rating System and work with the local Fire Service to ensure that high risk properties are identified and targeted through a programme of Home Fire Safety visits, which will provide residents with advice and assistance. In addition, our in-house Housing Improvement Agency will seek to identify residents who are hard of hearing or that have poor eyesight and require specialist sensory alarms.

We also fund a target hardening service, which provides free home security visits and installation of security devices in the homes

of victims of residential burglary. The service also includes the Sanctuary Scheme, a specific element which provides home security measures to victims of domestic violence and vulnerable victims and witnesses, in order for them to remain safely in their own home.

- **Target repairs and adaptation grants to vulnerable groups and those on the lowest income**

We have a whole range of grants and support to help those vulnerable households on low incomes. We have a very successful Handyman and Handyman Plus Scheme and an adaptations service to help those with physical disabilities remain in their homes living independently. We will monitor the take-up, resident feedback and outcomes provided by these services to ensure they continue to meet the needs of residents. This will inform a review our Housing Renewal Grant Policy. For those households who are not eligible for grants and work, we will maintain an approved contractors list that is open to all.

- **Improve energy efficiency in the private sector**

Ealing Council has a whole programme designed to improve energy efficiency across the entire borough housing stock to encourage home-owners and landlords to invest in energy efficiency and renewable technologies. As well as helping to raise the profile about available technologies; we also look at ways of providing incentives to encourage owners to adopt measures. We also target landlords with Energy Performance Certificates with of a rating of E, in advance of introduction of minimum EPC standards by government in 2018.

Ealing Council has also joined Green Deal Together (GDT), a Community Interest Company, to deliver the Green Deal in Ealing. This will provide the mechanism by which consumers (domestic and business) can have their properties assessed, introduce them to installers who want to do the work, and line up the finance (Green Deal Loan, ECO and any other local funding) in order for the work to take place.

- **Reduce fuel poverty**

Ealing Council actively seek funding to help support vulnerable households facing fuel poverty. We will be looking to replicate and

develop the success of the Cold weather Support in Ealing (COSIE) project by securing Department of Health funding for future winter periods. We are also planning to develop a partnership to access Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO) grant funding scheme from energy suppliers under ECO for eligible private sector properties.

A key part of our work to address fuel poverty is in providing training and resources to both internal and external front line staff on affordable warmth. This is an efficient way of ensuring that awareness is raised and residents are helped through good quality advice and sign posting to assistance.

Priority 4: Develop strong partnerships to support the private housing sector

46. This priority aims at supporting the delivery of our strategy by building strong links to private landlords and lettings agencies and our partners in the West London sub-region. By working in partnership and having an effective communications plan, will help ensure that residents and landlords are aware of the advice and other assistance available. It will also ensure that we will maximise funding opportunities and share resources and promote good practice through our partnerships.

Key Issues and Challenges:

- The Coalition government's devolution and 'Localism' agenda places less emphasis on central targets
- There is an increased need for more detailed information on housing and market conditions and residents needs and aspirations to help us plan services and respond to change
- Lowered funding availability means there is a greater need to share resources and jointly commission services

47. Our main aims:

- Provide strategic leadership on private sector housing issues within Ealing
- Provide effective partnerships within West London and positive relationships with private sector landlords, investors and other stakeholders
- Support residents and raise awareness of assistance that the council and partners can provide
- Understand local private sector housing property and market conditions
- Enhance our knowledge of the needs and aspirations of local private sector residents

48. What we will do:

- **Work in Partnership with the West London Housing Partnership to develop sub-regional projects**

Much of our work is undertaken in partnership with neighbouring West London boroughs through the West London Housing Partnership. We are active members of this group and intend to inform the development of the new West London Private Sector Housing Strategy and any other relevant strategies and plans. Through this group we will work in partnership to secure inward investment and ensure funding is effectively deployed across the sub region.

- **Provide value for money private sector housing services**

Local government has experienced a 28% reduction in central government funding over the current 4 year Spending Review period to 2014/15. It is likely that central government will impose further funding reductions as part of the next spending review to reduce the

overall national budgetary deficit. The financial climate poses challenges for the council in ensuring that the services we deliver are both efficient and effective. Managing our resources effectively is a key requirement to ensure that we are able to adopt a proactive, as opposed to reactive approach to meeting the objectives set out in this strategy.

