

**Report title: More Than a Roof: Bristol’s Housing Strategy**

**Wards affected:** All

**Strategic Director:** Alison Comley, Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods

**Report Author:** Sue Long, Planning and Development Advisor

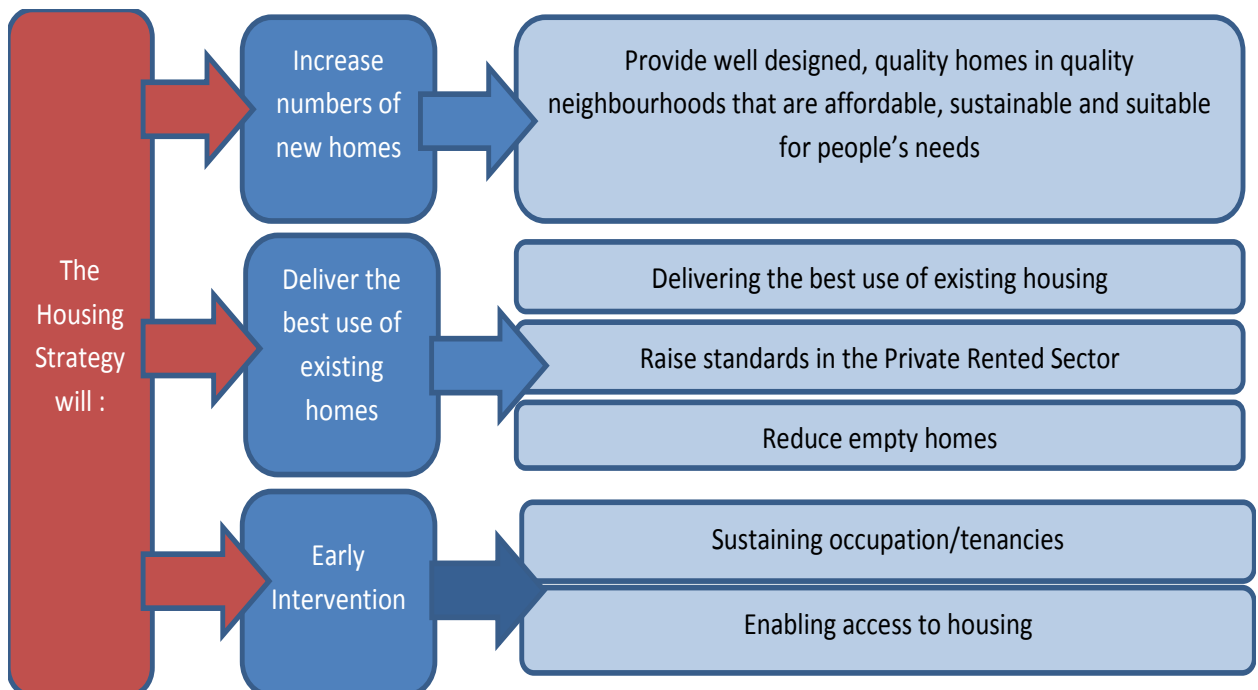
**RECOMMENDATION for the Mayor’s approval:**

1. To agree ‘More than a roof: Bristol’s Housing Strategy 2016 – 2020’ for submission to full council for approval.
2. Full Council to agree to publication of the strategy in January 2016
3. To agree delegation of the creation of the City Council elements of the action plan to Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods, which will follow in 2016 and will be reviewed and updated annually.

**Key background / detail:**

a. Purpose of report:

1. A new Bristol housing strategy has been written and has the following outcomes:



2. More Than a Roof: Bristol's Housing Strategy is not just a Bristol City Council strategy, but is a strategy for the 'city'. The strategy has been developed in conjunction with all delivery partners and reflects priorities and strategies of other organisations in the city, as well as reflecting the housing aspects of other key strategies.
3. The strategy is a framework within which all housing related projects, plans and policies will be delivered, and in addition will deliver most of the recommendations from the Mayors Homes Commission, along with the Affordable Housing Delivery Framework
4. We are delivering this strategy in a rapidly changing landscape. The new policy and legislative changes proposed by the Government will present a very real challenge to both delivery of services and to Bristol's residents
5. The strategy will respond to this by building on projects already in place, extending current services and creating an action plan that looks both at actions which will see a benefit in the short term, as well as actions which are more involved and will have an impact over the longer term.
6. There is not a legal obligation to have a housing strategy, but housing is considered to be of such significant importance that the creation of a strategy is needed to provide a framework tying together all aspects of the housing 'system', including housing development and service delivery. It is a local choice function and the council's constitution reserves the approval of the Housing Strategy to full Council.
7. The full strategy is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL  
CABINET**

**24 NOVEMBER 2015**

**REPORT TITLE: More Than a Roof: Bristol's Housing Strategy**

**Ward(s) affected by this report: All**

**Strategic Director: Alison Comley, Strategic Director Neighbourhoods**

**Report author: Sue Long, Planning & Development Advisor**

**Contact telephone no. 0117 3521633  
& e-mail address: Sue.long@bristol.gov.uk**

**Purpose of the report:**

To agree 'More Than a Roof: Bristol's Housing Strategy 2016 – 2020' and give delegated authority to the development of an action plan. The action plan will be renewed annually.

**RECOMMENDATION for the Mayor's approval:**

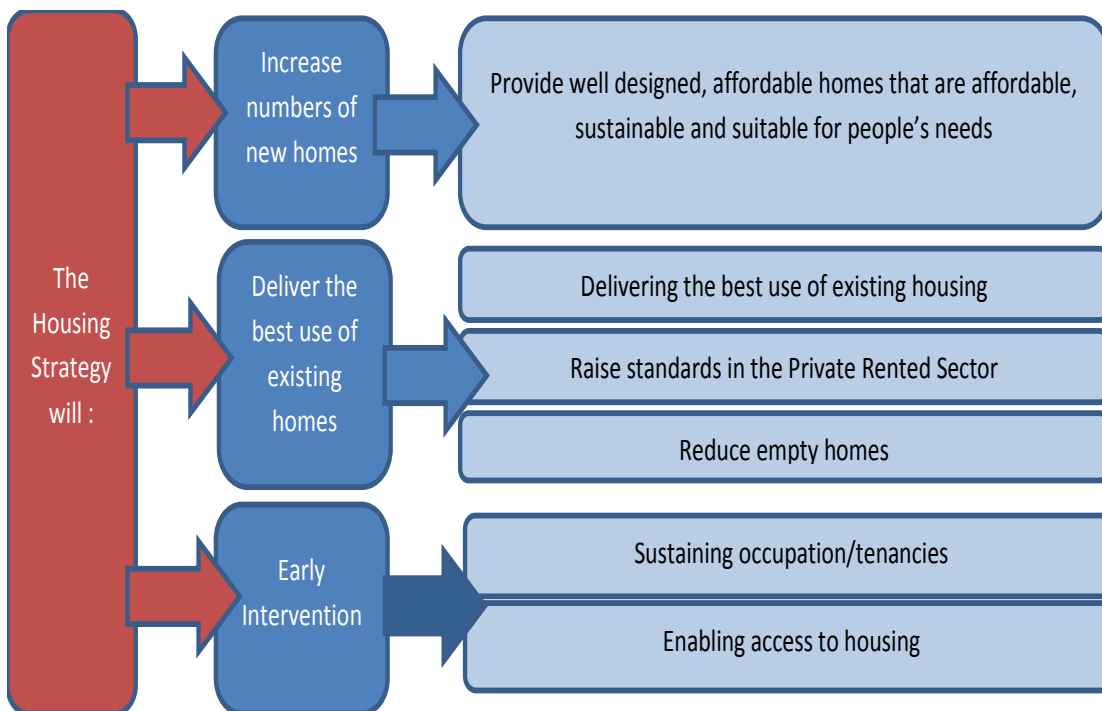
1. To agree 'More Than a Roof: Bristol's Housing Strategy 2016 – 2020' is able to progress to Council for approval.
2. To agree to publication of the Housing Strategy in January 2016
3. To agree delegation of decision making on the creation of the action plan which will follow in 2016 and will be reviewed and updated annually.

**The proposal:**

1. There is not a legal obligation to have a Housing Strategy, but housing is considered to be of significant importance that the creation of a strategy is needed to provide a framework tying together housing development and service delivery.
2. The Bristol housing strategy is not a Bristol City Council strategy, but is the strategy for the 'City'. The strategy has been developed in conjunction with all delivery partners and reflects priorities and strategies of other organisations in the City.
3. Housing is becoming increasingly expensive in Bristol and is in increasingly short supply as the population in Bristol is growing and changing rapidly. This, along with the growing private rented sector (making up 24% of the housing market in Bristol) creates a considerable challenge to the delivery of the Housing Strategy.
4. We are delivering this strategy in a rapidly changing landscape. The new policy and legislative changes proposed by the Government will present a very real challenge to

both delivery of services and Bristol's residents.

5. There will almost certainly continue to be a shortage of housing, particularly of affordable housing for low-income households.
6. The implementation of the proposed welfare reform changes will, very likely, result in more households being unable to afford to rent or buy in the private sector, so relying on affordable housing. Even rent levels/house prices of affordable homes will become increasingly unaffordable for some groups.
7. In addition to the very real need for more housing, we need to allocate resources to improve the city's housing stock.
8. Plus in the challenging environment people need good information, advice and support in order to obtain a tenancy and maximise their success as a tenant, whether in social, rented housing or a shared owner.
9. The Housing Strategy brings all of this together into one document acting as a framework setting direction for everyone involved in housing – residents, housing associations, developers, government bodies, regulators, investors, private landlords, alongside the Local Authority – to do what we can to provide the homes needed and ensure that housing delivers a clear social dividend.
10. The Housing Strategy will contribute to the Mayor's Vision for Bristol and its recognition of the need to address inequalities of health, wealth and opportunity in the city, supporting everyone to reach their potential by creating successful place to live, work and play.
11. The Housing Strategy outcomes are:



12. The Housing Strategy is the delivery vehicle for all housing related projects, plans and policies and will deliver the agreed outcomes from the Mayor's Homes

Commission, along with the Affordable Housing Delivery Framework.

13. The Housing Strategy will link closely to other key strategies, including Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Preventing Homelessness Strategy and strategies related to transport and education.

14. The full strategy report is attached to this report as Appendix 1

## **Consultation and scrutiny input:**

### **a. External consultation:**

1. The Housing Strategy had been developed throughout 2014/2015 and there have been several stages to writing and producing this draft strategy.
2. Firstly the Homes4Bristol board carried out a review of the previous housing strategy and initial research was carried out to look at the main issues with regards housing in the city.
3. Following this, in December 2014, we held a housing conference entitled 'Local Housing Futures'. The conference attendees were mainly professionals working in the housing field in Bristol. The aim of the conference was to identify the main issues in Bristol and therefore set the headline outcomes for the Housing Strategy. The main issues identified at the conference were:
  - a. Increasing housing in Bristol, including increasing affordable housing mix
  - b. Raising standards in the PRS
  - c. Devolution and what this means for housing (or potentially means)
  - d. Early intervention; support and advice services
4. The results of this conference, along with scenario planning work and completion of a research document, State of the Market: A Summary (appendix 2) were all used to draft the Housing Strategy 2016 – 2020 'My Home is my Springboard for Life'
5. Bristol City Council, in conjunction with the Homes4Bristol partnership board, then consulted on what the ambitions and priorities should be in the new housing strategy. The consultation on the draft strategy took place from 6<sup>th</sup> July 2015 and ended on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2015
6. Results of the consultation can be found in appendix 3. It was very clear though that respondents found it very difficult to see what we were intending to achieve because there wasn't an action plan developed. This needs to be prioritised now that the strategy has identified the key priorities and objectives. Also it was clear that when an action plan is developed, we need to ensure it meets the following demands:
  - a. Clearer picture about what Bristol is doing to meet objectives, and the role of the Local Authority and its partners
  - b. Better understanding of the housing needs of different groups and actions to address these
  - c. Consideration regarding not just the number of new homes but the quality (density, size, energy efficiency) and the impact on communities.

**b. Internal consultation:**

1. As part of the initial review of the previous strategy a working group was set up consisting of Senior Managers from within the City Council and representative of all relevant service areas. This group reviewed the previous strategy and set out expectations from the City Council of work to be completed prior to the development of the new strategy.
2. The Housing Strategy development has also been presented to People Scrutiny, with invitations extended to members from Place and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny on two occasions.
3. In early October, the Council held a Housing Enquiry Day. This brought together all members, along with professionals from the City Council and other key partnership boards (Homes4Bristol and Bristol Housing Partnership). A wide range of speakers gave information and views on the day and stayed to participate in the workshops.
4. The results from the Housing Enquiry Day have been input into the Housing Strategy.

**Other options considered:**

1. Option 1 – not to have a Housing Strategy

Although there isn't a legal requirement to have a Housing Strategy, it was felt by officers that this is a sufficiently important topic that a strategy is required. During the initial stages of consultation, this question was revisited and confirmation was obtained that we need to have a Housing Strategy. The current economic situation, changes in the welfare system and the current housing crisis all require a response and defined actions for both Bristol City Council and its partners. Therefore the option to no have a Housing Strategy was discarded.

