

# Boston Borough Housing Strategy 2012-17

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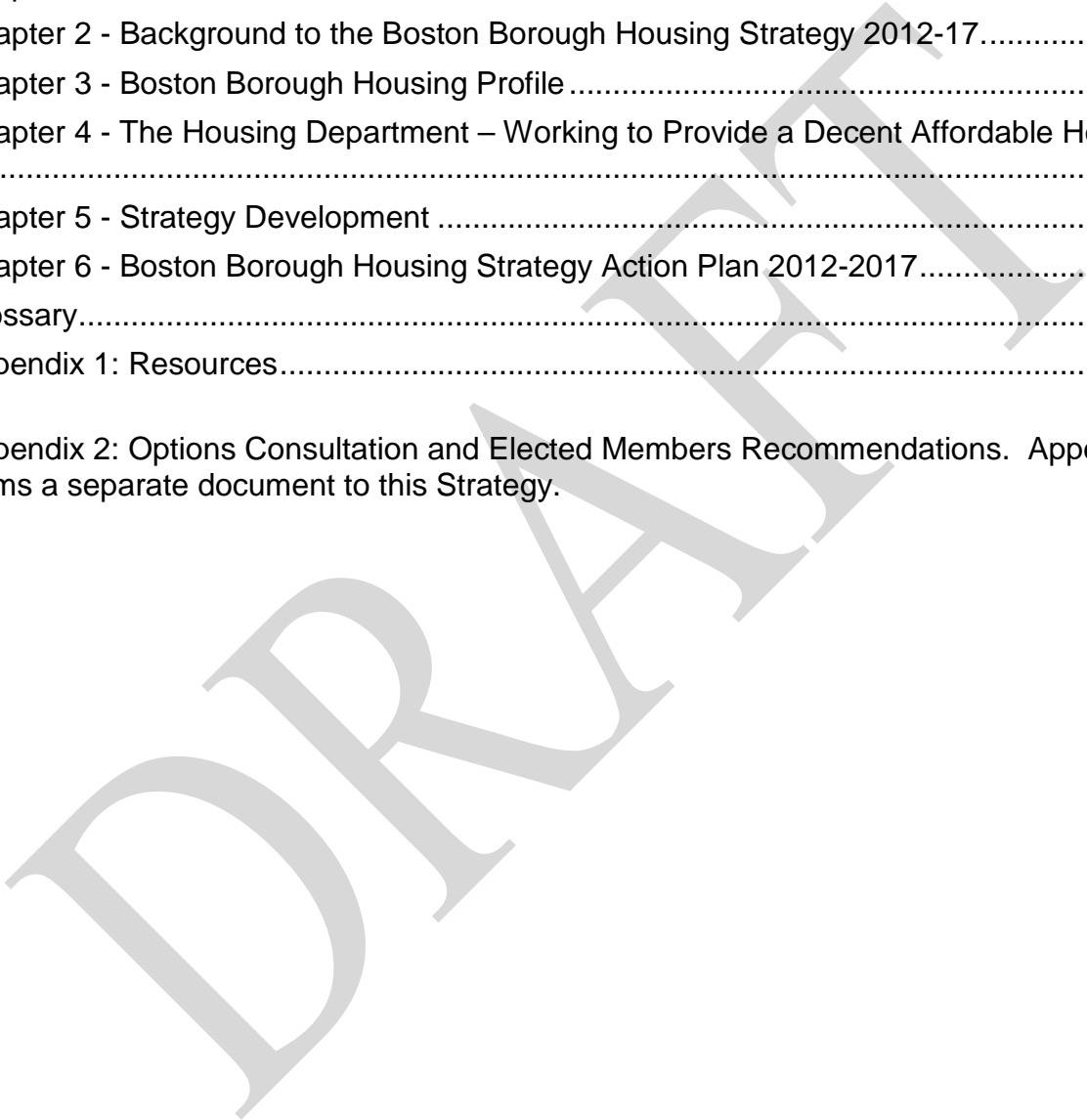
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## Foreword

In recent years Boston has seen and experienced change at a level and pace not seen before; national and international events have had a local impact and the effect of banks collapsing, the global recession and a change of national government have all been felt by our community.

This Strategy has been developed at a time of unprecedented change and ongoing uncertainty within the public sector. This government has dropped the previous top down model of administration and has charged local authorities, their Members and the community at large to come forward and to define and then deliver against their local priorities. In drawing up this Strategy, we have followed a process which we hope has fully captured the needs and aspirations of our community. The evidence base we have created and the consultation we have undertaken has revealed that our local housing aspirations reflect many of the government's national housing ambitions. The process we have followed has helped us develop our four strategic priorities:

- Providing more homes
- Improving existing homes
- Living safely in your home and,
- Facilitating access to your home

The most important part of this Strategy is the action plan presented at **Chapter 6** that sets out what we and our partners **will** do to address our housing priorities.

As we continue through these times of economic and social change, we will monitor, review and update our Strategy as necessary.

This Strategy represents our commitment to the Borough and all of its residents and I thank everyone who responded to us and helped shape this Strategy. I hope you find the document informative and that through delivering the actions set out, we will help many people now and into the future.

Councillor Mike Gilbert  
Portfolio Holder for Housing.

## Chapter 1 - Introduction

Covering an area of 140 square miles, the Borough of Boston is located next to the Wash, it comprises of the town of Boston, the sub-regional centre for the south-east of Lincolnshire, and 18 rural parishes. The five largest rural settlements are Butterwick, Kirton, Old Leake, Sutterton and Swineshead.

It is linked southward to Peterborough, south-eastwards to East Anglia and westward to the midlands by the A16, A17 and A52 roads. There is a passenger rail connection to the national rail network and a goods service that links directly to the Port of Boston.

The Borough has a population of over 64,600 (2011 Census), and serves a wider population of over 100,000 as a retail, social and employment centre. It has a rich history as a medieval port, market town and religious centre, with “The Stump”, the town’s parish church, being second only to Lincoln Cathedral for its architectural and historic significance in the county.

The town has seen major change over recent years with a significant population increase (15.9% increase 2001 – 2011), substantial change in the makeup of households, dramatic in-migration from the EU and extensive house price fluctuations. The pressures on both the social and private sector housing stock have consequently continued to increase.

This new Housing Strategy for the Borough has been produced at a time of economic turmoil when public funding has been substantially reduced to address the national deficit. Government housing policy continues to emerge with the implications of recent changes still to be seen, assessed and implemented.

Our Strategy has been shaped by many other sources including:

- the law, national housing policy and statutory guidance
- detailed local housing market information
- local plans and strategies such as the Council’s Corporate Plan, and
- consultation with residents, partners and wider stakeholders

A full description of the process we have adopted it set out at Chapter 5.

The positive impact that good quality, affordable, well managed and well maintained housing has on everyone’s health and well-being must not be underestimated, as the government state in their own Housing Strategy, ‘***A stable home provides the building block for everyone as they try to improve their lives and meet their aspirations for a better future – whether they are looking for work or struggling to bring up their children in a safe and caring environment.***

If you would like to request a copy of this document in an alternative language or format, or you require any further information about this Strategy please e-mail: [housing.dept@boston.gov.uk](mailto:housing.dept@boston.gov.uk) or telephone: 01205 314518.

## Chapter 2 - Background to the Boston Borough Housing Strategy 2012-17.

Since the last Boston Borough Housing Strategy was produced the entire housing landscape has changed. A new Government was elected in 2010 who have and continue to make significant changes to all areas of social policy. A key part of the reform agenda has been to review housing policy to:

- Increase the number of houses available to buy and rent, including affordable housing
- Improve the flexibility of social housing (increasing mobility and choice) and promote homeownership
- Protect the vulnerable and disadvantaged by tackling homelessness and support people to stay in their homes
- Make sure that homes are of high quality and sustainable.

The government recognise that building high quality homes that will stand the test of time and will meet the needs of a growing and an ageing population necessitates building more homes, including affordable ones, and for existing homes to be managed more efficiently. In addressing the public deficit the Governments' plan is to create the economic conditions necessary to allow more individuals to take responsibility for meeting their own and their families' housing needs whether they wish to buy or rent. Most people aspire to own their own home and the Government wants to support people with that aspiration as long as they can sustain homeownership. Social housing will provide support for families who need it.

As a district Council, we are influenced and directed by many national and sub-regional agendas. It is therefore important to set out summary of key influences so that everyone reading this document understands the how it fits into the wider political and social framework.

