

# WORCESTER CITY

## PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

Strategy  
Report

# 2015-2020



**Worcester**  
CITY COUNCIL



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# Foreword by Councillor Lucy Hodgson

Cabinet Member for History & Heritage



## The Council has recently adopted ambitious themes for growth and prosperity for the future of Worcester City:

- Increasing prosperity through successful businesses and great jobs
- Growing a vibrant city with sports, leisure and retail
- Making the most of our history and heritage
- Continuing to enhance our city centre and riverside
- Ensuring our city is clean, green and safe

A key component is a good quality housing stock within the City for existing residents and the new workforce as well as the more vulnerable. It is recognised by all partners that poor housing can lead to poor health and the outcomes have an impact on a range of service areas such as the National Health Service (NHS) or Social Care. We need to work together and pool resources to develop a strategy that will make Worcester an attractive place with good quality housing for the growing workforce.

This strategy sets out what we'll do to ensure Worcester City's private housing stock remains amongst the very best available. We have updated the private sector stock condition survey and statistics show that the recent economic downturn has resulted in an increase in non-decent homes and reduction in investment in existing housing. On a positive note, there are few empty properties (although a slightly higher percentage than 10 years ago); low levels of overcrowding, a lower proportion of retired households and overall energy efficiency rates are high.

With few resources available, it is a challenge to encourage home owners to improve their properties if people have difficulty accessing finance or the ability to organise works. There are still poor conditions and there's always more we can do to ensure homes are fit for the future. I am particularly keen to ensure a stronger focus on the private rented sector in coming years given the increasingly important role it plays. This strategy highlights where further action is needed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Hodgson'.

**Councillor Lucy Hodgson**  
**Cabinet Member for History & Heritage**

# Introduction

## **A total of 84% of the housing stock within Worcester City is privately owned.<sup>1</sup>**

This consists of 65% (28,525) owner occupation and shared ownership and 19% (8,308) private rented from a local landlord. We know that there is a high proportion of shared housing referred to as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) due to the existence of the University of Worcester. There are nearly 5% compared with the national average of 1.9%. The City also has a slightly higher level of pre-1919 properties, around 1900, of which 42% are in the private rented sector which is above the national average.

Worcester's future as a sustainable attractive place to live depends on a good supply of quality housing to meet a range of needs. We all know that the quality of the home we live in can have an impact on the lives we lead and poor housing can lead to poor health. Investing in homes and ensuring standards are maintained and improved will deliver a wide range of positive outcomes for people living in them and the City as a whole:

- Fewer homes that pose a risk to health and well being
- Improved outcomes for families, the elderly and young people
- More independence for older or vulnerable households
- Lower carbon emissions, improved energy efficiency and reduced fuel poverty
- Communities that are attractive and economically vibrant

It is generally accepted that the home owner is responsible for the repair and maintenance of their property and the role of the Council is to enable and encourage home owners who are more vulnerable such as the elderly and disabled to carry out vital repairs that can improve health and wellbeing.

<sup>1</sup> Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2014 carried out by Michael Dyson Associates



Over the past few years Worcester City Council has delivered the following to ensure good property standards in private sector housing:

- Continued the mandatory licensing of three storey Houses in Multiple occupation
- Operated a private sector landlord accreditation scheme and reviewed the outcomes of this scheme
- Held regular Landlord Forums
- Produced a Landlords Newsletter
- Provided Energy Advice working in partnership with Act on Energy
- Continued to be an active member of the Warmer Worcestershire Partnership
- Been involved in providing insulation grants to identified areas of the city
- Taking part in a Thermal Flyover and held an event to promote the need for and range of thermal insulation measures
- Established a social lettings agency – City Life Lettings
- Re-commissioned Worcestershire Care and Repair, the agency providing support to vulnerable households enabling them to live independently
- Reviewed the staffing and developed a pro-active approach to dealing with poor condition private sector accommodation
- Worked with the planning service to implement Article 4
- Increased the level of enforcement action undertaken if and when required
- Updated the Housing Enforcement Policy
- Completed a Private Sector Stock Condition Survey during 2014
- Produced the evidence to support the implementation of an additional licensing scheme from the 1st September 2015



The 2014 private sector stock condition survey highlights that there are continued challenges in improving the condition of the private sector housing stock.