2. Option 2: Creating a Housing Strategy with a shorter or longer timescale.

The previous two strategies were of a 5 year duration. Due to the fact that the economic context in which the housing strategy is set is changing rapidly and national policy is changing along with it, there is a level of uncertainty within the housing system. This led us to consider creating a 1 or 2 year strategy. However, this was dismissed because there will need to be some long term plans put in place and even some short term measures will not see a result for 2 or 3 years.

This led us to consider a longer term strategy, of 10 or even 15 years. However this was dismissed because the rapidly changing environment and national policy/legislation could make the strategy out of date very quickly.

It was therefore decided to keep a 5 year strategy, but it needs to be a framework that showcases the overall vision. The action plan will have clear, SMART actions and will be reviewed on an annual basis. Therefore keeping it at a length where we can plan short, medium and long term actions, whilst allowing the strategy to be reactive to further changes.

**Risk management / assessment:**

A full risk assessment will be carried out on completion of the action plan

**FIGURE 1**

**The risks associated with the implementation of the (subject) decision :**

No.	RISK	INHERENT RISK		RISK CONTROL MEASURES	CURRENT RISK		RISK OWNER
		(Before controls)			(After controls)		
		Impact	Probability		Impact	Probability	
1	Threat to achievement of the key objectives of the report National policy will continue to change affecting the direction of travel for the Housing Strategy	High	Medium	Mitigation (ie controls) and Evaluation (ie effectiveness of mitigation). The strategy is set out as a framework making it more adaptable than previous strategies. The action plan will be developed early next year allowing for greater understanding of the impacts of proposed changes in national policy. The action plan will be reviewed annually allowing for us to respond much quicker to further changes	Low	medium	Sue Long
2	The Housing Strategy will not be deliverable	High	Medium	Please see above (risk 1), but also a lot of work has been invested in gaining a partnership approach both internally and externally to the delivery of this strategy	Low	Low	Sue Long

**FIGURE 2**

**The risks associated with not implementing the (subject) decision:**

No.	RISK	INHERENT RISK		RISK CONTROL MEASURES	CURRENT RISK		RISK OWNER
		(Before controls)			(After controls)		
		Impact	Probability		Impact	Probability	
1	Threat to achievement of the key objectives of the report The partnership working established throughout the writing of this strategy will be abandoned and with it the joint work	High	High	Mitigation (ie controls) and Evaluation (ie effectiveness of mitigation). Keep the Homes4Bristol board working effectively and focus their attention on developing the action plan	low	low	Sue Long
2	Without direction provided by the Housing Strategy, individual work within the housing system will not be pulled together and some of the larger, more aspirational ideas will not be achieved	High	Low	Agree the Housing Strategy	Low	Low	Sue Long

**Public sector equality duties:**

This is a framework document and without the action plan it is more difficult to be specific about the equalities impacts. However, work has begun on drafting an equalities impact assessment and this can be found in appendix 4.

**Eco impact assessment**

There are no significant environmental impacts arising from this report. Any impacts resulting from the action plan will be agreed with the sustainable city team prior to publication.

**Resource and legal implications:**

**Finance**

The Housing Strategy sets out a range of commitments for the Council and its partners to provide well designed, quality homes that are affordable, sustainable and suitable for people's needs, raise standards in the private rented sector, deliver the best use of existing housing, reduce empty private homes, sustaining homes and enabling access to housing.

The financial implications for the Council of these commitments have not been set out at this stage as the strategy is a framework for setting direction for everyone involved in housing in Bristol, alongside the Local Authority.

**a. Financial (revenue) implications:**

There are no specific revenue costs within this report.

**Advice given by** Robin Poole, Finance Business Partner  
**Date** 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015

**b. Financial (capital) implications:**

There are no specific capital costs within this report.

**Advice given by** Robin Poole, Finance Business Partner  
**Date** 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015

**Comments from the Corporate Capital Programme Board:**

Not applicable

**c. Legal implications:**

Legal advice should be sought during the development of the action plan and in relation to specific actions on an ongoing basis.

The Housing Strategy is reserved to full Council as a matter of local choice (Article 4 of the Council's constitution). The Executive is required to formulate a policy for full Council to approve and implementation then reverts back to the Executive.

**Advice given by** Sarah Sharland, Solicitor; Shahzia Daya, Interim Service Director,  
Legal and Democratic services  
**Date** 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015

**d. Land / property implications:**

There are no direct land and property implications within this report. Advice will be sought during the development of the action plan and with particular actions as appropriate.

**e. Human resources implications:**

There are no human resources implications within this report. Should staffing or resource implications arise during the development and implementation of the action plan or with any particular actions, human resources advice should be sought to ensure that these are dealt with in accordance with employment law and Bristol City Council's policies and procedures.

**Advice given by** Alex Holly, People Business Partner  
**Date** 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Bristol Housing Strategy (draft)  
Appendix 2 – State of the market: A summary  
Appendix 3 – consultation results 2015



Appendix 4 – Equalities impact assessment

**Access to information (background papers):**  
Included above

# More Than a Roof

DRAFT

Bristol's  
Housing Strategy  
2016 – 2020



# Contents

Executive Summary .....	3
1. Introduction .....	4
2. Links to other strategies.....	5
3. Vision.....	6
4. Key Facts.....	8
5. Achievements.....	9
6. Defining the challenge .....	10
7. Delivering the Outcomes .....	13
8. Where does the Strategy fit.....	22
9. Governance and Implementation.....	23
10. Action Plan (to be developed) .....	23

## Executive Summary

# More Than a Roof

Bristol's housing strategy 2016 – 2020

**Vision:** Housing should provide a springboard to achieving a high quality of life and create the opportunity for all to thrive in mixed communities of their choice.

We are delivering this strategy in a rapidly changing landscape. The new policy and legislative changes proposed by the Government will present a very real challenge to both delivery of services and Bristol's residents over the 2015 – 2020 period. There will almost certainly continue to be a shortage of housing, particularly of affordable housing for low-income households. Also the implementation of the proposed welfare reform changes will, very likely, result in more households being unable to afford to rent or buy in the private sector so relying on affordable housing. Therefore the delivery of new housing, especially new affordable housing needs to be prioritised.

In addition, there is still much that needs to be done to improve the city's housing stock, including:

- Improve housing and management standards in the Private Rented Sector
- Reduce fuel poverty
- Reviewing affordable rented and social tenancies to identify where properties are unaffordable or unsuitable and help tenants to find a sustainable option eg. to move or increase income/minimise outgoings

Lastly, in a challenging economic environment people need good information, advice and support in order to obtain a tenancy and maximise their success as a tenant, whether in social or private rented housing, or a shared owner

This strategy is a framework setting direction for everyone involved in housing - residents, housing associations, developers, government bodies, regulators, investors, private landlords, alongside the Local Authority – to do what we can to provide the homes needed and ensure that housing delivers a clear social dividend.

The Housing Strategy will contribute to the Mayor's Vision for Bristol and its recognition of the need to address inequalities of health, wealth and opportunity in the city, supporting everyone to reach their potential by creating successful places to live, work and play.

Headline Outcomes	Increase the numbers of new homes			Deliver the best use of existing Homes			Intervene early before a crisis occurs	
Key priorities	Provide well designed, quality homes that are affordable, sustainable and suitable for people's needs			Deliver the best use of existing housing	Raise standards in the Private Rented Sector (PRS)	Reduce the number of empty private homes	Sustaining occupation /tenancies	Enabling access to housing
Headline actions	Carry out a fundamental review of our delivery arrangements	Complete the joint Spatial Plan for the West of England	Consider establishing a new, not for profit PRS provider, as an alternative to the market	Landlords to review social housing tenancies & support sustainable solutions	Improve the management and standards in the PRS	Increase affordable housing provision from the homes that are brought back into use	Work with communities, individuals and families to create resilient house holds	Prevent and respond to homelessness

## 1 Introduction

Bristol is a prosperous city, national surveys and media consistently rate Bristol as one of the best UK cities to live in. This acts as a draw for young people and families to live and settle in the city. Bristol's cultural and educational offer, as well as increasing employment opportunities, is expected to increase the number of people who want to live and work in the city.

Bristol has a thriving commercial centre with a good mix of private and social housing. The urban environment is broken by green space, but there is little available land for building new housing. The city council is bordered by three other local authorities that make up Greater Bristol<sup>1</sup>. Many households do not distinguish between the different authorities and see these as somewhat artificial boundaries when seeking to access housing. For many people, this offers the opportunity to live within a suburban environment while working in Bristol and enjoying the city's cultural offer. Accommodation within Bristol is varied with a good mix of styles and property sizes. There are many areas which offer good community living and plenty of open green spaces, making them popular places to live.

However, there is a considerable housing challenge in Bristol and this is growing: it is a city of inequalities with persistent health and wellbeing gaps between different parts of the city; demand for homes continues to grow, with housing becoming increasingly unaffordable for many people; quality of existing homes is often not high enough; and inequalities are reinforced by the way different kinds of housing are distributed across the city. Despite the prosperity within the city, there are substantial problems of deprivation in parts of Bristol. The neighbourhoods that do not share the city's prosperity often have insufficient good housing, transport and access to employment opportunities.

Bristol has ambitions to be a low-carbon city with high quality of life. It is the first UK city to be a European Green Capital 2015 and member of Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities.

New policy contained within the recent Queen's Speech<sup>2</sup> and the Summer budget 2015<sup>3</sup> will create a number of further challenges during the period this Housing Strategy covers. Proposed new policies include:

- Welfare Benefit Reforms – including the benefit cap and universal credit
- Social housing rent reduction
- Introduction of Right to Buy for all social tenancies
- Introduction of higher rent for tenants earning over £30,000

<sup>1</sup> The three other authorities are: North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Bath & North East Somerset, also known as the West of England partnership

<sup>2</sup> The Queen's Speech, 27 May 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/queens-speech-2015-background-briefing-notes>

<sup>3</sup> The Summer Budget June 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/summer-budget-2015-key-announcements>

The results of some of these changes are reduced incomes for housing cost and reducing incomes for social landlords who use rental income to provide services and invest in the provision of new homes. This changing context requires a new conversation and a very different response. The Welfare Benefit Reforms could make housing costs increasingly, and for some groups almost completely, unaffordable unless earned incomes rise to compensate. The social housing rent reduction was unexpected and as the business plans would have assumed rental growth, this affects future financial projections and therefore delivery of affordable housing. Right to buy for all social housing tenancies obviously impacts on future revenue as it sells assets providing rental income, as well as removing stock from the rental 'pool'. Lastly, introduction of higher rent for tenants earning over £30,000 could prove to be costly to manage and be a disincentive to work in some instances.

This strategy describes what we think that new response should look like – for our partners, Bristol's citizens and the Council.

## 2 Links to other strategies

The Bristol Housing Strategy does not stand alone and most of the work operates alongside existing strategies, plans and work programmes. Despite the prosperity within the City, there are substantial problems of deprivation in parts of Bristol. The neighbourhoods that do not share the city's prosperity have a lack of good housing, transport and employment opportunities. All of the strategies working alongside the Bristol Housing Strategy share a common thread of aiming to reduce social inequality.

This strategy provides a framework for the delivery of the Mayor's Vision by the council and its partners. In addition it will deliver the outcomes from the Mayor's Home Commission, which was set up in October 2013 and concluded in June 2014. The Commission made 20 recommendations, of which most were supported by the City Council. Many of the recommendations have already been put into place and the Action Plan linked to this strategy will report progress against them<sup>4</sup>. The strategy will also link very closely with strategies and plans in operation, for example the Joint Local Transport Plan, Bristol's Learning City, Bristol Local Plan, BCC's Climate Change and Energy Security Framework and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

<sup>4</sup> Outcomes can be found in full on page 14

### 3 Vision

This strategy sets out our vision for housing in Bristol and how we are going to deliver it.

