

**Decent Homes, Decent Neighbourhoods**  
**Oldham's Housing Strategy**  
**2005 -2008**

***Contents***

	<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
	<b>Executive Summary</b>	
	<b>Introduction</b>	
	<b>Understanding change in Oldham</b>	
	<b>Responding to local markets and needs</b>	
	<b>Improving housing quality and choice</b>	
	<b>Meeting Vulnerable people's housing needs</b>	
	<b>Investment to provide excellent retained housing and improved neighbourhoods</b>	
	<b>Achieving Community Cohesion and Sustainable communities</b>	
	<b>Action Plan and resources</b>	
	<b>Appendices</b>	
	<b>Glossary of terms</b>	
	<b>Key contacts</b>	
	<b>References and useful links</b>	

**Decent Homes, Decent Neighbourhoods:  
Oldham's Housing Strategy 2005 - 2008  
Executive Summary**

Oldham a borough of contrasts, of diversity, of challenge, of achievement, of infinite potential and opportunity.

In terms of housing Oldham encapsulates all of the above and this strategy built around the theme of decent homes, decent neighbourhoods details the key challenges and opportunities that exist to meet our aspirations to create sustainable communities.

***Oldham – The Place.***

The Borough has a diverse geography – a mix of urban and rural. The high-density urban areas a legacy of the Borough's industrial past contrasted by the beautiful rural countryside.

The geography brings with it a number of issues from a housing point of view. In the inner areas there is an oversupply of terraced housing and flatted accommodation giving little choice for people to meet their housing aspirations, whilst in the rural areas in particular the lack of affordable housing creates problems for those who want to get on the housing ladder.

Oldham's location on the motorway network is a real plus point and with the move to a more "City region" approach, Oldham is ideally positioned to take maximum advantage of the objectives of the Northern Way and the wider regional and sub-regional agendas. Through the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder we are aiming to restructure the housing market across Oldham and Rochdale and take advantage of our location in attracting people to the Borough and maintaining our existing population. We will provide good quality housing that is affordable and meets people's needs, along with good quality services and facilities.

***Oldham – Its People and Community.***

Oldham is a friendly and welcoming place where people are proud of their community and their heritage. It is also a diverse community, with diverse needs. Diversity covers a whole range of things from the urban/rural dimension, prosperity and deprivation, young and old, race and culture.

We are at the leading edge in regards to meeting our diverse needs and this strategy gives examples of what we are doing. For example, the development of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) for sheltered housing will provide the best portfolio of sheltered housing in the country. Through our Arms Length Management Organisation – First Choice Homes - we are delivering decent homes and improved management services. In addition, we have produced a Young Persons' Housing Needs Strategy in response to meeting the needs of our growing young population and continue to develop larger family housing to meet the acute needs that we have in the Borough for such property.

Our efforts to deal with poverty and deprivation in the Borough have made major strides in the past few years, acknowledged by the fact that we are now the 43<sup>rd</sup> most deprived Local Authority in England (up from 38<sup>th</sup> most deprived in 2000). These improvements have been realised by adopting a holistic approach to change, working in partnership with others. This strategy is built around partnership working as we see this as the only way to effect the real changes that are required in a sustainable way.

This strategy links very closely to the Council's main aim of:

**“Regenerating the Borough in a way that achieves greater Community Cohesion”**

Good quality housing, efficient housing services and a well-managed environment are seen as a foundation for sustainable communities and are therefore fundamental to helping the Council meet its main aim.

***Oldham – Our Achievements.***

In the past few years we have achieved a great deal evidenced by the following key achievements:

- Secured £53.5m Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder funding;
- Created First Choice Homes Oldham – our ALMO – which is helping us deliver Decent Homes as well as improving our housing services;
- Successfully completed two Stock Transfers at Avenues and Hollins and Fitton Hill;
- Appointed a preferred bidder – Housing 21 – to develop our pioneering Private Finance Initiative for sheltered housing;
- Through close working with RSL's have delivered high quality new build schemes and delivered on our ADP targets;
- Housing Market Assessment completed;
- Housing Needs Survey updated;
- Local Housing Partnership established.

## **Oldham – Objectives and Challenges**

The establishment of the Local Housing Partnership, made up of key people from a variety of sectors, allows us to meet the challenges that face us in a joined up way that achieve real outcomes. The vision for the Housing Partnership is that:

**“Oldham’s housing market will be confident and thriving, offering real choice and providing good standard accommodation which meets the needs and aspirations of all who wish to live here.”**

In order to meet this vision we have agreed a number of principal objectives that we believe will allow us to focus our actions on making a real difference to the quality of life for the people of the Borough. Some of the challenges within these objectives and how we will make a difference are as follows:

### **Responding to local markets and needs.**

#### **Challenges:**

- Meeting the acute housing needs in the Borough;
- Improving access to Council and Housing Association Homes;
- Responding to the findings of the Housing Market Assessment;

#### **How we will make a difference:**

- We will make best use of resources and provide homes that meet people’s needs;
- We will develop a customer focussed Choice Based Lettings system and a multi-landlord Housing Register that will make it easier for people to access housing in the Borough;
- In conjunction with the HMR Pathfinder we will deliver the market restructuring necessary to meet housing needs

### **Improving Housing Quality and Choice.**

#### **Challenges:**

- Widening the choice of quality affordable housing across all tenure types by maximising inward investment;
- Providing more large family homes of all tenures;
- Reducing the number of empty properties across all tenures;
- To tackle the impact of stock losses through Right to Buy and demolition, so that there is suitable rented housing to meet acute housing needs;
- To continue with the service improvements made by FCHO;
- To consider the future of council housing in the Borough.

### **How we will make a difference:**

- With our partners and through efficient procurement methods we will provide good quality affordable housing;
- Through new build and conversions we will provide larger family properties that allow a better choice and meet needs;
- We will set “stretch” targets across all tenures to ensure that the numbers of empty properties are kept to a minimum.
- With FCHO and our tenants we will consider the future of FCHO post 2007 and council housing in general.

### **Meeting vulnerable people’s housing needs**

#### **Challenges:**

- Providing high quality housing and support services to vulnerable people;
- Preventing homelessness and improving access to homelessness services;
- Implementing the Supporting People Strategy.

### **How we will make a difference:**

- We will implement the findings of our Supported Accommodation Strategy. For example, we will deliver our pioneering Sheltered PFI Project that will deliver excellent housing and support services;
- Through our Homelessness Forum we will involve service users in identifying and resolving needs and issues and keep the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation to a minimum;
- We will ensure that the strategic priorities detailed in the Supporting People Strategy are met and that all services are monitored to ensure that they attain good quality and good value.

### **Investment to provide excellent retained housing and improved neighbourhoods.**

#### **Challenges:**

- Bring all social rented homes to Decent Homes Standard and 70% of vulnerable households in the private sector by 2010;
- Sustaining and maintaining the investment in Decent Homes in the future;
- Implementation of our Private Sector Renewal Strategy to ensure a borough-wide approach is achieved;
- To work with RSL’s to ensure that their investment strategies complement the strategic housing agenda;
- To evaluate the partnering initiatives through FCHO, to ensure that the learning gained can be factored into a more efficient use of resources;

- Develop our Round 4 PFI (subject to approval) and ensure linkages with the developing HMR programme;
- Delivering Housing Market Renewal, so that decent homes and decent neighbourhoods are achieved.

#### **How we will make a difference:**

- We will deliver our Decent Homes targets;
- We will work with FCHO, RSL's, Private Landlords and owner occupiers to ensure that effective maintenance strategies are in place to ensure investment is sustained;
- We will look at the use of capital receipts as a means of funding to improve our housing stock;
- We will implement our Private Sector Renewal Strategy, through more use of equity based products which will help to improve homes in the private sector and allow people to remain in their homes, therefore sustaining communities;
- We will take the learning from the partnering initiatives to help deliver improvements more efficiently to achieve better value for money;
- Through the PFI we will ensure a whole systems approach to the regeneration of the chosen areas linking in with HMR to ensure maximum benefits are achieved.
- Through "Partners in Action" we will deliver on the outcomes and outputs that have been set.

### ***Achieving Community Cohesion and Sustainable Communities.***

#### **Challenges:**

- Regenerating the Borough in a way that achieves greater Community Cohesion;
- Managing neighbourhoods in transition;
- Creating the conditions that allow confident and cohesive communities to grow;

#### **How we will make a difference:**

- We will implement the actions coming out of the Oldham Beyond Study, primarily through targeted investment in priority areas;
- We will work in partnership to ensure that the impacts of regeneration initiatives are minimised for local people and communities in general;
- We will deliver the market restructuring necessary to ensure that new housing is complemented by improved local facilities and services and that people's skills and knowledge are developed in a way that allows them to aspire to a better quality of life.

## ***Equality Impact Assessment.***

All parts of this strategy have been submitted to an Equality Impact Assessment. The strategy has been assessed to consider all equality/diversity issues, not just those based on race. We aim to ensure that there are no hidden inequalities generated by this strategy, and there is awareness of how decisions to prioritise actions or resource allocation can be to the detriment of other sections of our community. We believe that this approach is best practice and underlines our commitment to addressing the diverse needs of the community that we serve.

# 1. Introduction

## Our Strategic Aims and Objectives

A longstanding aim of the Council, reiterated in the Oldham Community Strategy 2004, is at the heart of this strategy. Following a key strategic theme of 'Decent Homes for All', this is that:

"Oldham's housing market will be confident and thriving, offering real choice and providing good standard accommodation which meets the needs and aspirations of all who wish to live here".

This statement forms the vision for the Oldham Housing Partnership, a key thematic member of the Oldham Partnership<sup>1</sup>. Members of both these partnerships and their strategic links can be found in Appendix X.

To achieve this vision we will;

- Eradicate obsolete housing,
- Involve local people in developing good quality design,
- Give people greater influence and responsibility for the management of their neighbourhoods, and
- Create harmonious communities where diversity is respected.

Housing Market Renewal is a crucial instrument to deliver the objectives of this strategy, where like the HMR Pathfinder, the overall aim is:

"To deliver a transformation in the housing markets in our area, that will create sustainable communities and lead to greater community cohesion"

This housing strategy and action plan covers a breadth of issues and actions that will ensure the various housing and social issues are tackled in a strategic and coherent way.

Our principal objectives are:

- Responding to local housing markets and needs;
- Housing Choice;
- Meeting vulnerable people's housing needs;

---

<sup>1</sup> formerly The Oldham Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

- Investment to provide excellent retained housing and improved neighbourhoods; and
- Achieving Community Cohesion and Sustainable Communities

Each of these aims will be discussed at more length in sections 3 to 7. (see Appendix 1 for ‘the golden thread’.)

Our principal objectives have been influenced by an understanding of how the housing strategy can contribute to:

- The vision and objectives of the Community Strategy;
- The outcomes and impact these priorities will have on communities and customers; and
- Strategic aims sub regionally, regionally and nationally, and those of our partners.

The housing strategy presents a comprehensive vision for the future of housing within the wider objectives of boroughwide neighbourhood regeneration. There are close links between Oldham Housing Partnership (OHP), HMR, private sector renewal, the Oldham Housing Investment Partnership (OHIP), and the recently formed housing strategy team. This has allowed greater synchronicity between research and the strategy work in these sectors. The housing strategy team has further renewed links between housing, other council services and other partners, and works to place housing strategy at the centre of wider strategy. This has enabled improved cross agency working to deliver the aims of the Oldham Partnership.

Through its Area Committees, the council is committed to taking the delivery of strategic housing objectives to a local level, as we see this as a way of developing local multi-agency ownership. In this way we are embracing the modernisation agenda and empowering people and groups accordingly.

We have consulted with a wide range of stakeholders during the preparation of this strategy – see appendix 2. These included:

- A briefing to all parties in the council
- Integral involvement of the lead member for housing
- Presentations to the overview and scrutiny commission and Cabinet
- Presentation to the Housing Strategy Development Team
- Presentations to the Oldham Housing Partnership and Oldham Housing Investment Partnership
- Presentation to the Community Cohesion Partnership, The Health and Social Care Partnership, and Children and Young People’s Partnership
- Presentation to the Homelessness Forum
- Involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in theme based focus groups
- Involvement of a wide range of stakeholders commenting on draft versions of the strategy

The Oldham Partnership agreed our priorities for housing. They will make a major contribution the key aims for the Community Strategy.

The Housing Strategy 2005 – 2008 will outline:

- The issues and challenges that we face and what we need to do to tackle them;
- What has been achieved to date;
- Our plans and actions for the future; and
- How we are going to deliver these plans.

Our response will be based on a good understanding of local issues, which has been arrived at through research and analysis in a range of key areas.

### *The national, regional and sub - regional context*

This strategy shares the government's aim, as outlined in 'Sustainable Communities: Building for the future (The Communities Plan)' to build 'successful, thriving and inclusive communities' by developing partnerships to improve planning and resourcing to deliver change. A key element of the Communities Plan is the Housing Market Renewal Fund. As one of the nine 'Pathfinder' areas, Oldham will benefit from some of the £500 Million available to address housing market vulnerability and collapse over three years from 2004 - 2007.

The second report of the Communities Plan – 'Making it Happen: the Northern Way' - published in February 2004, acknowledged the particular challenges facing communities in the north and the links between low demand housing and below national average economic performance in the region. Improved housing and stronger housing markets, alongside further plans for improved public services, infrastructure and economic development, will complement action to tackle crime, poor health and social exclusion.

Early in 2005 further recommendations were published in 'Sustainable Communities: Homes for All'<sup>2</sup>. The wider links made within the document between housing, sustainable communities and the livability agenda is very welcome, as this echoes the focus of the Oldham and Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder (HMR). The proposed National Skills Centre will further enable the council and HMR to learn by sharing experiences and good practice.

This is supported by its sister document 'People, Places and Prosperity'<sup>3</sup> which promotes the sustainable community agenda by giving communities more power over local issues that affect them, thereby encouraging community involvement and decision making. Also central to this is building public confidence with local

---

<sup>2</sup> Sustainable Communities: Homes for All – 5 year plan (ODPM) January 2005

<sup>3</sup> Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity - Five Year Plan (ODPM) January 2005

authority and regional decision makers so that the council can work effectively with local people in the interests of everyone.

The Communities Plan is supported by a programme of planning reform, including the Planning And Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Act aims to make the system quicker and easier to access, and to encourage community engagement in these processes.

The Housing Act 2004 offers many opportunities to create fairer access to a housing market strengthened by HMR initiatives, particularly for vulnerable people. Aims of the Act include:

- Making home buying and selling processes more transparent and consumer – friendly;
- Amending the Right to Buy scheme;
- Expanding choice based lettings schemes;
- Modernising the council’s role in assessing poor housing conditions;
- Improve the council’s control on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs); and
- Provide the council with powers to license all landlords in areas with low housing demand.

In association with the government’s Housing Renewal Guidance published in July 2003 a key requirement of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002 is the publication by each Local Authority of a local Housing Renewal Policy setting out how it will make use of the various resources available to secure the repair, renewal, regeneration and sustainability of private sector housing stock in its area. The Order requires the Local Authority to demonstrate how the use of each of the specified policy tools will contribute to the achievement of objectives articulated in its Housing Strategy. In later chapters we will outline our plans to utilise these new powers.

Supporting the housing needs and choices of vulnerable people to maintain independent living is central to this strategy. The Supporting People programme, introduced in April 2003, requires us to:

‘Offer vulnerable people the opportunity to improve their quality of life by providing stable environments which enable independence’; and  
‘Deliver high quality... housing related services which are cost effective and reliable and complement existing care services.’

A Supporting People Strategy for Oldham was launched in April 2005. We are working with partner agencies and services to meet local need, at a local and sub – regional level, through delivery of the Supporting People Strategy. Our approach around this is detailed later in this document.

### ***Working in partnership: Sub - regional and regional strategy***

As the Community Plan<sup>4</sup> underlines, it is essential that we work together with our regional neighbours to address problems within a regional or sub regional context. This allows services, funding and planning to be developed at a regional level to avoid duplication of effort and maximise inward investment and quality.

The North West Regional Housing Board has produced The North West Regional Housing Strategy 2005 (RHS), which sets priorities for the 'single pot for housing allocations'. We will continue to work with the board and as part of the Greater Manchester Housing Strategy Officers' Group to influence regional strategy and developments. We have contributed to the consultation document through our involvement in this group. The four regional strategic priorities for housing are:

- Providing affordable homes to maintain balanced communities
- Delivering decent homes in thriving neighbourhoods
- Urban renaissance & dealing with changing demand
- Meeting the needs of communities and providing support for those who need it.

High quality housing is a vital part of the North West's competitive position and will be a catalyst for realising the vision set out in the North West Regional Economic Strategy 2003.

The North West needs to be:

“A region which provides attractive and vibrant communities to live in and will encourage talented individuals to settle and contribute to its economic success”.

The five priorities of this strategy are; Business Development, Regeneration, Skills and Employment, Infrastructure, and Image. We recognise that the economy and housing across the region and sub-region go hand-in-hand in creating sustainable, viable communities.

The Northern Way Growth Strategy identified city-regions as central to economic growth in the North, and the Manchester city-region as having the greatest potential in this respect. Accordingly, a Draft Greater Manchester Economic Delivery Plan 2004/5 – 2006/7 has been developed with specific aims for the sub-region, to make it a 'world class city-region at the heart of the North West'.

However, it is recognised that an inadequate housing supply could be a barrier to economic growth. This has led to the recent establishment of a Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Group, established by AGMA and including representatives from partner organisations such as; the voluntary sector, Housing Corporation, English Partnerships, Regional Development Agency etc.

---

<sup>4</sup> Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity – 5 Year Plan (ODPM) January 2005

This group will develop a sub-regional housing strategy for Greater Manchester that will reflect more accurately housing markets and economic relationships between GM local authorities. It will directly link to the City-Region Development Plan (currently being prepared) and related sub-regional strategies. We are key players in the development of this strategy, through our involvement in this group. Initial aims for the sub-regional strategy include:

- Linking the main elements of the RHS and Regional Spatial Strategy.
- Giving a stronger voice and profile to GM authorities, within the region and nationally.
- Developing shared methodology for housing and planning strategy functions, such as evaluation and monitoring.
- Developing a long-term view on the fitness for purpose of all tenure housing supply in the sub-region and suitable actions to address this.
- Undertaking further research into the sub-regional housing market and its constraints on economic performance and spatial implications of this.

The Oldham Beyond Visioning Initiative was commissioned by the Oldham Partnership and the North West Development Agency and reported in xx 2003. It sets out challenging plans to regenerate the Oldham borough using multi agency and borough wide approaches to develop all aspects of the Oldham economy, cultural life, and landscape. It places Oldham as part of the Northern Way and the City Region and identifies the particular role the borough can play within this. This vision is to be delivered around six key themes;

- Wealth creation,
- Liveability,
- A learning community,
- Sustainable Oldham,
- Common ground, and
- New Oldham.

Action is now underway on many fronts. The impetus will be maintained over the next three years through the 'Thousand Days Campaign'.

Oldham has contributed to the development of regional and sub regional strategies and plans, with active membership of:

- The North West Housing Forum;
- The Greater Manchester Housing Strategy Officers Group;
- The Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Group
- An interagency group for the four Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders working in the North West;
- M62 Group;
- Greater Manchester Supporting People Forum;
- Greater Manchester Homelessness Working Group.

## **Our key stakeholders**

As with any strategy there are a number of key stakeholders who will play a vital role in ensuring key elements are delivered. In Oldham these are many and various, examples being:

### **First Choice Homes Oldham (FCHO)**

Since FCHO was established in 2002 it has been a key partner in our drive to achieve Decent Homes and in the delivery of excellent housing services that are value for money. Major strides have been made through FCHO. It achieved a 2 star rating from the Audit Commission, which brought with it significant investment. The £72m of money for Decent Homes has been put to good use and with an extra £14.4m gained through the Building Cost Model, we are well on our way to achieving our Decent Homes targets. Overall, £120 million will be spent to make council homes decent by 2007, when including the MRA allowance. At the start of 2004/5 more than half of council homes had been made decent, with an aim to make all decent by 2010.

FCHO also provide several statutory services on behalf of the council. These include; homelessness, housing support, asylum seekers support and leaseholders services.

In addition, performance around key indicators has improved year on year resulting in a much-improved service to our customers. For example, our repairs service has improved significantly – with 96% of urgent repairs completed on time 2004/5 compared with 77% in 2003/4. We aim to continue this progress with a target of 99% for 2007/8. Customer satisfaction with the repairs service has also grown, from two thirds satisfied in 2003/4 to nearly three quarters in 2004/5 – we aim to reach xx% by 2005/6. Furthermore, three quarters of tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided by FCHO, putting us in the top 50% of ALMOs for performance – an improvement on the 68% who were satisfied in 2003 – and we hope to attain 90% satisfaction by 2007/8<sup>5</sup>.

We are confident that the marked improvements made will stand us in good stead in meeting our aspirations to have a 3 star ALMO. We are looking to the future and part of our action plan is investigate options for the ALMO when the current Service Level Agreement ends in 2007.

### **Hathershaw and Fitton Hill New Deal for Communities (NDC)**

The NDC is a key corporate priority for the Council and its wider partners including the Primary Care Trust, Crime and Disorder Partnership. In housing terms the NDC is playing a key role in helping to achieve our strategic objectives, particularly around Decent Homes, meeting our affordable housing needs and investing in where it is most needed.

---

<sup>5</sup> Status Survey 2005 Interim Report (Kwest Research) May 2005

For example, NDC played a major role in delivering the Stock Transfer of the Fitton Hill estate. The £6.9m provided by the NDC has allowed a key part of our Stock Options strategy to be delivered. Villages Housing Association, the new landlord, will help to meet Decent Homes targets. In addition, part of Villages' Business Plan involves the demolition of unpopular housing. These will be replaced by homes for sale, a number of which will be affordable.

Furthermore, the criteria set by the NDC for the funding to Villages HA dictated that investment into the housing stock should allow for properties to be made more accessible. This is already being realised through the provision of walk in showers to sheltered bungalows.

NDC will also be actively involved in the development and delivery of proposals for the area through Housing Market Renewal. The second wave Scheme Update is currently being developed and NDC is a key partner in this.

NDC is really making a difference to the quality of housing in Oldham and is contributing to the Borough's regeneration objectives.

### **Oldham Housing Investment Partnership (OHIP)**

OHIP is long established in Oldham and remains a vital part of Oldham's approach to regeneration and sustainable communities. Indeed, OHIP has been augmented recently by two extra members, namely Villages Housing Association and Housing 21.

The Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) who make up OHIP are key to the delivery of our strategic objectives, whether through development and improvement of homes, community cohesion initiatives or the delivery of excellent housing services. They are also an essential part of the restructuring of the housing markets in Oldham through the Housing Market Renewal initiative.

The table below outlines the approximate housing investment, by the council and our partners, in Oldham over the next few years.

<b>Approximate Housing Investment in Oldham 2005 - 2007</b>		
	<b>2005 – 2006 £'000</b>	<b>2006 – 2007 £'000</b>
ALMO	25200,000	25200,000
Housing SCE(R )	1000,000	1000,000
HMRF		
MRR	4454,000	7257,000
Other		
SRB	300,000	
Revenue	1790,000	
ADP		
Private Sector Renewal	2,000,000	2,000,000

Total		
-------	--	--

## ***Our commitment to community cohesion and diversity in Oldham***

'Building Cohesive Communities', published by the Home Office in 2001, made a series of recommendations, many of which were targeted at local authorities, to promote democratic renewal and cohesion within our local communities. Improving equality of access and support for all citizens, and developing cohesion across communities is integral to every strand of this housing strategy.