Welfare reform has placed a significant additional strain on local authority funding, causing increases in homelessness and making it more difficult and expensive to find sustainable tenancies within the borough. We are exploring various options to secure value for money in procuring temporary accommodation. One option we are taking forward is purchasing properties on the open market to help reduce the costs of placing homeless households in expensive bed and breakfast accommodation.

- **Build positive relationships with private sector landlords, council leaseholders, investors and other stakeholders**

We will be looking to take a more proactive approach to working with private landlords, council leaseholders and investors and promote and incentivise landlord accreditation. We already have an active six monthly landlord forum. This has proved very successful and is supported by an annual training programme for landlords, a bi-annual newsletter and an annual Open Day. We will consult with landlords as to how this programme can be further developed to help raise management standards.

- **Monitor private sector housing property and market conditions**

We will regularly update the information we have on properties and markets to help identify emerging trends to provide a sound evidence base for our housing strategies to meet the changing aspirations of our residents.

4. Private Housing Strategy Delivery Plan

Strategic Priority 1: Increase the supply of private housing			
What we will do	Action	Lead	Timescale
1.1 Bring empty properties back into use	Bring 350 long-term empty dwellings into use through direct intervention	Empty Property Team	Mar 2019
	Promote and process empty property grants	Empty Property Team	On-going
	Increase the levels of enforcement action and ensure that potential CPOs are rigorously pursued	Empty Property Team	On-going
	Promote & operate the Empty Property Matchmaker Scheme which brings together the owners of empty properties in Ealing and private individuals, investors and developers who want to purchase empty properties in the borough.	Empty Property Team	On-going
1.2 Increase the supply of quality, affordable private sector properties	Encourage housing associations and private institutions to both develop and manage a portfolio of private rented accommodation.	Housing Supply	On-going
	Maintain a pipeline supply of deliverable & developable sites in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to deliver the housing targets in the Core Strategy	Planning Policy	2015
	Develop homes for private sale and rent to provide cross subsidy for social housing and help create sustainable mixed tenure communities	Housing Supply & Regeneration	On-going

Strategic Priority 2: Support residents to access affordable, well managed private rented homes

What we will do	Action	Lead	Timescale
2.1 Improve access & choice to private rented homes for households living & working in Ealing	Ensure clients understand their rights and obligations in relation to private sector tenancies.	Housing Demand	On-going
	Develop a Local Lettings Agency to offer a management service in the private rented sector offering low cost fees & up-front costs for people living and working in Ealing and competitive management fees and greater security for landlords. Target subletting council leaseholders as part of this service.	Housing Demand	2015
	Maximise the use of direct let offers, including advertising units on Locata and using the THO website to inform applicants on their choice.	Housing Demand	On-going
2.2 Utilise the private rented sector to prevent homelessness & house homeless households	Continue to offer 'Finder Fees' and Discretionary Housing Payments to enable households facing homelessness to meet the initial cost of accessing private sector accommodation.	Housing Demand	On-going
	Utilise the THO website to inform on the lack of social housing options within the borough as a 'myth buster'.	Housing Demand	On-going
	Target sub-letting council leaseholders to procure accommodation /offer a management service to let to homeless households	Home Ownership & Leasehold Service & Housing Demand	2014
	Promote out of London opportunities through Locata.	Housing Demand	On-going
	Provide advice about realistic private rented sector options for households facing homelessness, particularly where the private sector in Ealing is not a viable option.	Housing Demand	On-going

Strategic Priority 2: Support residents to access affordable, well managed private rented homes