‘...my mission is to make sure the world sees a Bristol where every citizen is participating in our city’s success; and not on a Bristol held back by the price of inequality. The city must not succeed only for the benefit of the few, at the expense of the many.’ Mayor George Ferguson

At the heart of the Mayor’s vision is the need to address inequalities of health, wealth and opportunity in the city, supporting everyone to reach their potential by creating successful places to live, work and play. This strategy recognises that housing is far more than a ‘roof over our heads’; it is a fundamental part of our lives with poor housing or lack of housing affecting health and educational attainment. This strategy has a clear commitment to develop new homes and retrofit existing homes so that they are fit for purpose in the longer-term

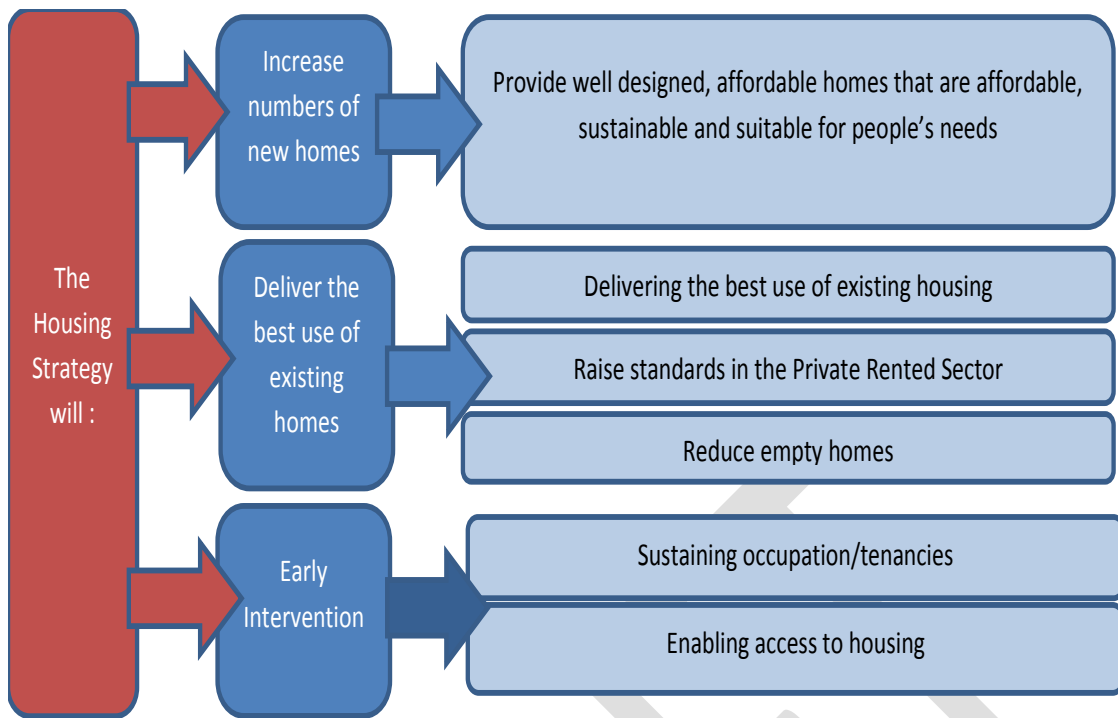
Housing should provide a springboard to achieving a high quality of life and create the opportunity for people to thrive in mixed communities of their choice. We will work together to tackle the range of housing issues that affect people who live in Bristol.

The vision for housing in Bristol has 3 headline outcomes and 6 major priorities and the Council with partners will invest resources in services and changes that help to achieve its priorities in order to get the best housing provision possible. These are:

- An increase in the number of new homes;
- Ensuring the best use of the existing homes; and
- More early intervention to prevent people reaching crisis.

Bristol is in desperate need of new additional housing and this has to be the priority for this Housing Strategy. By working with our partners to put in place the outcomes from the Mayor’s Homes Commission, we can drive forward increases in delivery, but in these challenging times we will all need to innovate to achieve our overall aim of increasing the number of new homes.

These outcomes for the Bristol Housing Strategy are linked to the priorities set out in the Mayor’s vision for Bristol and in Bristol’s Corporate Plan, 2013-2017 and will be delivered in conjunction with our partners in the city.



DRAFT



## 4 Key Facts

*This page will be presented as an Info graphic 'about Bristol'.*

Bristol has a population of around 442,500 and is the seventh largest English city outside London. It is a rapidly growing city, with a young and diverse population, a successful economy and a strong commitment to protecting the environment:

- 1,940 (1.3%) of private sector dwellings within Bristol are long-term vacant, defined as any dwelling vacant for six months or more, or subject to unauthorised occupation (Housing Stock condition survey 2012)
- 28% of homes receive one or more benefits compared to the national average of 21%. The distribution of benefit receipt by tenure shows the highest proportion, for the privately rented sector (Stock Condition Survey 2012)
- 10,443 live applications on the Bristol Housing Register as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015, of those 5217 have a housing need as outlined in the Housing Act 1996.
- 442,500 population (ONS Mid-2014 projections) and is expected to rise by 9% in 2022 if trends continue. Since 2004, the population is estimated to have risen by 46,700 people (11.8%), higher than the England and Wales increase of 8.0%.
- The number of residents aged 75 and over is projected to rise by 22% by 2024
- 194, 653 properties in Bristol as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. 15% of stock is owned by the Council, 6% by housing associations, 55% is owner occupied and 24% privately rented. The private rented sector has increased significantly since 2001, rising from 12.2% to 22.1% of all accommodation in Bristol (2011 Census)
- 28% of the homes across the city have a poor energy efficiency rating and have either a Band E, F or G on their energy performance certificate
- Bristol also has a relatively young age profile with more children aged 0-15 than people aged 65 and over. Bristol's 82,800 children make up almost 19% of the total population. In comparison, its 58,800 people aged 65 or over constitute only 13% of the total population.
- 68% of Bristol's population is of working age (ie. 16 – 64), with 20-39 year olds making up more than half of the total working population. Overall the working age population is projected to increase by 7% if recent trends continue.
- 183,900 households (DCLG mid-2012 estimate), projected to increase by 11% by 2022
- 28.4% of private homes currently fall beneath decent homes standard [footnote the survey] (Stock Condition Survey 2012)
- 7,100 new homes planned from 2014 – 2019
- The Black and Minority Ethnic population of Bristol has increased from 8.2% of all people in 2001 to 16% in 2011. If other groups with the exception of 'White British' are also included, then the non-'White British' population has increased from 12% of all people in 2001 to 22% in 2011.
- 5 Neighbourhood planning areas: Lockleaze, Old Market Quarter, Lawrence Weston, Knowle West, Redcliffe
- Fuel poverty at 17.9% is lower than the rate found in England at 21.0%. The rapid increase in fuel prices have affected fuel poverty figures which are constantly changing as a consequence.
- 2071 social and affordable rented homes were let within the last financial year 2014/2015
- Bristol's average house price is £198,556. Over the past decade, average house prices in Bristol increased by 29% compared with an increase of 16% for England and Wales over the same period.
- There are currently 359 homeless households (the council has a duty to rehouse people under section 184 of the Housing Act 1996)
- Rough Sleeping has increased from 9 in 2012 to 41 in 2014
- There are 675 applications on the Bristol housing register from people who are under occupying social housing tenancies.
- There are 33.7% single person households in Bristol

## 5 Achievements

The economic and political situation in the United Kingdom during the period of the previous Housing Strategy (2010 -2015) was difficult. However, the Partnership delivered many of the actions within the Strategy. The following are some of the key achievements.

Key achievements were:

*Info graphic*

1. Delivered 1,490 (e) high quality and affordable homes between April 2010 and April 2015 (Target 2,000)
2. Brought 3,248 empty properties back into use (target 2,000)
3. Delivered 615 units of extra care housing by May 2012, with a further build programme in place (target 600 units)
4. Increased the supply of purpose built Private Rented Sector (PRS) accommodation by 46 in 2013/14 and 64 in 2014/15.
5. Maximised resources and reduced waiting times in delivery of aids and adaptations to vulnerable people by reducing waiting time from 2 years to 6 months
6. Between April 2010 – Oct 2012 provided 3,811 private homes with insulation through BEES (Bristol Energy Efficiency Service) scheme = 136 per month.
7. Pathways (pathway from homelessness to settled accommodation) model in place for high-level, low level and floating support services. The pathway manages the lettings of 1,172 commissioned units and 660 floating support placements

The previous Housing Strategy was published within a time of economic change and this had an effect on the ability of the Partnership to deliver the Housing Strategy action plan. Some actions had to be abandoned as they were no longer a priority and many other actions were not completed in full. In spite of these very difficult circumstances there were lots of successes, but it is felt now that the strategy was not flexible enough to respond adequately to the rapid economic and legislative changes that occurred throughout its lifetime.

New legislation was brought in, the Localism Act (2011) and the Welfare Reform Act (2012). The Localism Act devolved more decision making powers to local authorities, including allowing them to restrict access to their social housing waiting lists. In order to reduce demand, many authorities have brought in these changes, but it has had the effect of restricting access at a time when, for many people, their options are limited.

### Lack of Choice

Demand for homes is high and increasingly so as the population is growing and changing rapidly. The growing population puts a high demand on both family housing and one-bedroomed housing. Younger people and families struggle to get onto the housing ladder. There are a growing number of older people who may be keen to move into more suitable homes, but much of the accommodation no longer appears to meet their needs. Traditional sheltered housing for older people does not always appeal to people aged 65+ years who are still active but the market for new generation 'retirement' homes is underdeveloped.

PRS tenancies currently make up 24% of the housing market in Bristol and this is expected to rise during the life of this strategy. Due to the economic situation in Bristol, many people are increasingly relying on PRS accommodation when they would previously have purchased, or at the other end of the market, when they would have previously have rented social housing. This has had the effect of pushing rents up, creating a new market for middle income households and creating a shrinking sub-market at the cheaper end of the market. Some landlords are capitalising on the need people have to find accommodation at a price they can afford by offering an inferior product.

### Welfare System

The Welfare Reform Act brought in numerous changes that affected the income of people living in Bristol. Firstly, the 'spare room subsidy' (commonly known as the 'bedroom tax'), meant that social housing tenants could no longer claim benefit for bedrooms they did not require. It has also capped housing benefits to 4 bedroomed properties only, meaning any large families occupying 5+ bedroom private sector houses have to pay the extra rent not covered by housing benefit. Furthermore, for some people welfare benefits have been capped. As a result, some people have not been able to afford their rent and some people have become homeless due to rent arrears.

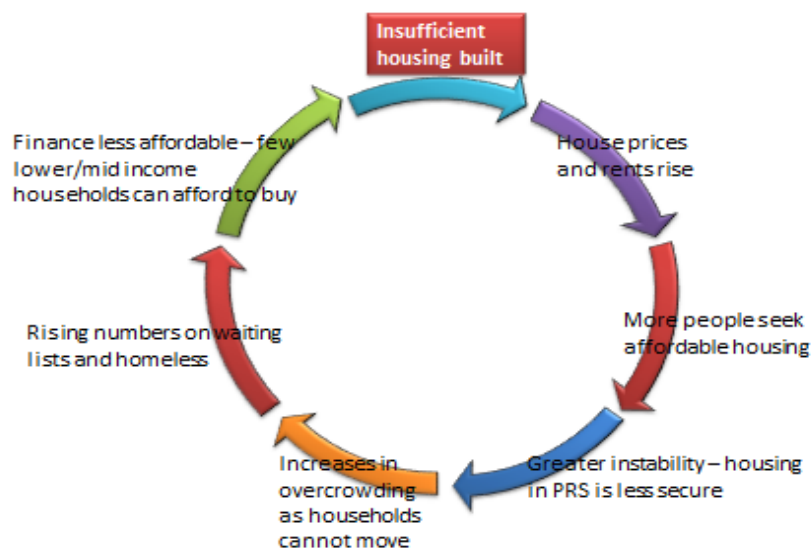
As a result of the Welfare Reform Act and further government announcements relating to the welfare and benefits system, households in Bristol experienced significant changes to their finance and entitlements.

The announcement in the Queen’s Speech 2015 and the Summer budget 2015, of the Full Employment and Welfare Benefits Bill, is likely to increase the challenge further. Whilst we have yet to model the impact these changes may have, benefits decreasing at a time when housing costs are rising is likely to continue to produce a significant challenge. In addition, over the next 3 years Bristol will also see the roll out of the Government’s flagship welfare reform policy – Universal Credit.

Insufficient number of new homes

There is a programme to increase housing supply in Bristol. There are 30,600 homes envisaged to be delivered in the City between 2006 and 2026, with a minimum target of 26,400 set out in the adopted Local Plan. Between 2006 and 2015, 16,300 homes have been built in the City. As an urban authority, Bristol does not have extensive land to build new properties and many more homes, especially affordable homes are needed to meet demand.

The following diagram shows the effect the lack of new build accommodation, especially affordable housing, has had on various parts of the housing system over the last 5 years.



Increasing demand for affordable housing units.

With the economic situation as it is at the moment, demand for affordable housing has risen. At the same time as the recession hit, finance arrangements for Registered Providers changed. Instead of receiving a significant proportion of the build costs as a government subsidy, they had to source private finance to a greater extent and raise rents to fund the additional borrowing. In addition, the cost of construction and land acquisition has continued to rise and there hasn’t been the availability of ex-local authority land as there has been in the past.

This has meant that developers of affordable housing in Bristol are taking a much more cautious view about where they build and how much the build costs will be in order to make the development a viable option for them. Often, the small pockets of land in Bristol are more difficult

and costly to develop, compared with greenfield sites, and therefore are less attractive. This has meant that when they have identified that they are able to raise finance to build, there has been less appetite for building in Bristol.

#### Challenges – info graphic

1. Balancing the pressure to significantly increase the number of new homes and the difficulties of the development when land is available.
2. Continuing to address the growing homelessness and rough sleeping in the city. It can increase worklessness and reliance on health services, whilst reducing educational attainment.
3. Reduce the housing equality gap – there are substantial inequalities of health, wealth and opportunity within the city of which housing is a key component.
4. Dealing with the challenge of welfare reform changes which will affect many people.
5. Providing a better housing offer/solutions for older people to give them a choice, help them stay independent and reduce isolation
6. Taking opportunities to add value by cross boundary working
7. Private Rented Sector (PRS) properties make up 24% of the housing market in Bristol. There is a need to put in place measures to tackle poor landlords and bring more homes up to the Decent Homes standard.
8. Reducing the number of empty homes and increasing affordable housing provision from it.
9. Managing the greater demands caused by changing demographics, such as increasing numbers of families and young people living in the area, an ageing population, and established cultural diversity.
11. Improving the energy efficiency of our homes and working to address fuel poverty so that rising energy prices have less of an impact, especially for the poorest families.
12. Planning well to ensure new housing minimises energy use, is sustainable, can stand the test of time and is built to deal with the effects of climate change.
14. Developing homes and communities that help people make healthy choices and promote healthier living.
15. Responding to the changes brought about by the Welfare Reform Act 2012, the proposed Housing Bill and the proposed Full Employment and Welfare Benefits Bill.