### National Influence

**The Localism Act 2011** received Royal Assent on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2011. The Act introduced four main measures:

- new freedoms and flexibilities for local government
- new rights and powers for communities and individuals
- reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective
- reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally

The Act has direct implications for the Council's housing function which are reflected within our Action Plan, for example, the new freedom to define who is eligible for social housing and how it is used requires us to review our housing allocation framework and produce a tenancy strategy.

**The Governments Housing Strategy – Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England**, was launched in November 2011. Its ambition is to unlock the housing market and get Britain building again. The strategy sets out a package of reforms to:

- get the housing market moving again

- lay the foundations for a more responsive, effective and stable housing market in the future
- support choice and quality for tenants
- improve environmental standards and design quality.

We will explore every opportunity to access the various funding streams that have, and may be made available, and seek to use all of the new powers to help meet the needs and aspirations of our community.

Below we set out a summary of the key actions from **Laying the Foundations**.

#### Support to deliver new homes and support aspiration

- 95 per cent loan to value mortgages for new build properties in England,
- Reconsideration of planning obligations agreed prior to April 2010 where development is stalled,
- New £500 million Growing Places Fund for housing related infrastructure and regeneration loans,
- New £400 million 'Get Britain Building' investment fund support building firms in need of development finance,
- Freeing up public sector land,
- £30 million short-term project finance on a repayable basis for individuals to build their own homes through a custom homes programme,
- More support for local areas that want to deliver larger scale new development to meet the needs of their growing communities,
- New incentives for housing growth through the New Homes Bonus, Community Infrastructure Levy and proposals for local business rates retention,
- Simplifying planning policy through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF),
- New powers for communities to deliver development through Community Right to Build.

#### Supporting choice and quality for tenants

- Help for tenants,
- Support for growth and investment in the private rented housing market,
- Support for new "Build to Let" models of development,
- Work with local authorities to tackle the worst properties,
- Reforming social housing to change the way in which it is accessed, the types of tenancies which are provided and the way that the homelessness duty is discharged,
- Tackling fraud and tenancy abuse,
- Considering ways to encourage more affordable housing – including new approaches to funding affordable housing development,
- Reinvigorating the Right to Buy by raising the discounts to make it attractive to tenants and help build more affordable housing.

### Tackling empty homes

- £100 million of funding to bring empty homes back into use as affordable housing and £50 million of further funding to tackle some of the worst concentrations of empty homes,
- Potential changes to Council Tax to help tackle empty homes and bring them back into productive use.

### Better quality homes, places and housing support

- Commitment to provide appropriate support, protections and opportunities to struggling households and to making the best use of social housing to provide stable homes for those who need them most,
- Prioritised protection for the vulnerable,
- Ministerial Working Group to tackle the complex causes of homelessness,
- New deal for older people's housing, with a better offer to support older people to live independently for longer,
- Commitment to improving the design and sustainability of housing in ways which give communities a say over the design of new homes and neighbourhoods,
- Commitment to delivering the Zero Carbon Homes standard for all new homes from 2016.

Further information about housing and the governments housing policy can be found on the Department for Communities and Local Government website at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/>

**The Welfare Reform Act 2012** received Royal Assent on 8 March 2012 and paves the way for the biggest change to the welfare system for over 60 years. The Act will make the benefits and tax credits systems fairer and simpler by:

- creating the right incentives to get more people into work
- protecting the most vulnerable in our society
- delivering fairness to those claiming benefit and to the taxpayer.

The main elements of the Act are:

- the introduction of Universal Credit to provide a single streamlined payment that will improve work incentives
- a stronger approach to reducing fraud and error with tougher penalties for the most serious offences
- a new claimant commitment showing clearly what is expected of claimants while giving protection to those with the greatest needs
- reforms to Disability Living Allowance, through the introduction of the Personal Independence Payment to meet the needs of disabled people today
- creating a fairer approach to Housing Benefit to bring stability to the market and improve incentives to work
- driving out abuse of the Social Fund system by giving greater power to local authorities

- reforming Employment and Support Allowance to make the benefit fairer and to ensure that help goes to those with the greatest need
- changes to support a new system of child support which puts the interest of the child first.

The impact of welfare reform on many of our residents will be significant. By reviewing many of our housing policies and through working in partnership with other organisations, we will use our skills, knowledge and resources to ensure that the most vulnerable within our community are protected and that families and individuals can access the advice, information and support they require. Our relationship with advice organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau will be critical in this respect.

### **Sub Regional and Local influence**

Boston Borough Council works in partnership with many organisations across Lincolnshire to influence and ensure delivery of high quality effective services to our residents. Lincolnshire County Council are one of our key partners and lead organisation for a number of initiatives which will have significant links with our local housing services.

The emerging **Lincolnshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy** (JHWS) will inform and influence decisions about health and social care services in Lincolnshire to ensure that they focus on the needs of the people who use them and tackle the factors that affect everyone's health and wellbeing.

The five themes of the JHWS are set out below:

- Promoting healthier lifestyles
- Improve the health and wellbeing of older people in Lincolnshire
- Delivering high quality systematic care for major causes of ill health and disability
- Improving health and social outcomes and reducing inequalities for children
- Tackling the social determinants of health.

Further information about the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy is available at [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk).

To ensure that the Council is able to help shape the future direction and commissioning of health and care services locally, we have established the Boston Strategic Health Group to inform the commissioning priorities of the East Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group and to feed directly into the Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board.

'Housing' is such a key determinant of health that we will continue to allocate our resources appropriately to ensure that positive health and wellbeing outcomes are enjoyed by our residents.

**Excellent Ageing** is a transformational programme that aims to radically improve the opportunities for people to enjoy an active life for longer and to enable organisations to work together more effectively. The focus of the programme is on our older residents who

are projected to represent the biggest growth in Lincolnshire's population over the next 20 years.

The objectives of the programme are:

- to improve the health and wellbeing of older people; and,
- to shift the way resources are targeted in the county to deliver better value and ensure support is available to meet increased demand.

The Vision for 2020:

- Older people **have more choice and control**, can receive the help they need and are valued and respected within their communities;
- Public, private and voluntary sectors **work together** with communities in a seamless way to ensure services, facilities and resources meet demand and are accessible;
- Services and support are **locally based, cost-effective and sustainable**.

Further information is available at <http://microsites.lincolnshire.gov.uk/excellentageing> .

We fully support the Excellent Ageing programme and will play our part to ensure that suitable housing options and programmes of assistance are available to secure the best possible outcomes for our older residents by taking their needs into account when planning for new housing, commissioning services and working with our partners to reshape existing accommodation.

**Lincolnshire Wellbeing Support Network** - There is significant evidence within health and social care that universal, low threshold services which intervene both reactively and proactively with people at risk of losing independence are cost effective and enhance wellbeing. These services need to develop and maintain relationships with people and be able to escalate support for short periods of time, offsetting the need for referral into acute health and social care services.

We are committed to working with the County Council to develop the Lincolnshire Wellbeing Support Network so that our residents can access timely, appropriate care and support when they need it.

Our **2012 – 2015 Corporate Plan, Planning for the Future - Improving Boston** has '*Safe, secure homes and neighbourhoods*' as one of our three corporate priorities that links our Housing Strategy directly with our wider corporate aims. Within our Corporate Plan we set out:

### **What will we do?**

We will immediately:

- Work with our partners to understand welfare reform and help our communities cope with the impact of the changes

- Continue to work with the Homes and Communities Agency, housing providers and private developers to deliver new homes that meet local needs
- Begin to revitalise neighbourhoods by targeting new homes bonus on returning empty houses back into use
- Continue to help people use, enjoy and remain in their homes by investing in our Disabled Facility Grant programme
- Continue to work with other partners to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping and to support others in acute housing need

We will work towards:

- Increasing funding from the government to take into account our total population and all of your needs
- Developing a five year housing strategy which sets out our framework for delivery
- Supporting housing development to take place to meet the needs of all of our communities
- Helping to improve the quality, management and energy efficiency of housing across the borough
- Influencing the investment plans of the government and our partners to ensure that every opportunity is seized to support our communities
- Reducing the flood risks which will enable new homes to be built whilst considering reducing the level of population exposed to flood risk
- Making the best use of existing housing stock with registered provider private landlords
- Developing decent homes for all.

From this summary it is clear that this Strategy is influenced by many outside factors; in the next chapter we set out a summary of the evidence base that has informed the actions we set out within our Action Plan.