What we will do	Action	Lead	Timescale
2.3 Ensure private sector tenancies are well managed	Work towards raising the 'professional standard' of landlords operating in the borough by encouraging landlords to join the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme (LLAs), or an alternative accreditation scheme which is compliant with the GLA's London Rental Standard	Housing Demand, Regulatory Services and Home Ownership & Leaseholder Services	On-going
	Facilitate an annual Landlord's Forum to promote best housing management practice	Housing Demand, Regulatory Services and Home Ownership & Leaseholder Services	annual
	Establish a Tenancy Relations Service for landlords to ensure that as many landlords are engaging in terms of prevention, as well as acquisitions	Housing Demand & Regulatory Services	2014
2.4 Support residents affected by welfare reform	Support benefit dependent clients in the private sector to access training and employment opportunities to mitigate the impact of caps.	Housing Demand	On-going
	Continue to raise awareness of the impact of Welfare reform and encourage residents to understand the options available to them and act quickly to; secure employment, find alternative affordable accommodation or meet the shortfall from existing resources.	Housing Demand	2017
	Contact all residents in Temporary Accommodation affected by the Welfare Reform especially Universal Credit to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise about available options including realistic private sector alternatives out of borough • Sign post to debt counselling services • Check details and confirm that the cap is applicable • Support moves into employment • Identify other affordable temporary accommodation 	Housing Demand	2014

Strategic Priority 2: Support residents to access affordable, well managed private rented homes

What we will do	Action	Lead	Timescale
	Negotiate with landlords to sustain private sector tenancies where possible where benefits are capped and assist clients at risk of homelessness with the options bulleted above.	Housing Demand	2017
2.5 Provide housing related support and advice to help vulnerable tenants remain or return to their home	Provide an Occupational Therapy Service to deal with hospital discharge cases by appointing a Housing Occupational Therapist.	Housing Demand	2014
	Work closer with Social Services colleagues through the Specialist Support Team to identify households at risk of homelessness or in housing need.	Housing Demand	On-going
	Utilise floating support services to support vulnerable households at risk of homelessness	Housing Demand	On-going

Strategic Priority 3: Improve the condition of private housing through regulation

What we will do	Action	Lead	Timescale
3.1 Regulate and take enforcement action where unauthorised outhouse developments are identified	Work in partnership to identify outhouse developments being used as residential accommodation.	Regulatory Services	On-going
	Take robust enforcement action where infringements of planning legislation are identified.	Planning Management Services & Regulatory Services	On-going
3.2 Improve the standard of private sector homes	Carry out checks to private rented properties where homeless households are placed to ensure they meet minimum repair standards in accordance with the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012.	Housing Demand	On-going

Strategic Priority 3: Improve the condition of private housing through regulation

What we will do	Action	Lead	Timescale
	Continue to check that current gas, electrical and energy efficiency certificates are in place where nominations are made by the Council.	Housing Demand	On-going
	Formalise an inspection programme of bed and breakfast and other emergency accommodation as part of the pan-London 'Setting the Standard' scheme.	Regulatory Services	On-going
	Take robust enforcement action against landlords who fail to take action where Category 1 and/or high scoring/multiple Category 2 hazards are identified.	Regulatory Services	On-going
3.3 Reduce over-crowding	Support households to find alternative, more appropriate sized accommodation	Housing Demand	2014
	Host an annual under-occupation / overcrowding matching event	Housing Demand	2017
3.4 Provide effective regulation of houses in multiple occupation	Continue to licence HMO's and identify unlicensed HMO's and take action where appropriate (including those within the additional licensing scheme designated wards).	Regulatory Services	On-going
	Take action to bring licensed HMO's up to standard	Regulatory Services	On-going
	Review the existing additional licensing scheme, which expires in 2015.	Regulatory Services	Spring 2014
3.5 Reduce anti-social behaviour through better regulation of private sector landlords	Investigate the feasibility of introducing selective licensing of private rented accommodation in areas experiencing low housing demand and/or suffering from anti-social behaviour (s.80 HA 2004)	Regulatory Services	Spring 2014
	Take robust enforcement action when instances of ASB and noise nuisance \ are established	Safer Communities	On-going
3.6 Improve safety within the home	Provide a target hardening service offering free home security visits and installation of security devices in the homes of victims of residential burglary and victims of domestic violence in order for them to remain safely in their own home.	Safer Communities	On-going

Strategic Priority 3: Improve the condition of private housing through regulation