Our approach to home improvement to date has been encouragement and support to home owners and working effectively in partnership with other agencies such as the Home and Improvement Agency (Worcestershire Care and Repair) and local landlords in delivering good quality housing. This approach will continue. However, where these efforts fail, we are determined to take decisive enforcement action and it is with this in mind that the Enforcement Policy has recently been updated. The Council has taken a decision in March 2015 to introduce an Additional Licensing scheme for all HMOs which will ensure that shared housing is safe and managed properly. There will be a great deal of work involved in this project but it will not be the only focus of the service into the future.

The Council recognises that the scale of the private sector challenge and limitations in its current resources mean that on-going improvement within the private sector housing stock will have to be undertaken, working in partnership, supported by access to alternative funding opportunities and by developing smart approaches to achieve the outcomes required.

This strategy sets out our objectives and actions to be adopted in a succinct way whilst recognising the challenging financial environment. The Strategy is identified within the Strategic Housing and Community Activity Annual Service Improvement Plan (SIP) and will be monitored to ensure the action plan is delivered and remains appropriate.

# Our Aims and Objectives

There are five themes to this strategy and they can be found below:

01

Encourage and enable owner occupiers to repair and maintain their homes to a good standard



There are 28,525 owner occupied properties in Worcester City making up 65% of the total housing stock.

## Decent Homes

The decent homes standard is no longer one which is reported to the Government but it is a good indicator of comparison over time. The 2014 private sector stock condition survey found that 68% of properties in the city meet the decent home standard. This is only slightly less than the national average which is 73%. This means that about 14,000 properties fail the standard which is 5,150 more than in 2004. The main causes of decent home failure are in relation to hazards of poor energy efficiency, excess cold and falls. This increased level of failure indicates that property maintenance and the rate of component renewals have slowed possibly due to the high cost of carrying out such works, the impact of the economic downturn and there being no meaningful sanction to do otherwise.

## We will aim to:

- Reduce the proportion of non-decent dwellings.
- Increase awareness of services available to support owners to maintain and improve their homes.
- Encourage and support greater access to equity release and home repair loan products to fund repairs and maintenance



02

## Encourage and enable private landlords and agents to provide good quality, well-managed properties in a professional way

The number of people renting privately in Worcester City has increased significantly from 12% in 2001<sup>2</sup> to 19% in 2011<sup>3</sup> and is now greater than social rented (16%). A total of 48.8% are semi-detached or terraced houses<sup>4</sup> and 37.8% flats. A high proportion of all flats and shared accommodation are privately rented (75%)<sup>5</sup>. With home ownership being expensive to access, the sector looks set to remain an important source of housing for the foreseeable future. Rented accommodation meets a diverse range of needs. It provides a flexible option for those who do not want to buy, can't afford to buy or are saving up for a deposit. It offers a range of shared accommodation for smaller households and is increasingly used by a growing number of families.

2 Census 2001

3 2011 Census updated in April 2014 (as quoted in the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2014)

4 Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2014

5 Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2014



## Private Rented Legislation, Guidance and Funding

The Government is determined to provide a “bigger and better private rented sector that encourages investment and provides better choice for tenants.”<sup>6</sup> In the last 12 months the following have been introduced:

- The introduction of a redress scheme for letting agents
- Publication of the “How to Rent” guide, informing tenants about their rights and responsibilities
- Publication of a model tenancy agreement
- Introduction of a new code of practice, to improve the sector’s professionalism
- The availability of over £4 million to 23 local authorities to help them tackle acute and complex problems with rogue landlords in their area building on £2.6 million given to nine local authorities to support enforcement against ‘Beds in Sheds’
- Made an amendment to the Deregulation Bill 2015 (which is awaiting Royal Assent) which would prevent retaliatory eviction and which clarifies the tenant deposit protection legislation in relation to recent court cases
- Introduced a requirement for letting agents to publish a full tariff of fees
- Introduced legislation where landlords will be required by law to install working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in their properties.
- Introduced regulations enabling tenants to request energy improvements and requirement for all private rented property to meet a minimum energy standard of EPC rating of E by 2020<sup>7</sup>.
- Provided funding for “Build to Rent” projects to encourage institutional investment into the private rented sector

## Conditions and Standards

In most cases the sector provides high quality housing opportunities, but there are still challenges, particularly in relation to property conditions. Whilst average conditions are good. The council has a statutory duty and a range of powers to address sub-standard conditions such as serious hazards. It can also intervene in cases of illegal eviction and harassment.

We work closely with local landlord bodies such as the National Landlords Association to raise awareness of issues and run an annual Landlord Forum which is well attended.

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6 Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2014

7 Energy Act 2011



## Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) (Shared Housing)

Due partly to the success of Worcester University, there are between 1,500 and 2,000 HMOs within the City.<sup>8</sup> The demand has also increased due to changes in Welfare Reform restricting housing benefit for single people below 35-years-of-age. The Article Four directive has been introduced which is a planning restriction to limit the density of HMOs in any location, and to improve standards, conditions and management, the Council has taken the decision to implement an Additional Licensing scheme. For the past 10 years the Council has operated an voluntary Accreditation Scheme for all landlords to ensure properties were offered at a good standard. This has recently been reviewed and the evidence clearly showed that it was only being used by landlords of student properties who were stipulated that they had to achieve this accreditation in order to advertise with the University. The review also showed that the amount of time devoted to operating this scheme was not achieving a cost effective way of improving or maintaining standards in the private sector. A decision was therefore made to remove it. Additional Licensing will replace accreditation within the City with the aim of building on existing relationships with local landlords. The mandatory licensing scheme is still in operation which affects properties that are three or more storeys with five or more people.

### We will aim to:

- Reduce the proportion of non-decent private rented dwellings with a particular focus on non-decent shared homes
- Implement the Additional Licensing scheme on 1 September 2015 and review in year five
- Increase awareness of landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities and provide support for all landlords in developing a professional private sector landlord offer. This will include regular Landlords Forums, professional development opportunity and newsletters.
- Develop joint working relationships to address rogue landlords and develop specific area approaches to address the worst conditions.
- Take robust enforcement action against the worst landlords and agents in accordance with the revised Enforcement Policy.

<sup>8</sup> Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2004 and 2014

03

## Enable people whose independence may be at risk to safely remain in or return to their home



In line with many other places, Worcester City has a growing number of older households and people with disabilities and complex needs. Much of the existing housing stock is not designed with the needs of these groups in mind.

As mentioned above there has been an increase in vulnerable households and poor conditions<sup>9</sup> with the number living in non decent homes increasing from 3% to 8.2%. It remains a priority to target these households.

<sup>9</sup> Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2014

## Housing Options

There has been an expansion of extra care accommodation in all sectors including new social housing projects at Ronkswood and St Johns. There are new private schemes to enable people to downsize into more suitable housing and vulnerable residents will be encouraged to consider alternatives to living in poor housing conditions. However, this may not be possible for everyone and we need to make sure that living independently at home can be accommodated safely.

## Home Adaptations

The need for home adaptations to support independence in the home is high and may be set to increase due to an ageing population. The Council has recently re-commissioned a Worcestershire wide Home Improvement Agency (HIA), Fortis Living Care and Repair to deliver a range of services to include Disabled Facility Grants (DFG). The main types of adaptations traditionally needed include adapted bathrooms and toilets, lifts and level or ramped access. The agreement with the HIA is one of the first in the country to agree the use of DFG funding in a different way and introduced a fast track "Independent Assistance Grant" to speed up the delivery of works to enable vulnerable clients to be able to live independently. Other grants relate to preventing admission to hospital and discharge from hospital.