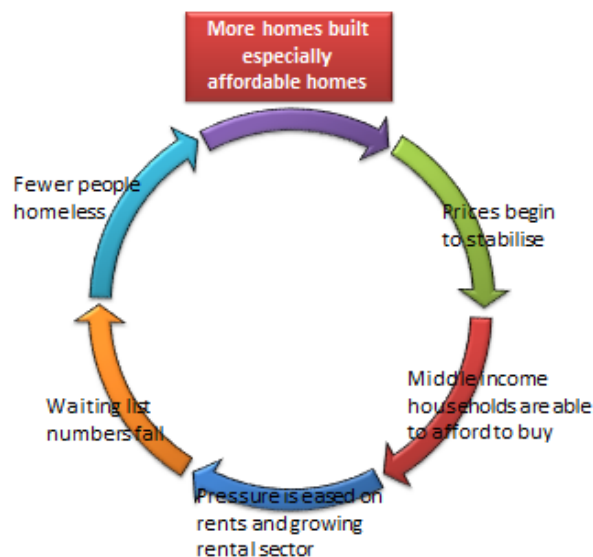
## 7 Delivering the Outcomes

### 7a Outcome 1: Increase numbers of new homes

Bristol does not have enough housing to meet demand and that applies across all tenures. There are over 8,700 homes with planning permission in Bristol (March 2014). Actions are needed to ensure that these houses are developed together with sites allocated in the adopted local plan<sup>5</sup>. The Delivery of new homes will become increasingly challenging, but needs to be a key priority.

This strategy has been written to reflect the council's adopted local plan, which allocates a large number of sites for the development of homes across the City to meet the demand for housing and improve affordability. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)<sup>6</sup> assesses the future requirement for homes in the Wider Bristol Housing Market Area (HMA)<sup>7</sup> in the period 2016 to 2036. The SHMA objectively assessed need is for 85,000 homes to be built across the Wider Bristol HMA over a 20 year period, with 29,100 of those defined as affordable housing. The need for affordable housing in Bristol alone is 18,800 which equates to 940 homes per year. A Joint Spatial Plan is being developed across the West of England which will set out how the future need for housing will be met.

Increasing the number of new build units in the city is not a short term solution and, as discussed previously, is not an easy challenge. However, we cannot underestimate its importance in improving the situation for Bristol residents. The following diagram shows the differences if there are enough homes built, especially affordable homes.



<sup>5</sup> Full Local Plan is published here:

<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/planning-and-building-regulations/bristol-local-plan>

<sup>6</sup> Full SHMA is published here

<http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/assets/files/Transport%20and%20Infrastructure/Duty%20to%20Cooperate/2015%2007%2028%20Wider%20Bristol%20HMA%20FINAL%20report.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> The HMA includes Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset.

In order for the Mayor to be clearer about how delivery of the Vision is achieved , 4 commissions were set up. The Homes Commission is the most important one for the delivery of the Housing Strategy and representation on the Commission was comprised of independent experts. Having considered the recommendations, these are the ones we are taking forward:

Proactively looking for opportunities to create additional housing land and site assembly options
Enhancing the role of the Bristol Property Board
Creating a Revolving Investment Fund to support stranded assets
Creating value from regenerating brownfield/greyfield areas of land and sites
Preparing an annual "LAND" Prospectus for Housing
Establish a specialist stalled site unlocking team in the Council
Developing and nurturing an alternative homes sector
Prioritise delivery of more homes in the short term and more affordable homes over the longer term
Ensure new homes planning targets over the longer term are both supported by robust evidence and are planned for on a sub-regional basis
Compulsory Purchase Order
Creating a 'Results-not-Process' Culture
Introduce end-to-end programme management
Post Implementation review of new organisational arrangements
Ensure robust accountability and scrutiny for implementation of the Affordable Housing Delivery Framework
Raising or eliminating the HRA borrowing cap
Council wide review of land and property assets for potential housing development
Fully examine the Municipal Housing Company model
Review action to bring more empty private homes into use
Use of Universal Credit

These recommendations will all be delivered through the Housing Strategy Action Plan to ensure that actions are put in place against the recommendations and that the outcomes are monitored on a regular basis.

Provide well designed, quality homes that are affordable, sustainable and suitable for people's needs.

It is important to remember that although there is a substantial need for new homes in Bristol, they still need to meet at very least our minimum standards. We want to provide well designed, quality homes that have a good energy rating which will enable people to reduce living costs and avoid costly repairs. This strategy will respond to that and alongside this will find ways to respond to the increasing need for affordable housing in Bristol. In order to achieve this it will be necessary to review the operation and partnerships in place to deliver housing currently.

However, due to the welfare reforms changes proposed and the fact that in Bristol the private rented sector is growing rapidly, we need to examine the possibilities of either the council and/or partner(s) becoming a provider and manager of PRS properties on a significant scale. There are examples from elsewhere of using institutional and charitable investment to do this. This would widen their sphere of business, use balance sheets as security and also provide a value for money service for potential tenants.

Provide well designed, quality homes that are affordable, sustainable and suitable for people's needs

We will:

- Carry out a fundamental review of our delivery system in order to:
  - Deliver increased number of new homes (both affordable and market housing) in order to meet demand
  - Ensure better partnership working
  - Create employment opportunities within the development of new homes
  - Evaluate different build models eg. experiment with different options that create higher density, modular construction, custom build, build to rent.
- Complete the Joint Spatial Plan for the West of England
- Consider establishing a not-for profit PRS provider, as an alternative to the market
  - Scope and develop a business plan with a range of delivery models
- Implement the Mayor's Homes Commission agreed recommendations
- Expand on the work to deliver homes for particular groups to maximise opportunities and choice within the housing system, by:
  - Working with a delivery partner provide 12 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches & 3 travelling show people pitches by 2018
  - Commissioning extra care housing schemes, as part of our Bristol Retirement Living plan, producing a total of 222 affordable flats and 764 flats for private sale to older people by 2023

### 7b. Outcome 2: Deliver the best use of existing buildings

This strategy will promote the best use of Bristol's current housing stock and facilitate partners to build the type of housing that is needed for the future needs of the city's population and its environmental sustainability.

In order to meet some of the demand within Bristol and improve the housing offer for people, it is important to work with the housing that we have, making sure that our current resource is optimised and that we are working towards increasing standards. While new build is vital to meet the city's needs, in practice it only adds between 1% and 2% additional homes per annum.

There are three parts to optimising existing housing:

1. Raise standards in the Private Rented Sector (PRS).
2. Deliver the best use of existing housing
3. Reduce empty homes, particularly in the private sector



### Raise Standards in the Private Rented Sector (PRS)

The private rented sector is growing rapidly in Bristol and although the majority of landlords provide a good standard of accommodation and service to their tenants, there are a growing number who do not. Within the last housing strategy period work was carried out to increase quality and management standards by launching a discretionary licencing scheme in the Stapleton Road area (which was identified as a key area for poor quality accommodation and poor landlords). So far this appears to be having a positive impact, and we will consider extending this to other parts of the city where similar conditions prevail.

In addition, there are further opportunities to provide support to private landlords and tenants which will be explored within this strategy, including implementing the West of England rental standard and working with ACORN to support their Ethical Lettings Charter.

Raise standards in the Private Rented Sector (PRS)	
We will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase housing and management standards in the PRS<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 'Roof over my Head' training for potential tenants</li><li>○ Advice, guidance and training for landlords</li><li>○ Exploring over the next 12 months whether a grading system to raise standards in the PRS is viable.</li><li>○ Investigate using longer term tenancies</li><li>○ Implement the West of England lettings standard</li><li>○ Continue to provide support to groups seeking to improve standards, such as ACORN (including supporting their Ethical Lettings Charter)</li></ul></li><li>• Identify and take action on poor quality PRS properties<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Consult on potential for roll-out of further discretionary licencing schemes in areas of poor housing</li><li>○ Target intervention at the bottom of the market, including prosecutions of rogue landlords</li></ul></li></ul>

### Deliver the best use of existing housing

As well as ensuring the delivery of sites already identified for additional homes, it is important that we maximise the use of the accommodation we already have. As a stock retaining authority Bristol City Council (BCC) has ownership of around 28,000 properties and BCC homes make up 15% of the total housing in Bristol, with housing associations owning a further 6%. Combined with the 24% of private rented homes, 45% of the homes in the city are rented. There are around 10,000 applicants on the Bristol Housing Register looking for social housing, so maximising the use of our properties can go a long way to aiding the resolution of the housing shortage in Bristol.

Moreover, both under occupation and the vacancy rate in the private sector are a barrier to better utilisation. As part of the Bristol Ageing Better programme, led by Age UK Bristol, and the Better Care Bristol programme, we need to develop a more joined up approach to advice on housing issues

and a better housing offer for older people enabling them to downsize to homes that are better-suited to need.

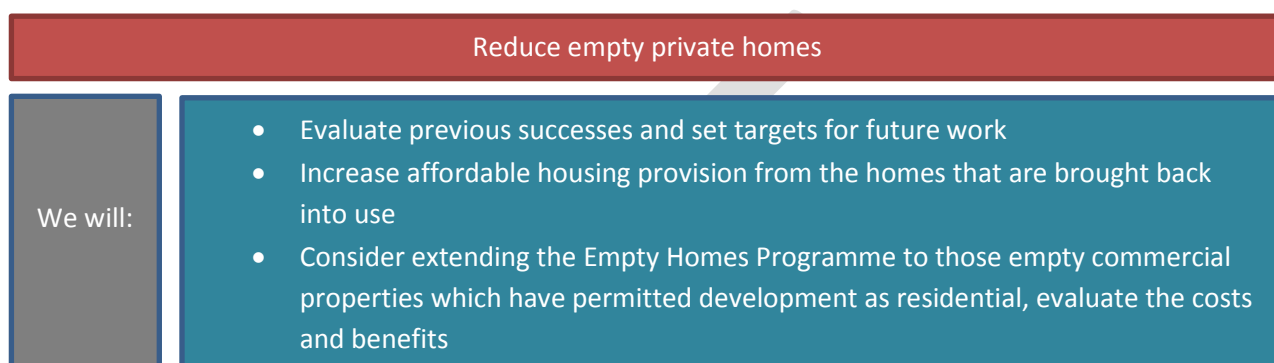
### Deliver the best use of existing housing

We will:

- Reduce overcrowding
  - Reduce overcrowding by working directly with households to enable moves to take place.
- Reduce the number of under occupied properties
  - Work directly with households to enable moves to take place
  - Reduce under occupation within social housing tenancies by developing improved incentive schemes
  - Create a better offer for older people that allows more people to live independently for longer in a home that better meets their needs, including extra care housing
- Improve the match between demand and what is available
  - Build on Bristol Housing Partnership's 'Housing Futures Work' by reviewing existing social housing stock to assess future viability and suitability
  - Create a database of all properties with adaptations
  - Establish what homes are in greatest demand and consider how to best utilise the available social housing stock

## Reduce Empty Private Homes

Bristol has carried out a very successful programme of reducing empty homes and bringing them back into use. It has brought 3,248 properties back into use between 2010 - 2015. Work in this area is on-going, but targets will need to reflect the fact that achieving results is going to become more challenging and we need to evaluate the previous work to see what a future work programme might look like. Also properties that have been brought back into use have mainly gone into the private sector (for sale or private rent) not the social sector. It is important now that we look at increasing the affordable housing provision gained from this resource.



### **7c Outcome 3: Intervene early before a crisis occurs**

Although this strategy is prioritising the delivery of new homes, the very real issues of rising homelessness and decreasing access to housing mean that there needs to be a focus on early intervention, prevention and enabling access to housing. Our aim will be to shift resources to tackle the causes of problems rather than just treating the symptoms.

Inherent within this will be a focus on intervention that can reduce the number of specialist interventions and prevent crisis. In order to achieve this, the strategy will focus on working in partnership to bring resources together in order to maximise the impact of any interventions. Partnership working will also enable specific targeted work to be carried out with those individuals or families that we can anticipate may have difficulties without effective support or intervention. The 'Think Family' programme is being expanded to work with households predicted to be at risk of crisis. This will include those at risk, for example, due to loss of income, domestic abuse or family breakdown – all of which can result in homelessness. This can be expanded by enlarging the role of social landlords as part of a 'housing plus' service.

Bristol will use evidence from the Universal Credit pathway authorities (Department of Work and Pensions) to identify and eliminate some of the anticipated impact of upcoming welfare reform.

Bristol has recently revised its Preventing Homelessness Strategy and identified six key priorities:

1. Minimise homelessness through early intervention by understanding and tackling the (often complex reasons behind it, with special emphasis on young people
2. Ensure consistency of approach, timely advice and earlier referrals from all agencies, even ones not always involved with homelessness.
3. Improve: access to, the amount of, the stability and quality of the Private Rented Sector (PRS); myth busting and encouraging new build, leasing, licensing and accreditation.
4. Continue to assertively tackle rough sleeping; target those clients with complex, multiple needs.
5. Make more direct links between homelessness and the housing, health and wider policy agenda
6. Ensure the right support is in place and that those ready to do so move-on promptly and reduce repeat homelessness.