What we will do	Action	Lead	Timescale
	Work with the Fire Service to undertake Home Fire Safety visits and target high risk properties.	Regulatory Services	On-going
	Fit specialist sensory alarms for the hard of hearing	Housing Repairs & Adaptations Service	On-going
3.7 Improve energy efficiency in the private sector	Launch and promote Green Deal Together (GDT), a Community Interest Company, to deliver the Green Deal in Ealing	Sustainability Team	Spring 2014
	Investigate commissioning an aerial thermographic survey to aid targeting of inefficient properties for promotion of energy efficiency messages	Sustainability Team	Autumn 2013
	Target landlords of PSL properties with EPCs of E, or below, to make energy efficiency improvements in advance of introduction of minimum EPC standards by government in 2018. Publicise appropriate funding sources, including Landlords Energy Saving Allowance (ends 1 April 2015).	Sustainability Team	On-going
	Include private sector residents in invitation to energy efficiency promotion events to be run by Ealing Green Champions (newly trained under COSIE project 2012-13)	Sustainability Team	On-going
	Develop and implement a Communications Plan for energy efficiency to promote benefits of energy efficiency and direct residents to available funding sources	Sustainability Team	Winter 2013
	Develop projects to address fuel poverty that would be eligible for funding by GDT Community Funds as appropriate	Sustainability Team	On-going
	Develop partnership(s) to access HHCRO funding from energy suppliers under ECO for eligible private sector properties	Sustainability Team 2013	Autumn
3.8 Target repairs and adaptation grants to vulnerable groups and those on the lowest income	Provide a Handyperson Service across all tenures, including hospital release scheme (discretionary)	Housing Repairs & Adaptations Service	On-going

Strategic Priority 3: Improve the condition of private housing through regulation

What we will do	Action	Lead	Timescale
	Handyperson Plus – repairs to disabled equipment and adapted properties, top up repairs for Disabled Facilities Grants, and emergency repairs for people on a means tested benefit (discretionary)	Housing Repairs & Adaptations Service	On-going
	Disabled Facilities Grants – continue programme of grant aiding adaptations for owner occupiers, RSLs and tenant/landlord properties	Housing Repairs & Adaptations Service	On-going
	Continue to offer Equity Release Loans for over 55s. Grant aid available for start-up costs. (discretionary)	Housing Repairs & Adaptations Service	On-going

Strategic Priority 4: Develop strong partnerships to support the private housing sector

What we will do	Action	Lead	Timescale
4.1 Work in Partnership with the West London Housing Partnership to develop sub-regional projects	Continue to work in partnership with other West London boroughs through the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West London Temporary Accommodation Group • West London Temporary accommodation procurement framework agreement • West London RSL Temporary Accommodation group • The pan London Welfare Reform group • Housing Needs and Homelessness – London Councils group • Network Housing temporary housing scheme partnership • West London Private Sector Housing Group • West London Housing Affordable Warmth Group 	Cross Departmental	On-going
4.2 Provide value for money private sector housing services	Procure lower cost alternatives to Bed and Breakfast accommodation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchasing a portfolio of properties for emergency use (120 properties) • Procurement of self-contained emergency accommodation as a cheaper and more suitable short-term alternative to B&B (150 units) 	Housing Demand	2013-15

Strategic Priority 4: Develop strong partnerships to support the private housing sector			
What we will do	Action	Lead	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter into an agreement with Network Housing Association who will purchase properties for emergency use in the first instance. (25 properties) • Increasing the in-house managed hostel portfolio. (100 household units) • Acquiring Direct Let properties out of borough to facilitate timely move-on from emergency accommodation. 		
	Acquire Private Sector Leased accommodation that is affordable to benefit dependant households where possible.	Housing Demand	2013-14
	Focus temporary accommodation procurement in outer London areas and out of London for larger units.	Housing Demand	2013-14
4.3 Build positive relationships with private sector landlords, council leaseholders, investors and other stakeholders	Provide 'meet and greet days' for landlords	Housing Demand	On-going
	Survey landlords to seek views on developing services	Housing Demand	2014
	Promote and facilitate membership to the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme (LLAs)	Housing Demand, Regulatory Services and Home Ownership & Leaseholder Services	On-going
4.4 Monitor private sector housing property and market conditions	Commission a private sector stock condition survey	Housing Policy & Strategy	2015
	Commission a Strategic Housing Market Assessment	Housing Policy & Strategy	Autumn 2013
	Monitor the affordability of home ownership & private renting	Housing Policy & Strategy	Annual/ on-going