The vision for the new service is:

*to transform the Worcestershire Home Improvement Agency into an accessible and commercially focused service which offers a wide range of solutions and choices at the right time, in the right way and in the right location to enable independent living.*

As mentioned above there has been an increase in vulnerable people living in non-decent homes so it is important to focus assistance.

## We will aim to:

- Increase the proportion of vulnerable people living in decent and safe homes
- Ensure those needing adaptations or other services to remain in or return to their home receive the right information, advice and support
- Increased awareness of the range of 'stay at home services' available to support independence
- Monitor the delivery of the Home Improvement Agency Contract and ensure future funding is made available to continue this service.

## 04 Maximise use of the existing private sector housing stock



### Overcrowding

The number of properties that are overcrowded using the "Occupancy Rating" equates to 3% of the stock and is concentrated in the shared accommodation which is not surprising due to the number of HMOs in Worcester City. The national average is 4.6%. Where overcrowding does occur it can have serious impacts on a person's health and wellbeing and undermine children's education.

## Under - Occupation

The greater issue is under occupation with 70% of properties having one or more bedrooms beyond the requirements of the households.

We must continue to work with developers to deliver more attractive housing options for older people and extend our housing advice and information to increase awareness and facilitate choice. We must look to address the practical barriers that many aspiring downsizers say they face when considering a move.

## Accessing the private rented sector

We have started to address some of the barriers faced by low income and vulnerable households seeking to access private rented accommodation through our City wide lettings agency. This is based on a strong partnership with local landlords and now has over 60 properties in management. We will continue to develop this agency, increasing the number of properties available and offering landlords a good value service. Coupled with this is the Council scheme to offer deposit bonds for tenants wanting to access the private rented sector which enables private rented accommodation to be made available for those who cannot afford the deposit and rent in advance required.

## Empty Properties

In Worcester's competitive housing market every home counts. The proportion of empty homes is lower than the national average (4.1% locally to 4.2% nationally) but there are still a number that have been empty for many years and there is also scope to use empty space over shops in the centre of the City and neighbourhood centres as accommodation. We have an on-line facility for residents to report empty properties and we will investigate where appropriate to encourage and enforce owners to bring their properties back into use.



## Neighbourhoods requiring improvement

There are locations within the city which require a more focussed approach to being able to address the wide range of issues that exist. Early discussions have commenced to undertake a feasibility study of the Avon and Teme Road area.

## BME Households

92 % of households are “White British”, 4% are “White other” and 3% are “Asian British” or of Asian origin. The stock condition survey identified that a greater percentage of Asian households live in private rented accommodation. BME households may face a number of obstacles to owner occupancy given the lower percentages of owner occupiers amongst certain BME groups and the causes of these inequalities need to be identified. The positive impacts are expected to be low at first as the root causes of the identified housing inequality need to be ascertained before they can be addressed.

## We will aim to:

- Reduce the proportion of under occupied private sector homes by encouraging alternative housing options
- Continue to promote and expand the City Life Lettings Agency
- Reduce the number of long term empty properties and increase the use of empty space above shops
- Complete a feasibility study of the work required to improve Avon and Teme Road
- To engage with identified BME groups to ascertain the higher take up of private rental properties and any housing inequalities within identified BME groups



05

## Enable more energy efficient and sustainable homes, and reduce fuel poverty

### Energy Efficiency

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 and guidance issued in July 2013<sup>10</sup> requires every local authority to provide a report (HECA report<sup>11</sup>) every two years showing progress against the targets set by the Climate Change Act 2008 and the Government's Carbon Plan<sup>12</sup>. Prior to this, annual reports were submitted. The HECA report set out the realistic targets the local authority would endorse i.e. Green Deal, Energy Company Obligation (ECO), Renewal Heat Incentive (RHI), Feed in Tariff (FIT) and other initiatives. By the 12th annual report, household energy efficiency had improved by 28.99%. The 2015 HECA progress against targets can be summarised:

- Domestic carbon emissions account for 40% of total emissions. There has been no overall reduction in carbon emissions over the past few years but the average per person is lower than locally and nationally (4.9 tonnes of carbon).
- The number of properties in EPC band D has increased from 36% to 40% and there are reductions in Band E, F and G.
- A total of 275 domestic, 9 commercial, one industrial and one community photovoltaic installations have been undertaken.

Worcester City's private sector housing stock shows good overall levels of energy efficiency compared to the national average when using the SAP rating as the average SAP rating is 60.2 compared to 52.9 nationally<sup>13</sup>. A total of 48% have a SAP rating of over 64 which is a relatively high level and higher than expected considering the number of dwellings in Worcester City that are pre 1919 (state).

10 Guidance to English Energy Conservation Authorities Issued Pursuant to the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 issued by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)

11 Worcester City HECA Report 2015

12 The Carbon Plan issued by the Department of Energy and Climate Change in December 2011

13 Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2013



The SAP rating is the Department of Energy and Climate Change's (DECC) methodology for assessing and comparing the energy and environmental performance of dwellings. Therefore, the thermal performance of dwellings within Worcester compares very well against the national average.

However, we know some areas fall below this high average. It is estimated that 2,022 or 4.63% of the number of dwellings in the City have a SAP rating of less than 35 and as such would fail the decent home standard and be deemed to have a Category One Housing and Health Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazard of excess cold. These are:

- In the private rented sector
- Converted and purpose built flats
- Properties of pre-war construction

## Fuel Poverty

Between 2009 and 2012, fuel poverty, defined as the number of households paying more than 10% of their income on fuel, reduced from 20.8% to 13.6% (5,598).

A new definition of fuel poverty in 2012 resulted in 13.1% households being in fuel poverty which is higher than the average for England (10.6%), lower than West Midlands (15.2% but higher than the Worcestershire average (12.5%).

A significant amount of work has been done in recent years to improve the energy efficiency of private sector homes in Worcestershire by a number of initiatives made possible by working with Act on Energy as well as local partners. Act on Energy which is an agency which works on behalf of a number of local authorities to provide advice and support to local authorities and residents to energy efficiency. Worcestershire Council's were successful in a bid to DECC for Green Deal Communities funding which provides external insulation and Fortis Living, the local Registered Providers (RPs) obtained funding for external insulation on a significant proportion of its stock within the City which has improved the energy performance of properties which were considered "hard to treat".

## We will aim to:

- Continue to work in partnership to improve the energy efficiency of homes within the City
- To continue to work with Warmer Worcestershire to attract funding e.g. Green Deal Communities external wall insulation, warm and healthy funds.
- Reduce fuel poverty through targeted work in the poorest performing areas

# Action Plan and Making Sure We Deliver

**The commitments outlined above are set out in the attached action plan. The Private Sector Housing Strategy is identified within the Corporate Plan and is contained within Theme 5 – Ensuring our city is clean, green and safe.**

The delivery of this strategy and action plan will be monitored via the Corporate Plan with a specific performance outcome:

- To reduce the number of vulnerable households living in non decent accommodation identified in the private sector stock condition survey 2014 at 3,566.

The baseline figure will be identified in year one to establish the target for future years.