#### Sustaining occupation

Bristol will adopt a holistic approach to tenancy by viewing the whole of the lifetime of a tenancy and identifying key points of increased vulnerability, such as: tenancy start; loss of employment; having a child. We will focus resources at the start of tenancy and pre-tenancy with accredited pre tenancy courses, and offering, introductory tenancies that have checks to identify vulnerability built in. As well as working with partners both internally and externally to spot and tackle early indicators of vulnerability or social isolation to support tenants to stay in their homes for as long as possible.

Working in partnership with advice agencies and housing associations we will work to prevent crisis and support successful tenancies. Bristol is fortunate that it has a wide provision of advice services in the city that has so far been largely unaffected by public spending cuts. Since the development of the last strategy, the impact of welfare changes, the recession and rising homelessness has meant that more households have reached crisis, even though a very high proportion of households still have a successful prevention intervention.

The continuation of this provision and ensuring that advice and support is received in a timely manner lies at the heart of early prevention; the re-commissioning of advice services in 2016 provides an opportunity to examine housing advice, alongside other related advice and use evidence of 'what works' to commission and provide new services.

The existing Heathy Home Zones programme will be extended, as it is a well-evidenced way of helping older and disabled to remain happily and safely in their own homes.

## Sustaining homes

We will:

- Map the risk for households and put in place appropriate support as early as possible
- Evaluate the success of the pathways from supported housing and redesign services where households are struggling to sustain independence
- Reduce fuel poverty and energy costs within social housing tenancies
  - Expand the Healthy Home Zone initiative
  - Promote the Bristol Energy Company
- Deliver the Preventing Homeless Strategy and action plan, specifically:
  - Reduce rough sleeping
  - Reduce the number of young people becoming homeless
  - Work with the Big Lottery funded Golden Key programme to achieve 'system change' for those with the most complex needs
- Support older people
  - Reduce social isolation and working to deliver the Age Friendly City Programme

### Enabling access to housing

In order to address the challenges faced by the housing market and welfare benefit cuts, we will work innovatively and creatively with landlords, tenants and employers to maximise working opportunities as well as working with partners to promote and champion:

- Employment skills
- Digital inclusion
- Financial inclusion
- Personal budgeting support
- Understanding the responsibilities of being a 'good' tenant
- Access to learning opportunities

We will also encourage all landlords to take an active approach in reviewing tenancies, so those who can afford to move are helped to move elsewhere and those who cannot afford their current accommodation, helped to move into something more affordable.

## Enabling access to housing

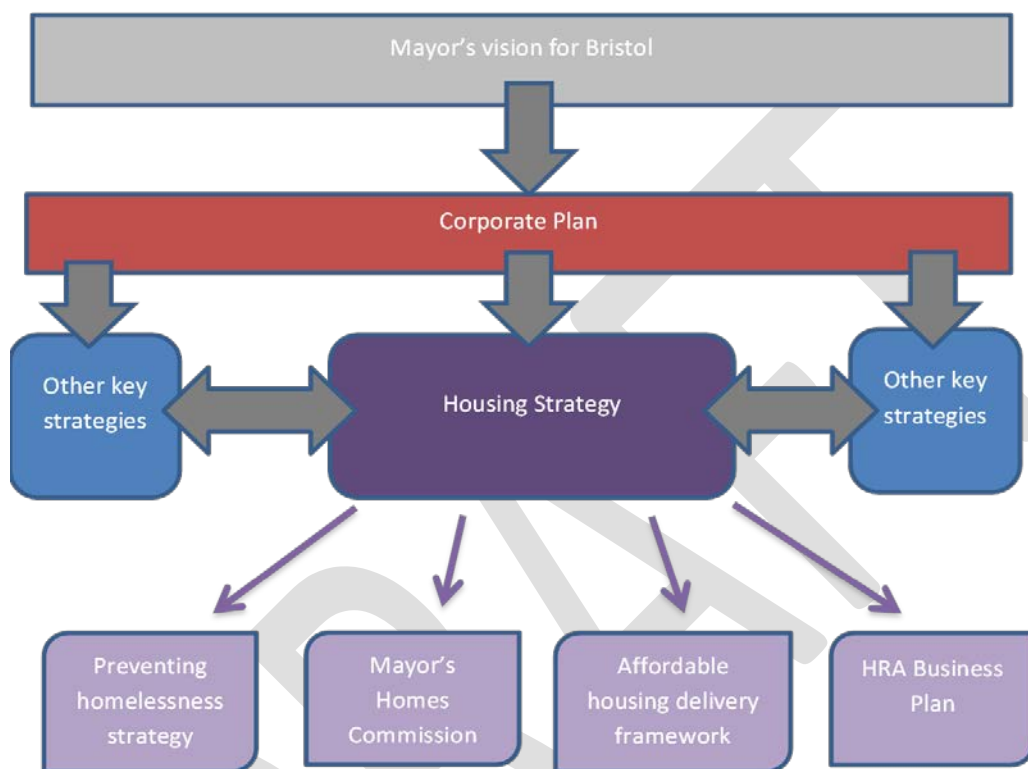
We will:

- Work with Registered Providers to reduce the need for affordability checks
  - Gather evidence around the consequences and benefits to the applicant
- Respond to welfare reform changes
  - Evaluate the impact of the introduction of Universal Credit and design early action for those households most at risk
- Work with children and families
  - Supporting the Think Family work, so that housing providers are part of the 'team around the family' providing holistic solutions
- Aid tenant success
  - Introduce readiness training – working to maximise income, manage budgets and behaviours (expand the Roof Over my Head programme if it proves successful)
  - Maximise employment opportunities by incorporating the Learning City aims
- Maximise the opportunities for people with learning disabilities or mental health issues to live independently or in alternative supported independent living schemes
- Work with Public Health to identify ways in which housing providers can contribute to better health outcomes, including dementia friendly housing

## 8 Where does the strategy fit?

### 8a Bristol City Council

The Housing Strategy is a key strategy for Bristol City Council and the following graphic shows where it fits with other key plans and strategies.



### 8b Partnerships

As the delivery agent for the Bristol Housing Strategy, the Homes4Bristol (H4B) Board contains representatives from all aspects of the housing system in Bristol. The Bristol Housing Partnership (BHP) is the forum for all social landlords to discuss joint ventures, share experiences and deliver joint actions. The Housing Strategy actions are represented within the BHP action plan, so there is a close working relationship between the BHP and H4B. Bristol City Council supports and feeds into both of these groups, as it does with other housing delivery groups/forums in the city.

Crucially, the council cannot and will not deliver this housing strategy in isolation. There is a central role for Bristol City Council, and we are also clear that leadership in Bristol extends beyond the council. The approach should apply to all homes in Bristol, which everyone involved in building and managing homes and supporting the people who live in them, has a role to play in delivering it.

This strategy has been developed in conjunction with all delivery partners and does reflect priorities and strategies of other organisations in the City. However, there is an expectation that in 'signing up' to the Strategy partners will align their own strategies and business plans to the Strategy

outcomes. H4B will be doing further work to develop key performance measures to gauge progress, and further work on governance to create accountability for delivery across the system.

## **9 Governance and implementation**

The Bristol Housing Strategy is overseen and delivery of it is managed by Homes4Bristol (H4B) Partnership. The Board has a Chair, independent of the Council, from one of the constituencies (a housing association) and contains representatives from all aspects of the housing system in Bristol i.e. finance, developers, private landlords, supported housing, Registered Providers, advice agencies, government agencies and Bristol City Council. The Board meets quarterly and is supported and administered by the Council. There is a close working relationship between the Board and Bristol Housing Partnership to ensure consistency of approach with registered providers.

## **10 Action Plan**

This strategy sets out what the City Council and Homes4Bristol wants to achieve on housing. While it describes a number of initiatives that are already in progress or in development, it does not offer the full detail of how we will achieve our objectives. In some instances, we do not yet have the answers. In others, there is not space here for all the detail. In many cases, we will want to consult further with residents and partners before finalising plans and putting them into action.

The action plan –specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed (SMART) – will be in place by March 2016 and will be rolled forward annually for the duration of the strategy.





**Consultation on Housing Strategy 2016 – 2020**  
**Response to the Consultation (2015)**

The council, in conjunction with the Homes4Bristol partnership board, recently consulted on what the ambitions and priorities should be in the new housing strategy. The housing strategy had been developed throughout 2014/2015 and there have been several stages to writing and producing this draft strategy. Firstly the homes4bristol board carried out a review of the previous housing strategy and initial research was carried out to look at the main issues with regards to housing in the city. Following this, in December 2014, we held a housing conference 'Local Housing Future' to discuss the issues and potential resolutions. The results of this conference, along with scenario planning work and completion of a research document State of the market: A summary, were all used to draft the Housing Strategy 2015 – 2020 'My Home is my springboard for life'.

It is intended that the new strategy will be a plan of how we intend to tackle the major housing issues that affect people in Bristol for the next 5 years (2015-2020) and how we, as a partnership, focus our resources.

The consultation period began on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2015 and ended on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2015. We gave people the choice to express their views in the following ways:

- Filling out a consultation questionnaire and sending it back
- Filling out a consultation questionnaire online
- Contacting a named officer by telephone
- Emailing a named officer
- Writing to a named officer
- Verbally at a meeting or on a one-to-one basis

We received a total of 223 responses to the consultation via the various methods of response. Where a group or organisation responded on behalf of its members, this was counted as a single response.

### **Results of the consultation**

Most of the questions were not mandatory, but instances where a respondent chose not to answer have been counted as no response and factored into the percentages.

### We asked and you said:

1. Do you agree with the three headline outcomes for the strategy and 67% of the respondents said that they did. Of those who didn't agree, the three most popular reasons for disagreeing were:
  - a. There needs to be greater emphasis on building affordable homes, with focus on quality and space
  - b. Quality of private sector accommodation and level of rents needs to be looked at more closely
  - c. Need to take a 'whole system' view, looking at community, health, transport etc.
2. Do you agree that the strategy demonstrates a clear understanding of national and local issues. 67% said that they agreed with this. The top three reasons for disagreeing were:
  - a. It doesn't pick up on the changes made within the Summer budget
  - b. The strategy isn't reflective enough of the scale of the housing crisis across all tenures
  - c. Doesn't do enough to join up services, eg health.
3. Do you feel that the Housing Strategy effectively communicates its relationships with its partners in delivering its three headline actions. 64% felt that it does. The three main ways in which it was felt not to are:
  - a. Needs to contain a statement of collective responsibilities, who is involved, who sits on the Homes4Bristol Board and what their role is
  - b. The strategy does not make it clear how this partnership will work on a practical level
  - c. Not enough involvement with communities
4. Is there anything you feel is not reflected in the Housing Strategy outcomes that you would like us to give consideration to. 25% of respondents answered this question and the top three points made were:
  - a. Community and sustainment, including better transport links
  - b. Private rented sector management and high rents
  - c. Creating a variety of housing to meet people's needs.
5. Is there anything else related to this document that you would like to share with us. 24% of respondents answered this question and the most popular three points were:
  - a. In order to truly succeed with increasing housing supply, Bristol will need to look at innovative ways of delivering developments.
  - b. There needs to be a closer link between housing and health
  - c. Affordable housing needs to have a better definition and it needs to be affordable.

### We did:

Following a review of all the responses and comments, the proposals remain largely unchanged, but we have taken steps to make our overall priorities clearer, include the impacts of changes in Government policy following the Summer Budget and show the links between the Housing Strategy and other key pieces of work or strategies in Bristol. Plus it is clear that it is really important for us to develop an action plan to support this document. It is also clear that when an action plan is developed, we need to ensure it meets the following demands:

1. Clearer picture about what Bristol is doing to meet objectives, and the role of the Local Authority and its partners
2. Better understanding of the housing needs of different groups and actions to address these
3. Consideration regarding not just the number of new homes but the quality (density, size, energy efficiency) and the impact on communities.