Encouraging community cohesion is central to the ODPM 5 year plan,<sup>6</sup> to create sustainable communities. The plan outlines how communities should be 'Active, Inclusive and Safe' by offering (amongst others);

- A sense of community identity and belonging
- Tolerance, respect and engagement with people from different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs
- Friendly, cooperative and helpful behaviour in neighbourhoods

Oldham Council's Forward Together Strategy and Action Plan, developed by the Community Cohesion Partnership (CCP), focuses our approach to community cohesion. This involves both developing and delivering equality in the community, but also promoting strong and effective civic leadership as guided by the Community Plan: 'People, Places and Prosperity'<sup>7</sup>

"Cohesion can only come about through mutual understanding, interaction, and participation in the life of the Borough and that the process must be characterised by an honest, fair, frank and open debate using language that is shared and widely understood. Oldham is very keen to add to the debate and to work with others in developing and promoting solutions and in identifying the measures of success needed to create communities which live and work confidently alongside each other, recognising and respecting differences but sharing a sense of belonging and common purpose.<sup>8</sup>"

Therefore Community Cohesion is central to Oldham's plans for regenerating the borough for the benefit of all its diverse communities. A primary aim of Oldham's 2<sup>nd</sup> Community Strategy, published in April 2005, is "Regenerating the borough in a way that achieves greater community cohesion" and this housing strategy will be a vital mechanism to deliver this. The CCP has worked with the Oldham Housing Partnership to assist with the preparation of this strategy.

---

<sup>6</sup> Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity (ODPM) January 2005

<sup>7</sup> Communities Plan – People Places and prosperity (ODPM) January 2005

<sup>8</sup> Forward Together Strategy (OMBC)

Oldham's vision for community cohesion is that:

'The Borough of Oldham will be a place in which people are well educated, with a thriving economy providing people with decent jobs; which has an attractive and healthy environment; where people are safe and live together peacefully; where everyone receives equality of treatment and people treat each other with respect; which welcomes visitors and where people are proud to say they belong.'

There are 3 main themes around which the delivery of this vision is organised;

- Identity – We want people to feel proud, with a positive sense of identity, as a basis for respecting and valuing people different from them
- Equality – We want each individual, each community and each neighbourhood to feel they are getting a fair deal
- Engagement – We want people to have a sense of inclusion and involvement, where citizens recognise they have rights and responsibilities

Community Cohesion is the principal thread throughout this strategy as housing is a crucial area where these key messages can be acted upon and real impact made.

### **Tackling Race Discrimination**

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 strengthened the Race Relations Act 1979 to ensure that specified local authorities work to eliminate unlawful discrimination, and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between ethnic groups.

'Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society'<sup>9</sup> published in January 2005 confirmed the Government's commitment to increasing race equality. The principal aims of this strategy are:

- Improve life chances for all, and
- Building community cohesion

A key sector to deliver these aims will be housing, particularly through action in the social sector, and will need to be delivered in partnership between key stakeholders such as The Council, The Oldham Partnership, Oldham Housing Partnership, OHIP and HMR. We await the publication of the new BME Housing Needs Action Plan and Commission for Racial Equality Code of Practice on housing later this year.

### **Tackling Disability Discrimination**

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995, introduced new rights for disabled people and new duties to suppliers of services. A key objective of this Act is the

---

<sup>9</sup> Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society: The Government's strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion (Home Office) January 2005 (check date)

improvement of access for disabled people to goods and services, often taken for granted by able-bodied people. Improving access to information, opportunities for meaningful involvement, and upgrading physical access to vital council and other services, is also a central theme to the Housing Strategy. We are committed to ensuring that disabled people have access to homes that meet their needs and aspirations. We are currently reviewing our adaptations service and our building design guide will ensure that new developments are built to be 'lifetime homes'.

### **Other inequalities**

The Housing Strategy also strives to promote equality and tackle inequality for other groups, some of which do not have formalised protection in law. Examples include:

- Gender – Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and 1986, Equal Pay Act 1970, and Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- Human Rights Act 1998 – this relates to other aspects of diversity, including sexuality, religious belief and expression and age. Further guidance and legislation is expected to formalise legal protection against discrimination.

### **OMBC Equalities and Diversity Policy and Action Plan**

This strategy, as with all our work, is framed to meet the actions of the Equalities and Diversity Policy published in 2004. This policy states that we will “recognize the importance of standing up for and championing the needs and aspirations of our local communities... our aim is to help develop self confident, representative local voices who can articulate those needs directly, but who share a commitment to bringing people together”

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

All parts of this strategy have been submitted to an Equality Impact Assessment, using the Council's Corporate Assessment Model<sup>10</sup>. Therefore the strategy has been assessed against all equality/ diversity issues, not just those relating to race issues. The purpose is to ensure that there are no hidden inequalities generated by this strategy, and that there is awareness of how decisions to prioritise actions or resource allocation can be to the detriment of other sections of our communities. We believe this approach is best practice and underlines our commitment to addressing the diverse needs of the community that we serve. In assessing Equality Impacts we will be linking in with the work already underway through our 'Forward Together' strategy and FCHO's BME housing strategy and action plan.

### **Ten key achievements since our last strategy 2002 – 2005**

- £53.5 million Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder funding secured

---

<sup>10</sup> Equality Impact Assessment toolkit – OMBC Equality and Diversity team 2004

- FCHO – Oldham ALMO – gaining ‘2 stars’ to secure £72 million funding for Decent Homes, complemented by a further £14.4 million in 2004. This decent homes programme is underway, with XX% of homes decent by April 2005.
- Stock Transfers at Avenues and Hollins, and Fitton Hill completed.
- Preferred bidder – Housing 21 – appointed to develop our pioneering Private Finance Initiative for sheltered housing
- Homelessness Strategy launched and now being implemented
- Supported Accommodation Strategy completed
- Supporting People Strategy completed
- Affordable Warmth Strategy launched and underway
- Housing Market Assessment completed
- Housing Needs Survey updated

We are proud of our achievements over the last 3 years and intend to increase the pace of this good work through the lifespan of this strategy and beyond. The challenges are great, but the opportunities to meet these challenges are huge. Through this strategy and Oldham’s ‘whole systems approach’ to regeneration we are confident that we can make an enormous difference.

## 2. Understanding Change in Oldham

### Oldham and Its population

Oldham Metropolitan Borough is situated in the North East of the Greater Manchester conurbation, approximately 7 miles from Manchester City Centre and is made up from the townships of Shaw, Royton, Lees, Failsworth, Saddleworth, Chadderton and Oldham town itself. The Borough covers an area of 55 square miles (142.5 square kilometres). Approximately half the Borough is open moorland and protected landscape areas and a small proportion of the Southeast corner of the Borough falls within the Peak District National Park.

Map of borough showing committee boundaries and surrounding authorities – include town centre area

At the 2001 Census, the resident population of Oldham Borough was 217,273 residing in 87,824 households. Although the population is fairly stable, with a projected marginal increase to 221,600 by 2021, there is expected to be a growth in household numbers as the trend to smaller households continues.

The proportion of people coming from Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnicity is expected to rise from 11.6% in 2001 to x% by 2021 following recent trends. Most of this growth has been due to natural growth (more births than deaths) as the South Asian population is generally quite young. There is some international migration, but most members of these communities were born in the UK.

Meanwhile, the White population is expected to decrease slightly, continuing the trend over the period 1991 – 2001, due to the older age demographic in this community and following the migration trends of other small industrial towns. The table below outlines the ethnic identity of the population in 1991 and 2001<sup>11</sup> when compared to overall national figures.

More age info here. – ‘dumbbell’ graph

Ethnicity in Oldham				
compatible groups derived from Census 1991 & 2001				
	Oldham % and (no.)		England and Wales	
	1991	2001	1991	2001
White	91% (197,451)	86% (187,147)		
Black	1% (1794)	1% (1214)		

<sup>11</sup> The future population and number of households in Oldham and Rochdale Boroughs Interim report – population, household and social change (CCSR University of Manchester) April 2005

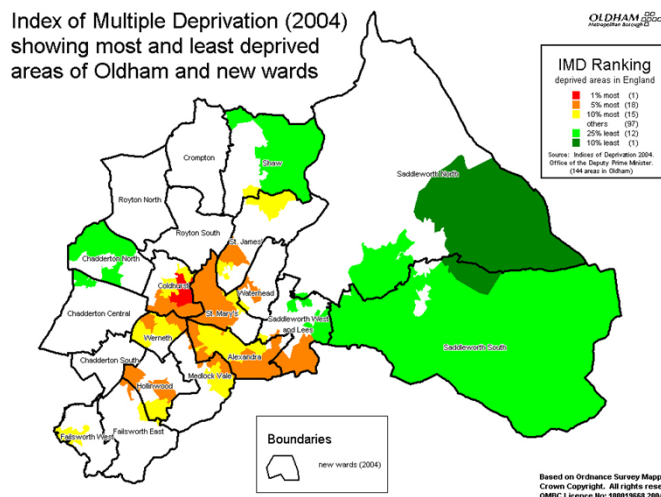
Bangladeshi	2% (5139)	5% (9813)	
Indian	1% (1557)	1% (1522)	
Pakistani	4% (8921)	5% (13,644)	
Other	1% (1420)	2% (3860)	
Total	100% (216,275)	100% (217,197)	

### Deprivation in Oldham

The improvement of housing conditions and regeneration in its all forms, physical, social and economic, plays a huge part in the recent history of the Borough. Our actions have been successful in reducing deprivation in Oldham relative to other boroughs and by ‘narrowing the gap’ within the borough. Oldham is the 43<sup>rd</sup> most deprived Local Authority in England in 2004 (using average of scores), up from the 38<sup>th</sup> most deprived in 2000 and from 33<sup>rd</sup> in the mid 1990s.

Despite this improvement, the Borough still has a disproportionate number of deprived neighbourhoods when compared with the country as a whole;

- Almost one quarter of the borough local areas are in the most deprived 10% nationally.
- One Super Output Area (SOA)<sup>12</sup>, in the St Mary’s ward is amongst the most deprived 1% of SOAs nationally
- Nineteen SOAs are in the top 5% most deprived.
- In contrast, SOAs in Saddleworth are amongst the 10% least deprived nationally.
- The greatest areas of deprivation are found in parts of central Oldham and includes residential areas where private sector housing dominates as well as areas where there is mostly public sector housing.



<sup>12</sup> Super Output Area (SOA) – 144 small neighbourhoods in Oldham defined in census data

Although no SOAs in Oldham are in the top 10% deprived for 'Barriers to housing and services', more than a quarter are ranked in the top 10% for crime, and there are significant problems with; education, skills and training, health and disability, and employment, causing localised quality of life issues that can damage the sustainability of neighbourhoods<sup>13</sup>. Further maps showing the concentrations of multiple deprivation can be found in appendix x.

### **Links to the Oldham economy**

A recent Labour Force Survey<sup>14</sup> found that 6.4% of the borough's working age population of 131,000 is unemployed, higher than Greater Manchester and regional figures, although the numbers claiming Job Seekers Allowance have decreased by more than half since 1996. The 2001 census highlighted that the Coldhurst, St Mary's and Werneth wards had particularly high numbers of unemployed.

The survey also showed that with economic activity at 79% there was less economic inactivity in Oldham than regionally or nationally - however where there were higher levels of economic inactivity, these corresponded closely with wards also with the highest unemployment, with only the addition of Failsworth West. Many economically inactive people are registered sick or disabled, the numbers of whom grew by 35% between 1991 and 2001, far more than the regional increase of 27%. This has hampered our efforts to reduce concentrations of deprivation in these areas.

The average weekly gross wage for people working in Oldham (£402.13) is below regional and national averages and there are signs this is declining further. This suggests there is little expansion of higher - skill employers in the borough. Although the workforce in the borough is growing, opportunities for employment locally are not expanding at the same pace, and opportunities are mainly in low paying and vulnerable employment sectors – notably parts of the manufacturing, retail and service sectors.

Overall the range of employment sectors offering jobs in Oldham has contracted in recent years, with more than 6 out of 10 jobs provided by only 22 sectors in 2002. The average weekly wage for Oldham residents is slightly higher at £405.31. People looking for higher paid work may be channeled out of the borough, most notably towards Manchester where wage levels for skilled occupations are considerably better, although there is less incentive for other groups<sup>15</sup>. Developing further links for Oldham people into the sub – regional labour market is an important part of Oldham's Economic Strategy.

---

<sup>13</sup> Indices of Deprivation 2004 – What do they mean for Oldham? - Monitoring board report, June 21 2004

<sup>14</sup> Local Area Labour Force Survey March 2002 – February 2003 quoted in HMA March 2005

<sup>15</sup> New Earnings Survey & Nomis 2004 quoted in HMA (GVA Grimley) March 2005

These restrictions in income have a direct affect on the ability of residents to access suitable accommodation within the Oldham housing market. Regional studies suggest there are links between housing supply and economic performance, where the areas of most intense deprivation are the areas with poorest economic performance and little housing choice, and this is supported by findings of the Housing Market Assessment (HMA) – there is more about this assessment in later in this section.

The census 2001 found that a quarter of the working age population have no qualifications – well above the regional average – while less Oldham residents are educated to degree level or above than regionally. In particular, the Oldham population has lower levels of basic (literacy and numeracy) skills and lower GCSE attainment than the GM sub – region or nationally. This restricts access to higher skilled occupations, both within Oldham, and in neighbouring travel to work areas.

Most of the travel to work trips beginning in Oldham were destined for another area of Oldham, although more people travel out of the borough to work (primarily to Manchester, Salford, or Tameside) than travel into the Borough from elsewhere. Although most journeys by public transport are for short localised trips, patterns appear to link with rail connections. Public transport is a particularly important method in accessing Manchester job markets and will be supported by the planned Metrolink extension.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Oldham's Housing Market***

The North West has been acknowledged as having the highest concentrations of low demand properties and therefore 'Urban renaissance and dealing with changing demand' is the primary priority from the North West Housing Strategy. Like many other Northern towns, Oldham has experienced fundamental changes in the housing market – changes that seriously impact on our ability to successfully deliver boroughwide regeneration. Increasing evidence of housing market dysfunction in some parts of the Borough has refocused our strategic thinking and we welcome the Government's support for the Housing Market Renewal fund.

Oldham has a housing stock of approximately 86,000 properties that are made up of 15,708 Council stock and 7,122 Registered Social Landlord (RSL) properties with the remainder being privately owned or rented properties.

---

<sup>16</sup> Details from HMA (GVA Grimley) March 2005

### Oldham Housing by Tenure 2001 - 2005

Sector	April 2001		April 2003		April 2005	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Private					71352	76%
Rent from Council					15146*	16%
Rent from RSL					6076	6%
<b>Total</b>					<b>93480</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*This includes some non - HRA council properties.

It has long been recognised that structural imbalances exist within Oldham's housing markets. Most strikingly, there are 23,000 pre-1919 terraced homes; many of these are of poor quality, do not reach the decent homes standard, and do not meet residents' current needs and aspirations. Oldham has more of these terraced properties than any other borough in the country, apart from the city of Liverpool, and many of these are in the HMR Pathfinder area. There are also less detached or semi-detached houses than are generally found in Greater Manchester stock profiles. This is a key problem in the mismatch between supply and demand - Housing Market Dysfunction.

**Housing Market Dysfunction**  
 "A mismatch between available housing and householder aspirations, in terms of housing size, the quality of the housing product and associated environment" HMA 2005

Imbalances within the housing market extend across tenures. For example, Oldham's Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) - First Choice Homes Oldham [FCHO] - has a disproportionate number of small flats and maisonettes, which are unsuitable for most families seeking accommodation, and often do not appeal to the aspirations of other need groups. A breakdown of FCHO stock can be seen in the table below.

<b>FCHO stock profile 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005</b>											
Flats & Maisonettes				Bungalows			Houses				
Bedsit	1	2	3+	Bedsit	1	2+	1	2	3	4	5+
267	4427	2599	243	41	1056	221	5	2459	3459	166	19
Total: 7336				Total: 1318			Total: 6416				
Overall total: 15071											

It has long been recognised that overcrowding can seriously affect mental and physical health and can particularly harm the life chances of children<sup>17</sup>. In the worst affected ward, Coldhurst, more than 2 in every 10 households are overcrowded, compared with the national average of 7%, and there are also serious problems in Werneth, St Mary's, Alexandra and St Paul's. Although levels have dropped for all communities since 1991, overcrowding is still a major problem and is particularly severe within the Bangladeshi community.

Tackling this issue is vital in Oldham. There are only 180 properties with 4 or more bedrooms available in the 'social sector' and these have a slow turnover. 170 households were on Council waiting lists for a home with four or more bedrooms in April 2004 and this rose to 194 by April 2005, from 130 in 2001<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, despite focusing ADP investment on large homes, there is still significant unmet need for homes suitable for large families.

### **Providing quality and choice**

A number of factors in Oldham's housing markets have combined to reduce housing choice for people in housing need and this has been a prime influence on our investment decisions.

House prices have recently increased substantially, growing by an average of 4% a year from 1997 – 2001, peaking at a 16% rise in 2001 and 2002, and slowing to just under 10% in 2003. Most of this slowdown is due to a reduction in price growth for larger, top-end properties, a picture reflected by the views of local estate agents. Meanwhile, the cost and market for smaller affordable homes has continued to grow, although values remain below the regional and national average – and this gap continues to increase (see graph in appendix X). Current national forecasts do not predict a house price 'crash', more that the market will continue to slow down.

Average house prices in the Oldham HMR area and average house prices in Oldham and the North West at the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2004 can be found in the table below.

<b>Average House prices in Oldham &amp; North West</b>					
	Oldham HMR	Differential %	Oldham	Differential %	North West
Overall	£55,601	-44	£99,646	-26	£133,877
Detached	£93,833	-58	£223,085	-12	£252,135
Semi-detached	£80,701	-35	£124,547	-11	£139,719
Terraced	£50,787	-25	£67,896	-20	£84,680

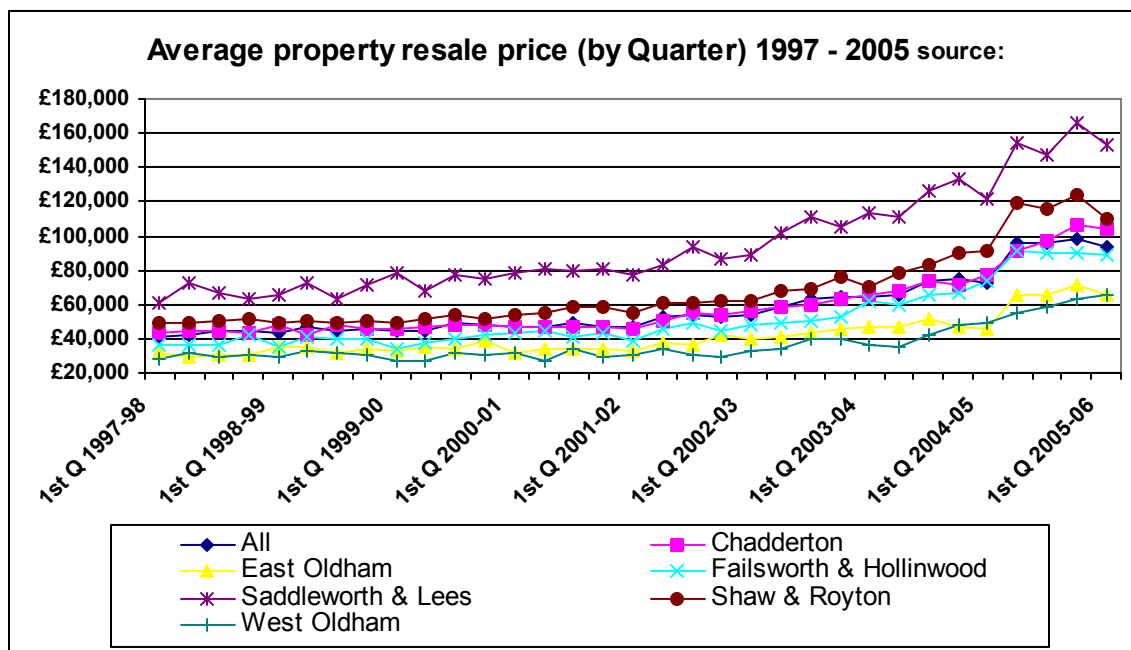
<sup>17</sup> For instance see current Shelter study 'Crowded House' 2004 or Sustainable Communities: Homes for All

<sup>18</sup> HSSA 2004

Flat or maisonette	#	#	£84,965	-33	£127,034
--------------------	---	---	---------	-----	----------

There is a wide diversity of house prices across the Oldham Borough - as shown in the graph below (and in the further graphs in appendix x). For instance:

- During January to March 1997, 208 resale properties (34% of 614 resale properties) were purchased at under £30,000 rising to 311 (34% of 904 sales) homes in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2001, but falling to just 12 (2% of 570 sales) by the start of 2005. At the same time, only 19 homes (3%) were sold in the £100-150,000 bracket during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 1997, rising to 117 properties (20%) by January to March 2005.
- The average resale price of a terraced house in West Oldham rose by 143% between the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 1997 (£22,832) and 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2005 (£55,524) – prices rose by 8% between Q1 1997 and Q1 2001, but by 124% between Q1 2001 and Q1 2005. In Royton and Shaw, the average terrace sold for £32,596 in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 1997 and £87,759 by January to March 2005 – an increase of nearly 170%, with prices again beginning to soar after 2001.
- In Saddleworth and Lees terraced homes increased by 140%, from £46,340 to £11,1123 (peaking at £118,095 at the end of 2004). Resale values of semi-detached homes rose by just over 150% from £59,906 to £150,758 by January to March 2005.
- In East Oldham, the average resale price of semi-detached homes rose by 174% from £39,222 during January to March 1997 to £107,498 at the start of 2005, while prices of these properties rose by 126% in West Oldham.
- The average sale price of a new build home in Oldham rose from £xx in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 1997 to £xx by January to March 2005. semi detached homes rose by xx% over this period, while terraced homes rose by xx%.



[Put up to date house price map in here.](#)

However, in most areas of Oldham, wages remain low and show little sign of improving. By the end of 2004 a person earning an average Oldham income would expect to pay more than 5 times their annual income to buy the average priced Oldham home, although this ratio is still below the North West Average.<sup>19</sup> Therefore many people are barely managing to buy a home – putting themselves at severe financial risk – or are being denied access to owner-occupation altogether. In addition, low income and lack of savings or access to suitable loans means many householders struggle to adequately maintain their home, leading to disrepair and a worsening spiral of decline.

There is also notable residential segregation along ethnic lines. The BME population is mainly concentrated in three wards in Oldham; Coldhurst, St Mary's and Werneth. The Pakistani community is primarily found in the wards of Alexandra, St Mary's, Werneth and St Paul's, while the Bangladeshi community has mainly settled in Coldhurst, with smaller communities in Alexandra, St Mary's and Werneth wards. There is also a sizable Indian community in St Paul's.

Therefore, many of these BME households live in the private sector terraced housing common in central Oldham neighbourhoods.

- Many families live in small 2 bedroom terraced houses that are overcrowded and in poor condition.
- Most homes have no gardens, small rear yards and no parking restricting usable outside space.
- Although property values are comparatively low there is generally little abandonment.

South Asian communities effectively sustain demand in these areas, and this is likely to continue if projections of BME population growth are borne out. However, housing market dysfunction exists, as local communities are often constrained by lack of resources or fear of potential harassment if they move to other areas with better quality homes. Larger family households are predominantly from the South Asian communities but there a shortage of suitable, affordable accommodation to meet their housing needs on the open market in areas of their choice. In affect, many households are living 'parallel lives' in communities separate to the white community.