## Conclusion

**This Private Sector Housing Strategy outlines the objectives the Council would like to adopt and actions outlined to tackle the diverse range of issues that have been identified. We will continue to target residents to tackle disrepair and conditions with a range of initiatives and will monitor progress regularly to make sure we are using all tools available.**

# WORCESTER CITY PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY REPORT 2015-2020 ACTIONS

## 01 Encourage and enable owner occupiers to repair and maintain their homes to a good standard

Ref No.	Action	Lead Officer(s)/ Resources	Target Completion Date	Outcome	Links to other plans/strategies	Progress
1	To monitor the availability of new funding sources to make bids for home improvements for the private sector stock	Strategy & Private Sector Team Manager	End 2020	To increase the number of decent homes	Housing Strategy Corporate Plan Service Imp Plan	
2	To ensure the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) is used to access available funding to help.	Worcestershire Care & Repair Agency	End 2020	To increase the number of decent homes	Housing Strategy HIA Contract Service Imp Plan	

## 02 Encourage and enable private landlords and agents to provide good quality, well-managed properties in a professional way

Ref No.	Action	Lead Officer(s)/ Resources	Target Completion Date	Outcome	Links to other plans/strategies	Progress
3	To implement the Additional Licensing Scheme	Strategy & Private Sector Team Manager	1 September 2015	Licensing of all HMOs in the City in the most efficient way and ensure compliance to standards	Housing Strategy Corporate Plan Service Imp Plan	
4	To continue holding landlord and letting agent forums and consider resourcing in a joined up way with Worcester University, NLA and other appropriate organisations	Strategy & Private Sector Team Manager	One or two a year	To achieve a professional, knowledgeable and legally compliant private rented market	Service Imp Plan Operational Imp Plan	
5	To continue to produce a landlords newsletter	Strategy & Private Sector Team Manager	Two a year	To achieve a professional, knowledgeable and legally compliant private rented market	Operational Imp Plan	
6	To develop a way of delivering continued professional development to private sector landlords	Strategy & Private Sector Team Manager	September 2017		Operational Imp Plan	

Ref No.	Action	Lead Officer(s)/ Resources	Target Completion Date	Outcome	Links to other plans/strategies	Progress
7	To review the tenant complaint procedure including updating relevant systems and processes to include an online reporting tool	Property Standards Team Manager	April 2014	To have an up-to-date tenant complaint procedure implemented	Operational Imp Plan	
8	To review harassment and illegal eviction process	Strategy & Private Sector Team Manager	March 2016	To have an up-to-date harassment and illegal eviction procedure implemented	Operational Imp Plan	
9	To develop working partnership with Regulatory Services and the fire service e.g. problem properties	Strategy & Private Sector Team Manager	March 2016	To have an effective information exchange and partnership working	Operational Imp Plan	
10	To develop joint mechanisms with trading standards to identify property owners renting out their properties without a valid EPC and not achieving energy performance standards	Strategy & Private Sector Team Manager	2018	To increase the number of decent homes	Operational Imp Plan	
11	To develop joint working relationships to address rogue landlords e.g. 'beds in sheds', and immigration checks	Strategy & Private Sector Team Manager	Date not known as subject to legislation	To comply with new immigration checks. To reduce the presence of rogue landlords and inappropriate behaviour	Operational Imp Plan	

### 03 Enable people whose independence may be at risk to safely remain in or return to their home

Ref No.	Action	Lead Officer(s)/ Resources	Target Completion Date	Outcome	Links to other plans/strategies	Progress
12	To monitor the HIA contract and meet quarterly	Service Manager/ Strategy & Private Sector Team Manager	To 2020	To have an effective HIA service within Worcestershire	SIP HIA Contract	
13	To work with the HIA to ensure the more efficient use of funding e.g. Independent Living Grant	Service Manager/ Strategy & Private Sector Team Manager	September 2015	To ensure a more efficient use of resources to provide more options for vulnerable people	SIP	