## Bristol Housing Market in 2015 – A Summary

### In brief:

- Demand is up and there continues to be an undersupply of new homes, both for ownership and rent. There is evidence to suggest that, during the last year, house prices in cities like Bristol have been growing faster than in areas of London.
- Significant shortage of affordable housing in the city and rising homelessness
- Significant increase in private renting (and rental costs)
- Limited number of strategic sites within Bristol itself

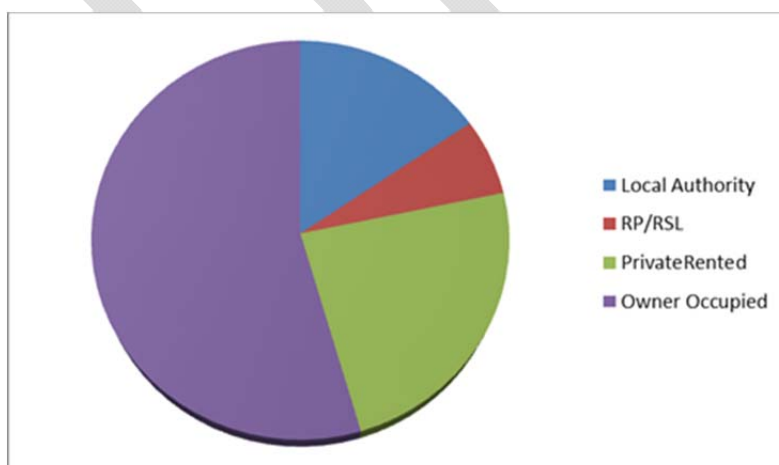
### Housing Stock

Valuation Office Agency figures (as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015) list 194,653 residential properties for Bristol, broken down into the following Council Tax bands:

Source: Valuation Office Agency – March 2015

Council Tax Band	Number of Properties
A	49,646
B	72,172
C	38,079
D	17,512
E	9,393
F	4,693
G	2,826
H	332
<b>Total</b>	<b>194,653</b>

According to the 2011 Census, some 15% of stock is owned by the city council, 6% by housing associations, 55% is owner occupied and 24% privately rented. The private rented sector has increased significantly since 2001, rising from 12.2% to 24% of all accommodation in Bristol. Private rental has overtaken the entire social sector, and is becoming the destination tenure for younger households and those on median and lower incomes who cannot afford to buy.



Source: 2011 Census

Local authority housing is mainly focused in inner city areas and on the outlying housing estates such as Hartcliffe, Withywood, Knowle West, Southmead, Lockleaze, Lawrence Weston and Henbury.

Private renting is concentrated in the central and central west wards of Clifton, Clifton East, Cabot, Cotham and Redland.

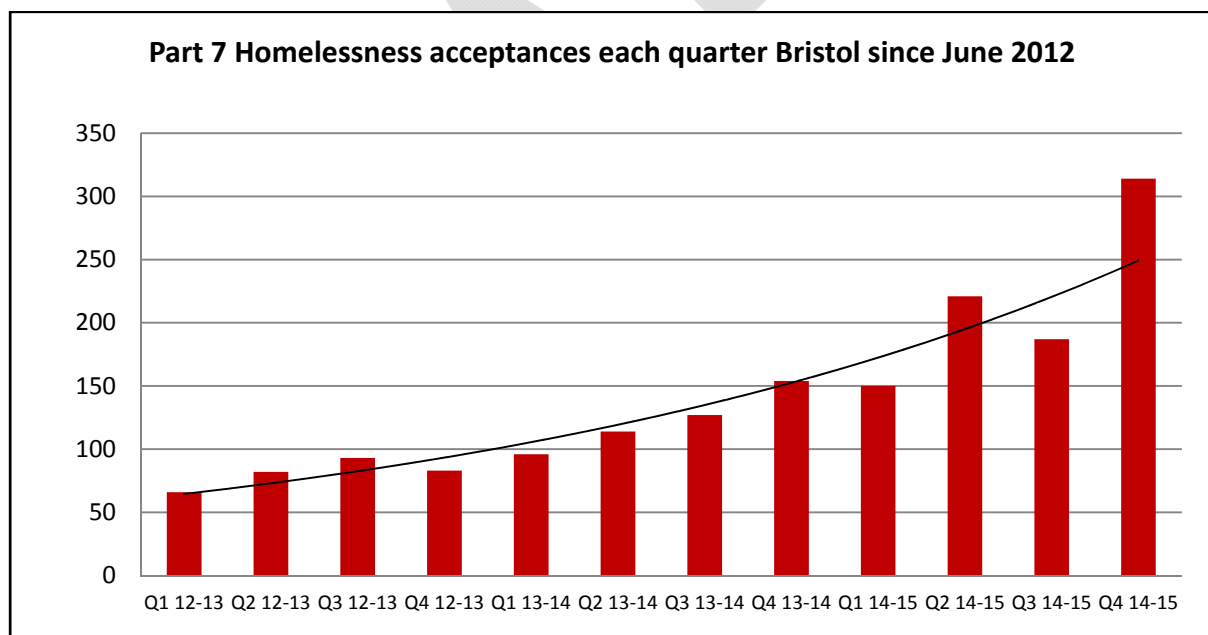
The proportion of detached housing in the city (found particularly in Stoke Bishop and Henleaze wards) is much lower than the South West average. The proportion of terraced housing (found particularly in the inner suburbs) and flats or converted houses (found particularly in the city centre and in Clifton and Cotham wards) is much higher than the South West average.<sup>1</sup>

## Homelessness <sup>2</sup>

### *Homelessness Acceptances*

Bristol City Council completes a return (known as the P1E return) to the Department of Communities & Local Government (DCLG) each quarter. The return reports homeless statistics for the city to central government. This data enables the mapping of homelessness trends in the city to identify action plans and plan changes to homelessness services.

There were 314 Part VII homelessness acceptances between January and April 2015 which represents a 41% increase on the previous quarter (187). Acceptances have continued an overall upward trend since Q4 April 12-13 when only 66 acceptances were reported. This is illustrated in the graph below.



Birmingham is the only core city to report a higher number of Part VII homeless acceptances per 1,000 households than Bristol between December and April 2015. Indeed, Bristol shows a much closer correlation with the returns reported by a number of inner London Boroughs than it does with other core cities.

The top 4 reasons reported for loss of a settled home where a duty of homelessness was agreed between January and April 2015 were:

<sup>1</sup> BCC, Planning Core Strategy, <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/planning-and-building-regulations/planning-core-strategy>

<sup>2</sup> Source: BCC, Q4(& year-end)2014-15 Homelessness Trends in Bristol,

- Termination of assured shorthold tenancy - 127 (47% increase on Q3 and a 50% increase on total year-end figures for 2014).
- Parents not willing or able to accommodate - 55 (37% increase on Q3 and a 55% increase on total year-end figures for 2014).
- Other relatives/friends not willing to accommodate - 39 (20% increase on Q3 and a 41% increase on total year-end figures for 2014).
- Violent breakdown of relationship involving partner 24 (37% increase on Q3 and a 41% increase on total year-end figures for 2014).

### ***Housing Support Register***

This register lists all those needing housing related support, usually as a result of homelessness or some other major issue. There have been a total of 2167 new registrations to the Housing Support Register (HSR) since April 2014, averaging 180 new referrals per month in 2014-15. This is a small increase on the previous year.

### ***Rough Sleeping***

The average number of rough sleepers identified on weekly hotspot counts has continued to rise each quarter since 2011. In 2010 there was an average of 5 identified rough sleepers on the streets of Bristol per month. In March 2015 there were 34 rough sleepers were identified by the Outreach Team and this makes an average of 25 per month during 2014-15. Bristol has one of the highest rough sleeping figures in England. The annual official count in October 2014 identified 42 rough sleepers. These figures are likely to underestimate the true position.

### **Housing Need**

The revised 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is currently being undertaken, but according to the 2009 findings, there is a shortage of affordable housing in Bristol. More than 1,500 new affordable homes would be required each year to house existing and newly forming households who cannot afford to buy or rent in the market. The need is predominantly for rented homes, with a shortage of smaller homes and larger houses for families. The SHMA 2009 found that net need for 4+ bedroom homes compared to supply from relets stood at 20:1, compared to 4:1 for one bedroom homes in Bristol.

### **House Prices**

Land Registry House Price Index information for February 2015 indicates a 10.2% annual increase in house prices for the Bristol, with an average house price (all categories) of £198,556. Over the past decade (February 2005 to February 2015), average house prices in Bristol increased by £44,100, an increase of 29%. This compares with an increase of 16% for England and Wales over the same period.<sup>3</sup>

In April 2015 Hometrack data indicated that house prices in cities like Bristol and Oxford were increasing faster than they were in areas of London such as Kensington and Chelsea and

---

<sup>3</sup> House Price Index. Data produced by Land Registry © Crown copyright 2015

Hammersmith and Fulham (Bristol 10.9% growth in the last year compared to 5.1% in Hammersmith and Fulham).<sup>4</sup>

Estate agent Savills recorded a 2.5% increase in Bristol city house prices (Q1 2014 to Q1 2015) and a 1.5% increase in the surrounding area. They note that over the past five years average values had increased by 14.8% in Bristol City and 5.2% in the surrounding area. Savills predict further growth of 22.2% between 2015 and 2019.<sup>5</sup>

Estate agent Knight Frank have argued that plans to modernise the rail links between London and Cardiff (which will see journey times between London and Bristol reduced by 20 minutes) are likely to increase demand for property in the Bristol area and substantially increase the size of the property search area for those commuting to London. They argue that increased demand could boost property values by between 5% and 10% in some locations over and above general market trends over the next few years.<sup>6</sup>

## Mortgage Interest Rates

Since 2009 Bank of England interest rates have stood at 0.5%. It is not yet clear whether the Conservatives winning an overall majority in the general election will have any impact on the interest rate outlook, although the greater certainty afforded by government with a parliamentary majority is usually regarded positively by economic analysts.

Official figures have recently shown that the total size of the economy increased by just 0.3 per cent in the first quarter of 2015. That was half the 0.6 per cent growth rate seen in the previous quarter and the worst performance since late 2012. Such figures have fuelled speculation that interest rates will not rise until at least the first quarter of 2016. The expectation that rates will stay lower for longer has also been encouraged by the low-inflation environment.

## Affordability

Housing affordability is a problem for all of the Core Cities. Proportionally they have fewer home owners (52%) compared to the national average (63%), and growth in home ownership has stalled over the past decade.<sup>7</sup>

Affordability is measured by the relationship between the price of the cheapest homes and the lowest level earnings. According to DCLG statistics, the ratio between lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings in Bristol in 1997 was 3.19. This rose to a peak of 7.91 (ie. the cost of the cheapest home was almost eight times the annual earnings of poorer households) in 2007. The latest data indicates a ratio for the city of Bristol of 6.83<sup>8</sup>. A similar ratio applies when median earnings are compared to median house prices for Bristol (6.24).<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.cityam.com/214479/london-house-prices-chelsea-and-kensington-now-growing-more-slowly-bristol-cities-outstrip>

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.savills.co.uk/estate-agents/savills-bristol-clifton/bristol-market-insight/sales.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.knightfrank.co.uk/resources/residential/insights/bristol/bristol-rail-report.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> [National Housing Federation, Core Cities Home Truths, 2015.](#)

<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-housing-market-and-house-prices> (Table 576).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, see Table 577.

In their report 'Core Cities Home Truths 2015', the National Housing Federation record an even higher affordability ratio for Bristol (8.9), which is also the highest recorded affordability ratio of all the eight core cities assessed.<sup>10</sup>

## Repossessions

The rate of mortgage repossession has been restrained since 2008 by low interest rates, a proactive approach from lenders in managing consumers in financial difficulties and other interventions from the government, such as the Mortgage Rescue Scheme. A rise in mortgage interest rates does risk pushing up mortgage repossessions, but as noted above, it is likely that interest rates will not rise until at least the first quarter of 2016. Overall annual possessions in Bristol have remained relatively stable since even before the economic downturn, though peaked in 2008 (379 – of which 39 were landlord accelerated procedure, 148 mortgage possessions, 13 private landlord possessions and 179 social landlord possessions) but have generally remained in the low 300s.<sup>11</sup>

## Right to Buy Sales

In April 2012 the government introduced changes to the Right to Buy increasing maximum discounts from £36,000 to £75,000 or 60% of open market value for houses, 70% for flats. Since the announcement the rate of applications more than doubled, and sales tripled. This renewed interest in Right to Buy has continued in 2013-14. The Conservative government have recently announced plans to extend Right to Buy to Housing Association tenants, a move which may lead to a further reduction in the size of the social housing sector.