## Chapter 3 - Boston Borough Housing Profile

In this chapter we set out a high level summary of the key information which, together with our extensive consultation and the external influences summarised in previous chapters, has shaped our Action Plan. The detailed information from which we have drawn this summary is available on our website ([www.boston.gov.uk](http://www.boston.gov.uk)) or upon request.

The data highlights that not only do we have issues within the existing housing stock but that we also have key challenges ahead because of our increasing, ageing and diversifying population.

### Population and Demographics

**Table 1** presents the ONS population projections with the actual Census 2011 figures included. Boston has a growing and ageing population which has significant implications for **all** local services.

**Table 1 – ONS Population Data 2008 - 2025**

<b>Boston Borough</b>						
<b>Year</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Census 2011</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Total population</b>	60,800	62,000	64,600	65,100	68,200	71,000
<b>Population aged 65 and over</b>	12,500	13,400	12,600	15,600	17,500	19,500
<b>Population aged 85 and over</b>	1,600	1,700	1,600	2,000	2,300	2,900
<b>Population aged 65 and over as a proportion of the total population</b>	20.56%	21.61%	19.56%	23.96%	25.66%	27.46%
<b>Population aged 85 and over as a proportion of the total population</b>	2.63%	2.74%	2.48%	3.07%	3.37%	4.08%

Table 2 shows that in addition to an increasing population, Boston faces a significant change in the makeup of its households with single person households projected to grow by 74% between 2001 and 2033. The data shows that smaller homes are likely to be required in the future.

**Table 2 - CLG Household Projections 2008-2033**

<b>Boston Borough</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2033</b>
<b>Married couple</b>	12,000	12,300	11,200
<b>Cohabiting couple</b>	2,150	2,700	3,800
<b>Lone parent</b>	1,850	2,000	3,000
<b>Other multi-person</b>	1,050	1,000	1,600
<b>Single person</b>	6,900	8000	12,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,000</b>	<b>26,000</b>	<b>31,600</b>

<b>Census 2011 Total Households</b>	<b>27,300</b>
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Table 3 sets out the number of new dwellings completed 2005 to 2012. In producing a new Local Plan we will carefully consider the type and size of accommodation which needs to be developed to meet the needs shown above.

**Table 3 – New Housing Supply**

Completed Housing Delivery	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	Average
Dwellings completed (NI 154)	268	271	503	282	128	196	156	258
Of which Affordable Housing	46	42	70	34	17	81	95	55
Of which Social Rent	7	28	45	24	12	57	71	35

### **Existing Stock**

The following section gives details of the Borough's existing housing stock. The data reveals a number of issues about the condition of existing homes.

#### **Current Housing Stock**

All tenures	28462
Of which privately rented *	2410
Of which social rented	5233
Of which Housing in Multiple Occupation HMO's *	400

Source: English Local Authority Statistics on Housing 2012

\* Source: Private Sector House Condition Survey Report April 2010

#### **Vacant dwellings as at April 2012**

All tenures	845
Of which privately owned	734
Of which owned by a social landlord	62
Of which owned by other public sector organisations	49
Of which empty for more than 6 months (long term empty)	458

Source: BBC Council Tax Database

#### **Housing Conditions**

<b>Non Decent Dwellings</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of relevant stock / tenure</b>
All Private Sector Stock	8,100	35.0
Owner Occupied	7,100	34.4
Privately Rented	1,000	40.2
Occupied by vulnerable households	1,860	36.5
Lincolnshire (All private sector stock)	-	36.1

England (All private sector stock)	-	35.3
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A decent home must: meet the statutory minimum standard; be in a reasonable state of repair; have reasonably modern facilities and services and provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. (From 2006, the definition of a decent home was updated with the replacement of the Fitness Standard by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) as the statutory criterion of decency).

<b>Dwellings with Serious Hazards*</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of relevant stock / tenure</b>
All Private Sector Stock	5,650	24.5
Owner Occupied	5,030	24.4
Privately Rented	620	25.8
Occupied by vulnerable households	1,382	27.0
Lincolnshire	-	24.1
England	-	23.5

\* A dwelling with a 'serious hazard' is one that contains a Category 1 hazard as defined within the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

### **Energy Efficiency**

#### **Mean SAP\***

All Private Sector Stock	52
Owner Occupied	52
Privately Rented	51
Lincolnshire	52
England	49

\* Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP 2005 methodology). The rating is expressed on a scale of 1-100 where a dwelling with a rating of 1 has poor energy efficiency (high costs) and a dwelling with a rating of 100 represents a completely energy efficient dwelling (zero net costs per year).

<b>Households in Fuel Poverty*</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of relevant stock / tenure</b>
All Private Sector Stock	4,210	18.3
Owner Occupied	3,660	17.8
Privately Rented	550	22.7
Lincolnshire	-	11.5
England	-	16.0

\* Occupiers of a dwelling are considered to be in fuel poverty if more than 10% of their net household income needs to be spent to provide adequate warmth and hot water.

Source: Private Sector House Condition Survey Report April 2010

## **Housing Need**

Estimating future housing need is complex; however, Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA) are the accepted method for modelling future housing requirements. **Table 4** sets out the future housing requirements and tenure mix included within the draft Strategic Housing Market Assessment covering Boston Borough.

**Table 4 – SHMA Future Housing Requirements by Tenure**

<b>Boston</b>		
<b>Housing Type</b>	<b>Dwellings</b>	<b>% of total requirement</b>
<b>2009-2031 Constrained to RSS Dwelling Delivery</b>		
<b>Market housing</b>	3,200	58.7%
<b>Intermediate housing</b>	(600) *	(10.3%)
<b>Social rented housing</b>	2,800	51.6%
<b>Total Housing Requirement</b>	<b>5,500</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>2009-2033 Unconstrained 2008 based Household Projections (CLG)</b>		
<b>Market housing</b>	2,600	50.1%
<b>Intermediate housing</b>	(600) *	(11.1%)
<b>Social rented housing</b>	3,100	60.9%
<b>Total Housing Requirement</b>	<b>5,200</b>	<b>100%</b>

Depending on the projection of dwelling/household numbers used over the period it is estimated that an annual average delivery within the range of 226 to 262 new dwellings will be required within the Borough of which **at least 50% would need to be affordable** to meet the needs identified.

\*The surplus of intermediate housing means that there is sufficient cheaper housing available in the private sector to meet the needs of households who would typically require dedicated intermediate housing (households with incomes in the range £15,000-£25,000). However this does not mean that there is a surplus of dedicated intermediate housing such as shared ownership or intermediate rent. It also does not imply that dedicated intermediate housing will not be occupied if provided. Many households would prefer a new intermediate dwelling to cheaper private rented or owner occupied dwellings.

The following section provides information about the local housing position.

<b><u>Housing Register Data</u></b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Number of Households on the Boston Homechoice Housing Register as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March	1693	1977	1781*	2283	2042*
New applications per annum (2011 = April 2010 to March 11)	Information not available		1718	1872	1904
* Full register review.					
<b><u>Homelessness</u></b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>2007/8</b>	<b>2008/9</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>
Statutory Homeless cases accepted as being owed a main housing duty	50	37	15	23	11

**Repossession Activity (Boston Borough)**

The information below shows the number of court actions, Mortgage and Landlord possession claims issued and orders made, relating to homes in Boston Borough. Not all claims issued are followed by an order being made. No statistics are available for actual repossessions.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2007/8</b>	<b>2008/9</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>
Mortgage Claims Issued	215	185	135	95	100
Mortgage Orders Made	175	170	125	80	65
Landlord Claims Issued	110	120	105	90	115
Landlord Orders Made	110	115	90	65	80

Source: Ministry of Justice - National Statistics on Mortgage & Landlord Possession Claims

**Housing and Council Tax Benefits**

<b>Year (as at 1<sup>st</sup> Dec)</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Households claiming Housing Benefit	4250	4600	4810	5170
of which in social rented housing	-	3550	3570	3700
of which in private rented housing	-	1060	1240	1470
Households claiming Council Tax Benefit	5580	5870	6030	6300
Households claiming both HB and CTB	-	4060	4240	4510

Source: Department for Work and Pensions

## **Chapter 4 - The Housing Department – Working to Provide a Decent Affordable Home for All**

Although we no longer own and manage any housing stock of our own we have a duty to provide a number of statutory housing services to the residents of our Borough. Some of these services are delivered directly by the Housing Department whilst others are delivered in partnership with a range of organisations such as Private Registered Providers (Housing Associations), other Local Authorities, Private Sector Businesses and Voluntary and Charitable Organisations.