Analysis by the Housing Market Assessment confirms that few 'non – white' households migrated between wards in Oldham during the year 2000/1 whereas there were higher levels of internal localised movement within wards with significant BME communities. However, while migration into these wards has

---

<sup>19</sup> All house price data from Land Registry data (mean averages), Income data from Annual Survey of Hours and earning 2004 – HMA (GVA Grimley) March 2005 (# No data available for this subgroup).

expanded BME populations in 'traditional settlement areas', some movement can be seen into 'growth' areas in neighbouring wards where there are already smaller BME communities. There is also some settlement by more affluent Asian families in areas such as Shaw.<sup>20</sup>

Home ownership amongst South Asian communities fell by 12% during the 1990s as households began to rent from private landlords, FCHO, and RSLs as they moved out of traditional settlement areas. This is despite the cultural preference for home ownership, particularly within Pakistani and Indian communities<sup>21</sup>.

Recent Housing Corporation research<sup>22</sup> shows that at a national level, a significant section of the Muslim population suffers from severe and persistent poverty and the associated problems of sub-standard and blighted neighbourhoods. Oldham is no exception to this. Muslim communities have some of the worst housing conditions in the borough, with many households overcrowded, reflecting larger household sizes, and living in poor quality homes.

Unemployment levels in BME communities are also high when compared to local, regional and national averages. Unemployment rates for BME people are three times that of the white population in Oldham. 20% of young people of Bangladeshi or Pakistani origin are unemployed, double that of young white people<sup>23</sup>. On average pupils of Bangladeshi, Pakistani or African Caribbean origin have lower levels of GSCE attainment which further restricts their options in the job market.

However, there are also pockets of severe deprivation within the wider community across the borough, such as at Fitton Hill, Sholver or Alt. For these reasons Oldham takes a boroughwide approach to regeneration and funding initiatives to ensure funding is not geographically determined, but is focused on need and identified locations that could be drivers for a stabilised market. We believe that this is essential if we are to have mixed and balanced communities that are sustainable.

In some outlying areas, most notably Saddleworth, where suitable private properties are available, many local people are priced out of the market by high prices. Demand is high for council or RSL properties in these areas but supply is decreasing due to slow property turnover rates and a high number of Right To Buys. The HMA found there is significant demand for 'Social Housing' across Oldham, but suggested that 'social' in this context could be taken to mean

---

<sup>20</sup> Housing Market Assessment (GV Grimley) March 2005

<sup>21</sup> The future population and number of households in Oldham and Rochdale Boroughs Interim report – population, household and social change (CCSR University of Manchester) April 2005

<sup>22</sup> Muslim Housing Experiences (Housing Corporation) September 2004

<sup>23</sup> Census ?

'affordable', in a variety of forms (and not only and always 'socially' rented) as demand and aspiration for owner occupation increases.

Affordable housing policies are being developed which take account of these issues and our approach to dealing with them. For instance two schemes have been developed in Saddleworth, where homes were sold with a Resale Covenant to ensure the properties were offered at a discount rate when resold in the future. Whilst small in number, this will go some way to helping some of those in need.

### ***Housing Market Renewal.***

HMR was sponsored by the Government to transform housing markets in northern cities, the problems of which were highlighted by the CURS study<sup>24</sup>. The aim is for intervention to address market failure in vulnerable neighbourhoods and make them sustainable. Unlike other regional pathfinders there has not been collapse of local housing markets in Oldham, but instead dysfunction. The principal reasons for this are detailed earlier in this chapter, but key issues include:

- Segregated communities
- Poor quality housing
- Lack of choice
- Poor value for money

Oldham Council, in partnership with Rochdale MBC, secured substantial Government funding in 2003, as one of the nine Housing Market Renewal (HMR) Pathfinders. Members of the two Local Strategic Partnerships joined to establish the HMR board for Oldham and Rochdale, along with council and independent representatives. In the 2003 submission the HMR, 'Oldham and Rochdale - Partners in Action', proposed a 15 year plan to deliver 'Transformation and Cohesion' in the boroughs.

A core team was initially recruited to develop strategy and local neighbourhood implementation teams were formed to complement this. The primary intervention in Oldham focuses on the Derker and Werneth/ Freehold areas and is being extended to other south and central areas of the borough. The geographical extent of this initiative can be seen in the map below.

The area, as proposed in the 'Scheme Update' due to be completed in July 2005, is not 'red lined' so firmly, allowing more communities to gain benefit from the initiative, although housing action will be focused in the 'priority neighbourhoods' – the Clarkwell, Glodwick, Hathershaw, Coppice and Hollinwood areas.

### **GIS Map of HMR areas**

---

<sup>24</sup> CURS study more details here.

Several large pieces of research have been undertaken to further inform the development of this project update. One such commission was an updated Housing Needs survey completed in 2004. Key findings of the update included;

- Although there was a 'modest surplus' of affordable housing in the borough, these were often in the wrong locations or were smaller units unsuitable for families
- These problems will be exacerbated in the short-term by HMR demolition, and the specific income/ affordability issues and low overall property quality in these areas
- A target of 30% should be set for affordable homes within future housing developments to address the imbalanced availability of good quality affordable family homes
- Just over half of these should be of a tenure that is not socially rented, where the demand is for 2 and 4 bedroom homes

In late 2004, Oldham MBC and Rochdale MBC commissioned consultants to conduct a Housing Market Assessment (HMA). This desktop review was designed to strengthen the Oldham and Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Partnership's understanding of the housing market in the intervention areas and its relationship to the wider sub-region. It has been designed to respond to specific recommendations of the Audit Commission Scrutiny Report (March 2004) and to inform the preparation of future intervention programmes. Its findings were important in reviewing the progress and developing intervention proposals for 2006/7 onwards, which was the basis of the scheme update. The HMA work has:

- Confirmed the strategic context, key trends and the definition of housing markets
- Assessed supply and demand and the key underlying drivers
- Increased understanding of key drivers where there are important gaps
- Assessed findings for the sustainability of HMR neighbourhoods, for affordable housing provision and the implications for future interventions
- Directed future research both boroughwide and with the HMR partnership
- Built the skills base and frameworks for monitoring, review and innovation.

The Housing Market Assessment identified nine sub-markets within the Oldham and Rochdale housing market area. In general much of the demand in these markets is locally - generated rather than based on migration from other areas, a picture confirmed by the experience of local estate agents, especially in HMR areas. Four of these sub-markets were in the Oldham borough. These are:

- Inner Oldham
- Failsworth
- Saddleworth/ Lees
- Royton, Crompton and Shaw

The HMA suggested that interventions in a specific location should impact positively on other parts of the sub-market, which has implications for the

development of a sustainable market renewal strategy. The table below outlines market over - and under - supplies of property type.

Insert table/ graph of market over and under supplies from HMA?

In order to deliver the market restructuring necessary to meet housing need, as indicated by the current flow of demand, the HMA gave the following recommendations:

- An additional 8461 households need to be provided for by 2019 – averaging 560 units per year, net of clearance,
- The number of terraced properties needs to be reduced by 6,600 units and flats by 1,200, and
- 13,900 larger houses need to be built by 2019.

However, an ongoing planning, monitoring and managing approach needs to be applied to ensure housing market demand and aspirations, and other relating factors are continuously checked and predictions revised. The fundamental link between economic regeneration strategy and the housing market must be strengthened to support growth in the spatial strategy.

The HMA states:

“Creating sustainable communities should be at the heart of the spatial strategy. An approach should be developed which plans for the stabilisation and support of existing communities with the pathfinder area, but which simultaneously creates opportunities for developing new markets that will encourage existing residents to stay, and attract higher-income households. Both will rely on the creative use of the distinctive strengths of ‘places’ to create places in which households choose to live, rather than live by necessity.”

Further analysis to provide up to date demographic projections for the borough has been funded by the HMR pathfinder.<sup>25</sup> Due to be completed by September 2005, this work will strengthen our understanding of demographic change in Oldham and Rochdale to enable more effective planning of housing and services.

An initial study of HMR research into community opinion about their homes and neighbourhoods was carried out during 2003<sup>26</sup> and this is being built upon during 2005; work currently being undertaken by Kwest Research and due to report by August 2005. The study is being carried out, mainly in HMR areas, targeting a

<sup>25</sup> The future population and number of households in Oldham and Rochdale Boroughs Interim report (CCSR University of Manchester) March 2005

<sup>26</sup> HMR Household Survey (MORI) October 2003 (A postal survey of the whole Oldham and Rochdale Boroughs). Findings outlined here are from the HMR Executive Summary and Investigation of Background Issues.

representative sample from the communities. In particular we will be seeking more representative response rates from BME communities in the HMR areas. The research is predominantly using a laptop - based conjoint approach that will help us better understand how people feel and make choices about the homes and neighbourhoods they live in or aspire to live in.

### **Oldham and Rochdale HMR Pathfinder Scheme Update**

Oldham and Rochdale HMR will submit the 'Scheme Update' to the ODPM in July 2005. This will review the initial submission using improved intelligence about the housing market – its drivers and issues, housing need and resident opinion<sup>27</sup>. We will bid for a further 2 years' funding of £40 - £70 million per annum for 2006 – 2008. This programme will meet the targets developed by the ODPM and emphasise the transformation of the market by moving away from the previous neighbourhood regeneration approach and building stronger links with the planning framework.

The work of the pathfinder will be managed and monitored following Audit Commission guidelines with clear focus on:

- Strategic objectives and related outputs and outcomes
- Value for Money, and
- Deliverability

Key priorities for the Pathfinder have been developed further using this evidence base, namely to:

- Create a step change in housing diversity and choice by providing and facilitating new housing and changing the balance in favour of larger properties;
- Transform the quality of housing and the environment, and plan for its long-term sustainability;
- Provide and promote a range of affordable housing options;
- Facilitate the economic development of Oldham and Rochdale;
- Help to promote community cohesion;
- Help to provide an excellent quality of life to encourage residents to remain in or move to the pathfinder area.

The ethos of the HMR scheme update will be more community centred than the initial areas, where important lessons have been learnt, to ensure public support for the plans.

It will be vital to build on opportunities for economic growth and development as research has highlighted that Oldham's economic structure does not support the balancing of dysfunctional housing markets due to the low skills and income of

---

<sup>27</sup> The Housing Market Assessment, Housing Needs Survey and EDAW study etc, as detailed in this section.

many residents, which do not match new jobs being brought to the borough or surrounding areas<sup>28</sup>.

The extension of Metrolink to Oldham (a key aim for HMR) and the close access to the motorway network and Manchester city centre, offers a potential to harness some of this regional economic growth to create more sustainable communities for people to live and work in. Links to the Regional Investment Sites, of Kingsway Business Park in Rochdale and North Manchester Business Park, are key to the HMR strategy.<sup>29</sup>

### **Development Planning**

The relationship between the process of statutory development planning and our achievement of strategic housing objectives is particularly crucial in Oldham as we enter a period of transformational change. Many factors contribute to the complexity of the issues to be tackled:

- The significant housing demolition and neighbourhood remodeling accompanied by large – scale, new - build development as envisaged by HMR.
- There is a comparatively limited amount of land available for new development and many competing pressures upon this land. For instance we must balance the need for economic development against the requirement to find space for accommodating additional households.
- There are low vacancy rates and little unused land in HMR core neighbourhoods, but the programme will inevitably reduce house densities in these areas.
- There are very different issues in the eastern part of the borough, where developments will have to be restrained to support HMR, but local affordability problems will still have to be addressed due to high property values in this area.
- The interplay with neighbouring boroughs and the Manchester and Salford HMR also needs to be considered.

We have recognised the importance of resolving a set of complicated, interconnected and dynamic policy choices. To facilitate this process we have brought together community strategy work, spatial planning, housing strategy and economic policy in a single Division of the Chief Executives Department. The same division is charged with leading on community cohesion to ensure this is a thread that runs through all our policy development activity.

### **Decent Homes Standard**

The Government set a ten - year target to address the backlog of repairs within the public sector, as part of its overall housing strategy. The aim, through the

---

<sup>28</sup> Housing Market Assessment (GVA Grimley) March 2005

<sup>29</sup> Oldham HMR visioning document (EDAW) March 2005

Decent Homes programme is to bring all properties up to decency standards by 2010.

The main monitored elements of the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) are that a property should:

- Meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing;
- Be in a reasonable state of repair;
- Have reasonably modern facilities and services (not be lacking three or more components);
- Provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

During 2001 Oldham Council carried out a stock options study<sup>30</sup> to secure the delivery of Decent Homes Standard to its stock, and was one of the first local authorities to do so. This study recommended a multiple response to the issues uncovered, including:

- The setting up of an Arms-Length Management Organisation (ALMO),
- The stock transfer of two estates,
- Sheltered Housing PFI initiatives for 1700 of our properties, and
- Demolition of certain unpopular estates or properties.

In April 2002 the ALMO – First Choice Homes Oldham - was launched to provide housing management, maintenance and improvements on OMBC properties as well as other statutory responsibilities such as homelessness, housing support for public and private sector residents and an asylum team.

Under Section 27 of the Housing Act 1985, a legal agreement was drawn up highlighting the legal relationship and responsibilities between FCHO and Oldham MBC. The agreement describes the delegated functions in a management agreement. FCHO business strategy, outputs and key performance indicators are set out in FCHO's delivery plan and the HRA Business Plan.

In 2003 FCHO achieved a '2 stars' rating at inspection and was been awarded £72 million to deliver decent homes between 2003 and 2007. A further £14.4 million was awarded in 2004 following presentation of an updated building costs model. Working with a key selection of partners FCHO aim to complete this work, to high quality and value for money standards, by 2007. In April 2003 43% of FCHO homes met the DHS and this rose to 52% by April 2004 – putting us in the top 50% of ALMO performances

The table below outlines the costs of bringing all FCHO properties up to the DHS. Each year shows original costs from the ALMO bid of 2002 and the revised costs using the 'Building Costs Model' (BCM).

---

<sup>30</sup> Oldham Housing Inquiry (Housing Quality Network) 2001

<b>Decent Homes Costs 2003 - 2007</b>								
Category	2003/4 plan	2003/4 actual	2004/5 plan	2004/5 actual	2005/6 plan	2005/6 BCM	2006/7 plan	2006/7 BCM
Kitchens	3,237,700		3,237,700		3,237,700		3,237,700	
Bathrooms	3,082,700		3,082,700		3,082,700		3,082,700	
Windows	6,785,000		6,785,000		6,785,000		6,785,000	
Central Heating	3,474,600		3,474,600		3,474,600		3,474,600	
Chimneys	12,300		12,300		12,300		12,300	
Doors	180,800		180,800		180,800		180,800	
Rewiring	333,800		333,800		333,800		333,800	
Roof covering	159,200		159,200		159,200		159,200	
Roof structures	51,100		51,100		51,100		51,100	
Structural works	547,800		547,800		547,800		547,800	
Other	157,100		157,100		157,100		157,100	
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,022,100</b>		<b>18,022,100</b>		<b>18,022,100</b>		<b>18,022,100</b>	

FCHO play a major role in the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives and in meeting its statutory obligations. A Performance Management Framework is in place to help manage the relationship between the Council and FCHO, as well as Service Level Agreements that set out; what is to be delivered, how this is done, and the cost of these services.

This five - year ALMO contract runs until the end of March 2007. We will be working in line with government guidance, soon to be published, and taking account of work done by the National Federation of ALMOs on the future of council housing<sup>31</sup>. We will consult once more with our tenants and the wider community as to the most effective future management of council homes. We will be commissioning an Independent Tenants Advisor to lead this review on behalf of tenants and residents. Also central to our aim however, is the delivery of decent neighbourhoods to complement the decent homes programme due for completion in 2007. This can only be provided if the ALMO is given a stable and sustainable future and, if it meets 3 stars, is able to lever in further investment.

All RSLs in Oldham - working together through OHIP - will ensure they provide decent homes by 2010. Most RSL property currently meets these standards, but there is much work to do in some areas – particularly on formerly council - owned transfer estates such as Villages HA at Fitton Hill.

<sup>31</sup> ALMOs – a new future for council housing (National Federation of ALMOs)

### **Private sector renewal to deliver decent homes in the private sector**

In 2004 the ODPM published targets for improvements to decent homes standards in the private sector. This aims to deliver these standards to 70% of vulnerable households in the private sector by 2010. This is a great opportunity for Oldham when viewed in parallel with Housing Market Renewal investment and the Council's mainstream programme detailed in the Private Sector Renewal Policy.

### 3. Responding to Local Housing Markets and Needs

Key Objectives;

- Improve access to housing in all tenures
- Further develop housing support services to enable people to become independent or remain in their homes
- Ensure Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder delivers affordable quality homes
- Continue research and development of robust mechanisms for analysis of housing markets and housing need
- Monitor this action through the corporate service improvement plan

#### Oldham's housing market

Further details of Oldham's housing market, its place in the region and other linked issues can be found in Section 2 – Understanding Change in Oldham

#### *Oldham Beyond*

Restructuring the housing market is an important part of Oldham Beyond. The Oldham Beyond work will provide a basis from which to develop a more detailed area analysis and more defined proposals for intervention within our neighbourhoods, some of which are experiencing housing market dysfunction, have concentrations of socially obsolete housing, and wider deprivation issues. It is important that any consideration of housing market and need understands and takes note of factors such as the Regional Economic Strategy, future transport plans and Green Space Strategy to ensure quality sustainable communities – this is being corporately driven by the 'Thousand Days Campaign'<sup>32</sup>.

#### *Oldham and Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Area*

Revitalising the housing market in deprived neighbourhoods is a great opportunity. The HMR Pathfinder (as outlined in section 2 – Understanding Change) is not only key to the delivery of regeneration programmes for both Oldham and Rochdale, but is also central to the creation of a dynamic housing market and a vibrant and sustainable economy.

We are well placed to meet this challenge, as the HMR sits within the context of the national and regional frameworks, as well as within both boroughs' Community Strategies and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies. Oldham and Rochdale are working with their Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and other

---

<sup>32</sup> The 1000 days campaign is a special campaign that has been launched recently to drive and monitor the progress of the Oldham Beyond initiative. The specially formed independent commission will be chaired by Professor Peter Roberts of Liverpool University.

key agencies and have ambitious plans to deliver the social, economic and physical regeneration of both towns.

We have focused our housing strategy on creating ‘Decent Homes and Decent Neighbourhoods’, with a particular aim of delivering housing market improvements on the north east, central and inner south areas of Oldham . These are all areas characterised by a limited housing choice, overcrowding and a high density of pre-1919 pavement terraced properties. In recognition of this, and the past failures of traditional neighbourhood regeneration approaches, the partnership has set out a transformational agenda.

To deliver this, resources will be directed towards initial interventions in the private sector housing market that will become the foundations of further investment to unlock the true potential of the pathfinder areas. Through HMR, we will ensure that neighbourhoods are sustainable in the long term, using such means as:

- The ready availability of employment generated through increased economic activity.
- Increased value in the housing stock to give residents the confidence to become or remain owner-occupiers.
- Providing choice within the local housing stock that will allow residents to move within an area as their needs change, such as young, economically active people forming new households in their local neighbourhoods.
- Reduced levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, improved public services and a high quality environment.

### ***Improved data collection, management and analysis***

One of the major challenges restricting action to deal with these issues has been the lack of up to date and reliable information on the housing market in Oldham. In acknowledgement of this, several substantial pieces of research have been carried out and their analysis will guide future strategy development.

### **Housing Market Assessment**

A growing understanding of housing needs and aspirations and a greater appreciation of the effects of changing housing markets must underpin a ‘fit for purpose’ housing strategy. We have embarked on data collection and analysis in the short, medium and long term in order to address the mismatch between supply and demand within Oldham.

The HMA is part of a wider programme of work for developing our housing information database, processes for review, analytical tools and capacity to assess future trends and scenarios. There is a requirement throughout the project for collaborative working and for pro-active transfer of tools, knowledge and skills between the consultants working on the HMA and the Physical Regeneration Framework. The development of these two pieces of work has been mutually informed. The HMA work was completed in March 2005 and the

outcomes have been factored into this strategy. Key findings are outlined in Understanding Change in Oldham.

### **Housing Needs Survey**

Last year we commissioned a Housing Needs Survey update for Oldham using ODPM guidance and methodology. One of the key objectives was to produce an understanding of the amount, size, property type, tenure and location of new affordable housing requirements. Importantly we are working very closely with Rochdale Council, which has also reviewed this survey, to ensure that there is a consistent approach to data collection and sharing. Further details of this can be found in section 2 - Understanding Change in Oldham.

### **Stock Condition Survey**

The Council, in partnership with Oldham Housing Investment Partnership (representing the major RSL's) and FCHO, have commissioned a borough wide stock condition survey, due to report in August 2005. For further details see Section 6 – Investment.

### **Other socio – economic and opinion research**

Oldham and Rochdale HMR have also commissioned Kwest Research to carry out a further socio – economic and opinion survey across the two borough's pathfinder areas to build on the MORI survey<sup>33</sup>. FCHO have also undertaken a survey of leaseholders' views, which reported in March 2005 and an annual status survey of tenants' that reported in May 2005<sup>34</sup>.

The research currently being undertaken or planned will inform future strategy development both in HMR areas and boroughwide.

The development of a housing information database, bringing together stock and socio-economic information from all tenures, will enable a more effective use of this data than at present. OMBC will be improving its use of IT to support this process by expanding their GIS capabilities to link collected data and the land registry database. This will complement the work of the Oldham Info Network, particularly the development of the [Oldhaminfo.org](http://Oldhaminfo.org) website, and will facilitate more effective data sharing and analysis by members of the Forum for Oldham Research (FOR) - a group formed by researchers from across the public, private and voluntary sectors to allow a more holistic overview of research to support Oldham Partnership priorities.

### ***New development and planning***

The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) framework produced under Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) supports Oldham's status as an HMR Pathfinder. This

---

<sup>33</sup> The postal socio economic and opinion survey carried out by MORI across Oldham and Rochdale in 2003.

<sup>34</sup> Both undertaken by Kwest Research

encourages the use of previously developed, brownfield land across the borough for new investment and development. RPG requires us to work in partnership with neighbouring local authorities to ensure such developments do not have a negative impact on housing markets or the future regeneration of these areas. RPG sets annual targets for new housing provision for all local authorities in the North West.

- Oldham's target is 270 dwellings a year, net of clearance properties.
- 80% of these must be on brownfield land<sup>35</sup>.

Sustainable communities<sup>36</sup>, further underlines the council's strategic role to encourage the suitable use of brownfield land and in providing land for low cost homes. The Draft UDP also drives policy to ensure this land is used efficiently, that sites supplying a variety of housing types and sizes are identified across the borough and that, to enable liveability and sustainability, key locations are linked to strategic employment sites<sup>37</sup>.

Past experience in Oldham has taught us that care needs to be taken when developing brownfield, infill sites in already densely developed areas, to provide much needed large family housing. It is essential that suitable outside space and facilities for young people are provided to avoid problems with anti social behaviour and other nuisance.

We experience particular problems identifying land for suitable developments in the Saddleworth wards, where there is significant demand. Due to the semi-rural and village centred nature of these communities, there are multiple issues to face if appropriate properties are to be developed, in keeping with the surrounding environment, listed properties and greenbelt etc.

### **Improving housing land availability**

We have set up a Land and Housing Issues group that consists of Senior Officers from Planning, Regeneration, HMR and Housing Strategy to discuss issues about land availability as this is a key factor in developing affordable housing. The Land Housing Issues Group will be developing an Affordable Housing Policy during 2005. Oldham has recently carried out an Urban Capacity Study to pinpoint potential sites for development in the next 15 years. Identifying and making land available for development, including the re - designation of industrial land for housing use, is a key local measure for the success of the HMR pathfinder.