	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14
Applications	445	146	468	156	144	344	424
Completions	141	49	41	37	40	135	154

## Housing Supply

The number of homes planned to be built in Bristol between 2006 and 2026 is set out in the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (June 2011). The strategy aims to deliver a minimum of 26,400 homes over this period, but envisages that 30,600 will be provided. Since 2006 14,900 new homes have been built in the city.<sup>12</sup>

### *Dwelling Stock Change*

1,287 dwellings (net) were completed in Bristol in the 12 months to 31 March 2014. This is an increase of 409 dwellings on last year's figure of 878. The majority of these dwellings (665), were completed on major sites (i.e. 10 or more dwellings). There were 2,039 dwellings under construction in 2013/14, which is 418 more dwellings than were under construction in 2012/13. Please note net dwelling figures have been revised from 2008/09 to reflect the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) changes of the dwelling definition to include student cluster flats.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> [National Housing Federation, Core Cities Home Truths, 2015.](#)

<sup>11</sup> 'Local Authority level figures 2000-2013' at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mortgage-and-landlord-possession-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2013>

<sup>12</sup> BCC, Bristol Residential Development Survey 2014, <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/council-and-democracy/land-use-development-and-planning-policy-research>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

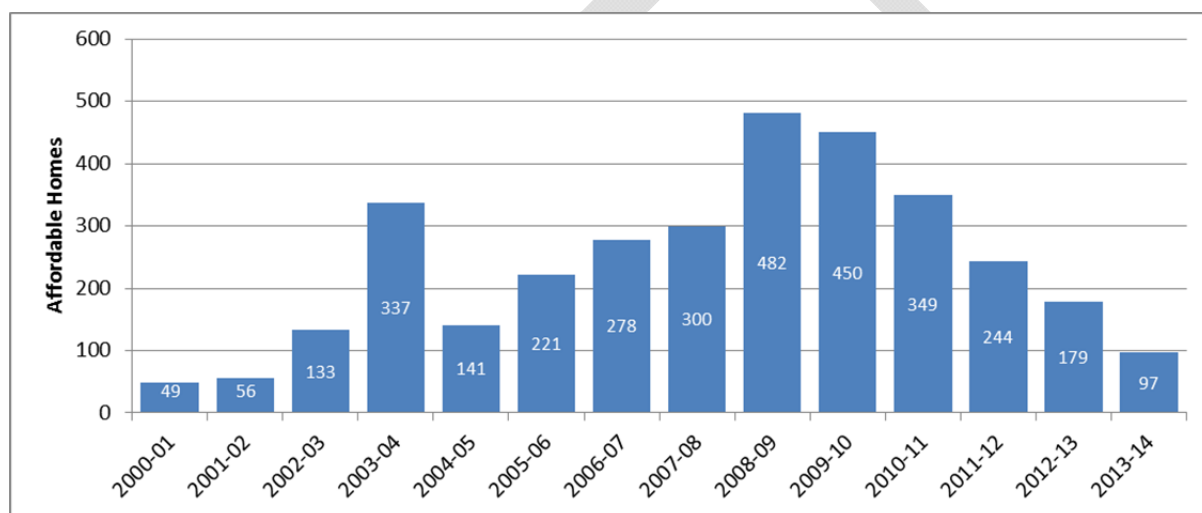


The number of dwellings with planning permission not completed as at 1 April 2014, is 8,323. This figure comprises 2,039 under construction, with the remaining 6,284 not started. A further 382 dwellings have planning permission subject to the signing of a Section 106 agreement.

8,705 is an increase of 326 on the total number of dwellings with planning permission in 2012/13 (8,379), however the low number of dwellings with planning permission not completed continues to reflect the reduced number of dwellings that have been granted planning permission since 2007/08. At 1 April 2014, 57.3% of all dwellings with planning permission are flats.

In 2013/14, 86.27% of all dwellings completed were on previously developed land. The percentage of dwellings completed on previously developed land since 2006 is 94.35%. Private residential gardens are excluded from the definition of previously developed land (PDL) in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This change has resulted in a lower number of housing completions on PDL since 2010/11.

### **Affordable Housing Supply 2000/01 to 2013/14**



A total of 2,379 net affordable dwellings have been completed since 2006. This figure comprises 1,606 through housing association/local authority, and 773 completed through Section 106 agreements, as part of private housing developments. Affordable housing therefore makes up about 16% of net new housing provision in Bristol since 2006.

### **Dwelling Types**

Of the 14,881 net dwelling completions between 2006 and 2014, excluding 12 Gypsy Caravans, 82.4% were flats and maisonettes and 17.6% were houses and bungalows. The 2011 census shows that 72% of all household spaces are houses. In 2013/14, 81% of all dwelling completions were flats and 19% houses.

### **Dwelling Density**

Some 91% of all major dwellings completed since 2006 were at more than 50 dwellings per hectare (dph). The average density of housing completed on major sites (incl. other housing) during this period is 103.

## Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector represents a growing proportion of the housing market nationally and locally and the only housing option for many households priced out of owner occupation but ineligible for affordable housing. Valuation Office Agency figures for the period October 2013 to September 2014 indicate an overall average rent for the city of Bristol (across all rented property categories - from single room rental to 4+ bedroom properties) of £828 a month with a lower quartile of £575 a month and an upper quartile of £950 a month. The bulk of rented properties assessed by the Valuation Office Agency were one and two bedroom rented properties, whose mean monthly rents were £639 a month and £830 a month respectively.<sup>14</sup> With respect to ongoing rental trends, April 2015 data from HomeLet indicated that the average rental cost rose in the 12 months to March 2015 in 11 out of 12 UK regions (Wales being the only exception). Significantly, the region with the fastest growing rental prices was the south west, with an annual increase of 13.7 per cent.<sup>15</sup>

In the 2013 Housing Market report, it was noted that, as part of its programme of welfare reform, the Coalition government were placing a number of restrictions on Local Housing Allowance (LHA), which determines the amount of housing benefit an individual can receive if they rent from a private landlord. In 2014 the government introduced measures to ensure that any increase in LHA would be capped at actual rent inflation, or 1%, whichever is the lower figure. This capping has continued under the Conservative government, which would tend to indicate a growing disparity between housing benefit rates and actual market rents across the city.

A number of the conclusions stated in the Housing Market assessment of 2013 remain valid for Bristol in 2015. For the foreseeable future private renting will remain the default option for younger households. While interest rates remain low and are set to remain low until at least 2016, there remains a significant 'affordability gap' for many younger people as house prices continue to rise.

The notable rise of private sector rents across the south west is indicative of a market that is experiencing sustained demand from increasing numbers of people requiring privately rented property. Rising rents and restricted benefit levels are set to continue to squeeze households on the lowest incomes and may well be a contributing factor to the trend towards increasing homelessness noted for the city. In an already tight and expensive housing market, the ongoing shortage of housing supply means that the trend towards high or even higher prices to rent or buy are likely to continue.

---

<sup>14</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-rental-market-statistics>

<sup>15</sup> See <http://www.cityam.com/213854/uk-house-prices-cost-buying-has-pushed-prices-10-cent-year-generation-rent>

## Bristol City Council Equality Impact Assessment Form



Name of proposal	Housing Strategy 2015-2010
Directorate and Service Area	Housing Solution and Crime Reduction
Name of Lead Officer	Nick Hooper

### Step 1: What is the proposal?

#### 1.1 What is the proposal?

The 2015-2020 Housing Strategy replaces the 2010-15 Housing Strategy.

This strategy is a framework setting direction for everyone involved in housing - residents, housing associations, developers, investors, alongside the Local Authority – to do what we can to provide the homes needed and ensure that housing delivers a clear social value.

The strategy gathers information to ensure we have a clear understanding of the current issues and challenges. The strategy then sets the headline outcomes and key priorities where resources will be focussed:

##### Headline outcomes

- Increase the number of new homes
- Deliver the best use of existing buildings
- Intervene early before a crisis evolves

##### Key priorities

- Provide well-designed, quality homes that are affordable, sustainable and suitable for people's needs
- Deliver the best use of existing housing stock
- Raise standards in the Private Rented Sector
- Reduce the number of empty private homes
- Sustaining occupation/tenancies
- Enabling access to housing

The strategy aims to gain consensus regarding the cities priorities then to build on these by creating action plans for specific activities to achieve the objectives set.

### Step 2: What information do we have?

#### 2.1 What data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be affected?

Housing issues affect all residents in the City, however the Strategy recognises there are certain groups who are less able to access housing of good quality, appropriate housing on the open market and/or groups who may struggle to sustain a successful tenancy. The strategy focusses on how to increase the general supply of housing and also how to help those groups unable to meet their

needs on the open market by targeting resources and services to create more affordable homes, make the best use of the stock available and intervene before crisis (to help create more sustainable tenancies/households).

The strategy aims to have a positive impact on households/individuals from protected characteristic groups who may have particular issues accessing and maintaining tenancies/homes. This section therefore concentrates on identifying the particular issues different groups are more likely to experience.

In writing this impact assessment quantitative data from a range of sources has been considered to help understand the housing issues faced by the different equalities groups:

- 2011 Census
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- Profile of applicants of the housing register (housing waiting list)
- Profile of Bristol City Council existing and new tenants
- Welfare Reform – Financial Inclusion report
- Online consultation feedback (223 responses)
- Profile of homeless households who the Council has a duty to rehouse (past 12 months)

At the end of this document is an appendix containing 3 tables of information referenced throughout this document.

Feedback from the online consultation and meetings with various stakeholders/groups has also provided quantitative data.

### **Housing issues for individuals/households with protected characteristics**

#### **Age:**

Older people: the number of older people is growing and their needs are becoming increasingly diverse with many housing products no longer fit for purpose. Housing issues more specific to older people include: accommodation that no longer meets their needs (too big, physically or financially unable to cope with maintenance, not adapted or adaptable), unmet care or support needs, to suffer from social isolation, or to struggle in the housing market as they are equity rich but cash poor.

Younger people: many struggling to access homes in Bristol due to high property prices and rent levels. Younger people are also significantly impacted by welfare reforms that restrict access to housing benefit (removal of automatic entitlement to under 21's and single room rates for under 35s). Others may have particular issues sustaining tenancies for example care leavers with poor /low resilience to deal with crisis. Younger people are over-represented as a percentage of households to whom the Council accepts a homeless duty and as percentage of new Council tenants, demonstrating the numbers in housing need unable to secure accommodation on the open market.

#### **Race:**

BME: BME households are over-represented as a percentage of households to whom the Council accepts a homeless duty (appendix a, table 3 show 64% of homeless applicants were while compare to 84% if the population) and as percentage of new social housing tenants (30% BME or white other compared to 18% of the population), demonstrating the numbers in housing need unable to secure accommodation on the open market. BME households are more likely to suffer from over-crowding (Runnymede trust report in 2011 that non-white households were almost three times more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation than white households, 27% compare to 9.8%). BME

households are over-represented as a % of households on the housing register requiring larger (4bed+) homes of which there is an under-supply.

Many BME households prefer central locations, often linked to fact that racial harassment is more prevalent in the out-laying estates. Accommodation is in high demand in central Bristol as there are competing demands, demand for one bed social housing is high due to high service provision (especially mental health and alcohol and drug treatment support) and there is a lack of family sized accommodation. A significant percentage of poor condition PRS homes are in the centre of Bristol.

#### Gypsy, Roma, Travellers

in any type of dwelling, encounter discrimination and/or racism and would like access to a more inclusive living environment. Other issues identified are:

- There is a lack of G&T sites; in addition to the 12 existing pitches of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation at South Liberty Lane, Bristol needs a further 24 pitches of residential accommodation by 2028 (16 pitches by 2018, 4 pitches by 2023 and a further 4 pitches by 2028).
- G&T rarely get planning permission to build on their own land.
- Implications of lack of pitches, permission being granted, means that there is nowhere authorised for GRT to stay, increasing number of unauthorised encampments.

#### Disability:

Households/individuals with mental and physical impairments are over-represented as the percentage of benefit recipients, making accessing and maintaining housing at market rent/purchase more difficult (disabled households/individuals are over-represented as a percentage of households on the housing register and social housing tenants). There is an insufficient supply of adapted homes, of all tenures, to meet needs. The proportion of new Council tenants with physical and mental health problems is growing demonstrating the numbers in housing need unable to secure and maintain accommodation on the open market. Issues include:

- Lack of accessible properties across all tenures.
- Lack of adaptable properties.
- Lack of wheelchair standard properties.
- Most of the above require larger building footprints than standard accommodation so developers are less likely to build accessible properties.
- Where accessible property does exist it's very difficult for Disabled people to find it – there is no accessible housing register in Bristol.
- Urban design needs to be made accessible to ensure housing can be truly accessible. Accessible housing in an inaccessible estate doesn't work.
- Inability to adapt homes (either in PRS) or where housing associations refuse adaptations mean that disabled people can live in unsuitable accommodation – not being able to access upstairs or the garden. If disabled people can't access their own homes they have to pay for social care for things like washing, cooking which they could do themselves if their home was suitable.

#### Sex:

Women are more likely to lack the finances to secure accommodation on the open market being more likely to suffer from pay inequality; single parents (who are more likely to be women) are over-represented as benefit recipients and social housing tenants. Women's are more likely to be carers which can limit earning capacity and bring specific housing requirements (location and amenities). Women are also more likely to suffer from domestic abuse resulting in the need for support and alternative housing solutions. Female single parents are significantly over-represented as a percentage of homeless households to whom the Council accepts a duty to rehouse.

### **Sexual orientation and gender re-assignment**

Sexual orientation and gender reassignment are grouped together here as research shows that LGB and T people face similar issues in relation to housing:

National research has shown that young LGBT people are particularly at risk of homelessness due to

- Homophobia and transphobia which can lead to young people being thrown out or leaving home due to a hostile environment
- Increased risk of mental health and addiction problems, which often increase the risk of homelessness.

LGBT may experience homophobic harassment or hate crime in general needs homes but may also face harassment or ostracism in shared housing, care or sheltered housing.

Compared to heterosexual and cisgender (non transgender) peers older LGBT people are less likely to have viable social support mechanisms spouse as a spouse or adult children. Research has shown that older LGBT may be worried about discrimination in sheltered housing and have expressed a preference for LGBT only housing.

**Religion & belief:** no particular housing issues have been identified for this group

**Marriage & civil partnerships:** no particular housing issues have been identified

**Pregnancy & maternity:** issues raised regarding single parents extend to single expectant mothers.

## **2.2 Who is missing? Are there any gaps in the data?**

The council doesn't hold reliable data on some protected characteristics for our tenants or those on the housing register. Whilst we hold 94.4% of ethnicity data on tenants we only know the sexual orientation of 73.49%, for example. This makes it harder to identify patterns or where people with protected characteristics may be over or under represented.

Could also say here that we didn't get specific feedback from equalities groups – so we have used research and previous consultation results to gather a picture of housing need.