Details of the services delivered and examples of some of the work undertaken are summarised below. Further information can be obtained from the housing pages on our website – [www.boston.gov.uk/housing](http://www.boston.gov.uk/housing)

### **Housing Advice and Information**

The Council's Housing Department provides a free, comprehensive advice and information service to anyone living within the Borough who has a housing problem. This covers matters such as mortgage and rent advice, tenancy rights, property condition and management, debt advice, relationship breakdown, domestic violence and harassment and illegal eviction. We have a wide range of leaflets and information booklets available to anyone which can be accessed through our website. Alternatively, you can speak to an advice officer about your particular circumstance.

### **Homelessness and Homelessness Prevention**

Prevention is always better than cure; if you ever find yourself homeless or threatened with homelessness within the Borough you should contact us at the earliest opportunity as we may well be able to help. You can get in touch with us by calling at our main office, by telephoning the Housing Aid and Advice team, by email or through our website or via our Out of Hours service in the event of an emergency.

The Council understands that being homeless or threatened with homelessness is very frightening and traumatic and it will do everything possible to assist applicants swiftly and sympathetically through the process. When people present as homeless or being threatened with homelessness, it does not mean they are automatically entitled to housing; however, all applications will be assessed and we will give you clear advice and information.

Some of the prevention measures currently available to prevent households becoming homeless include:

- Rent Deposit Scheme – to assist eligible households into private rented housing,
- Homelessness Prevention Payment – an interest free loan of up to £750,
- Sanctuary Scheme - to enable victims of domestic violence to remain in their own homes when possible and desired,
- The Boston Court Desk Scheme – offering free legal representation at all listed repossession hearings,

- Mediation - to resolve family disputes where household members have been told to leave home.

During 2011/12, we prevented 177 households from homelessness. Given the state of the economy and what we know about our local housing market, we will review our homelessness prevention options to ensure that they continue to be effective and help people in housing need.

If we cannot prevent you from becoming homeless and you are eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need we may have a duty to provide you accommodation. We manage two emergency access homelessness hostels where we provide a full support package; however sometimes we have to use other temporary accommodation such as Bed and Breakfast whilst trying to find suitable longer term or permanent accommodation.

As part of our commitment to supporting young people we will continue to work as part of the Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy Group to deliver a 'youth homelessness' drama production to all year 11 children in our area. (for more details see "Until it's gone" <http://www.zestcreativearts.org.uk/productions.html>).

### **The Boston Common Housing Register**

To help you find and secure an affordable home, we operate and maintain a 'waiting list' and work in close partnership with all social housing providers in the Borough which provides a single application route for people seeking an affordable rented home. The waiting list 'prioritises' applications to ensure that those in the greatest housing need are given the best opportunities of securing a new home. Our scheme has been operating since January 2007 and we advertise all available homes through; the Boston Homechoice website, [www.bostonhomechoice.co.uk](http://www.bostonhomechoice.co.uk), in the Boston Property Magazine and in our and partner organisation's offices with 'Members' of the scheme applying for the homes in which they want to live.

459 homes were let to households in housing need during 2011/12. To make sure that our scheme remains fit for purpose and ensure that we make the best use of the affordable housing stock available throughout the Borough, we will develop a Tenancy Strategy for our area and review our housing allocations scheme.

### **Housing Conditions**

Another of our key responsibilities is to ensure that the homes in which our residents live are safe. This role includes:

- monitoring housing conditions within the Borough to ensure appropriate standards are maintained,
- dealing with complaints about the quality of private rented housing, and
- ensuring that Houses in Multiple Occupation are appropriately managed and where necessary licensed.

We ensure this through:

- the provision of advice and information and activities such as facilitating a Landlord Forum,
- using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System to identify problems in homes, and where necessary
- taking appropriate enforcement action to remedy the problems we find.

We also offer advice and assistance to vulnerable owner occupiers to help them identify what repairs or improvements are needed and then advise them what help may be available, for example by signposting them to the Lincolnshire Home Improvement Agency (LHIA) Handyperson Scheme for small works and repairs.

Through a mixture of support and enforcement action the condition of 69 properties were improved in the Borough during 2011/12. Given what we know about the condition of our housing stock, we will continue to support the Lincolnshire Home Improvement Agency Handyperson Scheme and will develop a Small Works Loan Scheme to help improve property conditions for vulnerable people.

### **Disabled Facilities Grants**

If you or a member of your household cannot use and enjoy your home because of mobility or other medical problems, you may be entitled to a Disabled Facilities Grant. All Disabled Facilities Grants need a formal referral from a Lincolnshire County Council Occupational Therapist and for adults are means tested.

To support people requiring an adaptation, we provide a technical design service which takes all of the worry about finding and supervising suitable contractors to deliver adaptations.

During 2011/12 we resourced and delivered 78 statutory disabled adaptations to help people access, use and enjoy their own homes. Given our ageing population, we know that resources will not keep track with demand for adaptations; we will regularly review our own financial contribution and work with our partners to try and secure additional resources that support those within our community who need an adaptation.

### **Domestic Energy Efficiency Advice**

Promoting a green and sustainable environment is important to us and is why we give free advice and information about a range of cost effective ways to reduce your domestic energy usage and are able to offer advice on available assistance.

All local authorities across Lincolnshire have approved the Lincolnshire Affordable Warmth Strategy which includes actions to help households reduce energy costs, improve living conditions and cut emissions which affect the environment.

As a member of the Home Energy Lincolnshire Partnership we helped improve the energy efficiency of 439 homes in the Borough during 2011/12 through a loft and cavity wall insulation scheme. We will continue to work as a member of the HELP Partnership to take advantage of measures offered through the 'Green Deal' and the 'Energy Company Obligation' to reduce fuel poverty and improve housing conditions for our residents.

## Enabling the Provision of Affordable Housing

Securing the delivery of affordable housing is one of our key strategic priorities. As a Council we work in partnership with developers, Registered Providers, the Homes and Communities Agency and other organisations such as Community Links to deliver high quality affordable homes that meet local housing needs. We use the planning system to secure developer contributions for affordable housing and we are part of the Lincolnshire Rural Affordable Housing Partnership (LRAHP - Living Lincolnshire) which works to deliver affordable homes in our rural parishes. Having formed the South East Lincolnshire Joint Planning Authority with South Holland District Council and Lincolnshire County Council, we are developing a new Local Plan that will set out in detail our future housing requirements and include specific policies around affordable housing.

Developing new homes in the current economic climate is challenging for every local authority; in addition to the general market issues we face, we have the added complexity in meeting the additional costs associated with flood resilient design. Having produced our last Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in 2010, we have continued to work closely with the Environment Agency and other partners to explore ways of bringing forward development. The Riverside Housing Scheme which is being delivered by a local developer is a good example of how we have overcome flood risk issues.

Between 2009 and 2012 £3.2 million was secured through the Homes and Communities Agency from Kickstart housing programmes to support the delivery of two major housing schemes in the town: 27 affordable rented homes at Haven Court and 32 affordable rented homes and 10 shared ownership homes at Riverside. As well as meeting housing need, both schemes have made a significant contribution to regenerating the surrounding areas improving the appearance of the town.

The level of housing need set out within Chapter 3 shows how important it is for us to continue to support the delivery of new affordable homes and is why we will invest New Homes Bonus to deliver more affordable homes.

## Empty Homes

Long term empty homes are not only a wasted resource in these times of housing need, they also have an overall detrimental effect on communities. They become focal points for illegal and anti-social behaviour, place a strain on local services such as Fire and Rescue and can also pose risks to the public through becoming unsafe and harbouring litter and vermin.

Having played our full part in the Lincolnshire Empty Homes Project and helped produce the Lincolnshire Empty Homes Strategy 2010 – 2013 (available through our website), the document contains further detailed information about empty homes.

Every empty home returned into use that increases our net housing figure attracts the New Homes Bonus payment.

24 homes were returned into use in 2011/12. By joint funding a Coastal Lincolnshire Empty Homes Officer and providing capital resources, we will continue to work with property owners and partner organisations to return empty homes back into use.

## The Redstone Travellers Site

Boston Borough Council manages 24 permanent pitches within Boston for Gypsies and Travellers on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council. These fully fenced pitches provide hard-standings for caravans, a tarmac drive for vehicles and a utility block containing a small kitchen, a separate toilet and bathroom, and a metered electricity supply.