---

<sup>35</sup> Oldham Replacement UDP draft Oct 2004

<sup>36</sup> Sustainable communities: Homes for All 5 year plan

<sup>37</sup> Oldham Draft Unitary Development Plan October 2004, Housing Market Assessment (GVA Grimley) March 2005

## Affordable Quality Housing

Ensuring developments are affordable, quality homes is a major challenge in all tenures. Against the background of generally rising house prices, the local housing market is characterised by significant price differentials.

Over recent years the number of completed homes have declined, with the net rate of growth falling from more than 600 dwellings in 1995/6 to 270 during 2003/4, reflecting the Regional Planning Guidance. Although 6 out of 10 of these properties were built within the Oldham Township during 2003/4, few were in core HMR areas (often due to a lack of suitable sites), and a further 2 in 10 were in Saddleworth. The most predominant house types were terraces or detached, each contributing a third of completions<sup>38</sup>.

The building of new houses for rent through the ADP (detailed in Section 4 – Housing Choice) nowhere matches the loss of rented properties due to RTB and Right to Acquire – see table below. During 2004/5, £4,883,208 of ADP funded development was delivered from the £11 million 2 year budget. Demand for these homes is exacerbated by the limited number of affordable homes to buy on the open market.

	Stock sold through RTB	New social housing units provided by ADP
2003/4	410	57
2004/5	388	62
2005/6 planned	N/A	33

The challenge we face is to provide high quality homes that meet people's needs and aspirations, irrespective of whether they want to rent or to own their homes. Although it poses its own problems, HMR offers significant opportunities to restructure Oldham's housing markets and address the imbalances.

The Housing Association Development Officer, working within the Housing Strategy Team, is a key link between RSLs, the Corporate Planning Policy Team, HMR and private developers. It is the role of this officer to encourage and enable suitable developments across the borough, to meet housing need.

The number of ADP funded properties delivered or planned are outlined in the table below, while further properties will be provided by RSLs using their own resources (More details on these projects are given in sections 4 and 5).

### ADP funded developments 2004/2007 <sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Oldham's Replacement UDP: Housing Topic Paper November 2004

<sup>39</sup> # limited confirmed information is currently available

No. of Units	Newbuild RSL rental properties	Conversions	For low cost sale or shared ownership	Supported units	Total
Completed 2004/5	0	23	0	18	41
Planned 2005/6	62	20	14	8	104
Planned 2006/7	#	#	#	6	6
Total	62	43	14	32	151

### ***Local Private Sector Housing Markets***

In the private sector, the demand for terraced housing is complex and influenced by a number of factors. Evidence from the CURS regional study published in 2000 suggested that large concentrations of terraced housing presented a significant risk of housing market failure, the first signs of which were becoming evident in some neighbourhoods. This evidence has been further informed by the the Housing Market Assessment.

Large parts of Oldham's terraced housing market, such as in Glodwick and Westwood, are sustained by demand from BME communities. This demand has supported vibrant local housing markets that have saved these areas from the abandonment and collapse seen in some HMR pathfinder areas. By its very nature this has led to a 'dysfunctional' market that presents both challenges and opportunities.

### ***Improving the Private Rented Sector***

Understanding of the private rented sector (PRS) is relatively limited. However, there is evidence that there has been a growth in the Buy to Let market in recent years. Most investors are non-professionals with small portfolios; estate agents signal this market has now begun to slow down.

- Census data indicates growth in this sector across the Oldham and Rochdale pathfinder from 5.5% in 1991 to nearly 11% in 2001.
- This sector has grown more in this period than those in Manchester or the North West.
- There has been increased buoyancy in rental values in some areas such as the more desirable parts of Failsworth and in Shaw, while in some HMR areas demand has dropped; the market is sustained by Housing Benefit payments.<sup>40</sup>

A healthy PRS is crucial to a thriving housing market in Oldham and can play a vital role in helping us to meet housing needs. The government's mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and selective private rented

---

<sup>40</sup> Housing Market Assessment (GVA Grimley) March 2005

sector licensing in low demand areas are welcome. We consider it essential that PRS licensing should include property condition as well as management.

The Council is keen to use the new enforcement powers to regulate the PRS where poor management of private rented homes has negatively impacted on the surrounding environment and community. We will continue to work with private landlords who operate within Oldham to improve the maintenance and management of their properties, using the processes outlined below, to develop a higher quality private rented sector in the borough.

### **Registering Houses in Multiple Occupation.**

The council is currently considering the adoption of an HMO registration scheme to deal with 129 eligible properties borough wide where a property has two or more occupants in an HMO.

These properties consist of mainly bed sitting accommodation, usually provided in smaller two bedroom terraced properties, that are predominately used by NASS agencies to supply accommodation for asylum seekers or to childless households in private rented accommodation. 27 are classed as '3 - storey HMO's' deemed to be 'high risk' from of fire and therefore are required to be Mandatory Licensed by the authority.

The HMO Registration Scheme;

- Places a duty on landlords to register their premises and provide the local authority with basic information including details about the house, the number of rooms and facilities and the management of the premises.
- Can impose as a condition of registration that the premises meet in full the Council's adopted standards for houses in multiple occupation
- Can refuse registration to landlords for various reasons if the house or management is not considered suitable for HMO use.
- Will impose management conditions and make full use of its enforcement opportunities

The scheme will also enable us to update our existing house in multiple occupation database in preparation for Landlord Licensing. There are 204 HMOs in Oldham and we expect to license 21 of these to meet the requirements of the Housing Act 2004. The scheme will include powers modified from the requirements of the current Housing Act 1996 requirements.

### **The Landlord Accreditation Scheme**

The Council's Landlord Accreditation Scheme (LAS) initially adopted in Derker, in partnership with Salford Council, has been extended into other areas of the borough, such as the NDC area at Fitton Hill and Hathershaw, following the formal launch of the Private Sector Housing Unit in April 2005.

The LAS, holds a Private Rented Sector Forum that brings together the town's private landlords at quarterly meetings. Five have been held to date with one focusing specifically on HMR issues to assist in raising standards in private rented accommodation and share good practice.

The scheme works with private landlords to encourage them to sign up to a code of property and management standards. Once accredited landlords can access a range of advice services such as:

- Housing Benefit
- Insurance
- Rent levels
- Tax
- Their role in meeting homelessness needs
- HMO registration
- Building trade discounts
- Tenancy relations advice

Private Landlords can also access limited funding to support security and home safety measures. We are currently working with EAC and EAGA to develop an appropriate energy efficiency scheme to support the implementation of the Decent Homes Standards within this sector.

As part of our HMR Pathfinder we are continuing to work with Rochdale MBC to share knowledge and good practice from the Landlord Accreditation Scheme and have actively attended each other's forums. Both Oldham and Rochdale are engaged in the North West ACT Now Working Group, which currently meets on a quarterly basis to discuss private sector initiatives. In addition to this the scheme is a member of Accreditation Network UK (ANUK) a national network for accreditation schemes working to the adopted code of standards used by Oldham MBC.

### ***Using the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) to support owner-occupiers***

The Order requires the establishment, publication and ongoing review of a Housing Renewal Policy linked to the strategic objectives and the key priorities within the Housing Strategy. The policy is required to take account of other corporate priorities established through the Oldham Partnership and includes health, crime, education and the environment.

This policy enables the Council to spend capital resources on the key priorities identified to achieve shared outcomes, such as through the Housing Market Renewal Scheme Update and other mainstreamed private sector capital improvement programmes, to secure the regeneration and renewal of private

sector stock within the Borough. Oldham's policy was first adopted in October 2003 and an update is currently under review.

Oldham MBC welcomes the new freedoms and flexibilities that have been brought in under the RRO. The removal of former rigid and prescriptive housing grant legislation gives local authorities the ability to design and deliver more effective and innovative strategies and to develop schemes that address specific local needs and make better use of resources. The RRO will be a major tool in the delivery of sustainable homeownership options on a boroughwide basis, through the Affordable Housing Policy, and as part of the HMR scheme update. Some of these include;

- An equity release product in 'Home Improve - Oldham', in partnership with Rochdale MBC and West Pennine Housing Association. This will allow owner occupiers with limited disposable income to maintain their properties through the release of equity in their property. Further details of this scheme can be found in Section 6 – Investment.
- The flexibility to use grant and/ or equity release/loans to set our own limits and conditions for assistance enables Oldham to frame policies that account for both local circumstances and a person's ability to contribute. We will continue to develop, expand and monitor the effectiveness of the 'home improve' scheme.
- We are also in the process of considering new forms of assistance to reach shared outcomes in relation to health and social care. This includes the use of equity release products to fund adaptations in the home or to facilitate moving to a more appropriate adapted property to promote independent living for disabled people.
- Under the existing person - centred approach the policy supports the work of the Home Maintenance Project - a shared delivery partnership between Oldham Council, Oldham Independent Housing Aid Centre, and Anchor Staying Put - to provide a home maintenance advice and small repairs service to vulnerable households. Previously provided within the NDC and SRB 6 regeneration areas, we are hoping to build on this project's experience and good practice to expand this service into other areas of the borough.

Clearance activity paragraph to follow

### ***Improving access to rented Council housing***

The number of council homes available to rent has dropped drastically in Oldham over the last 10 years and will continue to decline for some time. There are three main reasons for this:

#### **Right to Buy**

The popularity of the Right to Buy Scheme remains high in Oldham. Many council tenants use this as a means to enter into home ownership. Over 2000 council homes have been sold since 1993 under the Right to Buy, with over 1000 being sold since the ALMO was formed. These homes are mainly houses in the outer areas, such as Saddleworth (24 houses 2004/5), Chadderton (60 houses

2004/5), Failsworth (42 houses 2004/5), Shaw (22 houses 2004/5) and Royton (28 houses 2004/5) where the property market is particularly buoyant, and is seriously affecting the rehousing prospects for families.

Recently sales have also begun to increase in the inner areas, and of flats and maisonettes, predominantly by BME tenants. For instance, 24 houses have been purchased by their tenants in Werneth, whilst 5 houses, 6 maisonettes and 5 flats were sold in Coldhurst during 2004/5.

Insert GIS map of lost stock showing areas of loss

Council Right to Buy 1993 - 2005								
Year	Houses (by bedroom no.)				Flats	Maisonettes	Bungalows	Total
	0-2	3	4-6	Total				
2004 – 05	121	182	17	320	49	16	3	388
2003 – 04	172	244	14	435	34	5	1	475
2002 – 03	79	118	7	115	14	1	2	232
2001 – 02	70	129	8	207	15	1	0	223
2000 – 01	47	89	5	141	12	1	0	154
1999 – 00	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
1998 – 99	34	59	3	96	11	0	1	108
1997 – 98	41	55	1	97	9	0	1	107
1996 – 97	57	69	0	128	13	0	1	142
1995 – 96	55	77	3	135	16	2	0	154
1994 – 95	46	59	3	108	5	1	0	114
1993 – 94	41	65	3	109	16	1	0	126
Total	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#

Although RTB has delivered mixed tenure estates throughout the borough, greatly discounted sale receipts have not been reinvested in replacement rental stock and this had led to a severe restriction of choice in council housing.

We are taking action on this issue:

- A Right To Buy And Leaseholders Working Group has been established to lead a BVR into these services, partly in response to the impact of this policy on Oldham's housing market.
- The group has identified a cross departmental approach to developing policy and practice in response to reducing housing stock levels and to establish a strategy to track trends and inform FCHO business planning.

- They will work to ensure effective action is taken to meet the needs of new legislation or regulation that affects leaseholders.<sup>41</sup>
- This group is working to the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) around RTBs and Leaseholders and has developed its Action Plan to ensure that the criteria set out within the KLOE are met.

### **Stock transfer, demolition and devolved management**

In order to effectively deliver decent homes across the borough the council has also transferred some stock to RSL ownership following the Housing Inquiry in 2001 – see graph below. This appraisal also recommended the demolition of XX low demand or obsolete properties where there was no value for money option for modernisation. The management of 1614 sheltered homes will also transfer to Housing 21 by the end of 2005 under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). The number of properties managed will decrease over the contract period as flats are converted (often 2 units into 1) or replaced.

### **Clearance in HMR areas**

Further council properties will be lost due to demolition in HMR neighbourhoods such as Werneth and Derker over the next two years, along with the demolition of private and RSL homes. There will be some timelag between demolition and the completion of new affordable housing in the area and this will place further high demands on dwindling council stock.

Taken together, these factors are seriously reducing Council property availability. It is increasingly difficult for the council to discharge its statutory obligations to priority need homeless applicants, facilitate the smooth running of the clearance programme and also meet the needs of applicants on the housing register.

**Graph here 'changes in council stock' showing transfers (LVT, Villages), Hsg 21, RTBs and HMR/ stock options demolition – preferred option figures.**

### **Improving access to Registered Social Landlord (RSL) properties**

The number of RSL properties in Oldham has grown in recent years due to the transfer of Council stock and the focus of ADP funding to provide suitable property types. There are currently xxxx RSL homes<sup>42</sup> and most are accessed directly from RSL waiting lists, although 63 tenancies were facilitated through nomination procedures in 2003/4 <sup>43</sup>.

---

<sup>41</sup> For instance, The Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act (2002) or Service Charges (consultation requirements) Regulations 2003.

<sup>42</sup> HIP 2005

<sup>43</sup> Housing Options records/ HIP 2004

In the last year few properties had been bought by their residents using the Right to Aquire, mainly due to the high value of many of the newer large family homes built by RSLs and the minimal discounts available.

- Where there have been sales these have generally been of smaller, older, often ex – local authority homes.
- It is predicted many more of these homes will be bought by their tenants if the Right to Buy is extended to RSL homes as proposed in ‘The 5 year plan’<sup>44</sup>, further depleting the stock of family properties for rent.

During March 2005 there were more than 6000 people on the council waiting list and the number is increasing, by 1500 in the last 2 years<sup>45</sup>.

- Therefore it is important for all parties to work together to ensure that best use is made of the rented homes that are available and that the recent transfers of ownership do not lead to a reduction in housing choice for people in need of affordable rented housing.
- To this end, the council is currently revising its allocation scheme, is reviewing nomination arrangements and is looking to expand the choice based lettings system to involve all OHIP partners during 2006.
- We will also work with private landlords to facilitate the provision of further good quality rental options in the borough through the LAS and Landlords’ Forum – in particular to provide suitable housing for vulnerable or homeless households.

### ***Future housing markets***

Demographic changes in Oldham, with a large number of younger people, predominantly from South Asian communities, and a growing population of older residents mean there will be changing needs in the medium term for Oldham housing market.

The number of households in Oldham is expected to increase from 85,210 in 2001 to around 95,300 by 2021, suggesting an annual growth of 325 – 375 households<sup>46</sup>. Many of these households will be smaller units, due to declining household size, despite the larger families often seen in South Asian communities, and these people are less likely to want the largest properties (though many would like to have a ‘spare room’ for visitors or an office/study). Many of these small households will be from younger or older age groups.

### **Dumbell type illustration of current demographics**

This demographic split can cause many problems as neighbours of varied age groups clash due to differing aspirations and lifestyles. Particularly in Council housing there is demand for similar type properties (mainly flats) from both the

---

<sup>44</sup> Sustainable communities: Homes for All - 5 year plan ODPM 2005

<sup>45</sup> FCHO records

<sup>46</sup> OMBC population projections 1997 in HMA March 2005. ODPM projections predict 94,346 households in Oldham by 2021 (update with ludis?)

younger and older age groups - clear management and effective support are needed if these communities are to be cohesive.

### **Town centre living**

Town centre living has become popular in many neighbouring towns and cities. 'Oldham Beyond' outlined the need to further assess the demand for this. We will need to provide aspirational urban housing opportunities in the Inner Oldham areas if we are to attract or retain higher income households in these neighbourhoods.

The forthcoming University College will also demand the provision of suitable student accommodation near to campus, in and around the town centre. We hope to undertake a 'Town Centre Living Feasibility Study' in the near future to help deliver the HMR aims of; increasing the number of people living in Oldham town centre and building more aspirational properties there.

### **Helping young people access the housing market**

Housing options are limited for young people in Oldham. While owner occupation is out of reach for most young people, their access to rented property is also restricted. There are several reasons for this:

- There are local lettings policies that do not allow the letting of otherwise suitable council or RSL properties to younger age groups. Although 1500, nearly a quarter, of applicants on the council register are under 25 years old many flats are only let to people aged 25+. Currently just under 10% of tenants are under 25 years old. Most existing RSL properties have been developed for family and older people's markets, to reflect statutory obligations placed on local authorities in the past.
- Only the most vulnerable young people are protected by homelessness legislation. The homelessness service has seen increasing number of presentations, xx% of which are from people under 25 years old during 2004 - 5<sup>47</sup>.
- Since rent deregulation in 1998, access to the private rented sector has also been difficult for many young people.
- The capping of housing benefit to the 'single room rent' level for under 25s restricts access to better quality and non HMO private rented property, as most private lets in Oldham are of two bed properties.
- Jobseekers Allowance is paid at a lower rate to under 25s, while benefit payments to 16 and 17 year olds are even more tightly restricted. These low incomes can make securing and retaining a home more problematic for young people with few life skills

Together the overall effect has been that young people have been squeezed out of any real affordable housing choice, particularly close to their family and community support networks.

---

<sup>47</sup> P1E homelessness stats 2004/5

- Population projections suggest that the number of young people in Oldham is growing, so this problem is likely to intensify unless remedial action is taken.
- It has been predicted that the BME community in Oldham will make up 19% of the population by 2011, with much of this growth in the under 25s age group.

This presents a large potential market for affordable housing but moreover a major challenge for the council and its partners. Currently only 7% of FCHO primary tenants are under 25 years old (while a quarter of people on the waiting list were under 25) although a quarter of new lets were made to people under 25 between October 2004 and March 2005. We are working to attract and retain younger tenants to council and OHIP tenancies, and aim to have young people as 20% of FCHO tenancies by March 1996 (confirm age grouping):

- The Council's Review of Allocations (see Section 4 – Housing Quality and Choice for more details) will open up housing options for young people by reviewing local lettings policies that restrict their access to council homes and by giving them access to a choice based lettings system. All these letting policies will be reviewed, in consultation with stakeholders, during 2005 – 6 to ensure that the needs of current residents, as well as prospective tenants, are reflected.
- We are in the process of developing a Young People's Housing Strategy and a multi-agency steering group has been set up to lead this. The strategy will detail the issues facing us, and the strategic direction we are taking to deal with such issues. The strategy will be built on a core of multi-agency working and will fit with the 'Every Child Matters' agenda and the objectives of The Children and Young People Partnership. This strategy will cover:
  - Information about housing and support services,
  - Access to housing, housing advice and support,
  - Availability of accommodation by type and tenure, and
  - Support services.
- In particular, this work will need to focus on the needs of BME young people, who currently are not effectively accessing housing and support services.
- We now work closely with the Vulnerable Young Adults Team in Social Services to develop a joint approach to assessing and meeting needs of young people. Further details on our work to support young people can be found in section 5 – Vulnerable people.

OMBC and FCHO will engage more closely with potential young customers for rented council housing to develop an attractive product that is accessible and forms a value for money alternative to privately rented accommodation.

## Supporting older people

Nearly than 3 out of 10 FCHO primary tenants are over 60 years old (and a third of these are over 80 years)<sup>48</sup>, which has obvious implications for the future. Population projections<sup>49</sup> suggest there will be a increase in pensioner households across the borough which will lead to further demands on adapted or sheltered homes and other support services. Services will have to be more flexible to address the changing needs in housing services for older people, where possible to enable them to remain in their own home. Our approach to this is discussed further in section 5 – Meeting Vulnerable People’s Housing Needs.

## Improving access for other vulnerable people.

A Homelessness Forum has been established to bring together statutory and voluntary agencies to discuss relevant issues. It also works with the authority and monitors its performance in discharging its statutory responsibilities for homelessness.

- A homelessness strategy has been produced in partnership with the statutory and voluntary agencies currently providing services for homeless people in Oldham.
- Oldham MBC and Oldham Primary Care Trust have recently completed a Supported Accommodation Strategy and a core team will monitor the progress on the action plan.
- Consultants were commissioned by Oldham Social Services and Regeneration Departments to review delivery of the Adaptations Service to disabled residents in Oldham. The steering group will focus on improvements to the delivery of adaptations and ensuring a person centred approach in the future. The results of this exercise are due in late Summer 2005.

Further information on these issues is provided in Section 5 – Meeting Vulnerable People’s Housing Needs.

## Action Points:

- We will continue to analyse the outputs of a wide range of research to improve our understanding of housing markets and housing needs and aspirations
- We will develop an affordable housing policy by xxxx
- We will, through HMR, deliver good quality affordable lifetime homes
- We will strive to identify suitable brownfield sites so a greater mix of quality homes can be built within vibrant existing communities .
- We will improve access to council and RSL homes by working in effective partnership

---

<sup>48</sup> We do not have date of birth details for a further 1200 tenants – these are mostly our longer - term tenants and as such are also likely to be in an older age group.

<sup>49</sup> OMBC population projections 1997

### ***Equality Impact Assessment***

- Undertake research to assess the housing aspirations of the growing young BME population;
- Using a “plan, monitor, manage” approach to continually review our policies and interventions in the housing market; with a particular emphasis on ensuring that the needs of vulnerable groups are met;
- Ensure that all new homes are built to “lifetime homes” standards so that they are more accessible and allow people to live more independent lives;
- Ensure that the number of FCHO tenancies reflects the level of housing need in the BME communities.

## 4. Improving Housing Quality and Choice

Key Objectives;

- Widening the choice of quality affordable housing across all tenure types, by maximising inward investment
- Providing more large family homes of all tenures
- Reducing the number of empty properties across all tenures
- Monitor this action through the Performance Management Framework and the Oldham Housing Partnership

### Barriers to providing quality and choice

A number of factors in Oldham's housing markets, as outlined in the Understanding Change and Housing Markets sections, have combined to reduce housing choice for people in housing need and this has been a prime influence on the focus of our regulatory role and our investment decisions.

### Oldham Housing Partnership

We launched the thematic Oldham Housing Partnership on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2004 to bring together a wide range of partners that are in a position to help provide solutions to housing issues through discussions and shared experiences. Having a broader membership will allow us to create a greater joint understanding of the issues facing us, but moreover, a more coordinated response. The OHP will link directly with the Oldham Partnership whose members are outlined in appendix X.

### Improving information on housing need and choice.

OMBC acknowledges that it has not collected or effectively used valuable information about housing need in the past. In response we commissioned a Housing Needs Survey (HNS)<sup>50</sup> update that has provided us with important information to reflect the changing needs in Oldham.

In addition to this the Housing Market Assessment that reported in March 2005<sup>51</sup> fundamentally supported these findings. This will be followed up with a full Housing Needs Survey during 2005 and will build on the outcomes of the HMA. More detailed information about the HNS and HMA can be found in Understanding Change in Oldham.

A strengthened research base within the Housing Strategy Team and HMR core team will allow for better analysis of data, improved input into policy development

---

<sup>50</sup> Oldham Housing Market Demand and Needs Study (Fordham Research) July 2004. This used the ODPM 'Basic Needs Assessment Model' based on historical data and a demand-based model that reflects changes due to HMR and future aspirations and expectations.

<sup>51</sup> Oldham and Rochdale Housing Market Assessment (GVA Grimley) March 2005.

and performance monitoring systems. We will, as a result of the information received from these surveys and in consultation with key stakeholders, endeavour to match investment with the needs of local communities.