Appendix 1: National Legislative & Policy Context

1. OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL POLICY:

Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England-sets out the government's housing policy. The strategy sets out plans to:

- Increase supply: more homes & provide stable growth
- Reform social and affordable housing
- Create a thriving private rented sector
- Bring empty homes back into use
- Provide choice, and to ensure a stable home is accessible for vulnerable households
- Improve the quality, sustainability and design of housing

Universal Credit: welfare that works- the key objectives are to:

- To put work at the heart of the welfare system so that it pays to work
- Make the welfare system fairer, sustainable and more affordable
- Make the welfare system simpler and more efficient and better able to tackle poverty, welfare dependency, worklessness whilst still supporting those in the greatest need
- To help reduce the public spending deficit
- To help reduce fraud, error and duplication.

Building a Greener Future: Towards Zero Carbon Development - set out a commitment to delivering zero carbon homes from 2016 (under the previous government). The Coalition Government has amended the proposals concept of 'Allowable Solutions' has been introduced to widen the possibility of what off-site carbon reductions can be considered. A commitment to delivering zero carbon homes from 2016 was included in the Budget 2013.

Warm Homes, Greener Homes: A Strategy for Household Energy Management (2010)

2. KEY GOVERNMENT REVIEWS & INQUIRIES INTO PRIVATE HOUSING

CLG Select Committee on the private rented sector (2013) -explored the quality, affordability, regulation & consumer issues in the private rented sector.

The Montague Review (2012) noted the potential of large scale 'build to let' in:

- Filling a gap in the housing market for households unable to become owner occupiers and unlikely to be able to access affordable housing
- Providing high quality private rented housing, i.e., purpose-built accommodation, longer tenancies and better management services
- Acting as an exemplar and a further lever to 'encourage' existing private landlords to improve their offer
- Helping to unlock stalled development sites

- Taking forward broader urban regeneration strategies.

HM Treasury Review into the Investment into the PRS (2010) -looked at removing the barriers to institutional investment in the private rented sector.

Rugg Review (2008) examined the private rented sector in England and Wales. It recommended the need for a sound evidence base; equalising the rental choice; 'light' touch licensing and effective redress.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY LEGISLATION:

The Localism Act 2011- gave local authorities the power to discharge homelessness duty into the private rented sector

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 - sets out a number of changes to welfare benefits that will impact the income of certain households living in private sector housing.

The Energy Act 2011- Sets out the government's flagship Green Deal scheme, whereby homes will be given finance upfront to make energy efficiency improvements, which would then be paid for by energy bill savings. The Act also sets up a new obligation on energy companies (ECO) to help certain groups of consumers with saving energy, who need extra support.

The Act also introduced a range of other measures designed to improve energy efficiency; such as facilitating the roll-out of smart meters, widening access to energy performance certificates and making information on energy bills clearer.

Lastly, new powers enabled the government to make regulations that will require landlords to meet minimum standards in relation to energy efficiency:

- From 2016 reasonable requests by tenants to make improvements cannot be refused
- From 2018 landlords will not be able to rent out properties that do not reach the minimum standard energy efficiency rating.

The Housing Act 2004 -i ntroduced:

- The Health & Housing Safety Rating System, which identifies 29 hazards which impact on health in terms of risk. The likely outcome is scored to determine if intervention is required.
- A requirement for certain larger Houses in Multiple Occupation to be licensed by local housing authorities.
- Management Orders giving local authorities the duty in some circumstances and powers in other situations to take over the management of certain HMO's.
- The power to make Empty Dwelling Management Orders to address problems associated with individual long term empty properties.

The Energy Bill 2013 (currently going through Parliament)-is intended to establish a framework for delivering secure, affordable and low-carbon energy, reforming energy markets and consumer protection.