We are committed to meeting the housing and support needs of our Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople community and have commissioned a Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople's accommodation needs assessment to inform our Development Plan Policies.

We will continue to work closely with the County Council's Gypsy and Traveller liaison team to meet the ongoing needs of this community.

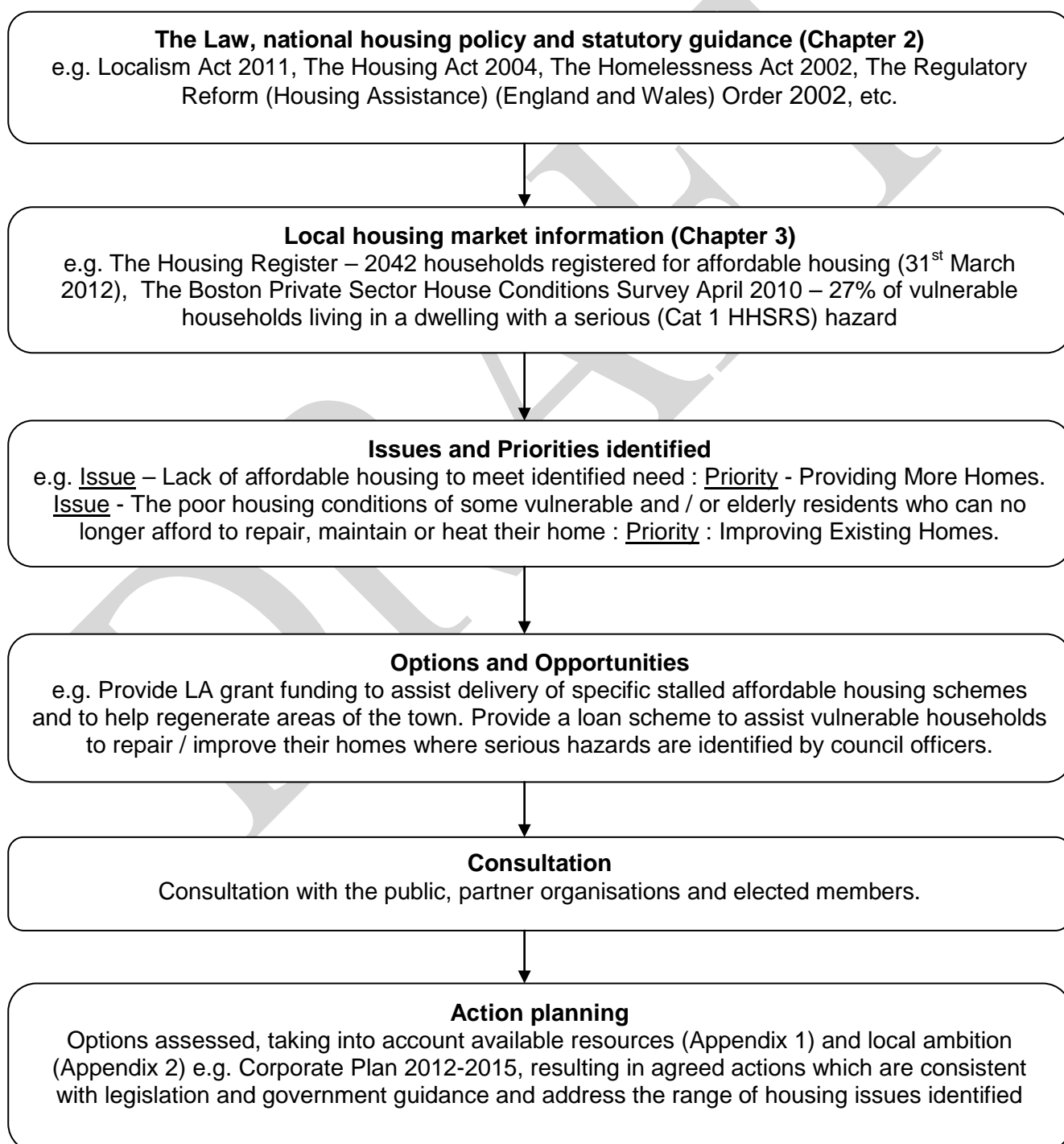
## Strategic Housing

In addition to the specific services we provide, as the statutory Local Housing Authority for the Borough, we have an overarching duty to monitor and improve the health, safety and welfare of our residents by working with partners to ensure there is an adequate supply of suitable accommodation and that homes are of a decent standard. We therefore need to have a detailed understanding of the local housing market which we achieve by monitoring many sources of information and producing or commissioning various studies and reports such as Strategic Housing Market Assessments and Private Sector House Condition Surveys the headline information from which we set out at **Chapter 3**. Together with extensive consultation, we use the variety of information we have to develop plans, policies and strategies that meet local needs and apply Government policy as we demonstrate within the next Chapter.

## Chapter 5 - Strategy Development

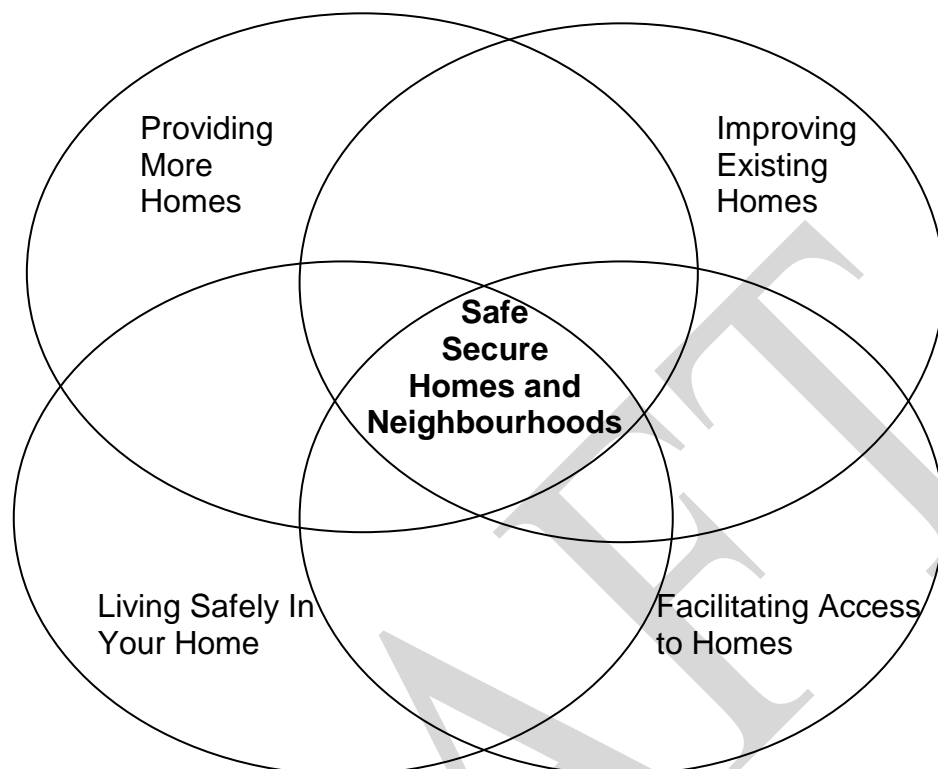
As we set out throughout, this Strategy has been developed based on our extensive knowledge of the local housing market gained through research, ongoing monitoring and detailed analysis of information, it also takes into account how we will respond to the law and government guidance. Our Action Plan states how we will address the identified housing issues and needs of our residents having taken account of: local ambition, availability of resources (Appendix 1) and most importantly the views of our residents and partner organisations (Appendix 2). Figure 1 shows the process we followed in developing this Strategy.

**Figure 1 - Overview of the strategy process**



## Figure 2 - Housing Strategy Priorities

Figure 2 below shows the link between our Housing Strategy priorities all supporting our Corporate Plan 2012-2015 priority of having 'Safe Secure Homes and Neighbourhoods'.



### The Formal Process

In developing our Housing Strategy, an Options Paper was produced following the process set out in Figure 1. This paper went to the Council's Corporate and Community Scrutiny Committee on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012 where the draft priorities (Figure 2) were discussed following which the document was released for public consultation.

The Options Paper consultation was placed on our website, sent out to all of our partners and distributed amongst our resident's panel asking whether there were any additional options which need to be included and considered?, and, which options should be progressed into actions within the new Housing Strategy?