The development of the Oldham housing information system will help us pinpoint issues of housing choice and need more effectively and, for instance through Housing Market Renewal and the ADP, Oldham is in a healthy position to identify solutions to these issues.

### **Private Sector Renewal Strategy**

The Regulatory Reform Order provided authorities with a much greater degree of flexibility in devising a strategy to deal with poor housing conditions in the private sector and in order to access capital funding from the single capital pot, Councils are required to have publicised and adopted a strategy/policy.

The strategy was adopted by the Council's Cabinet in August 2003. The strategy was set in the strategic context of:

- The emerging Area Development Frameworks (ADFs) arising from the Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMR) run jointly with Rochdale M.B.C., and
- The regeneration vision for the borough as a whole.

The strategy is not a static document; it is currently being updated to reflect the HMR scheme update, the revised Community Strategy and in order to demonstrate how they fit into and contribute to the wider regeneration of Oldham.

### **Bringing empty homes back into use**

The current estimate for properties of all tenures, which have been vacant for more than 6 months (Council Tax December 2004), is 2468, which represents around 2.5% of the total housing stock. Many of these vacant properties are flats or terraced properties. The revised Empty Homes Strategy, which follows Empty Homes Agency guidelines, was re-launched in 2001.

This uses council tax records to monitor empty homes and signal where intervention is needed. The number of private sector empty homes brought back into use is a Best Value National Performance Indicator (BVPI 64). These targets were not met during 2004/5, partially due to HMR activity. However we have now gained approval (subject to HMR scheme update) to purchase further empty properties for demolition or refurbishment.

We welcome the new powers of Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO's) included in the Housing Act 2004. This will assist us in dealing with private empty properties vacant for more than six months. The new power will enable us to manage the letting of a property, but does not alter the legal ownership of the property. We are committed to bringing empty properties back into use as they

can play a key role in meeting our housing needs. We will set stretch targets and through our empty properties strategy manage performance in this area.

This will also play a key role within the HMR neighbourhoods where empty properties are contributing towards the deterioration in quality of a life and associated crime within a local area. At the end of December 2004, 2978 properties were vacant in the Oldham HMR area, a vacancy rate of 7%, while the borough average is just under 5%<sup>52</sup> - although this was affected by initial HMR activities as numbers have grown since the beginning of the year. The new management orders will provide access to further housing stock to help meet homelessness need and access to affordable housing for families affected by housing clearance schemes in HMR action areas.

In April 2005 around 3.6% of council properties were empty; either awaiting letting, improvement or demolition, an improvement from 4.6% in April 2004. Several initiatives have been developed by FCHO in the last few years to improve performance and this has been very successful – the number of management voids has dropped by nearly two - thirds over the year – so that now the ratio of empty homes to stock levels is three times higher in the private sector than in council homes. However, many properties have now been emptied or have had their lettings frozen to facilitate the PFI contact (179 homes) and HMR activity. In general this reduced level of empty homes available to let is unhelpful when trying to address homelessness and housing need.

Recently an Empty Homes Officer, who works with a range of partners, including the Empty Homes Agency and internal Council partners, to adopt good practice for bringing empty homes back into use, has been appointed. Since then we have:

- Developed an initial standard assessment procedure to aid the prioritisation of action against properties empty for more than 6 months and assesses the best course of action to bring the property back into use.
- Established relationships with Council Tax, Valuers and the Land Registry to use a range of new electronic methods for locating owners and reporting empty properties via the website.

Several voluntary measures are available to bring private sector empty properties back into use. This includes contacting owners via members of the community and local action groups, establishing ownership and writing to the owners to establish their intended use of the property in the future. We will work with property owners, including 'buy to let' investors, to ensure houses are seen as homes (or potential homes) not just as property assets.

We also proactively target and promote our role to developers, RSL's and other housing providers to secure the re-occupation of vacant properties through voluntary methods rather than using our enforcement powers.

---

<sup>52</sup> Oldham Council Tax records 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2004

The council will continue to use other enforcement powers where necessary to bring empty properties back in to use such as compulsory acquisition under Part II of the 1985 Housing Act and the potential use of an enforced sales procedure, which is currently under development, to provide a further means of dealing with problematic empty dwellings.

### **Improving access to private rented homes.**

Many low-income households have difficulties gathering the large deposits and up-front rent payment usually needed to take on a private sector rental property. A Rent Deposit Scheme, managed by OIHAC, has been developed to assist people in accessing this sector, and will particularly target good quality properties registered with the Landlord's Accreditation Scheme.

### **Access to Council and RSL Properties**

Availability of council housing has been constrained for some time and has become more problematic for general needs applicants due to the growth in homelessness and the HMR initiative. During 2003/4 the average rent for a council property was £48.32, while the average for OHIP RSLs was £xx.xx. This offers good value, high quality accommodation and services for the people who are able to access them.

The demand is particularly high for family homes in all areas of the borough, and these are the properties that are in shortest supply, due to the take up of RTB. Younger people, a growing market in Oldham, also find their access restricted due to local lettings policies and the lack of available support. Oldham Council is currently developing a Young People's Housing Strategy and is undertaking an Allocations Review to address some of these issues.

### **Improving access to Council properties**

The Council is committed to improving housing choice and we have been working closely with First Choice Homes to review the allocations scheme it manages on our behalf. Key aims of the allocations review are to;

- Improve services to applicants
- Improve the outcomes of rehousing
- Develop partnerships to extend quality and choice
- Meet strategic targets

The review will introduce Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Scheme in Autumn 2005 as the future method of allocating council homes, following ODPM guidance<sup>53</sup>. This will allow greater transparency than under the previous allocation scheme.

- The scheme, based on four need bands – Urgent, high, medium and standard (which also factors time on applicants' list) - and will use a bidding system where applicants can register interest in specific homes.

---

<sup>53</sup> Homes for All - Sustainable Communities 5 year plan (ODPM) January 2005

- All properties will be available for one week after which they will be offered to the bidder with the highest banding and time on list. This will avoid the inappropriate offers that were a feature of the previous scheme and therefore speed up letting times.
- Management and monitoring of the scheme will be facilitated by the new SX3 housing management system, due to come online in Autumn 2005.

The Strategic aim is to widen the CBL scheme to encompass all the Registered Social Landlords operating within the Borough and to include the Private Sector by allowing landlords who have registered with the Landlord Accreditation Scheme to advertise and let their properties through the CBL scheme. A further long-term aim will be to link the scheme with sub-regional partners to further expand choice<sup>54</sup>.

FCHO also manage a Furnished Tenancy Scheme, which provides affordable basic furnishing packages for new tenants of FCHO properties, enabling people without household goods or savings to access council homes. In April 2005 FCHO managed 542 furnished tenancies.

### **Improved contact with FCHO**

The recent Status Survey<sup>55</sup> found that FCHO tenants were more likely to express satisfaction in their contact with FCHO than during 2003 – although we have not yet reached the nationwide benchmark. Most people got in touch with FCHO about a repair; nearly 6 in 10 used the telephone.

FCHO joined the corporate telephone Contact Centre as the one - stop - shop for accessing FCHO services in June 2005 to ensure high standards of customer service to tenants and prospective tenants. Four local housing offices have been closed (after tenant consultation and in response to limited use by customers or accessibility problems) to deliver a more streamlined and consistent service. This will allow Housing Officers to spend more time on estates, managing homes and working with residents at a local level. This new system will be monitored to ensure it delivers increased service quality and accessibility, particularly to vulnerable households. FCHO have also developed their own website [www.fcho.co.uk](http://www.fcho.co.uk) to provide greater on - line access and information. This went 'live' in July 2005.

### **FCHO sustainability appraisal to improve quality and choice**

The Council and FCHO continue to appraise stock options for sustainability and a special FCHO Board meeting was held in January 2005 to discuss this. Recommendations included;

---

<sup>54</sup> As suggested in Homes for All (ODPM) January 2005

<sup>55</sup> Status Survey 2005 Interim Report (Kwest Research) May 2005

- Developing further options for the remaining non – PFI sheltered properties, including focused de-designation of sheltered stock to general needs or other special needs use, or limited demolition.
- Further investigation of options to redevelop the site of low rise flats on Sholver, which have been traditionally hard to let, high turnover properties with multiple management problems. This could include a mixture of refurbishment, redesignation of use with improved management and support, or demolition to be replaced in partnership with a private developer.
- Consideration of the sustainability of several other estates and dispersed acquired properties.
- All these options will be further discussed, with key input from the Council, residents and where relevant, Tenant Management Organisations.

The council has submitted an Expression of Interest for Round 4 PFI Resources, which will take in estates at Primrose Bank, Clarkwell and Crossley. We intend this investment to support and sustain the strong multi ethnic communities living in these neighbourhoods by providing more suitable, attractive accommodation within these popular locations. Central to this will be the development of tenant management options on these estates.

This Expression of Interest is yet another example of our diverse approach to meeting investment needs, delivering Decent Homes and improving the quality of life for our residents. A key part of the PFI proposals is the link to HMR and the best use of resources. If the bid is successful we are envisaging around £90 million of investment.

### ***Our Approved Development Programme (ADP)***

ADP investment in Oldham is directed at meeting housing needs and widening housing choice for people in Oldham. In recent years, investment has been primarily directed at meeting the needs of larger households, widening housing choice in higher cost areas, increasing the availability and range of supported housing and renovating run down empty properties to bring them back into use. In 2004 - 5 we delivered 97% of our allocated ADP funded programme, against a regional average of 86% and in 2005 - 6 £xxx,xxx will be invested. Around £xxx,xxx will be invested in 2006 - 7. From 2004-2005 onwards 95% of this ADP funding has been focused in the HMR areas. Whilst this does allow a very focused approach and complements the HMR programme, it does mean that there is little left to spend on other needs elsewhere in the Borough.

### **Working in partnership with OHIP to increase choice of large family houses.**

The recent Housing Market Assessment confirmed there will be continuing demand for larger homes in the borough over the next 15 years<sup>56</sup> to meet the needs of overcrowded families and community aspirations. Accordingly, the

---

<sup>56</sup> HMA (GVA Grimley) presentation Feb 2005

biggest part of the ADP has focused on meeting the needs of larger households whose current choice is restricted due to an absolute lack of affordable good quality larger homes. This strategy of improving access to large family properties will continue.

In July 2004 a development of 4 three bed, 16 four bedroom and 4 five bedroom homes was opened at Harmony Street in Glodwick. Built and managed by West Pennine HA using £1,202,397 ADP funding, the scheme delivered modern and high quality larger family homes for a community where there is limited access to suitable properties locally. The entrances to the estate were signposted by mosaics created by local school children, some of whom live in the new homes. Phase two of this scheme is expected to complete later this year.

Associations have received ADP funding for 67 new homes for rent in the first wave HMR areas. Discussions are under way as to exact sites, mix, etc. but the great majority of new homes will have three or more bedrooms. All new homes will be built to high design and environmental standards to provide accessible lifetime homes.

While many ADP funded homes have been newly built, others have been created by converting existing stock. These properties were in poor condition or suffered from low demand, as they no longer met local housing needs. This has involved both lateral conversions of pairs of older terraced houses and also vertical conversions of two storey flats. These schemes have made best use of existing housing stock and have improved the appearance of the areas in which they are situated. The finished product is attractive, good quality and is popular with tenants.

This initiative will continue as other lower demand or poor quality homes suitable for conversion are identified. For example;

- Contour currently has an ADP allocation that will enable them to convert 28 one bedroom flats in Westwood into 14 three bedroom houses for rent. Demand for the flats has reduced in recent years, while there is a substantial unmet demand for 3 bedroom homes. These homes should be complete by the end of 2005/6.
- WPHA, MMHG and NCHA all have rehab allocations through the ADP for 2004/5 and 2005/6 for the first wave HMR areas. This money will be used to bring 30 run down terraced houses back into use and also to carry out 2 lateral conversions in order to provide four bedroom homes. These will be completed during 2005 -7.

The conversion policy for council homes is currently being reviewed and it is intended that more homes will be converted if further suitable properties can be identified. This is a key aim of the FCHO BME Housing Strategy, and is

monitored by the Community Cohesion Working Group (see section 7 – Achieving community cohesion and sustainable communities).

### **Encouraging further RSL investment in Oldham.**

Oldham MBC also supports RSL's in using their own resources to invest in their stock.

- During 2004/5 and 2005/6, Northern Counties HA will be investing £1.7 million to remodel Bickerton Court (a category 2 scheme for older people) in Chadderton. Work includes converting bedsits into one bedroom flats, a new heating system, the installation of a lift and improved communal facilities, etc.
- In May 2005, Contour HA completed six houses for rent (5 x 2 bedroom, 1 x 3 bedroom) in Uppermill. This is part of a larger mixed tenure development that includes houses for outright sale.
- Attention has also focused on ways to produce affordable homes for sale. Contour HA is building 6 x 2 bedroom flats in Uppermill that will be sold on a shared ownership basis.
- MMHG and WPHA have and will continue to make significant investment in HMR areas, particularly Werneth.

### **Access to owner occupation**

There are many problems of access to suitable owner occupied homes in Oldham. Many buyers are restricted to the small terraced market in central Oldham, despite the fact that these homes do not meet their needs. More choice of property type is available in the outlying areas, but these are often too expensive for many Oldhamers and do not allow easy access to existing community facilities or support. This is particularly true for members of Muslim communities, who need to be close by community facilities such as mosques and shops.

The HMR initiative has led many owner-occupiers to consider their housing options. Many are expressing a wish to move into the rented market as the market value for their property may not meet the price of a suitable replacement home being developed in the area, or because of their age may not want to take on another mortgage. We have developed a range of equity support products to enable residents to aspire to replacement housing and hopefully remain in their local area. A consequence of owner-occupiers wanting rented housing is that it puts further stress on our already depleted rented housing stock.

#### **Using equity products to support home ownership**

Some home owners have already used our equity support packages to help them move into a more suitable and sustainable family home.

For instance, the Fothergill family from Derker have recently moved from a terraced property to a four bed semi – detached home in Lees using a

£35,000 loan. This loan does not need to be paid back until they sell the house in the future. The new home gives them safe outside play areas and access to countryside that is ideal for their five sons – “We are really glad we have moved, it’s our dream home” says Brian Fothergill.

Ruhel Ahmed and his family have moved from a 3 bedroom house in Werneth to a 3 bed house in a quiet area of Chadderton. Over recent years they had suffered from repeated car crime and were glad of the added security offered by their own driveway. Ruhel’s wife Maya Khutan said “ the new house is great because it has a driveway for our car... it is going to make it much easier to get the children and the shopping from the car to the house.” The family borrowed 27% of the £110,000 house price to help them move.

### **Enabling owner occupation.**

Enabling greater sustainable owner-occupation is a major aim of this strategy, and the appointment of a Homeownership Officer within the Housing Strategy Team is being considered to facilitate and monitor this.

### **Low cost home ownership**

In the past, the valuation gap for larger homes (between the relatively high cost of construction and the somewhat lower house values in the inner areas of Oldham) has frustrated housing association efforts to provide larger homes for sale. In addition, shared ownership has not proved popular among South Asian households, who overall occupy some of the worst homes.

However, recent house price increases plus the availability of Housing Market Renewal funding have improved the viability of such developments. In addition, associations have ADP funding to provide 30 homes under the Homebuy scheme in the first wave HMR areas.

- These will be mainly new build, with some refurbished terraced houses.
- They will be sold at a discount of 25% on the open market value.
- MMHG are currently piloting large homes for outright sale or shared ownership at Selwyn Close in Coppice. 4 four bedroom homes are being built for sale with a further 4 for shared ownership. WPHA are also investigating this option.

A range of lower cost home ownership initiatives has been developed using the planning system. S106 agreements have so far produced 31 homes for sale at a discount to Oldham MBC nominees in 2002-2004. They were targeted at people who can afford the discounted price, but who are unable to pay the full market value (FMV). These homes have been sold under a resale covenant to protect the discounted FMV prices.

A further 58 low cost home ownership homes developed using S106 agreements are planned for sale during 2005-2006 in Royton, Shaw and Chadderton, giving

discounts of 30% on FMV. Some of these are targeted at specific groups, such as people losing their homes under HMR, or for people with a local connection to these areas.

These low cost homes include;

- Two 2 bed apartments at £55,960, and nine 3 bedroom houses for sale at £69,950 on Refuge Street, Shaw
- Twelve 3 Bedroom houses for sale at £73,500, and eight 2 bedroom houses for sale at £62,000 on Cottonfields, a 135 unit scheme in Chadderton
- Four 2 bedroom flats at Royton Park , a mixed development of flats and houses
- Four 2 bedroom flats and six 3 bedroom at Highbarn Road, Royton, and
- Four 2 bedroom flats and nine 3 bedroom at Monarch Mill, Royton.

### Right to Buy

388, Council homes have been bought by their tenants using RTB during 2004-2005<sup>57</sup>. This is a significant number of new households accessing owner occupation using the, often generous, discounts available. This is a major attraction to council properties, particularly for Asian residents, who see it as a way of accessing more a suitable modern home in neighbourhoods where few other options exist. There is more discussion on the consequences of this in section 3 – Responding to local housing markets and needs.

FCHO currently provide services to people using their RTB and leaseholders living in ex-council property. The Best Value Review (BVR) of Right to Buy and Leaseholder's Services is due to report by the end of 2005. This will develop a Service Level Agreement for these services and will also produce a handbook for leaseholders and an information pack for tenants wanting to RTB their home. A survey of leaseholder opinion was carried out in early 2005 and will inform this BVR<sup>58</sup>.

### The future of Council Housing in Oldham

Our agreement with FCHO to manage and improve the Council's housing stock comes to an end in March 2007. Since the setting up of the ALMO significant improvements have been made in the management, maintenance and improvement of the housing stock. We are committed to ensuring that these improvements are sustained. With this in mind we are already looking ahead to the future and, on the back of the recent document produced by the National Federation of ALMO's – The Future of Council Housing - and others and the awaited consultation document from the ODPM have agreed the following:

---

<sup>57</sup> HIP 2005

<sup>58</sup> Leaseholders Survey (KWEST Research) March 2005

- The appointment of an Independent Tenant Advisor to work with tenants and explore the options available;
- The appointment of an Independent Financial Advisor to assess the financial issues on the options available.

We will manage progress on this through a joint executive meeting involving FCHO Board Members and the Council's Cabinet. The work with tenants is scheduled to start in July 2005.

### **Action Points:**

- We will continue to work with FCHO, RSLs, HMR, Regeneration and other partners to ensure that a choice of good quality, affordable homes are provided in all sectors across the borough.
- We will ensure that affordable housing is provided to be cost effective and value for money, by working closely with preferred partners in HMR neighbourhoods.
- We will implement the actions of the Allocations Review to deliver a joint housing register and choice based lettings to applicants across the borough
- We will set 'stretch targets' across all tenures to ensure empty properties are kept to a minimum and performance targets are met.
- Working with FCHO and our tenants we will consider the future of FCHO after 2007 and the general future of council housing in Oldham.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

- Provide more large family homes of all tenures to meet housing needs and in particular for those living in overcrowded conditions;
- Ensure that the needs of BME communities are integrated into all regeneration projects;
- Implement the new Allocations Policy, ensuring that all people have equal access to housing;
- Promote housing in non-traditional areas and ensure co-ordinated support to tenants moving into such areas.

## 5. Meeting Vulnerable People's Housing Needs

Key Objectives;

- To support the provision of high quality housing and support services to vulnerable people
- Further develop and improve customer focus and choice in all services
- Improve access to homelessness services and related support
- Work in partnership with other agencies to support victims of domestic violence, coercion or community exploitation
- Monitor this action through the Supporting People Action Plan and the Housing Performance Management Framework

### Local, Sub-regional and Regional Issues

#### *Improving public access to information and services*

New initiatives and changes in legislation<sup>59</sup> have highlighted the need to improve means of access to information and services for all, but particularly vulnerable groups. Good quality information and advice about housing, care and support services is essential to assist people in making informed choices. The newly appointed Homelessness Development Worker will work with all agencies and the Homelessness Forum to ensure that the quality of advice and information and non-accommodation based services provided for vulnerable people are maintained and improved, as part of the prevention agenda.

In May 2005 all council housing access and support services were co – located at the FCHO headquarters in Oldham town centre, nearby other organisations such as RSLs, the DSS and Employment Service, OIHAC, the Law Centre and CAB. This now provides a 'One Stop Shop' for housing advice and support and includes the Housing Options and Homelessness team, the Housing Support team, the Tenancy Support team, the Asylum team and Private Sector Tenancy Relations.

Further improvements include:

- The ongoing development of housing and support information on the OMBC Intranet and Internet site. The OMBC website has one of the highest accessibility ratings of all local authorities
- Oldham Social Services is running a pilot scheme whereby all information is being produced as electronic Fact Sheets. A much greater range of information will be provided, including facts about some of the more specialist

---

<sup>59</sup> DDA (1995), e-government targets, Sustainable Communities: Homes for All etc

services. It also provides information especially aimed at children and young people;

- The voluntary sector has developed an online directory for service users and agencies at [voo.org](http://voo.org)
- A directory of services funded by Supporting People has been compiled and includes details of other resources available such as information and advice
- A services directory is also being prepared, providing details of advice and services for people affected by domestic abuse, using crime and disorder funding
- The Connexions Service has produced a leaflet specifically about housing issues for young people

### **Supporting People Strategy**

Oldham is committed to delivering the Supporting People programme in a way that best meets the housing needs of vulnerable people in the Borough. A Supporting People Strategy has been developed and will be released in August 2005. Developed from the outcomes of the Review of Supported Housing, the approach adopted looks to support independence and promote choice for vulnerable people in locations where they choose to live. It aims to put vulnerable people in control, with staff supporting them to achieve informed and responsible decisions.

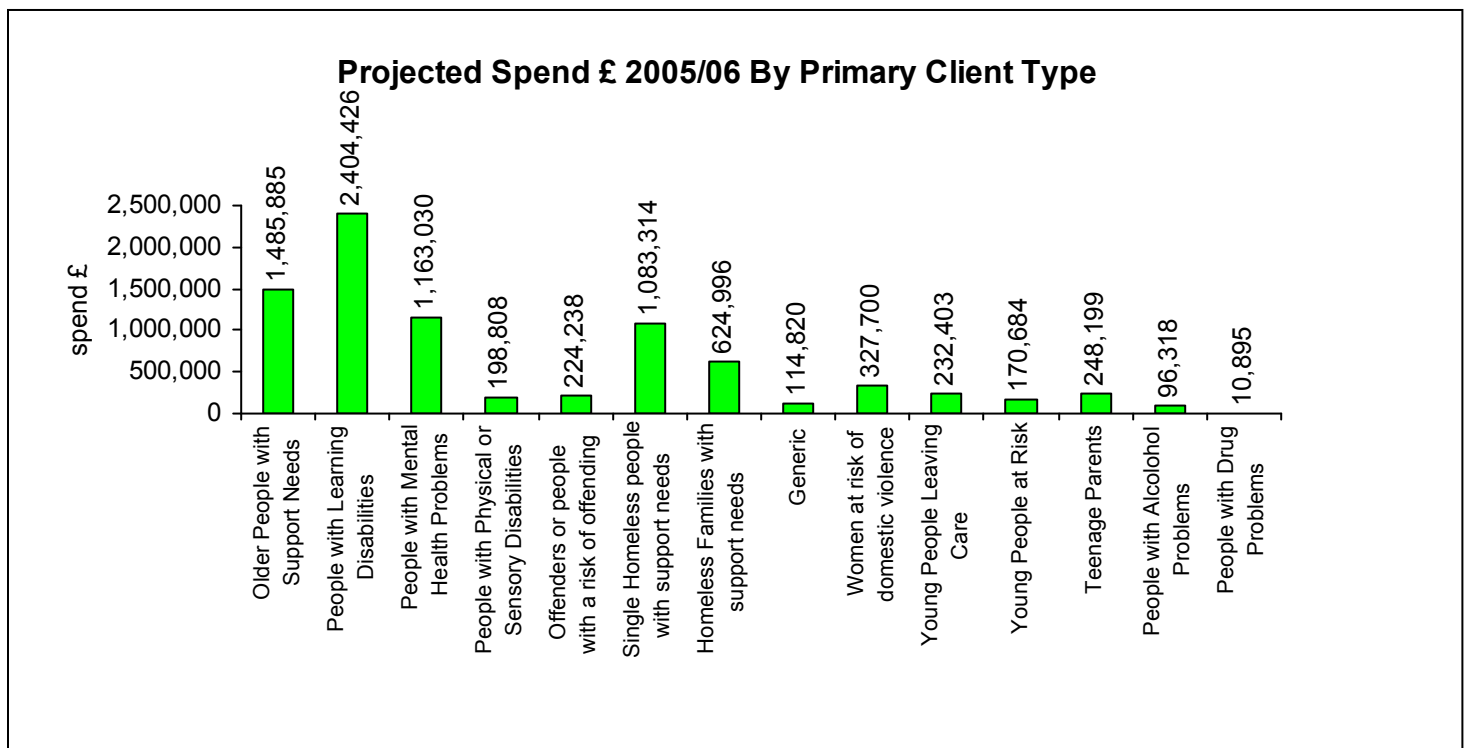
Supporting People funds a wide range of services provided by Housing Associations, the voluntary sector as well as the local authority and First Choice Homes. The programme supports people with a wide range of differing housing related support needs including those with learning disabilities, mental health problems, drug and alcohol problems, older people and the homeless. A Providers Forum meets quarterly where service and support providers can meet to share experience and knowledge across the sector.