Housing Act 1985, s 8 places a duty on local authorities to undertake periodical reviews of housing need

The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order, 2012 strengthens existing provisions and requires local authorities to ensure this accommodation is of suitable (in terms of size, physical condition and affordability) and available for a minimum of 12 months.

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002, s 3 (power of local housing authorities to provide assistance for improving living conditions) (SI 2002/1860)

Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), Part 7 (preventing and reducing homelessness)

Housing Act 1985 - general provisions relating to housing conditions, assistance for owners of defective housing

Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 - grants for renewal of private sector housing

Local Government Act 2003, Section 85, allows the use of information gathered as part of the Council Tax billing process to identify empty properties within an authority's area.

Appendix 2: Recent Examples of Good Practice in the Private Sector

Initiative/Recommendation	Further Info
<p>Alternatives to discretionary (additional & selective) licensing-landlord alliance with greater use of accreditation</p> <p>The Law Commission proposed a system of “‘enhanced self-regulation’ developed by all key stakeholders: landlords, agents, local authorities and tenants”; this system would include “greater use of accreditation schemes”</p> <p>The South East Alliance of Landlords, Agents & Residents or SEAL was initially formed to coordinate a response to Southend-on-Sea Borough Council’s (the Council’s) consultation on the possible introduction of Selective Licensing.</p> <p>Out of that process SEAL formed a new and formal partnership with the Council to improve the management and standard of accommodation within privately rented properties, and reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB) throughout SEAL managed properties.</p> <p>SEAL will be responsible for reporting its progress to the Council’s Community Services and Culture Scrutiny Committee and as a result of this partnership, the proposal for introducing Selective Licensing into three locations of the town has been postponed, pending the success of SEAL.</p>	<p>http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/10084/private_landlords/1474/seal_south_east_alliance_of_landlords/1</p> <p>LGUI/Fire Safety Council: House Proud, how councils can raise standards in the PRS, August 2013</p> <p>Law Commission, Encouraging Responsible Letting, 2010</p>
<p>Alternatives to discretionary (additional & selective) licensing-neighbourhood approaches</p> <p>Leeds City Council decided against further discretionary licensing and has introduced a neighbourhood approach which was “seen as more flexible than licensing”. This</p> <p>approach targeted “neighbourhoods on a street by street basis addressing the area as whole and dealing with standards in the private rented sector as well as empty homes”. The approach included close work with partner organisations, the provision of help, advice and mentoring, and an intention to inspect all private rented properties in an area to ensure they met minimum standards. The</p>	<p>CLG Select Committee, July 2013</p>

Initiative/Recommendation	Further Info
<p>council stated that the approach was “seen as more flexible than licensing [and] can target a single street or 4/5 streets over a 6/9 month period rather than have a scheme for up to 5 years”.</p> <p>Blackpool Council had similarly developed an area based approach. It considered this to be “resource intensive but [...] cost effective because it identifies and deals with problems rather than just moving them on to other areas.</p>	
<p>Borough wide licensing</p> <p>Newham Council has recently launched mandatory licensing of private landlords to deal with increasing levels of anti-social behaviour associated with rented properties that fail to meet satisfactory levels of tenancy and property management. Newham have an additional licensing for houses in multiple-occupation and selective licensing for all other privately rented properties. Seven months after designation, Newham had received 30,776 licensing applications from 18,341 landlords out of an estimated 38,000.</p>	
<p>Raise awareness about rights and responsibilities - should fund awareness-raising campaigns to promote a greater understanding, among tenants and landlords, of their rights and responsibilities.</p>	<p>Centre for London, Stressed: A Review of London’s PRS, August 2013 and also CLG Select Committee, July 2013</p>
<p>The London Borough of Lewisham has set up a Private Sector Housing Agency bringing together a number of teams who were working across the private sector, including Housing Rights, Temporary Accommodation management and support teams and the Environmental Health residential team. The agency provides a centre of excellence and single point of contact for citizens, landlords, partner organisations, stakeholders and council officers. The aim is to take a more proactive, leadership role and engage in a new positive dialogue with the sector. As part of their work they advise private tenants and landlords about their rights and responsibilities and ensure compliance with the law. These advisers act as mediators; will attend incidents and directly intervene where necessary; and help tenants to obtain injunctive relief.</p>	<p>Shelter Emerging Practice: Tackling rogue landlords and improving the private rented sector, September 2013</p>
<p>Establish a social letting agency or private rented sector access scheme</p>	<p>CLG Select Committee, August 2013 & GLA London Assembly report on Making London’s PRS fit for purpose, June 2013</p>