The consultation formally closed on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012 with all responses being considered during two Elected Member at workshops that were held on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012. Taking into account: the identified issues; available resources; the law and government guidance; local ambition; and the consultation responses received, elected members were asked the same two questions. This resulted in a list of recommended actions for inclusion within our Housing Strategy 2012-17. **Appendix 2** presents the Options Paper and includes all consultation responses received and Elected Member recommendations, both of which shaped this Strategy.

A full draft of the Boston Borough Housing Strategy 2012-17, including the proposed 'Action Plan' was presented to the Council's Corporate and Community Committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> September for consideration. It then proceeded to Cabinet on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012 and subsequently to Full Council on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2012 for final adoption.

## Chapter 6 - Boston Borough Housing Strategy Action Plan 2012-2017

The Action Plan below sets out our high level actions. As we set out within the Foreword, we fully appreciate that as we continue through these times of economic and social change that we will need to closely monitor and update our Strategy and its actions regularly and because many of our actions themselves are specific projects and programmes of work, **we will set, monitor and evaluate our targets annually**. The performance management framework underpinning our Action Plan will be linked directly to our budget setting process and monitored through an Annual Housing Delivery Plan.

<b>Strategic Priority – Providing More Homes</b>					
<b>Issue</b> – lack of affordable housing to help meet identified housing need					
<b>Driver / Evidence Base</b> The Governments Housing Strategy – “Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England”, Boston Homechoice Housing Register, Draft Coastal Lincolnshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2012, Draft Coastal Lincolnshire Economic Viability Assessment (EVA) 2012, Boston Borough Housing Demand Survey 2011					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead/s</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timescales / Monitoring</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>1.1</b> Work with partners to enable the delivery of new affordable housing.	Principal Housing Strategy Officer. Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer.	Private Registered Providers. Homes and Communities Agency.	Officer time.	Ongoing.  Number of Affordable homes delivered is a key performance measure.	That new affordable homes are delivered to help address our identified housing needs.
<b>1.2</b> Assist and encouraging RP's to obtain planning permission for schemes and to take advantage of all grant funding opportunities.	Principal Housing Strategy Officer.	Private Registered Providers.	Officer time.	Ongoing  Monitored as part of an additional housing performance indicator.	That new affordable homes are delivered to help address our identified housing needs.

Action	Lead/s	Key Partners	Resources	Timescales / Monitoring	Outcome
<b>1.3</b> Provide LA grant or long term interest free loan funding to Private Registered Providers to support the delivery of affordable housing, e.g. where the implications of flood risk make them otherwise unviable.	Principal Housing Strategy Officer.	Private Registered Providers. Homes and Communities Agency. Developers.	Officer time. 8 – 10k per unit from New Homes Bonus. (£355,050 held in reserve at 09/2012). Use of future NHB allocations to be considered annually by elected members as per Action 1.10.	To be operated as an ongoing process from January 2013 (subject to future allocations of NHB at 1.10) with recommendations being made as appropriate to the Cabinet.	That new affordable homes are delivered help address local housing needs and that additional NHB is attracted.
<b>1.4</b> Explore how the Council could facilitate and promote a 'rent a room' scheme to increase the supply of low cost, single person's accommodation.	Principal Housing Strategy Officer. Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer.	Private Registered Providers. Interested tenants and owner occupiers.	Officer time. Minimal marketing budget.	Research existing schemes by December 2012.  Produce 'Rent a Room' advice leaflets by March 2013.	That more opportunities exist for single people to find suitable accommodation.
<b>1.5</b> Return Empty Homes back into use through using New Homes Bonus (NHB) in partnership with RP's and Lincolnshire Credit Union.	Principal Housing Strategy Officer. Coastal Lincolnshire Empty Homes Officer.	Empty Home Owners. Private Registered Providers, Lincolnshire Credit Union.	Officer time. £217,000 NHB allocated as at 09/12 – future resources to be determined as per Action 1.10.	Implemented / ongoing  Monitored as a key housing performance measure.	That long term empty homes are returned into use to help meet our housing needs and support the regeneration of neighbourhoods.
<b>1.6</b> Reassess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers to identify any additional housing requirements as prescribed within Section 8 of the Housing Act, 1985 as amended.	Planning Policy. Principal Housing Strategy Officer.	Gypsy and traveller communities. Consultants. Lincolnshire County Council Gypsies and Travellers Liaison Officer.	Officer time. £20,000 to employ consultants to undertake a formal assessment from the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan Joint Budget arrangements.	Final report due autumn 2012	That our development plans are based on robust information and take account of the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

Action	Lead/s	Key Partners	Resources	Timescales / Monitoring	Outcome
1.7 Explore mechanisms to deliver new rural affordable housing, e.g. Community Land Trust models.	Principal Housing Strategy Officer.	Living Lincolnshire Partnership. The Lincolnshire Community Land Trust. Developers. Community Lincs.	Officer time. Linked to Action 1.3.	Ongoing.	That rural housing needs are considered and addressed.
1.8 To ensure that affordable housing policies relating to Boston Borough, currently being developed as part of the South East Lincs Local Plan, incorporate the findings of the Coastal Lincolnshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Economic Viability Assessment.	Head of Housing, Property and Communities. Principal Housing Strategy Officer	South East Lincolnshire Local Planning Authority. Planning Policy.	Officer time.	Development Plan Documents adopted Summer 2014.	That the Council obtains the <b>MAXIMUM VIABLE</b> affordable housing contribution to help meet housing needs through the planning process.
1.9 To lobby the Joint Strategic Planning Authority to develop a policy framework that supports a change of use from commercial property to residential accommodation where appropriate.	Head of Housing, Property and Communities. Principal Housing Strategy Officer.	South East Lincolnshire Local Planning Authority. Planning Policy.	Officer time.	Development Plan Documents adopted Summer 2014.	To reinvigorate parts of the town centre whilst providing valuable accommodation.

1.10 That Elected Members consider the use of New Homes Bonus allocations for housing initiatives as part of the annual budget setting process.	Head of Housing, Property and Communities, Head of Finance and IT. Principal Housing Strategy Officer.	The Council's chief / senior officers.	Officer time.	To be considered as part of our annual budget setting process.	That resources are allocated to support future and ongoing delivery of the actions in the Councils Housing Strategy.
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## Strategic Priority – Improving Existing Homes

**Issue** - The poor housing conditions of some tenants and vulnerable owner occupiers

### Driver / Evidence Base

Boston Borough Private Sector House Condition Survey April 2010, Lincolnshire Affordable Warmth Strategy 2010-2016  
Government guidance - The Government would consider that an authority was failing in its duty as a housing enabler and in its responsibility to consider the condition of the local private sector stock if it did not make some provision for assistance. A blanket 'no assistance policy', whether for grants, loans or both, would therefore be unacceptable.

Action	Lead/s	Key Partners	Resources	Timescales / monitoring	Outcome
2.1 Continue funding the Lincolnshire Home Improvement Agency Handyperson Scheme to assist vulnerable households to repair, maintain and secure their homes for the period of the new Housing strategy at current uptake levels.	Principal Housing Strategy Officer.	Lincolnshire Home Improvement Agency. Lincolnshire County Council. Lincolnshire Supported Housing Partnership.	£10,000 residual Decent Home Grant Funding.	In operation / ongoing.  Quarterly monitoring returns received from LHIA.	That resources are available to facilitate small repairs and improvements to improve vulnerable people's health and wellbeing and save larger expenditure later.

Action	Lead/s	Key Partners	Resources	Timescales / Monitoring	Outcome
<b>2.2</b> Provide funding to support a small works loan scheme (max £5,000 per loan) to assist vulnerable households to repair / improve their homes where serious hazards are identified by council officers through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)	Principal Housing Strategy Officer.	Lincolnshire Credit Union.	£74,000K Residual Decent Home Grant Funding. (£84K- £10K for Action 2.1)  Future funding to be determined through Action 1.10.	Outline policy framework drafted by Spring 2013 and adopted Summer 2013.  Housing standards improved is a key housing performance measure.	That vulnerable owners are helped to address serious hazards within their home to improve their health, safety and wellbeing.
<b>2.3</b> Continue to promote and support regular landlord forums in partnership with other Lincolnshire Local Authorities.	Principal Housing Strategy Officer. Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer.	Landlords. Local letting agents. Other Lincolnshire Local Authorities. Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue. Lincolnshire Trading Standards. Housing Benefits Dept.	Officer time.	Ongoing. Forums held regularly around Lincolnshire.  Lincolnshire landlords website maintained and updated with articles / information.	That Landlords are kept informed about housing law and local policy.  That good practice is encouraged to improve the quality of private rented housing in the Borough.
<b>2.4</b> Consider/Implement an 'Additional Licensing Scheme' for houses in multiple occupation. (Spotlight on Oxford City Council approach)	Head of Housing, Property and Communities. Principal Housing Strategy Officer	Landlords. Local letting agents. Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue.	Additional officer(s). Initial funding for officers required = c. £40,000 to be met from Housing Salary savings.  Scheme to then run at full cost recovery with an annual licence fee being levied.	Consider case following Oxford visit in October 2012. Recruitment / Public consultation. Policy framework developed by summer 2013.  Scheme introduced late 2013.	That all Houses in Multiple Occupation are well managed and meet <b>all</b> minimum housing standards.