2004 - 2005 has seen the use of the Supporting People Grant to increase the provision of floating support to meet the needs of two further groups of people requiring such services. The groups to benefit from this increase in provision are those with drug and alcohol problems and also asylum seekers and refugees. Supporting People funds housing related support services to 4888 households; 4502 accommodation based services and 386 floating support or outreach services.

During 2005/6 the SP funding to Oldham will be cut by more than 5% - to £8,259,000 – signalling severe problems for maintaining and improving services in Oldham, particularly if these cuts continue year on year. Therefore providers are expected to continue quality services while receiving no funding rises, even to cover inflation. Oldham are reassured by the ODPM statement that future years allocations will not be so restrictive and any over or under spends can be rolled over to the following year.

The Supporting People Strategy will ensure that strategic priorities are met and that all services are monitored to ensure they attain good quality and value. A major aim of Supporting People is to ensure that support is offered to a wide range of vulnerable client groups. This includes homeless people, people who have committed, or are at risk of committing crime, women escaping domestic violence and vulnerable young people.

Key themes of Supporting People are the prevention of homelessness, crime and social exclusion amongst these households, and the development of the community links they need to build successful lives including access to better health care and advice, education and employment. The projected SP spend by client group over the next year is outlined in the graph below.



The programme also places a particular emphasis on ensuring that there is a diversity of support, which is responsive to the needs of hard to reach groups and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities. This is particularly welcomed in Oldham given the Borough's diverse population.

### **Review of Supported Accommodation**

Oldham is committed to, through the provision of housing and support schemes including; sheltered housing, supported housing and floating support, to enabling a wide range of vulnerable people to maintain stable, independent and fulfilling lives within the community. In order to deliver this Oldham has recently completed a Supported Accommodation Review, as a partnership between

Housing, Social Services, Supporting People and other stakeholders. The key aims of the strategy are:

- To inform other related strategies such as the five year Supporting People Strategy and HMR,
- Develop a social inclusion framework and approach for vulnerable groups in Oldham,
- To provide information about need and demand across all the groups covered under Supporting People
- Deliver recommendations about the number and types of services needed in the future, as well as priorities for investments and shifts of resources.

As part of this, Oldham has developed strong and effective partnerships to support a wide range of initiatives to address the needs of vulnerable people within the Borough. We also recognise that many vulnerable people would like to remain in their own homes as long as possible, or require support to gain more independence. We aim to provide services that help people to maintain or develop independence and support themselves. Key issues included:

- Lack of emergency provision and floating support
- Oversupply of general sheltered elderly accommodation but lack of extra care provision, or support for elderly people with multiple needs
- Rigid Community Alarm Service provision, that does not reflect changing needs of the individual or in the community, and reaches relatively few people in the borough
- Unsuitable or restrictive support provision for adults with special needs
- Lack of culturally sensitive support provision for BME communities
- Lack of emergency homelessness accommodation, and provision for people with complex needs
- Barriers to owner occupation and private rental markets for people with support needs

Recommendations include:

- The development of cross cutting generic support services for adults provided locally across the borough
- Review of the community alarm service
- Add more here

Oldham believes that the vulnerable people living in the Borough are first and fore-most citizens and not clients. They have a right to live in safety, in the community of their choice, wherever possible, and to contribute to that community. Furthermore the accommodation and services provided should be age appropriate and reflect the cultural diversity of Oldham. The accommodation and services provided for vulnerable people in Oldham should promote choice, independence and social inclusion. The improved information on needs gained as a result of the Supported Accommodation Review will enable Oldham to improve its services for vulnerable residents.

## ***Our vision for housing vulnerable people***

Building on the development of the Supporting People and Supported Accommodation strategies, we have devised a vision for Housing for vulnerable people:

- Older people will be enabled to remain at home for as long as possible with an evolving package of support. This will include the development of 'Extra Care' housing for people suffering from dementia or other cognitive impairments, as an alternative to institutional care.
- Other vulnerable adults will be offered support so they can choose from the same range of housing options as the general community – private and socially rented homes or owner occupation throughout the borough.

Our primary aims are to promote independence, offer a range of support packages and choice.

## ***Improved information gathering***

Further work is planned including a tracking study, to find out how people contact and make use of services for homeless and potentially homeless people, and an audit of people using homelessness services to identify primary and other needs will be undertaken as part of the Supporting People service review of Homelessness services. Research will also be undertaken to get a greater understanding of repeat homelessness, as some individuals face homelessness at several points in their lives.

A study has also been carried out to identify the key access points for young people in housing need or wishing to access advice services. It is hoped that this research will help us to provide better quality advice and information services.

## ***Access and choice in housing***

Oldham recognises that not all vulnerable people wish to live in social rented housing and have developed a Rent Deposit scheme, administered by the Oldham Independent Housing Aid Centre and a landlord accreditation scheme to improve access to better quality privately rented housing. The increase in emphasis on floating and outreach support rather than supported accommodation also ensures that vulnerable people are supported regardless of their tenure and are enabled, where possible, to remain in their own home and community.

## ***Homelessness***

In 2004/5 there was a significant rise in homelessness in Oldham, with 1570 applications of which xx% were accepted in priority need, maintaining the trend for increased presentations and need. The number of people of BME origin presenting as homeless is higher than the population profile in Oldham.

The main reasons for homelessness during 2004/5 were:

- Loss of lodging with parents or friends
- Relationship breakdown
- Termination of private sector tenancy
- Harassment and
- Domestic violence..

These are similar reasons to those given by neighbouring Local Authorities.

In December 2004 we carried out a Rough Sleepers Count, following ODPM guidelines. Working in partnership with a broad range of agencies, no rough sleepers were found on the night of the study, confirming local intelligence that there is a minor street homelessness problem in Oldham.

<b>Number statutory homeless cases 2001 - 2005</b>					
	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	#	#	#	#	#
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	#	#	#	#	#
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	#	#	#	#	#
4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	#	#	#	#	#
Total	#	#	#	#	#

### Fill in and add Tameside comparisons

There has been an increase in applications partially caused by the changes to homelessness legislation implemented in 2002. This has widened the categories of need requiring the council to provide statutory support and housing to more need groups. These include young people and ex offenders. It has been increasingly difficult to house homeless households promptly in permanent accommodation due to shrinking council house numbers (due to soaring RTB figures and demolition of obsolete stock) and this growing demand. Further strain has been placed on the service as the numbers of households needing to be urgently rehoused or decanted due to HMR or Decent Homes programmes grows and who are competing for limited 'social housing' stock.

Further homelessness problems have arisen recently driven by the HMR programme in Oldham. There is evidence, both outlined in the Shelter study<sup>60</sup> and evidenced locally that private landlords in HMR areas are ending tenancies in order to gain an improved untenanted property price for the sale of the property. This has led to increased homeless applications from vulnerable tenants.

<sup>60</sup> Shelter report 2005 – get details

Due to this rise in statutory homeless households and the increased demand on homes brought about by HMR demolition, we have recently needed to use other forms of temporary accommodation for homeless households, including use of bed and breakfast accommodation at peak periods. This has been a significant drain on resources. During the year 2004/5 there were 165 placements in B&B, with an average stay of five and a half days.

There has also been a perceived increase in repeat homelessness, not only by current households, but of children from previously homeless families. Although many of these people think there has been positive change to the service and accommodation offered, more work needs to be done if this cycle can be broken and repeat homelessness prevented.

In September 2004 a new Homelessness Strategy for Oldham was launched. The strategy was drawn up in response to the Homelessness Act 2002. It sets out a long - term strategic plan to improve services for homeless people in Oldham with a key emphasis on prevention. This strategy will be monitored through a multi agency strategy group that oversees homelessness spending and monitors changing needs in Oldham and will be reviewed in Autumn 2005. In particular it will address issues raised in the Equality Impact Assessment of the strategy such as:

- Men or people from same sex relationships fleeing domestic violence or coercion,
- People with multiple health problems,
- People with HIV/ AIDs,
- People with brain injuries or mental health problems, and
- Facilities for disabled homeless people.

A newly established Homelessness Forum reports to the Oldham Local Housing Partnership and seeks to involve service users in identifying and resolving needs and issues. We have recently appointed a Homelessness Development Worker to take forward the strategy. Reporting to the Homelessness Forum, the worker will ensure that the Action Plan objectives and targets are met. In March 2005 a 'Speak Out' event, organised by the Forum, was held in Oldham to encourage the involvement of currently or formerly homeless people and we intend to build on this work in conjunction with the Supporting People team.

Homeless facilities in Oldham include;

- Swift Court, a homeless persons temporary accommodation unit comprising 20 self contained flats in the Sholver area of Oldham. It is run by FCHO and currently accommodates the majority of homeless people for whom OMBC have a duty to temporarily accommodate. The occupancy rate at Swift Court has been averaging 120% between April 2004 and February 2005<sup>61</sup>.

---

<sup>61</sup> Homelessness SLA Monitoring and Performance Indicators (FCHO) April 2005.

- In order to address the increasing need for temporary accommodation for homeless households 6 new units of emergency accommodation, with shared facilities, were developed at Swift Court during 2004.
- A further 9 units of dispersed temporary accommodation with support have also been provided and these will be supported by the team at Swift Court. More dispersed units will be negotiated in FCHO or private rented properties if need persists and the approach is found to be successful.
- West Pennine Housing Association have recently opened a replacement hostel for homeless single men to be managed by Threshold Housing Project. It comprises 8 rooms with shared facilities and 10 self-contained bedsits.

Despite this, recently we have needed to use B&B accommodation more frequently to house homeless households at times of peak demand. To address the issues of cost and quality of using this type of accommodation, a B&B working group has been formed. This group aims to make rapid change to the service and will report to cabinet and the FCHO board in the near future.

We are also currently developing a 3 month pilot for a mediation service, provided by National Children's Homes (NCH), that will try to build bridges within fractured households (particularly for young people) to enable a temporary or permanent move home. This ODPM Homelessness Grant funded initiative will be carefully targeted at people who are under no threat of violence, to help them remain in the family home or to make a more sustainable move to independence that will not require emergency assistance. We are also recruiting two ODPM Homeless Grant funded Housing Advisors to work within the FCHO options team - to provide practical advice to prevent homelessness.

Both these initiatives are being undertaken on an 'invest to save' basis, as it is hoped savings to the B&B budget will enable further proactive prevention work.

George (all names have been changed) was 65 when he came to Swift Court after his long-term relationship broke down. He had endured several years of emotional cruelty and was very worried about having to move away from his local community. Support staff arranged counselling for George while at Swift Court, assisted him to maximise his income from benefits and helped him to find a tenancy back in his own neighbourhood. After leaving, George wrote to Swift Court staff thanking them for their support.

Anna was highly distressed when she arrived with her three children at Swift Court, fleeing domestic violence. During her stay Anna was offered counselling and given further support in accessing benefits by the support team. When a new secure home was found for Anna, she was supported through her resettlement - including getting furniture and community care grants to deal with moving to her new home. Anna now feels happy and secure in her own home and has begun working full time.

"When I first moved (to THP hostel) I was spending all day in bed and had no

motivation to do anything...staff motivated me by telling me straight my options and encouraging me to act on them to help my situation...even when I felt I was not ready to move on into more permanent accommodation they filled me with confidence to believe I could do it. I now have my own really nice flat, which...I am proud of. Yours sincerely PJ.”

### **Young people**

A further issue is around the housing opportunities for young people, the number of whom is growing due to the youthful demographics in the borough. These are being addressed, in part via the review of allocations and local lettings policies and the proposals for a Common Housing Register. The Young People's Housing Strategy is due to be launched by Summer 2005.

We know that young people are experiencing difficulties accessing good quality accommodation. These problems will be addressed in the Young People's Housing Needs Strategy and through the change in approach to Housing Choice in Oldham. In addition:

- Our major priority is to improve access and support to the small group of young people who have multiple problems. Some of these are very vulnerable young people who have previously been in care or who have 'fallen through the gaps' of services provided by various agencies. There will need to be further work to develop support for these young people with complex support needs who, although they may be relatively small in numbers, demand intensive support. The Supporting People Strategy proposes a scheme for up to 20 people with complex support needs, possibly in smaller supported group homes.
- West Pennine HA are building 8 self contained flats for young people with support needs, developed in partnership with Oldham's Social Services and the De Paul Trust, and due for completion in September 2005.
- Threshold Housing Project manages a supported housing project for teenage parents. Oldham's pioneering multi agency work in this field has helped to successfully reduce the numbers of teenage parents in the Borough from 67.6 per 1000 female population aged 15 to 17 in 1998 to 55.3 in 2002. The needs of teenage parents are monitored on a multi agency basis via the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy. We also hope to identify further supported housing for teenage parents to continue and improve this positive work.
- FCHO will continue to facilitate supported lodgings for young people – where young people go to live with a family in the borough who support them in developing the skills and confidence they need to live independently.

We will also be developing a pilot pre – tenancy training scheme for people setting up home for the first time. It is hoped to launch this in October 2005.

Kate (all names have been changed) was pregnant when she first came to Threshold Housing Project's scheme for young mothers in 2002. Initially, Kate remained at the unit, but moved out in 2003 to set up her own home, with

continuing support from the team. This has helped Kate to overcome personal difficulties and meet personal goals, while maintaining her tenancy for more than two years. Kate is now mother to two children and has just begun part time work. Support workers are proud of her achievements and believe Kate's children are a credit to her.

Laura was 16, still at school and sleeping on a friend's sofa when she was referred to the Supported Lodgings Scheme. As the relationship with her family had broken down, Laura chose a supported lodging close to her friends and school. To begin with Laura had no independent living skills and lacked self - confidence, but by working with her support worker and the lodgings provider, Laura's confidence grew. After 18 months, Laura had passed her GCSEs, started college and felt able to move on to her own FCHO flat in the same neighbourhood, with further short term support from the team. Despite a limited income Laura has successfully managed her home and is due to go to university soon. She still maintains the strong friendship built with her lodgings provider.

### *Independence for older people*

Despite the ageing population in Oldham, there is an oversupply of unsuitable sheltered housing for older people. There are increasing vacancy rates and declining demand for some housing schemes designated for older people across social housing providers, reflecting the unpopular location or outdated facilities provided.

FCHO currently manage 3100 sheltered homes, of which 1614 properties are to be managed and brought up to decent homes standards by Housing 21, under the Private Finance Initiative contract. This number will be reduced to 1453 units as schemes are remodeled or rebuilt to provide up to date facilities and services. FCHO are currently leading a further Review of Older People's Housing together with the 'Helpline' Community Alarm Service (CAS), which they manage on behalf of the Council. Through Supporting People we aim to offer a more flexible service to a wider range of people to reflect the changing needs of this client group.

The options for the remaining properties will remain under review by the council and FCHO and de-designation of sheltered status or demolition of properties will be considered as appropriate. Early findings suggest that some existing sheltered housing will be identified as more suitable for meeting the needs of other vulnerable people. Some remaining sheltered properties have been identified for building work, environmental work or service improvement.

The need for older people's sheltered housing with additional care will be addressed via the PFI partnership with Housing 21 which will ensure the improvement of sheltered accommodation, including provision of extra care services to 317 properties at eight sites across Oldham. This will enable more

residents to remain in their own home if circumstances and needs change, and fits in with our vision of housing vulnerable people.

A substantial amount is to be invested in these properties over the next 5 years which will not only create better quality and more appropriate accommodation but help towards the Council's targets to achieve Decent Homes across Oldham. Further programme details can be found in section 6 – Investment to provide excellent retained housing and improved neighbourhoods.

The PFI contract has also presented opportunities to improve the provision of owner-occupied retirement properties, with access to support facilities, for sale in the Borough. Two schemes are planned in the Saddleworth area, where new build units for sale will be linked to new or improved rented sheltered homes.

### **Review of the council 'Helpline' Community Alarm Service (CAS)**

The council 'Helpline' is managed by FCHO and is provided to about 4,000 customers (mainly FCHO tenants), but is not available to the general elderly population unless referred by Social Services.

Key aims of the Community Alarm Service Review, currently underway, include;

- Widening access to the CAS to all vulnerable sections of the community, whatever their tenure
- Improving value for money to customers and OMBC
- Bringing the service up to industry standards as outlined by ASAP accreditation<sup>62</sup>
- Improving response times to calls

There will be market testing of this service, looking at several options for providers including; remaining with FCHO, becoming part of the corporate Contact Centre, or provision by a private company with expertise in this area and a suitable housing support ethos. It is thought that significant savings could be made to the Supporting People Budget if a new approach is found. This review will be concluded in XX 2005 and recommendations implemented alongside the development of an Older People's Housing Strategy.

### **Hate Crimes - Domestic Violence, Coercion and Exploitation**

Domestic Violence (DV), coercion and exploitation is increasing with in excess of 400 DV incidents being dealt with by the police each month. Oldham has; a women's refuge, supported move on accommodation and provides floating support for women with children leaving violent partners, managed by Oldham Family Crisis. They also manage a housing project for Asian women in crisis, which provides specialist support to meet the needs of women from BME communities.

---

<sup>62</sup> The Association of Social Alarm Providers (ASAP) is the body that develop industry standards for this sector. Their key aims include raising awareness of issues and developing best practice while ensuring standard specifications are met.

We believe that domestic violence is never acceptable and one of the ways we communicate this is through our action against perpetrators of DV in council properties. The council tenancy agreement states;

'You, your relatives and any other person living in the property (including children) must not... use or threaten to use violence towards anyone living in the property'. There is also specific advice and action on DV given in Oldham's ASB policy and procedures<sup>63</sup>, an approach shared by most OHIP members, and training on this subject has been given to frontline staff.

Oldham currently has a shortage of facilities and services suitable for people fleeing domestic or community violence. Several measures have been put in place or are planned to deal with this:

- A Domestic Violence Coordinator for Oldham has been recruited within the Council's Community Safety Unit to assist in addressing DV issues and promoting partnership working across agencies.
- The continuing need for an outreach worker for Asian women has also been identified, and there are hopes to provide this through Oldham Family Crisis when funding is found.
- Oldham Family Crisis hope to develop a scheme for vulnerable young women (aged 13-19 years) who are fleeing familial abuse including physical or sexual abuse, forced marriage and coercive control – feasibility and funding is being investigated.
- All dispersed temporary accommodation supported by Swift Court will have security measures fitted to make the properties suitable for families or individuals fleeing violence by Summer 2005.
- A further facility, offering a female only environment, is being considered as use for surplus sheltered property<sup>64</sup>. This secure scheme would be suitable for women fleeing domestic violence as well as other women seeking a female only environment.
- A project has been introduced during 2004/5 where those who would otherwise have to leave their homes because of domestic violence may choose to stay in their home, after additional security measures are fitted. 27 homes have had security measures fitted by the ODPM homelessness grant funded 'Sanctuary Project' since April 2004. An assessment of the effectiveness of this scheme has been undertaken and it will be rolled out further in the near future.
- The Greater Manchester Police and CSU work in partnership to deliver this service. These partners are also central to the updated ASB policy<sup>65</sup> developed by OMBC and FCHO, which outlines our approach to domestic violence.

---

<sup>63</sup> OMBC Anti Social Behaviour Policy and Procedures Dec 2004

<sup>64</sup> As part of the Review of Older People's Housing

<sup>65</sup> Anti Social Behaviour Policy and Procedures (OMBC/CSU/FCHO) December 2004

This forms part of our key strategic aim, which is to develop initiatives to prevent domestic violence. Oldham's performance on DV is monitored by BV225 within the CSU, and we work closely with them to meet these requirements.

### ***People with physical, sensory or learning disabilities***

Many people, particularly in the most deprived areas of Oldham, suffer from long-term ill health or disability. Due to the growing number of older people living in the borough, there are likely to be more who need some kind of support, due to illness, disability or infirmity in the coming years. In the Asian community especially there are high levels of ill health and this is likely to rise as more of this population reach retirement age. These residents may require adaptations to their home or other support measures to enable them to remain in their own home.

There are often limited services for disabled people to receive support in their own homes, which restricts independence and leads to the institutionalisation of clients. These services can also be an unnecessary drain on budgets, as clients currently require to be placed in out of borough facilities as no suitable provision is available here. A key issue of the Supported Housing Review has been the reduction of these out of borough placements as this has placed severe strain on limited Supporting People budgets and the accommodation available. Social Services have formed a 'Place to Live' working group, with membership from a wide range of agencies, who will work to address these issues.

The Learning Disabilities Service Housing Strategy (2003) established a need for appropriate self-contained accommodation for service users with learning disabilities. New supported housing is being built on the site of a former Social Services hostel, which was demolished when it no longer met care standards. Service users with learning disabilities and their families have been consulted about the new development, which includes;

- Two blocks of 6 self contained flats, including ground floor flats adapted for physically disabled people,
- A bungalow providing supported living, and
- A respite care facility.

West Pennine HA are acting as Project Manager for this development which includes funding from Housing Association Grant and the Health Authority.

In 2005/6, further ADP investment is being targeted at projects for people with learning disabilities.

- WPHA will build 6 one bedroom flats in Chadderton for younger people with learning disabilities, some of whom have additional physical disabilities.
- Places for people HA will also be converting their small group home in Failsworth for people with learning disabilities in order to accommodate their growing physical frailty.

Further properties are being developed by SELHAL to meet the need for less institutionalised homes for service users with learning disabilities. Proposals include the latest SMART technology to assist in promoting and maintaining dignity and independence.

### ***Effective delivery of property adaptations***

Oldham will continue to focus on improving the delivery of adaptations work for people with impaired mobility or other problems, to help them become or remain independent in their own home. During 2004-2005, £877,000 was spent providing adaptations to 337 council properties, while a further £754,000 was invested in 125 non - council properties, through Disabled Facilities Grants.