Initiative/Recommendation	Further Info
<p>Slough Borough Council completed a thermal imaging aerial map of Slough to both identify where unauthorised private rented properties are located and to also identify where the properties that are losing the most heat in cold conditions are located. A public web portal will shortly enable every Slough resident and landlord to identify their own property and establish whether the property is efficient at retaining heat or not.</p>	<p>Shelter Emerging Practice: Tackling rogue landlords and improving the private rented sector, September 2013</p>
<p>High Peak Borough Council tries to target hard-to-reach groups to ensure that they are aware of the minimum standards of housing that they can expect to have.</p>	<p>Shelter Emerging Practice: Tackling rogue landlords and improving the private rented sector, September 2013</p>
<p>Implement a clear complaints procedure and harness the skills of other agencies</p>	<p>Shelter Emerging Practice: Tackling rogue landlords and improving the private rented sector, September 2013</p>
<p>Incentivising accreditation and licensing schemes- discounts are given on fees charged to landlords applying for licences who are accredited. Free or discounted training. Grants and loans given to those landlords are conditional on bringing properties up to standard and landlords being accredited.</p>	<p>Shelter Emerging Practice: Tackling rogue landlords and improving the private rented sector, September 2013</p>
<p>Building strong links with the local police service. Amber Valley and Derbyshire Police jointly identify properties of shared interest and co-ordinate enforcement. Officers share intelligence at monthly tasking meetings, which helps the housing team identify the properties that need to be targeted for enforcement.</p>	<p>Shelter Emerging Practice: Tackling rogue landlords and improving the private rented sector, September 2013</p>
<p>Charging for formal enforcement notices. Pendle include an enforcement fee of £370.</p>	<p>LGUI & the Fire Safety Council: House Proud, how councils can raise standards in the PRS, August 2013</p>

Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms

Affordable Homes Programme	The HCA (England)/GLA (London) investment programme aiming to increase the supply of new affordable homes in England. The majority of the new programme will be made available as Affordable Rent with some for affordable home ownership, supported housing and in some circumstances, social rent.
Affordable Housing	Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the open market.
Affordable Rent	Social housing where rent is charged at up to 80% market rents. The tenancies can either be flexible tenancies or lifetime tenancies. Affordable Rent properties are not subject to the rent restructuring policy that applies to social rented housing.
CLG	The Department of Communities and Local Government-the government department responsible for national housing policy
Fixed Term Tenancy	Applies to tenancies offered for a specific period of Time, rather than traditional “lifetime tenancies”
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency. The national housing and regeneration delivery agency for England
Flexible Tenancy	Fixed term tenancy for a minimum of 2 years with a built in review period
GLA	The Greater London Authority- the body directly responsible for strategic housing, regeneration and economic development in the capital.
Housing Association	Independent, not-for-profit organisation providing affordable housing
Lifetime tenancies	Either Secure (council) or Assured tenancies (registered provider).
Market Rent	This refers to private sector rent levels. The rent levels used in this document are sourced from the GLA Rents map and use Valuation Office Agency data. Registered Providers will calculate market rent based on the RICS guidance “Market Rent: a guide for providers of Affordable Rented housing”
Registered Social Landlords	Government funded not-for-profit organisations that provide affordable housing. They include housing associations, trusts and cooperatives.
Social Housing providers	Provider of subsidised social housing below market rent, including the council and other registered providers such as housing associations.
Social Rent	Rents which are kept low through state subsidy, to approximately a third of market levels. The social housing sector is currently governed by a strictly defined system of rent control to ensure that rents are kept affordable.
SMHA	Strategic Market Housing Assessment - a framework that local authorities and regional bodies can follow to develop a good understanding of how housing markets operate. It promotes an approach to assessing housing need and demand, which can inform the development of local development document and regional spatial strategy planning for housing policies.