Ref No.	Action	Lead Officer(s)/ Resources	Target Completion Date	Outcome	Links to other plans/strategies	Progress
14	To investigate the possibility of introducing a social prescribing scheme with the HIA/public health and local GP surgeries	Service Manager/ Strategy & Private Sector Team Manager	March 2016	To reduce the incidences of cold weather deaths and enable people to live independently in their home	Health & Wellbeing Strategy SIP	
15	To develop a county-wide Housing Assistance Policy	Service Manager	September 2016	An agreed policy	SIP	
16	To identify further funding to extend the HIA contract beyond 2018	Service Manager	March 2018	To continue the delivery of an effective HIA service within Worcestershire	Strategic Housing Partnership Plan SIP	

## 04 Maximise use of the existing private sector housing stock

Ref No.	Action	Lead Officer(s)/ Resources	Target Completion Date	Outcome	Links to other plans/strategies	Progress
17	To work with the Registered Providers, third sector and voluntary agencies, to bring empty homes back into use including vacant spaces above shops	Strategy & Private Sector Team Manager	To 2020	A reduction in the number of empty homes	Housing Strategy	
18	To work to improve the data collection and analysis of information relating to empty properties and attract NHB where appropriate in a joined up way	Property Standards & Enforcement Team Manager	December 2015	To achieve improved levels of NHB	Operational Imp Plan	
19	To attend the Community Led Empty Property Forum to improve the numbers of empty properties being brought back into use	Property Standards & Enforcement Team Manager	December 2015	A reduction in the number of empty homes	Operational Imp Plan	
20	To promote City Life Lettings to increase access to the affordable private rented sector accommodation	Homelessness Team Manager	On-going	To increase and maintain the number of properties to 125 by 2018. To provide access to affordable, good quality private sector housing to prevent homelessness	Homelessness Strategy Housing Strategy Operational Imp Plan	

Ref No.	Action	Lead Officer(s)/ Resources	Target Completion Date	Outcome	Links to other plans/strategies	Progress
21	To view the existing under occupation scheme and develop a model that is not reliant on financial incentives	Strategy & Partnerships Officer - to be identified	March 2016	To make the best use of existing stock by supporting the ability to move where required	Housing Strategy	
22	To develop a whole systems approach to tackling empty properties	Strategy & Private Sector Housing Team Manager	March 2016	A reduction in the number of empty homes	Housing Strategy	
23	To work with Fortis Living to undertake a feasibility for the improvement of Avon and Teme Road	Strategy & Private Sector Housing Team Manager	March 2017	To fully understand the finances required and challenges to be able to create an attractive offer and neighbourhood to meet housing need	Housing Strategy	
24	To engage with identified BME groups to ascertain the higher take up of private rental properties and any housing inequalities within identified BME groups	Strategy & Private Sector Housing Team Manager	September 2016	To understand housing inequalities face by identified BME and how best to address these inequalities with partnership agencies	Housing Strategy	

## 05 Enable more energy efficient and sustainable homes, and reduce fuel poverty

Ref No.	Action	Lead Officer(s)/ Resources	Target Completion Date	Outcome	Links to other plans/strategies	Progress
25	To train officers to be able to conduct Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) assessments and offer as an additional service	Strategy & Private Sector Housing Team Manager	March 2016	To provide a more holistic service to the private sector and achieving a more sustainable home		
26	To jointly procure an energy advice agency within Worcestershire	Service Manager	March 2017	To have a cost effective energy advice service		

Ref No.	Action	Lead Officer(s)/ Resources	Target Completion Date	Outcome	Links to other plans/strategies	Progress
27	Develop health through warmth financial assistance product (part of the Housing Assistance Policy)	Service Manager	October 2016	To improve health by creating thermally comfortable homes and reduce carbon emissions		
28	To continue to work with Warmer Worcestershire to attract funding e.g. Green Deal Communities external wall insulation, warm and healthy funds	Strategy & Partnerships Officer - to be identified	Dependent on opportunities available	To improve health by creating thermally comfortable homes and reduce carbon emissions		
29	To ensure that an appropriate approach is taken regarding Park Street and the new Heat Network Regulations	Homelessness Team Manager	December 2015	To comply with new regulations and provide individual heating bills to occupiers if financially viable		