Typical works included;

- Fitting of grab handles at entrances, stairs or in bathrooms
- Provision of level access showers
- Installation of stair lifts or through floor lifts
- Building of extensions to provide downstairs bedroom or sanitary facilities

An Adaptations Review has been carried out in partnership with the Primary Care Trust, Social Services, Regeneration and Chief Executive's Departments. One of the key aims of this was to identify adapted properties in the borough and build a register so that better use can be made of previously adapted homes, particularly council and RSL properties, to encourage a better match between person and property, shortening waiting times for adaptations or rehousing. New procedures will be developed to improve communication so the process from assessment to delivery is made more effective and transparent.

### ***Delivering affordable warmth***

A warm home is vital to everyone, but in particular to many of the most vulnerable groups. To address this an Affordable Warmth Strategy was launched in 2004. One of the main priorities is dealing with fuel poverty and increasing the amount of disposable income that people have. Through access to Warm Front and other types of grants, and Decent Homes work, we are confident that significant impacts will be made for the people of the borough. For more details of this strategy see Section 6 – Investment to Provide Excellent Housing.

### ***Supporting other vulnerable people***

It has been identified that some other vulnerable groups are underrepresented in terms of housing and support services provision. These are often groups with complex needs, such as people with mental health problems, chaotic lifestyles or addiction problems. The Supported Accommodation Strategy has highlighted these needs and possible solutions to current gaps in support.

## **Dealing with drug and alcohol addiction**

OMBC now work in partnership with the Drug and Alcohol team sited within the Connexions youth support service to support younger people with complex needs including addiction problems.

It is hoped to develop facilities for people who do not feel ready to stop drinking, to compliment the 'dry' temporary accommodation already provided. We are currently considering the feasibility of developing these facilities, in partnership with Tameside MBC and Stockport MBC, to tackle the problem of homelessness experienced by this group. We also aim to provide high level floating support services to enable people with addiction problems to stabilise in their own, or small group, homes.

## **Supporting ex forces personnel**

Many ex forces personnel experience problems in adapting back to civilian life and suffer multiple problems caused by post – traumatic stress, emotional or addiction problems etc. We are working to ensure these individuals or families are supported back into the community, despite the short timescales involved when leaving the forces.

## **Supporting ex offenders on their return to the community**

OMBC and the Housing Options team within FCHO work closely with the probation service and prison services to ensure the appropriate support, advice and rehousing is offered to ex-offenders. Currently Threshold Housing Project (in partnership with the Probation Service) provide Supporting People funded floating support to help clients enter mainstream housing and English Churches Housing Group have a 'halfway house' for ex - offenders, although these services are oversubscribed. We aim to extend the THP scheme to support another 12 people, so that intensive support offered by ECHG can be effectively targeted for those most in need. We hope to develop 20 further units of supported housing for ex offenders, 12 units for men and 8 units for women, by 2007/8, if funding can be identified.

Through the Drug and Alcohol Task Force and the Drug Intervention Programme we are developing a number of initiatives to help tackle substance abuse, particularly around offenders leaving prison. We are developing a temporary assessment centre to provide accommodation where people can stabilise their lives in a supported environment. It is hoped this approach will help stem re-offending rates.

## **Asylum Seekers and Refugees**

Asylum seekers are currently housed in a range of NASS properties, both provided by private landlords and FCHO. In November 2004, 385 people/households were temporarily accommodated by this scheme. FCHO have supported 75 people or households, who are new to the country, as part of their Induction Service, since July 2004.

There is currently no specialist provision for refugees who have been given leave to remain, other than short-term support for people housed by FCHO. The provision of an Asylum Move On Officer by FCHO has been secured until March 2006 using temporary Supporting People funding. There are many refugees who are suffering from stress, or post traumatic stress – a reflection of their experiences in their country of origin and since they have come to Britain. One problem restricting the work with asylum seekers and refugees is the limited access to suitable interpreters for these new communities within the borough. Working together with local health services, we hope to support suitable individuals to become professionally trained translators.

An Asylum Seeker position statement and outline action plan, developed by the Asylum Steering Group, will be submitted to the Community Cohesion Partnership, and the wider Oldham Partnership in Summer 2005. This will enable action on many issues facing these groups.

### **Gypsies and Travellers**

Gypsies and Travellers are acknowledged as one of the most excluded communities in society, suffering restricted access to many vital services. There is currently no council provision for the travelling community within Oldham, but may need to be developed to meet requirements of the Housing Act 2004<sup>66</sup>. This requires the local authority to allocate land for caravan sites to meet any assessed need and gives them strengthened powers to combat unauthorised sites.

The Housing Strategy Team will lead on the development of a strategy for Gypsies and Travellers during 2005/6. If assessments indicate need locally, a key aim will be to develop official sites, possibly in partnership with Tameside MBC, and to provide suitable support to enable families to access services, for instance by providing good access to suitable education and health services. This should ensure the pressure to form illegal encampments is removed. The strategy will be developed in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders including the travelling community and other residents. Indeed, we are currently in discussion with The Gypsy Council as to how best to address these issues.

Providing effective, flexible support to vulnerable people of all tenures is essential if we are to develop sustainable and mixed communities throughout Oldham. More than 9 out of 10 people who have used the services of the FCHO Tenancy Support Scheme remain in their tenancies six months after the end of their support and this level of success must be extended to support more vulnerable people across the borough.

---

<sup>66</sup> An ODPM consultation paper, 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites' was published in December 2004

## Action points:

- We will monitor any applicable actions from the Supported Accommodation Strategy.
- We will continue to work with social services, supporting people and other stakeholders to deliver effective multi agency provision and ensure Supporting People priorities are met.
- We will develop a common assessment framework for all housing advice services to ensure common risk assessment procedures and information sharing to provide a joined – up service to clients
- We will work to improve public access to services and information, frontline housing advice and prevention services - following the ‘invest to save’ agenda - to expand customer choice
- We will strive to provide permanent suitable housing for vulnerable people to support their independence in all tenures

## Equality Impact Assessment

- Develop new temporary accommodation provision and adapt existing where appropriate to positively address the needs of disabled people who may be homeless;
- Develop additional provision of accommodation and support for people experiencing domestic violence, particularly for those for whom current refuge provision is not suitable/available, including people in same sex relationships, male victims and young single women;
- To continue to support the Asian Women’s Outreach service, provided by Oldham Family Crisis;
- In developing the Older Person’s Strategy to consider the needs of BME elders;
- Through the Supporting People Programme ensure that there is a diversity of support to meet the needs of hard to reach groups;
- Maximise the benefits of the PFI Sheltered Housing Scheme to provide good access for disabled people to ensure “homes for life”;
- Working with the Gypsy Council and other representative groups ensure that the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers are met.

## 6. Investment to provide excellent retained housing and improved neighbourhoods

### Key Objectives ;

- Bring all council homes to Decent Homes Standard by 2007 and 70% of vulnerable households in the private sector by 2010
- Support delivery of HMR Project Update across all tenures
- Promote environmental sustainability and improve home energy efficiency across all tenures.
- Monitor this action through the performance management framework.

### **National, Regional, Sub - regional and Local Context**

Further information about the current local housing conditions and barriers to investment are found in section 2 – Understanding Change in Oldham.

For many years there has been serious under-investment in the nation's public sector housing stock and this situation has been reflected in Oldham.

The Oldham Community Strategy 2002-2022 features housing as a key priority. It aims to integrate the key elements that make up a cohesive and sustainable community. The foundation for this needs to be the availability of warm, safe and affordable homes.

Our investment priorities for both the public and private sector are ambitious, we will deliver these with out partners while engaging with all stakeholders.

### ***Improved information collection and analysis***

OMBC is currently developing a housing information database to collect and aid analysis of a wide range of housing information. This database, under stewardship of the Housing Strategy Team and Oldham Housing Partnership, will collate information on all tenures, including management, stock condition and social economic data to enable information sharing between partners, such as OMBC, FCHO, RSLs and the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder.

There have been several large research and consultation projects that have taken place in the last year or are currently underway that will inform this database, as outlined in Section 3 - Housing markets.

One current piece of research – the Decent Homes, Decent Neighbourhoods Stock Condition Survey – aims to gather cross tenure stock data (updating the 1999 survey) and targeted socio economic information. A primary focus will be on the HMR areas in Oldham. This will assist us to:

- Make more informed decisions about the targeting of housing resources and specifically to determine spending priorities
- Identify the existing position relating to the Decent Homes Standard across all tenures
- Further develop our housing renewal policy under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002
- Develop / influence our home energy conservation strategies
- Help in the development of improvement grants or loans and other means of support for householders
- Provide background material to inform bids such as the annual bidding rounds with ODPM and the housing corporation
- Support the '2<sup>nd</sup> wave' HMR scheme update prospectus.
- Improve the information base on private landlords to identify trends within the sector.

We are in a better position now to identify needs and to prioritise these in our investment and delivery plans. We are more able to ensure consistent monitoring and drive continuous improvement and will strive to develop this further.

### ***Delivering Decent Homes for the Social Housing Sector***

Since 2001 the council has been working to achieve the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) for all its properties. Details of DHS can be found in section 2 - Understanding Change in Oldham. To evaluate the possible investment options OMBC carried out a stock options study<sup>67</sup>, which recommended a multiple approach of estate stock transfer, a PFI scheme and setting up an ALMO.

At the time the ALMO was formed and transfers took place...

Outline of current picture where not mentioned in detail in understanding change; (almo bid – fcho website)

Stock condition info for FCHO/ Villages and PFI stock.

No of FCHO properties not meeting the DHS 2004/5

Estimated costs of bringing FCHO props up to standard including PFI properties. – or below?

Details of DHS in RSL sector – most ok

### ***First Choice Homes Oldham delivering Decent Homes***

Oldham approach has been innovative and challenging. The bulk of the Oldham's housing stock will be bought up to the Decent Standard through FCHO – it is seen as the primary vehicle in meeting the Government's target.

Since April 2002 FCHO has delivered, amongst other services: estate management, housing maintenance and improvement, and estate regeneration. FCHO secured a two star rating from the Housing Inspectorate in 2003. As a result Oldham MBC secured significant additional capital resources. Between

---

<sup>67</sup> Oldham Housing Inquiry (Housing Quality Network) 2001

2003 and 2007 this will be £86 million. This will enable Oldham to achieve the decent homes target by 2007, subject to Government approval.

FCHO and Oldham MBC have recognised that to deliver best value in this major investment programme they will need to work in partnership with the private sector. FCHO are delivering the programme through partnering arrangements in line with Gershon efficiencies and the 'Rethinking Construction'<sup>68</sup> ethos – to deliver value for money procurement. FCHO are working with other Greater Manchester ALMOs to benchmark the costs associated with partnership working.

Oldham Council and ultimately FCHO were one of the first organisations to enter into partnership agreements, for the delivery of housing capital improvement schemes, to ensure high value for money and quality standards. Currently FCHO have partnership agreements with several building firms; Emanuel Whittaker, The Lord Group and Connaught, as well as gas heating engineers Emcor – Drake and Scull and Apollo<sup>69</sup> and, the consultants, Indigo. All these companies are members of the Oldham Housing Partnership.

Currently our partnership is reporting 4% efficiency savings (at least half of which is given back to FCHO to be reinvested in the capital programme). The Audit Commission has recently commended the success of the partnership arrangements – “FCHO has demonstrated through its award winning partnering arrangements that it can deliver decent homes”<sup>70</sup>.

The table below outlines the approved FCHO Capital Programme for 2004 – 2010. Area Improvement Plans for all the local board areas are developed by FCHO in partnership with the local and main boards, and these inform the capital programme.

<b>Capital Programme 2004/05-2009/10<sup>71</sup></b>							
<b>Planning totals</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£'m.</b>	<b>£'m.</b>	<b>£'m.</b>	<b>£'m.</b>	<b>£'m.</b>	<b>£'m.</b>	<b>£'m.</b>
Chadderton	£4.00	£5.78	£4.90	£4.38	£2.72	£0.06	£21.84
Failsworth/ Hollinwood	£4.24	£6.13	£2.74	£3.65	£0.04	£0.04	£16.84
West Oldham	£8.77	£11.75	£3.63	£1.44	£0.10	£0.10	£25.79
Shaw/ Royton	£3.23	£6.04	£2.25	£0.62	£0.02	£0.03	£12.19
Saddleworth/ Lees	£1.49	£2.61	£1.58	£0.02	£0.69	£0.02	£6.41
East Oldham	£7.00	£11.27	£8.11	£6.35	£4.96	£1.13	£38.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>£28.73</b>	<b>£43.58</b>	<b>£23.21</b>	<b>£16.46</b>	<b>£8.53</b>	<b>£1.38</b>	<b>£121.89</b>

<sup>68</sup> source documents

<sup>69</sup> FCHO previously worked with Emcor – Drake and Scull as partners for heating improvements. Apollo have been working with us since April 2005.

<sup>70</sup> FCHO Board report 8<sup>th</sup> June 2005 – quote from 'Improvement Drivers in Local Authority Housing' (Audit Commission) xxxx 2005?

<sup>71</sup> FCHO Board Report 8<sup>th</sup> June 2005

<b>Boroughwide</b>							
One off Heating replacement/ Legionella/ Group schemes	£0.20	£0.60	£0.30				£1.10
Furnished accomodation	£0.23	£0.20	£0.20	£0.20	£0.20	£0.20	£1.23
Shetered PFI fees	-£0.13	£0.02	£0.00				-£0.11
DPA's	£0.96	£0.70	£0.60	£0.60	£0.60	£0.60	£4.06
Repairs to Footpaths	£0.10	£0.15	£0.15	£0.15	£0.15	£0.15	£0.85
Disability Discrimination Act works	£0.00	£0.10					£0.10
Decom/conversion non PFI sheltered	£0.08						£0.08
SX3 computer system	£0.90	£1.58					£2.48
Stock condition survey	£0.00	£0.08					£0.08
Housing Market Renewal Fund	£0.92	£0.07	£0.00				£0.99
Total	£3.19	£3.57	£1.25	£0.95	£0.95	£0.95	£10.86
Carry forward from year to year	£0.00	£0.00	£14.41	£5.41	£14.79	£16.50	£51.10
Grand total	£31.92	£47.15	£38.87	£22.82	£24.27	£18.83	£183.85
<b>Resources</b>							
HIP Allocation	£1.00	£1.00	£1.00	£1.00	£1.00	£1.00	£6.00
Major Repairs Allowance	£12.31	£4.451	£7.26	£7.03	£6.77	£6.51	£44.33
ALMO Allowance	£17.76	£25.50	£25.20				£68.16
RCCO	£0.44	£1.79					£2.23
HMRF	£0.38	£0.30					£0.68
Homeless Directive Grant	£0.03	£0.00	£0.00				£0.03
Total	£31.92	£32.74	£33.46	£8.03	£7.77	£7.51	£98.12
Overprogramming (Need note about this)	£0.00	£14.41	£4.51	£14.79	£16.50	£11.32	£19.82

FCHO also provide improvement works to leaseholders whose homes were formerly council owned flats and maisonettes. There is currently a review of the services provided to these customers that will aim not only to clarify and improve general management and maintenance structures, but to more effectively consult with leaseholders about services, charges, and major improvement works schemes.

#### **Improvements to Montgomery House in Hollinwood**

Beginning early in 2004 extensive work has been undertaken by Emanuel Whittaker Ltd to bring flats up to the Decent Homes Standard. This scheme will cost £XX million.

- External repairs were done to the roof, concrete and brickwork and new render was applied in 'indigo', the colour choice of the majority of tenants
- All flats and communal areas have been rewired
- All flats have had new kitchens and windows fitted
- Balconies have had screens fitted and drying rooms improved
- An integrated satellite connection has been fitted, so tenants will no longer need individual dishes, and this will improve the appearance of the block

- A new video call entry system has been installed, so tenants can see the caller to their home from a handset by their front door and thus better control access to the block. The entrance door has also been replaced. This system is connected to the 24 - hour security office sited at Crossbank House.
- Prior to the scheme commencing extensive consultation was carried out with tenants, residents and local councilors. A respite flat has been provided to allow tenants to escape the noise and disruption while the work is underway.

Delivering decent homes standards will help council estates remain sustainable as pleasant and desirable places to live. Analysis by FCHO has confirmed that DH work can improve sustainability. For instance since the external improvements, including overcladding, insulation works and replacement windows, were carried out at Crossbank and Summervale houses in central Oldham:

- The average relet time for flats in the blocks has dropped to less than a third (61 days) of the time taken in 2001 - 2 (192 days).
- The turnover rate has decreased markedly, with the amount of money lost due to void properties dropping for the first time in five years
- The sign up rate for tenancies rose, with more than half of offers being taken up, higher than any point in the last five years.
- This suggests that the better quality, attractive homes provided after decent homes improvements are seen as desirable and residents are more likely to want to stay.

### Involving customers in FCHO capital schemes

Customer involvement throughout capital schemes is central to the success of this programme. Beginning with tenant membership of FCHO boards, tenants and residents are vital to the successful delivery of the projects from start to finish. Dedicated customer consultation officers work on all schemes using consultation procedures developed by FCHO and it's partners. Where possible;

- Residents affected will be involved from an early stage;
- Suitable information and consultation is provided using a variety of methods; and
- Where applicable residents will be offered choices, for instance in colour schemes, siting of central heating or choice of fire surround.

Throughout the process it is made clear how customers should make comment or complain, and the response to these is monitored. When the work is completed all customers affected are sent a detailed satisfaction survey and appropriate support is offered to encourage people to reply. Satisfaction rates with the overall work of the Capital Programme Partnership currently average at 88%, despite the often intrusive and disruptive nature of the improvement work.

The results of this feedback are monitored by the Capital Programme Monitoring Group, the FCHO board and OMBC, and best practice findings are integrated into future projects. A summary leaflet is also distributed to residents and any Tenant and Resident Associations in the project area.

### **RSLs delivering Decent Homes**

RSLs play a central roll in delivering decent homes in Oldham. The transfer of homes to Villages HA and Contour HA has led to £XX million being spent on these homes in the year 2004 – 2005. Much of the work by Villages HA at Fitton Hill has been delivered in partnership with New Deal for Communities.

All OHIP member RSLs are stakeholders in the boroughwide stock condition survey currently being undertaken. Many local RSLs have relatively modern stock, much of which already meets DHS. For instance, all WPHA properties in Oldham currently meet the DHS and stock is assessed annually to ensure this continues.

#### **Improvements at Limehurst Village Trust**

LVT has delivered a £14 million improvement scheme to deliver decent homes and neighbourhoods since the stock transfer in 1998

#### **Decent Homes for Villages HA at Fitton Hill**

Since the transfer of 1220 homes in April 2004 Villages have already brought 159 homes up to DHS, including all bungalow properties where residents have benefited from improved heating, electrics, kitchens and bathrooms.

During 2005/6 Villages will deliver;

- Window replacement to 263 homes
- New kitchens for 150 properties
- Modern bathrooms for 142 homes and
- Improved heating for 297 homes

### **Private Finance Initiative**

Our pioneering PFI partnership with Housing 21 will realise significant investment in our Sheltered Housing stock. Over the next five years over £80m will be invested in the improvement and re-provision of 1453 sheltered homes. The proposed funding split over the 5 years, subject to ODPM approval, is:

- Year 1 - £19.6m
- Year 2 - £31.3m
- Year 3 - £18.2m
- Year 4 - £11.8m
- Year 5 - £3.4m

This partnership will deliver Decent Homes improvements to sheltered properties across the borough, as well as further improvements, conversions or new build, to offer more suitable, accessible homes or communal and care facilities. This will ensure that they are suitable for use as sheltered housing long into the future.

### **PFI at Wood Square**

The current sheltered properties at Wood Square in Saddleworth do not have potential for value for money improvements that would bring them up to a suitable modern standard. Therefore a new build solution has been proposed. Planned to start on site during the fourth year of the initiative, the new two-storey complex will offer:

- 12 one bedroom flats,
- 4 two bedroom flats,
- Lift access to first floor,
- Communal facilities such as lounge, conservatory and tea kitchen,
- Wardens office and modern call system,
- Secure call entry system, and
- Parking and buggy storage facilities.

It is also proposed that a three-storey block of retirement apartments for sale will be built adjacent to the new scheme and this will provide more choice for older people to remain independent in their local community. These plans are indicative only as consultation is still underway.

### ***Decent Homes in the private sector***

There are major issues within the owner occupied sector in some parts of the borough centred on disrepair, unfitness and dysfunctional local housing markets. These problems are also found in the private rented sector.

As outlined in section 2 - Understanding Change, much of Oldham's private sector stock is terraced and was built prior to 1919. Due to the low incomes of many households and high maintenance costs there has been long-term neglect to many homes and there is a serious problem with disrepair.

The government has recently made funding available to assist the private sector in achieving the Decent Homes Standard in the private sector. The targets for private sector are 70% of homes containing vulnerable households by 2010.

**Details of private rented sector, conditions in HMOs, actions against private landlords to maintain properties. Details of empty or abandoned properties and HMO info? Link to choice? Still to add targets.**

## Private Sector Renewal Strategy

A Private Sector Renewal Strategy has been developed, involving multi-agency stakeholders. Oldham's priorities for the private sector are to:

- Improve private sector dwellings which are unfit or in disrepair
- Develop initiatives in the private rented sector
- Empower owner occupiers to remain in their homes
- Improve energy efficiency and environmental sustainability

Early in 2005 we commissioned a stock condition survey to provide the outline information on decent homes in the private sector. This will then assist us in re-defining our aims and interventions to meet government targets. Initial findings from the pilot suggest that up to 4 in 10 properties surveyed may not meet decency standards, while a quarter are statutory unfit<sup>72</sup>.

The recent formation of the Oldham Housing Partnership will enable more effective strategy development for the private sector. This will be driven by the membership of the partnership, which includes construction companies, private landlords, local estate agents, the Rent Officer and building societies as well as the Council's strategic and private sector housing teams, FCHO and RSLs.

Oldham aims to improve and sustain homes with the private sector, with or without financial assistance. The Private Sector Renewal Strategy and HMR will help towards addressing issues within this sector.

Oldham plans to:

Improve advice and support we provide to vulnerable homeowners

- Further develop the Home Improvement Agency
- Prioritise home energy conservation and develop Local Energy Action Plans
- Leverage external resources to improve the energy efficiency of homes
- Expand registration and landlord accreditation schemes for private landlords across the borough

## Equity release for home improvements

The changes in housing renewal legislation have enabled Oldham Council to develop an equity release package that will help owner occupiers in necessitous circumstances, such as low income, to release equity in their property to carry out the necessary repairs or improvements to their home. The equity release package is known as "Home Improve – Oldham" which is a partnership between HMR, Oldham MBC and West Pennine Housing Association, and is mirrored by similar arrangements in Rochdale.

Key factors of the Home Improve scheme:

---

<sup>72</sup> Stock Condition Survey pilot interim report (Michael Dyson Associates) July 2005. These findings act as a guide for the full field work now underway.

- Equity release allows a homeowner to unlock additional finance by using the available equity in the property. This only needs to be repaid on the sale of the home.
- On the sale of their property the homeowner has to pay back the amount awarded plus a proportion of any increase in property value since the investment was made. It is proposed that this will be capped at 6.5% and if the property value falls, the homeowner will only need to repay the original payment made.
- It provides good value for money for the Council, against traditional grant packages, because when the property is sold the initial finance can be recycled to another property.
- 'Home Improve' has been nationally recognised as successful model for equity release schemes.

Financial resources from the Private Sector Housing Capital Programme 2004/05 for the amount of £200k and a matching amount from the Housing Market Renewal Programme are now in place to start delivering the equity release package across the Borough of Oldham. The project has enormous potential to exceed expectations. Although the scheme has generated a lot of interest from homeowners there is still some work to do in developing the scheme. The initiative will be monitored through the Home Improve Steering Group, which will ensure that targets and performance indicators are met. In addition to this we are also considering a similar Home Improve initiative for major disability adaptations.