Section 2.1 draws evidence from a number of data sources (information regarding homeless applications, tenants profile etc), national research and officer knowledge.

During the consultation for the new strategy feedback indicated that the strategy did not go far enough in identifying the housing needs of specific groups, for example older and disabled people.

In the action plan being developed to deliver the strategy is to gather further information regarding the housing needs of specific groups.

This will provide us with an opportunity to fill gaps in our knowledge and ensure there is activity to meet the needs of specific groups.

## **2.3 How have we involved, or will we involve, communities and groups that could be affected?**

Strategy consultation:

- Online consultation open to all Bristol citizens
- Email to 3000+ involved citizens inviting them to participate in the online consultation
- Briefing re: consultation opportunity (online consultation or requests for meetings) circulated to Housing Management Board, Health & Well-being Board, Children and Families Board and Learning Disabilities Board.

- Attended: Homes4Bristol boards, Women’s Commission meeting, Bristol Physical Access Chain, Bristol Supported Housing Forum and PRS Landlord Working Group.

Outcomes of online feedback:

- Representation: LGT 5.6%, Disabled 19.4%, BME 9.1% and white other 9.1% , transgender 1%, female 60% and male 38%, 18-65 91%.

- Most common ‘themes’ to come out of the online consultation (focus on equalities issues):

- More emphasis on providing affordable homes
- The strategy should better reflect and meet the needs of different groups - disabled, older people, under 35's, care leavers, low earners
- More emphasis on creating sustainable homes and communities
- More information needed on the impact of welfare reforms and their impacts on different groups
- Need better ongoing communication and engagement with communities

Outcomes of other feedback:

- The strategy should better reflect and meet the needs of different groups (in particular women)

### Step 3: Who might the proposal impact?

Analysis of impacts on people with protected characteristics must be rigorous. Please demonstrate your analysis of any impacts in this section, referring to all of the equalities groups as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

#### 3.1 Does the proposal have any potentially adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics?

The strategy aims to raise standards in the Private Rented Sector; any measure employed by private landlords that incur costs may result in charges being passed onto tenants with protected characteristics.

Opportunity cost; the City Council, and its partners, have limited resources and directing resources to address any one issue potential diverts resources from other actions. The effect of these could be:

- Meeting the needs of one group at the expense of another; and/or
- Community tension if some groups are perceived to be treated more favourably

Building on a large scale more likely to occur outside of the City Centre due to the availability of land, therefore new homes are more likely to be built in areas that are potentially less popular for BME households.

#### 3.2 Can these impacts be mitigated or justified? If so, how?

Actions can be justified as they are priorities agreed by Citizens and partners. Mitigation of unintended consequences include:

- Ensuring PRS landlords can access grants and low cost loans to carry out property improvements

- Ensuring resources are available to continue community cohesion activities.

### 3.3 Does the proposal create any benefits for people with protected characteristics?

The strategy aims to focus resources on actions and services to support groups who may not flourish/cope in the open housing market, therefore the strategy aims to have a positive impact for all citizens but in particular:

- Women
- Younger & older people
- BME individuals/households
- Disabled individuals/households
- LGBT people

The same groups will also benefit from:

- The strategy encourages social landlords to pro-actively review tenancies and provide services to create sustainable tenancies (in response to welfare reforms). The above groups are disproportionately affected by welfare reforms.
- One of the strategy actions is to better understand and respond to needs of certain groups, particular calls were made regarding the needs of women, younger people, those with disabilities and the changing needs of older people (including older LGBT people). Therefore we will engage with these groups to gain a better understanding of their needs as well as utilising existing information and feedback.
- Many of the above groups are more likely to be at risk of experiencing homelessness, therefore actions to tackle homelessness (deliver the preventing homeless strategy, reduce rough sleeping etc) will have a positive impact.

The strategy emphasises the need to make the best use of stock and address over and under occupation. BME households are more likely to suffer from over-crowding and older people are more likely to live in homes too large for their needs.

BME: the discretionary licensing scheme aims to improve the condition and management of PRS homes in central wards, this will have a positive impact on BME households who make up a significant proportion of residents in these areas.

GRT: the strategy commitment to provide 16 additional pitches and 3 additional travelling show people sites by 2018 (although there will still be a shortfall in number of pitches required).

Disabled:

- Work with BCC landlord to create a database of all properties with adaptations.
- Maximise the opportunities for people with LD or mental health issues to live independently or in alternative supported living schemes by promoting financial inclusion, personal budgeting skills, responsibilities of being a good tenant etc.

### 3.4 Can they be maximised? If so, how?

- Create a communications plan to share the details of the strategy
- Create an engagement plan to involve citizens and communities in further developing actions and a deeper understanding of the needs of specific groups in order to identify gaps and develop solutions to tackle housing issues for different groups.

## Step 4: So what?



The Equality Impact Assessment must be able to influence the proposal and decision. This section asks how your understanding of impacts on people with protected characteristics has influenced your proposal, and how the findings of your Equality Impact Assessment can be measured going forward.

**4.1 How has the equality impact assessment informed or changed the proposal?**

Feedback from stakeholders, including citizens and service users, has been considered in this EIA). The document also shows how the strategy has been amended in light of this feedback

**4.2 What actions have been identified going forward?**

When the strategy is agreed focus will move to creating and implementing an action plan to achieve the strategic aims identified.

A small number of priority actions will be included in the strategy, in response to the online consultation this will include:

- Demonstrate a better understanding of the needs of different groups - disabled, older people, under 35's, care leavers, low earners and how we plan to meet those needs.

Consultation also highlighted the need for better communication and ongoing community engagement with the strategy. Therefore we will explore ways of making the strategy more transparent and how to involve citizens in the development of the action plan and monitoring of its progress.

**4.3 How will the impact of your proposal and actions be measured moving forward?**

The actions and outcomes identified in the Housing Strategy, and any actions and outcomes identified in subsequent action plans will be monitored by the Homes4Bristol board. Progress will be report annually.

Service Director Sign-Off:	Equalities Officer Sign Off:
Date:	Date:

**Appendix A: Data and research to support the Housing Strategy Equalities Impact Assessment**

**Table 1: Profile of applicants on the housing register and those rehoused (\*new social rented allocation)**

	<b>Band 1</b>	<b>Band 2</b>	<b>Band 3</b>	<b>Band 4</b>	<b>Rehoused*</b>
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	64%	72%	59%	57%	65%
Male	36%	28%	41%	43%	35%
<b>Age</b>					
Under 18	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
18-25	1%	26%	11%	17%	19%
26-35	6%	37%	30%	30%	27%
36-45	15%	23%	24%	21%	18%
46-55	25%	10%	17%	17%	14%
56-65	20%	2%	11%	9%	10%
66-74	12%	1%	5%	4%	7%
75+	21%	1%	3%	2%	5%
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
White British	82%	58%	64%	67%	69%
BME (inc Wh Oth)	18%	40%	35%	32%	30%
PNTS		1%	1%	1%	1%
Not known		1%		0%	0%
<b>Disabled</b>					
Yes	39%	11%	18%	13%	21%
Mobility	39%	5%	13%	7%	
Long term illness	32%	7%	12%	9%	
Mental or emotional distress	22%	18%	18%	16%	
Wheelchair user	7%	0%	1%	1%	
Sensory impairment hearing	7%	1%	2%	2%	
Sensory impairment sight	5%	1%	2%	1%	
<b>Sexual orientation</b>					
Heterosexual	77%	71%	76%	78%	79%
LGB	3%	4%	2%	4%	3%
PNTS	10%	10%	11%	10%	17%
Other	11%	16%	10%	8%	1%
<b>Religion:</b>					
None	26%	21%	31%	37%	35%
Christian	42%	22%	32%	34%	33%
Muslim	8%	17%	16%	10%	11%
NKN/PNS	17%	23%	16%	15%	17%
Other	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Buddhist	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Sikh	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Hindu	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Jewish*	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

\*% rounded to closest whole number, some therefore show as zero as numbers too small to detected

**Table 2: Profile of Bristol residents compared to profile of BCC tenants (all existing tenants and new tenants over 1 yr)**

	Bristol residents (2011 census)	All BCC tenants (as at 31/3/14)	New BCC tenants 2013/14	BCC tenants with arrears over £100 at 21/10/05
<b>Number</b>	428,234	32,402	1626	10,077
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	50.2%	61.43%	66.48%	65.82%
Male	49.8%	38.57%	33.52%	34.38%
<b>Age</b>				
16-24	15.7%	4.10%	21.65%	4.94%
25-44	31.7%	33.10%	44.90%	48.45%
45-64	21.2%	37.02%	26.63%	40.16%
65-74	6.5%	12.05%	3.94%	3.51%
75+	6.6%	11.84%	2.89%	2.08%
Not known	-	1.88%	0.00%	1.05%
<b>Ethnicity:</b>				
WH British	77.9%	74.56%	70.36%	69.2%
BME	16%	16.22%	23.74%	22.8%
WH Other	6.1%	3.62%	4.86%	2.49%
Not known/refused	-	5.60%	1.05%	5.51%
<b>Disability:</b>				
Disabled	8.1% day to day activities limited a lot 8.7% limited little	18.09%	20.97%	12.77%
<b>Disability support need:</b>				
Mobility		13.55%	15.74%	6.78%
Long term impairment		13.32%	11.32%	7.43%
Mental/emotional distress		8.73%	18.94%	8.5%
Other		3.16%	6.52%	2.49%
Hearing impairment		3.03%	2.58%	1.11%
Vision impaired		2.18%	2.21%	0.98%
Learning impairment		2.15%	6.15%	2%
Wheelchair user		1.44%	1.23%	0.59%
<b>Sexual Orientation:</b>				
Heterosexual	Not available	71.82%	83.64%	72.46%
Not known		26.51%	12.85%	19.46%
LGB		1.35%	2.64%	1.28%
Other		0.32%	0.86%	25.66%
<b>Religion:</b>				
None	37.4%	29.09%	40.59%	36.78%
Christian	46.8%	38.82%	34.69%	27.69%
Muslim	5.1%	6.58%	10.70%	9.76%
NKN/PNS	8.1%	20.77%	10.33%	23.8%
Other	0.7%	2.20%	2.83%	1.78%
Buddhist	0.6%	0.32%	0.49%	0.18%
Sikh	0.5%	0.15%	0.25%	0.12%
Hindu	0.6%	0.14%	0.06%	0.07%
Jewish	0.2%	0.07%	0.06%	0.03%

**Table 3: Profile of applicants for who the City Council accepted a homeless duty July 2014-  
July 2015**

	<b>Homeless duty accepted</b>	<b>All Bristol residents</b>
<b>Age</b>		
16-24	22%	16%
25-44	61%	32%
45-59	13%	17%
60-64	1%	5%
65-74	2%	6%
75+	1%	7%
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White	64%	84%
Black	20%	6%
Asian	7%	6%
Mixed	4%	4%
Other	3%	1%
Not state	3%	0%
<b>Household type</b>		
Couple with or expecting dependent children	26%	16%
Lone parent with or expecting dependent children	50%	8.2%
One person household	25%	23%

NB - Data for all Bristol residents from different sources which has analysed them by different age bands and ethnicity groups, ie in table two white British and white other shown as one group

## Section 2: Reference material

### a) Equality and Human Rights Commission: Research report 27Trans research review (Martin Mitchell and Charlie Howarth)

- There was no research specifically on the housing experiences and needs of transpeople, although there was some evidence surrounding these issues in general research on this population.
- In one Scottish survey 25.4 per cent of trans respondents had had to move out of their home due to transphobic reactions. Trans people may be particularly at risk of housing problems as a result of transphobic reactions by family and neighbours.
- Trans people were often reluctant to disclose their gender identity to housing officers because they feared insensitivity in the way they would be treated. Trans status or gender identity was not monitored in housing services procedures.
- There were no examples of housing initiatives specifically designed to tackle homelessness among trans people.

### b) Ethnicity and Housing

#### i) Overcrowding

BME families are more likely to live in overcrowded conditions. The Runnymede Trust's Report, 'Local Ethnic inequalities' measured the difference between the proportion of households in overcrowded accommodation for White British and ethnic minority groups.

Their research found that in 2011 Bristol came 15<sup>th</sup> in the top 20 districts where inequality is most severe for ethnic groups. 9.8% of white British households in Bristol were in overcrowded accommodation, compared to 27% of non White British households.

Runnymede also produced a ranking of districts which combined data on education, employment, health and housing to produce an index of multiple inequality. In 2001 Bristol did not appear in the list of 20 districts with the greatest ethnic inequalities. In 2011 Bristol was ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in the list of districts with greatest minority inequality.

## **ii) Poor quality housing**

Poor quality housing where low income for larger households has been shown to be a major cause of overcrowding and poor housing conditions (Lahey,1997)

Poor quality housing in PRS – BME and non-white British people more at risk. Discretionary licensing in east central should help to address this.

## **iii) Homelessness**

Significant over representation of BME people who we accept a duty towards (table 3)

## **iv) Emergency accommodation EIA**

52.6% of households in emergency accommodation are BME households, compared to the BME population of Bristol which is 16%. If the White groups with the exception of 'White British' are also included, then the non-'White British' population in EA is 61% compared to the non white British population of Bristol which is 22%.