Action	Lead/s	Key Partners	Resources	Timescales / Monitoring	Outcome
<p><b>2.5</b> Consider the case for developing a standalone Landlord Accreditation Scheme.</p>	Principal Housing Strategy Officer	Landlords. Local letting agents. Other Lincolnshire Local Authorities. Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue. Housing Benefit Department. D.A.S.H.	Officer time	Following implementation of any additional HMO licensing scheme.	That the standard of private rented housing is improved to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our residents.
<p><b>2.6</b> Continue to work with landlords, tenants and owner occupiers to address poor housing conditions through advice, information and where necessary appropriate enforcement action (including charging for notices).</p>	Principal Housing Strategy Officer	Landlords. Tenants. Local letting agents.	Officer time. Residual regional funding from the discontinued Decent Home Grants Scheme to be partially used to support “works in default” where required.	Ongoing  Standard fee schedule for all Notices to be developed as part of 2013/14 budget setting process.	That the standard of private rented housing is improved to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our residents.
<p><b>2.7</b> Explore ways to ensure that information about local stock condition is updated in line with statutory requirements. (Next update required 2014/15)</p>	Principal Housing Strategy Officer	Lincolnshire Local Authorities. Housing Intelligence for the East Midlands. Lincolnshire Research Observatory.	Officer time. Funding to commission house condition survey or to support ongoing recording system. Full survey Est. £50,000 depending on commissioning arrangements and number of surveys etc.	Options to be explored with partners.  Resources to be considered as part of the 2014/15 budget setting process.	That we meet our statutory requirement to assess local housing conditions and have access to robust information that informs and supports local decisions about future policy.

<b>Strategic Priority – Living Safely in Your Home</b>					
<b>Issue</b> – Provision of timely and appropriate adaptations (Disabled Facility Grants) for eligible disabled people, Fuel poverty and affordable warmth, Homelessness prevention, Supply of move on accommodation					
<b>Driver / Evidence Base</b> – Statutory requirements, The Governments Housing Strategy – “Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England”, The Lincolnshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Excellent Ageing, Boston Borough Private Sector House Condition Survey April 2010, Lincolnshire Affordable Warmth Strategy 2010-2016					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead/s</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timescales / monitoring</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>3.1</b> Continue to support and deliver DFGs to ensure that local residents can remain in their own homes as long as possible.	Head of Housing, Property and Communities.	Lincolnshire County Council	£312,000 in 2012/13 budget - £254,000 for works, £58,000 for capitalised salaries.	Ongoing.  Monitored as a housing service plan task.	That residents continue to use and enjoy their home and remain independent for as long as possible.
<b>3.2</b> Continue to work with key partners to attract additional external resources to deliver adaptations and other 'insitu' measures e.g. telecare and telehealth.	Head of Housing, Property and Communities. Principal Housing Strategy Officer.	Lincolnshire County Council – linked to Excellent Ageing programme and emerging Health and Wellbeing Strategy.	Officer time to develop partnership models and methods for 'funding things differently'.	Ongoing	That residents continue to use and enjoy their home and remain independent for as long as possible in order to reduce demand for more specialist or acute service provision.
<b>3.3</b> Continue to facilitate a comprehensive Homelessness Prevention service through direct provision and by funding third party organisations to deliver specialist services (e.g. debt advice, Boston Court Desk service, Mortgage rescue etc)	Principal Housing Needs Officer	Ringrose Law, Citizens Advice bureau Boston Housing Forum, Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy Group.	Various costs met through DCLG Homelessness funding resources at district level or by working in partnership with other Lincolnshire LA's.	Ongoing  Number of homelessness cases prevented a key housing performance measure.	That households do not have to face the distress and upheaval caused by becoming homeless and that the use and cost of temporary accommodation is kept to a minimum.

Action	Lead/s	Key Partners	Resources	Timescales / Monitoring	Outcome
<p><b>3.4</b> Continue to support the Home Energy Lincolnshire Partnership to improve the energy efficiency of homes within the Borough by attracting resources through the Government's Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation.</p>	<p>Principal Housing Strategy Officer</p>	<p>Lincolnshire County Council (Ref - Task and Finish Group Report) Insulation installers, Energy companies.</p>	<p>Officer time.</p>	<p>Ongoing - Green Deal launch expected early 2013.</p> <p>Home Energy Conservation Act "Further Reports" produced and submitted by March 2013 and March 2015.</p> <p>Housing standards improved is a key housing performance measure.</p>	<p>That fuel poverty, cold related hospital admissions and Excess Winter Deaths are reduced as well as assisting with reduction in CO2 emissions.</p>
<p><b>3.5</b> Continue to work strategically to ensure ready access to housing support and social care services.</p>	<p>Head of Housing, Property and Communities. Principal Housing Strategy Officer.</p>	<p>Lincolnshire Supported Housing Partnership, Lincolnshire County Council - linking to: First Contact, Wellnet and Excellent Aging initiatives.</p>	<p>Officer time.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>That our residents are able to remain living in their own homes as long as possible because of the care and support care they receive.</p>

<b>Strategic Priority – Facilitating Access to Homes</b>					
<b>Issues</b> – Homelessness, Rough Sleeping, Welfare Reform, Localism, Tenancy Strategy, Allocations Policy					
<b>Driver / Evidence Base</b> – The Governments Housing Strategy – “Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England”, Localism Act, statutory requirement, Government policy / plan “No second night out”, The Lincolnshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Excellent Ageing. Welfare Reform.					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead/s</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timescales / monitoring</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>4.1</b> Review our Housing Allocation Policy (Boston Homechoice Scheme) in light of the Localism Act, revised statutory guidance, welfare reform and the need to develop a Tenancy Strategy for Boston.	Principal Housing Needs Officer.	Private Registered Providers, Boston Housing Forum.	Officer time - consultation resources.	New policy developed and adopted by March 2013.	That our policy ensures that best use is made of the Borough’s limited affordable housing stock and that those in greatest need get helped first.
<b>4.2</b> Develop and publish a Tenancy Strategy for Boston to which Registered Providers must have regard to when formulating their own approach.	Principal Housing Officer	Private Registered Providers (Board Members and Trustees), Boston Housing Forum	Officer time - Consultation resources.	Strategy developed and adopted March 2013.	That Registered Providers operating in the Borough are clear about our ambition to develop a more fluid housing market that supports more people in housing need.

Action	Lead/s	Key Partners	Resources	Timescales / Monitoring	Outcome
4.3 Address local rough sleeping issues in partnership with other agencies in accordance with "No Second Night Out" guidance.	Principal Housing Needs Officer	Framework, Churches Together, Boston Housing Forum, Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy Group	Various costs to be met from the Homelessness funding resources provided by DCLG. This could be at district level or by working in partnership with other Lincolnshire LA's	Ongoing – Rough Sleeper Action Plan developed as part of Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2012 - 2016.  Number of people sleeping rough is a housing performance indicator.	That the numbers of people sleeping rough in the Borough are kept to an absolute minimum because there is sufficient support help them get off the streets and help them improve their life chances.
4.4 Review the Council's Homelessness Prevention Policy to ensure that the options available are fit for purpose in the current housing climate.	Principal Housing Needs Officer	Boston Housing Forum, Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy Group	Officer time. The cost of prevention measures can be met from the Homelessness funding resources provided by DCLG. This could be at district level or by working in partnership with other Lincolnshire LA's	New policy developed and adopted by March 2013	Those appropriate and effective measures are in place that prevent people from becoming homeless.
4.5 Ensure that cold weather provision to support rough sleepers is available.	Principal Housing Needs Officer	Churches Together, Boston Housing Forum, Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy Group	Various costs which can be met from the Homelessness funding resources provided by DCLG. This could be at district level or by working in partnership with other Lincolnshire LA's	Ongoing - Provision currently in place to winter 2013/14.  Future provision agreed by summer 2014.  Number of people sleeping rough is a housing performance indicator.	That emergency access accommodation is available for anyone sleeping rough during extreme cold weather periods.

Action	Lead/s	Key Partners	Resources	Timescales / Monitoring	Outcome
<p><b>4.6</b> Help deliver the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy and act as the 'banker' to future DCLG countywide resource allocations.</p>	<p>Principal Housing Needs Officer.</p>	<p>Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy Group</p>	<p>Officer time. Various costs which can be met from the Homelessness funding resources provided by DCLG.</p>	<p>Ongoing.  New Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy 2012 – 2016 to be formally launched Autumn 2012.</p>	<p>That a package of homelessness and rough sleeping services are available across Lincolnshire and that we maximise the benefit of these services for people within our Borough.</p>

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## Glossary

<b>Action</b>	The activities designed and carried out to achieve objective and have a positive impact on a problem or issue.
<b>Additional Licensing Scheme</b>	A scheme that requires all HMO's to be licensed and subject to the same standards as those imposed by the Mandatory Licensing framework.
<b>Affordable housing</b>	Housing of an adequate standard which is cheaper than that which is generally available in the local housing market.
<b>Community</b>	Any group of people who share a common interest, concern, issue or place.
<b>Community Infrastructure Levy</b>	A planning charge that can be levied on developers and used to fund a wide range of infrastructure that is needed as a result of development.
<b>Community Right to Build</b>	A scheme to help communities gain planning permission for developments they want to see go ahead, and any benefits of the development are managed by a community organisation for the benefit of the community.
<b>Dwelling</b>	A dwelling is a self contained unit of accommodation where all rooms and facilities available for the use of the occupants are behind a front door.
<b>Energy Company Obligation</b>	Extra financial support under the Green Deal for low-income households and those in hard-to-treat properties. Due to be introduced alongside Green Deal in late 2012.
<b>Green Deal</b>	A new financial mechanism that allows householders to make energy efficiency improvements to their home without up-front costs, which is repaid through the electricity bill from the savings made. Due to be introduced in late 2012. Replaces current grant funding schemes.
<b>Household</b>	One person living alone or a group of related people living together.
<b>Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's)</b>	An HMO is a dwelling-house which is occupied by more than one household.
<b>Housing need</b>	The situation in which households lack their own housing or are living in housing which is inadequate or unsuitable and who are unlikely to be able to meet their needs in the housing market without some assistance.
<b>Housing Register</b>	A list of households who have applied to a Local Authority or a Registered Provider to secure a suitable home.
<b>Intermediate Housing</b>	Intermediate housing are homes for sale or rent provided at a cost above affordable rent but below open market levels. 'Intermediate Homes' can include shared equity or shared ownership homes and other low cost homes for sale or below market rent.

<b>Landlord accreditation scheme</b>	Accreditation schemes prescribe a set of minimum standards for the management and condition of privately rented homes. Landlords who are accepted onto schemes are known as 'accredited landlords'.
<b>Objective</b>	This is a statement of key goal(s) that are being worked towards over a medium to long term period
<b>Performance indicator</b>	These measure how an activity is doing. They tell us whether performance is on target, below target or above target.
<b>Personal Independence Payment</b>	New benefit to be introduced in April 2013 and replaces the Disability Living Allowance for eligible working age people aged 16-64.
<b>Private sector housing</b>	Dwellings owned by individuals or companies and businesses other than Registered Providers (Housing Associations).
<b>Resources</b>	These are all the inputs needed to provide a service or activity, and include funding, equipment and time.
<b>SAP rating</b>	This is the Standard Assessment Procedure for rating the energy efficiency of new and existing homes, on a scale of 1 to 100; the higher the rating, the lower the energy running costs of the home
<b>Social Rented housing</b>	Housing of an adequate standard which is provided to rent at below market cost for households in need by Local Authorities or Registered Providers.
<b>Statutory</b>	Something that must be done by law.
<b>Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA)</b>	An assessment of the estimated demand for housing in our area, now and in the future, in terms of distribution, house types and sizes and the specific requirements of particular groups.
<b>Targets</b>	These tell us the level of performance that has to be achieved. Targets aim to continually improve performance.
<b>Universal Credit</b>	New benefit, to be introduced in 2013, for those who are looking for work or on low income. This single payment will replace Working tax credit, Child tax credits, Income Support, Housing Benefit and the Income based Job Seekers allowance and Employment and Support Allowance.
<b>Vision</b>	A broad high-level statement of intent, which tells us the desired future that we are working towards.
<b>Voluntary Sector</b>	A wide range of organisations, with some paid staff but usually employing volunteers to deliver services to others e.g. Samaritans, Citizens Advice, Red Cross.
<b>Zero Carbon Homes</b>	A property with zero net emissions of carbon dioxide from all energy use in the home. All new housing developments should meet this standard by 2016.

## **Appendix 1: Resources**

The success and impact of any strategy relates directly to the availability of resources to deliver the actions within it, or the leverage that the strategy itself has in attracting new resources. A summary of the resources available within the Council's Five Year Medium Term Financial Strategy as at September 2012 are set out below.

### Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) funding

The Council received £208,000 capital grant for 2012/13 from the Department for Communities and Local Government to support the delivery of disabled facility adaptations. In addition to our grant award, we are planning to invest £104,000 of our own resources into DFGs per annum through to 2017. From our total budget of £312,000, £58,000 is deducted to support our own staffing costs through capitalisation of salaries. The cash spend directly on adaptations is therefore planned to be approx £254,000.

### New Homes Bonus (NHB)

New Homes Bonus was introduced by the Government as a financial incentive to encourage local authorities to facilitate the development of new homes and to bring back empty homes back into use to meet local housing need and to support communities that have experienced housing growth. The scheme provides local authorities with a bonus, equal to the national average for the council tax band for each net additional property. The grant is paid each year for six years; with every new affordable home attracting a premium payment.

As at September 2012, we had £355,050 held within the Housing Reserve to fund some of the actions set out within this Strategy. £217,000 NHB was allocated to support a range of measures aimed at returning long term empty homes back into use to prior to September 2012. Future NHB payments will be linked to local government finance reform and are to be based around the retention of business rates at the local level. Given this position, the use of NHB going forward will be considered annually as part of our annual budget setting process.

### Decent Home Grant Funding

The Council received funding for housing renewal from the former Regional Housing Board (RHB) and Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM) totalling £1,219,689 between 2007 and 2010. These resources were mainly used for the delivery of Decent Home Grants which assisted eligible vulnerable households in private sector housing to live in a decent home; it also provided funding for a 'handyperson' scheme in the Borough run by the Lincolnshire Home Improvement Agency's and the initial funding for the development of the Lincolnshire Empty Homes Project and Strategy.

The Decent Home Grant scheme ceased in 2010 following the end of Government funding. One of the policy conditions of Decent Home Grants was that if the property was sold within 10 years, a sliding proportion of the grant would become repayable to the Council. Repaid grant funding and unspent legacy funding as at September 2012 amounted to £58,000. In addition to these resources, the Council decided that any future grant repayments will be transferred directly into the Housing Reserve to address local housing need. 'On loan' legacy funding of approximately £26,000 also remains with the Lincolnshire Credit Union who we commissioned to administer the loan element of our Decent Homes programme.

### Homelessness Funding

The Council has received funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to prevent homelessness and to address rough sleeping in the Borough. All funding will continue to be spent in line with our Homelessness Prevention Strategy or activities and initiatives to prevent homelessness and to address rough sleeping that may be necessary in the future. As at August 2012, £167,975 is available to support this work.

In March 2012 we were approached by DCLG to administer countywide funding of £309,000 aimed at preventing rough sleeping, tackling single homelessness and supporting the development of a generic early intervention and prevention service across Lincolnshire and Rutland. This pot, which stood at £296,500 in August 2012, will be targeted in accordance with the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2012 – 2016.

### Future Funding

Future resource allocation to deliver the actions within this Strategy will be considered annually as part of our annual budget setting process. Specifically members will consider how funding such as New Homes Bonus, DCLG grant and DFG allocations will be used to ensure that we create safe, secure homes and neighbourhoods.