### Landlord Accreditation scheme

This scheme, currently working in the Derker area, requires private landlords to sign up to a code of conduct. To date 18 landlords have been accredited and they manage 40 properties. Support packages are promoted through a quarterly newsletter, forum meetings and by other aspects of the Private Sector Housing Unit's work within the Regeneration Department. Information on accreditation is also available on the Council's website. Oldham has been at the forefront of Landlord Accreditation having been involved in a pilot with Salford City Council. The lessons gained from this pilot are being used to further develop our policies.

### Houses in Multiple Occupation

The Housing for Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing will enable the council to ensure that the most vulnerable HMOs have the correct safety and maintenance work carried out and will help to regulate the use of these properties to prevent potential nuisance in the area.

The Fire Brigade is one of the main partners in adopting the scheme approach and regular partnership meetings have now been established to develop fire standards within HMO's to provide safe and secure accommodation for tenants.

Further details on the Landlord Accreditation and HMO Licensing can be found in Section 3 – Responding to Local Housing Markets and Needs

### Empty Homes Strategy

Oldham Council will use Compulsory Purchase or the proposed enforced sales procedures to deal with long-term empty properties. For more information see Section 4 – Housing Choice.

Give further details of;

no. of grants planned 2005/6 under group repairs, HRA and renovation grants.

It is hoped that 122 grants will be made during 2004/5 with funding £69,700<sup>73</sup>

(BVPI62) targets no made fit or demolished (all private sector)

Targets long term empty properties bought back into use

Target nos CPO and outcomes eg HMR/ other

Target improved no. of dwelling

### Affordable warmth in all tenures

Ensuring homes across the borough are “Warm, safe and dry” has been a long - term theme of Oldham’s Housing Strategy while “Providing a reasonable degree of thermal comfort” is one of the key aims of the DHS. The introduction of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) includes “cold, damp and mould growth” indicators and will allow us to target action where this could impact on the health of occupants.

Oldham has many older properties, which often have solid walls, poor insulation standards and low Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) ratings. SAP ratings in some private sector properties are particularly low. These properties are home to some of the most deprived people in the borough and this has led to fuel poverty. Fuel poverty has multiple detrimental affects on the people living in these properties, leading to ill health, premature death, educational disadvantage and reduced quality of life.

During 2004 Oldham developed The Affordable Warmth Strategy 2004 - 2010. The strategic vision is “Working together to eradicate fuel poverty in vulnerable groups by 2010”. The Affordable Warmth For All Steering Group will monitor the action plan for this strategy. This is a multi agency group including representatives from OMBC, FCHO, RSLs, Manchester North Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (MNEEAC) and the Health and Voluntary sectors.

Under the Health and Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) Oldham Council is committed to reduce energy consumption in housing by 30% by 2010 and has utilised affordable warmth initiatives to help deliver this target. One of these is the NMEEAC, which offers advice, support and information about grants to improve energy efficiency. More work will be done to outreach these services to more

---

<sup>73</sup> HSSA 2004

vulnerable members of the community. Since 1996 the energy efficiency of Oldham’s housing has improved by 17.35%<sup>74</sup>. In order to more consistently record improvements and assist calculations for HECA and BVPI 63<sup>75</sup>, FCHO purchased specialist software using EU SAVE funding.

The Energy Efficiency Commitment 2005 – 2008 requires energy suppliers to fund energy efficiency measures for vulnerable households to deliver fuel cost savings. We will continue to work with Scottish Power to meet this aim, in partnership with the North Manchester Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (NMEEAC), using the AWARM referral mechanism to ensure improvements are targeted at households suffering from fuel poverty.

Central to the HMR ‘Design Code’ currently being developed for the HMR Project Update is the provision of energy efficient ‘eco – homes’ in all tenures across the pathfinder. We will ensure that 90% of all new homes built under HMR will meet ‘excellent’ eco – homes ratings while the remaining 10% will be ‘very good’, exceeding government targets and lifting the benchmark for good design standards.

### FCHO improving energy efficiency

FCHO work with Switch 2 Energy Solutions (group heating contracts) and partners Emcor – Drake and Scull and Apollo Heating to deliver heating maintenance and improvement works in council homes. We aim to deliver improved service to supply reliable quality heating to our tenants and to deal with problems efficiently. While working with Emcor – Drake and Scull, the quality and customer satisfaction with the annual servicing and reactive maintenance service improved <sup>76</sup>and we intend to build on this with our new partner Apollo Heating with aims of 98% reactive jobs delivered on time and 90% customer satisfaction with heating repairs by 2005/6.

FCHO has targeted heating and insulation improvements on the council homes with some of the lowest SAP ratings to eradicate fuel poverty. The planned expenditure over the next two years future is shown in the table below. By April 2005 FCHO properties had a SAP rating of 68.06, an improvement from 56.53 in 2003/4. This places FCHO properties in the top quarter of English local authorities for energy efficiency<sup>77</sup>. We aim for a SAP rating of 71 by 2007/8.

Planned Energy Efficiency Improvements 2005/6 - 2006/7	
2005/6 Planned number homes improved (&	2006/7 Planned number homes improved (&

<sup>74</sup> HECA Eighth Progress Report 2003/2004

<sup>75</sup> Details of this BVPI can be found in appendix XX

<sup>76</sup> 82% customers were satisfied by the heating repairs service in 2004/5 rising from 80% in 2003/4.

<sup>77</sup> FCHO Board Report Energy Update 16<sup>th</sup> April 2005

	expenditure)	expenditure)
Replacement windows and doors	1755 (£2,220,000)	tbc
Efficient heating systems	1350 (£3,297,000)	tbc
Insulation including internal, cavity wall and external	2000 (£1250,000)	tbc

### **Energy Efficiency Improvements at Ashton Road East**

Decent Homes work has recently begun on properties at Ashton Road East in Failsworth/ Hollinwood. As part of comprehensive works internally and externally householders will benefit from;

- UPVC double glazing with energy effective 'k' glass
- UPVC front and back doors
- Replacement energy efficient central heating boilers and radiators
- Installation of extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms to deal with condensation/ mold growth
- Upgrade to loft insulation

All residents were invited to an open day before the scheme began. Work is expected to be complete in early 2006.

Investment in new software has enabled FCHO to monitor the use of energy by district and group heating schemes as part of the Energy Strategy. This allows FCHO to take measures to improve insulation and reduce energy usage – FCHO aim to make efficiency savings of 10 - 15% by upgrading these properties.

FCHO have also developed a new scheme called 'Voids Solution', where tenants are referred for fuel supply by Scottish Power, if requested when they sign the agreement for their new home. This helps to avoid confusion for tenants and gives them access to lower tariffs offered by Scottish Power.

- This scheme was piloted in Oldham West from June 2004 and the roll out to the whole borough will be completed in July 2005. By April 2005 182 tenants had been nominated and 85 had signed up with Scottish Power.
- All FCHO properties used by Asylum Seekers have also been signed up to this scheme, and meters have been improved to allow better monitoring of energy costs by this vulnerable group.
- The nomination scheme has also been extended to existing FCHO customers and has been promoted in the tenant's newsletter and at local housing offices.

The nomination scheme has brought over £4,000 in additional income to FCHO, which will be invested in further energy saving opportunities.

## Energy efficiency in the private sector

Oldham council has improved energy efficiency in private sector housing by:

- Developing HMO registration and landlord inspection schemes, and supporting landlord and private tenant forums where energy advice can be targeted.
- Giving loans or grants to people on low incomes to improve heating systems and insulation. We aim to invest £xxxx in XX households in XX – XX.

## Housing Market Renewal

Although the aim of the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder is to restructure the housing market, not explicitly to improve housing, part of this initiative will include significant investment in pathfinder areas to maintain, improve and sustain properties and neighbourhoods. Some of this funding will be used to deal with quality of life and environmental issues.

Oldham will, in partnership with the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder address unfitness and disrepair through the private sector investment programme and HMR resources. These will include:

- Initiatives under by the Regulatory Reform Order 2002, such as the Equity Release Scheme
- Work in partnership with RSLs to provide affordable quality homes in the pathfinder area

Several Group repair schemes are already underway in the First Wave HMR areas. This work is being undertaken by the FCHO Capital Programme Partnership and is expected to be complete by September 2005.

- 1-55 Hereford Street is being undertaken by Connaught.
- 8-26 Filbert Street is delivered by The Lord Group.
- 2-16 Whitecroft Street being carried out by The Lord Group.

Demolition has also begun in HMR areas, including FCHO flats at Acre Lane and Crabtree Road in Derker and Suther Street in Werneth.

- In Werneth we are planning to demolish 700 properties to be replaced by 900 new homes. This is in addition the refurbishment to over 900 properties that will sustain communities until building is completed.
- We have already acquired more than 30 properties and in 2005 we hope to build new homes to suit the needs of the community as soon as land becomes available through demolition.

Further details of Oldham and Rochdale HMR's investment plans will be published in the Project Update in July 2005.

[Add further details in here](#)

[Target Areas and Action](#)

[Special measures / initiatives](#)

[Home Improvement Agency](#)

Anchor Staying Put / care and repair  
Area based investment  
developing homesswop? Nothing on this yet in document!!  
HMR intervention and plan (quick wins)  
Few examples of where HMR has invested or intends to invest in housing improvements.

### *Environmental improvements for sustainable neighbourhoods*

The HMR opinion survey of 2003<sup>78</sup> and other research has underlined the importance of the neighbourhood environment in balancing housing markets and making areas 'a nice place to live', and this is reflected in the visioning work carried out. This focus has been confirmed in recent study by Keele University<sup>79</sup> that links between community safety and the housing market. Therefore a whole environment approach has been taken to neighbourhood investment programmes, which place importance on communal space and security and tackling antisocial behaviour. This is discussed in more depth in the next section – Community Cohesion and Sustainable Communities.

The Oldham Beyond Vision placed particular emphasis on the need to develop a network of quality green space where local people can meet, relax, exercise and play in a safe and confident environment. The Green Space Strategy 2004 complements a number of related strategies and programmes, such as Oldham's Agenda 21 Plan and the Local Development Framework to deliver or protect open civic and green spaces.

Oldham is fortunate in having a rich variety of scenery ranging from the spectacular countryside landscapes of the Pennines to beautifully restored urban parks. But equally important are the hundreds of other green spaces, large and small, within housing areas, in our town and district centres, close to where we work, and alongside roads. Taken together, they form the Borough's 'green estate'. As the major landowner, the Council is determined to give a lead in terms of good practice in the development and maintenance of these areas.

Accordingly significant investment will be undertaken to improve the environment on FCHO and RSL estates, in pathfinder areas, in Oldham town centre and across the rest of the borough. Key to the 'Design Code' currently being developed by the pathfinder is the importance of providing homes that relate to the streetscape and ensure pleasant, safe community environments for residents and visitors. This will include particular focus on 'creative place - making' that gives easy access to areas for 'walk – through traffic' but where the street frontages and internal design of properties encourages residents to be more outwards looking – improving the usage and security of street and other communal areas.

---

<sup>78</sup> HMR household survey (MORI North) October 2003

<sup>79</sup> Keele University study (get details from HMR team)

FCHO have a large environmental works budget set annually by area boards. This work includes security improvement work, such as improved fencing and controlled call entry schemes, as well as more general work to improve communal space, shared facilities and landscaping to provide more defensible or community owned spaces. Priorities are set by FCHO Area Boards and residents are involved in schemes from the outset. The table below outlines some of the expenditure for 2005 – 2006<sup>80</sup>.

<b>FCHO environmental Improvements 2005 - 2006</b>			
<b>Local Board</b>	<b>Planned environmental improvements 2005/6</b>	<b>Planned fencing works 2005/6</b>	<b>Planned controlled entry schemes 2005/6</b>
Chadderton	£494,000	£20,000	£46,400
West Oldham	£979,000	£47,000	£73,300
Failsworth & Hollinwood	£382,000	£26,000	£13,000
East Oldham	£1,074,000	£38,000	£127,100
Saddleworth & Lees	£363,000	£26,000	£23,200
Royton & Shaw	£346,300	£23,000	£23,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,638,00</b>	<b>£180,000</b>	<b>£306,200</b>

FCHO have established a Project Evaluation Board and will be tendering the contract for a package of environmental improvement projects<sup>81</sup> (for 2006 –2008) during 2005. This will further extend the partnering approach to procurement to ensure greater value for money and quality of these schemes.

Other FCHO initiatives to improve estate environment include;

- A schedule of formal estate inspections, working with stakeholders, to resolve local quality of life issues such as; litter and fly – tipping, vandalism or unkempt gardens and communal spaces. These inspections report to local FCHO boards and are instrumental in developing Area Improvement Plans.
- FCHO work closely with the CSU to deal with ASB, and with CPOs to tackle other environmental nuisance on their estates
- The OMBC Security Service, delivered by FCHO, regularly patrol trouble spots and provide extra security for sheltered schemes, where the fear of crime and anti social behaviour was particularly high.

Limehurst Village Trust (LVT) and Villages HA have invested significantly to improve the local environment since the stock transfers from OMBC.

- 188 Villages homes will benefit from environmental improvements during 2005/6 with further work being planned that will touch 200 households. This

<sup>80</sup> FCHO Board report 8<sup>th</sup> June 2005

<sup>81</sup> Planned for 2006 –2008 and including design, consultation, hard and soft landscaping, and secure by design works.

work, planned and delivered in partnership with New Deal for Communities and local residents, will underline Villages aim to be ' more than just a landlord'.

- As well as improving the environment by providing off road parking and boundary fencing for all homes, all LVT homes have been fitted with security systems.

The Council's Safe As Houses scheme targets vulnerable homeowners outside HMR areas who have been victim of burglary. This work includes security measures such as; window locks, burglar alarms, door viewers and replacement doors and windows if poor maintenance increases risk. It is intended that this work will tackle crime and the fear of crime amongst the most vulnerable, helping people to remain in their own homes and neighbourhoods. This scheme is currently being evaluated with a view to improving the targeting of this funding.

How this improves neighbourhoods, defensible space and ownership, security – design code, HMR etc

### Action Points:

- We will bring all council homes to the Governments Decent Standard by 2007 and work with Housing 21, Villages and other RSLs to ensure this work is completed across the sector. We will listen to and take account of customer's views when we deliver the improvement programme across Oldham.
- We will investigate the use of capital receipts as a means of funding to improve our housing stock.
- We will improve homes in the private sector that are unfit or in poor repair, above all where residents are vulnerable, through our private sector renewal strategy and the HMR initiative. In particular, we will develop our approach to housing management in the private rented sector,
- We will sustain local communities by helping vulnerable homeowners to remain in their home within their community, through targeted support and equity packages.
- We will develop and improve the energy efficiency of homes in Oldham

### Equality Impact Assessment

- In procuring investment programmes that employment opportunities for BME contractors and consultants are provided and employment opportunities for local BME communities are maximized;
- Contractors carrying out investment programmes provide appropriate translation and interpretation services to residents within an understanding of cultural needs;
- Implementation of the review of the Adaptations Service is done with customer care to the fore to ensure that the most vulnerable get the best possible service.



## 7. Achieving Community Cohesion and Sustainable Communities

Key Objectives;

- To regenerate the borough in a way that achieves greater community cohesion
- Continue research to understand the issues and drivers preventing community cohesion
- Support victims of racial harassment, work to prevent hate crimes and provide improved tenancy support for households moving into non traditional areas or for families with other support needs
- Work with the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder to tackle dysfunctional local housing markets
- Monitor this action through the performance management framework.

### Community Cohesion and Sustainable Communities

The whole of this strategy is founded on these principles of community cohesion and sustainable communities and we have outlined many projects to address this in previous sections. However, this chapter will detail further measures to support and deliver community cohesion in order to meet the diverse needs of Oldham's citizens and help to build integrated and mixed communities.

The main reasons for ethnic residential segregation were discussed in detail in earlier sections. Though race equality and race relations are of central importance, community cohesion in Oldham is about much more than ethnicity, religion or culture, and involves inclusion strategies for other groups.

- For instance, there is also friction in some communities between the youngest and oldest residents, whose values and needs do not always correspond, and where little work has been done to develop shared understanding.
- Similarly disabled people, people with other support needs, or people with chaotic lifestyles, can find themselves excluded from many aspects of community life due to a lack of access and understanding, or prejudice.
- Other minority groups, such as Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual or Trans people (LGBT), including those from BME backgrounds, can find themselves discriminated against for multiple reasons with very little support, help or advice available and limited legal protection. Recent research found that two thirds of LGBT people had experienced homophobic abuse<sup>82</sup>.

---

<sup>82</sup> Breaking the Chain of Hate (National Advisory Group) 1999. Issues of prejudice in all forms are discussed further on the website at [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

The Oldham Housing Strategy will play its part in delivering the Community Strategy by ensuring that building community cohesion and sustainable communities is a key priority.

The housing strategy will ensure that the housing needs of all communities are addressed and on the creation of healthy housing markets. We aim to increase residential integration by encouraging tolerance and understanding of diversity and challenging prejudice wherever it is found. This will be achieved by:

- Identifying ways to build capacity in communities
- Recognising and valuing the diverse communities within Oldham and building on civic pride
- Empowering communities by involving them in regeneration and service improvement
- Undertaking Equality Impact Assessments, using the corporate model, on all major strategies developed by the Housing Strategy Team or our partners, to ensure the affects of policies on diverse groups are identified, and if necessary addressed

**Bit on Council's Neighbourhood Solutions approach to neighbourhood management being rolled out during 2005/6?**

### **FCHO BME Strategy**

A Community Cohesion Working Group (CCWG) was set up in 2002 by FCHO, but works corporately to deal with race diversity and community cohesion issues. This group is now driving and monitoring the FCHO BME Strategy and Action Plan 2004-5 aim to 'eliminate housing and related disadvantage in Oldham's BME communities'. A supplementary survey for FCHO BME tenants, to uncover specific needs and views of these communities, was carried out as part of the Status Tenants Survey in 2003<sup>83</sup>. This helped to better inform the development of the strategy.

Some key priorities are;

- Meeting housing needs
- Tackling hate crimes and racial harassment
- Service improvements
- Access to services and communication
- Homelessness, social care and supporting people
- Consultation and involvement

There have been significant improvements in BME satisfaction with FCHO services since the initial survey in 2003. The Status Survey undertaken in 2005<sup>84</sup> found that BME tenants were more likely to be satisfied with their neighbourhood, and with opportunities for participation in management and decision making, than

---

<sup>83</sup> BME Survey (NHC) January 2003

<sup>84</sup> Status Survey Interim Report (Kwest Research) May 2005.

non - BME tenants - an improvement from the previous study. However BME tenants were less likely to be satisfied with their actual home and we are continuing to take action to address this.

### ***Improved data collection and analysis***

The First Choice Homes Oldham BME Strategy and Action Plan drives the collection of BME housing statistics on a quarterly basis into the Performance Management Framework. This is complemented by similar information provided by OHIP member RSLs and lets us monitor performance to BME residents.

The new HMR socio-economic and opinion survey<sup>85</sup> has been commissioned specifically to provide more representative feedback from South Asian households, to better inform the scheme update. Later research currently being planned will investigate the key drivers for the movement of BME communities into other 'non traditional' areas.

Many other research projects will be or are being undertaken to inform future service development or monitoring as part of, for example, The Supported Accommodation Strategy, The Homelessness Strategy, The Young People's Housing Needs Strategy and The Supporting People Strategy. These will expand our understanding of the needs and aspirations of these vulnerable groups, as well as encouraging people to get involved with the services they use.

### ***Opportunities for ADP investment***

For many years, a sizeable proportion of ADP investment in Oldham has been directed towards providing new and refurbished family houses to address unmet needs. The predominant type of older terraced stock has meant that many of the refurbished homes have been traditional two bedroom terraced houses. Some 2 into 1 conversions of adjacent houses have been carried out (see section 4 – Housing Choice) to provide four and five bedroom homes, but these are difficult and expensive to deliver, so this has limited numbers.

House prices and availability have meant that many of the properties refurbished by housing associations have been located within the inner areas, where acquisition costs are lower and where there have historically been more long term empty homes in need of refurbishment.

Given the high level of demand for larger properties from families (in particular BME families) on the housing register and relatively limited supply, many of the new homes have had three or more bedrooms. A proportion of these have been built within the inner areas where there has traditionally been a concentration of BME households. However, due to lack of land, plus a need to relieve congestion and other factors, some larger new homes have been built in “non-traditional”

---

<sup>85</sup> Kwest Research were contracted in March 2005 to carry out this work.

areas. This has led to the development of more integrated estates over the last 10 years.

Set within the context of the Sustainable Communities Plan, we will be working closely with the HMR team to address these problems within the context of economic, social, environmental and cultural improvement.

### **Working to increase residential integration**

The main aim of the HMR pathfinder is to restructure housing markets, including promoting the development of more sustainable mixed communities. As such HMR is a key mechanism for tackling ethnic residential segregation and encouraging community cohesion in Oldham, particularly in the private sector neighbourhoods.

With the notable exception of AKSA HA (where well over half the tenants are from BME backgrounds), there has historically been an under-representation of BME households across the social rented sector. A number of measures to address this have been developed by local housing organisations. These have focused on better marketing (e.g. providing more information on rehousing options available in different areas) and providing support to those who decide to move into a 'non-traditional' area.

As part of the BME Housing Strategy FCHO hope to expand their lettings to the BME community to 10% of lettings by April 2006. Lettings have so far improved from xx% in 2000 to 7.5% by April 2005. FCHO hope to improve this further through the launch of the Choice Based Lettings scheme (see section 4 – Housing quality and choice for more details), which other local authorities have found improves BME access to social rented homes greatly<sup>86</sup>. Certainly there has been a greater number of tenancy offers made to BME households using the pilot choice based lettings scheme than by the current allocation methods, although refusal rates remain higher for BME customers. **Give details of future targets for lettings to BME community – OHIP.**

In addition, Oldham has directed a proportion of ADP investment for the construction of larger homes in 'non-traditional areas'. Further details of new and converted large family homes, funded by ADP, are outlined in section 4 – Housing quality and choice. It is essential that suitable support is offered to families moving to homes in non – traditional areas.

For instance, although BME tenants of FCHO said they would move to other areas if there were homes of the right size and quality, tenants were worried about facing harassment, not being accepted or not feeling safe in the area and being away from cultural facilities<sup>87</sup>. It is hoped that our new Choice Based

---

<sup>86</sup> For instance, lettings to BME groups in Bradford increased by 60% after the launch of their Homehunter scheme (presentation at CIH CBL seminar January 2004)

<sup>87</sup> FCHO General Tenants Survey (NHC) 2003

Lettings scheme will facilitate BME applicants to move to a wider range of areas across Oldham. The tenancy support staff will have a major role to play in ensuring BME customers fully understand this scheme and use it effectively.

### Improving tenancy support

Some recent support initiatives to deliver residential integration are:

- FCHO has agreed a protocol with Greater Manchester Police and Oldham Council's Community Safety Unit (CSU) to support tenants moving into "non-traditional" areas. The CSU are also developing further links with other OHIP members and continue to support victims of Hate Crimes and ASB from all tenures.
- FCHO has two Tenancy Support Officers who can communicate in all major South Asian languages spoken in Oldham. They provide information and ongoing support for people interested in living in "non-traditional" areas. This is available before, during and after any move takes place. With high demand amongst Pakistanis and relatively high demand within the Bangladeshi community, Tenancy Support has been a vital element in helping BME tenants to settle in non-traditional areas.

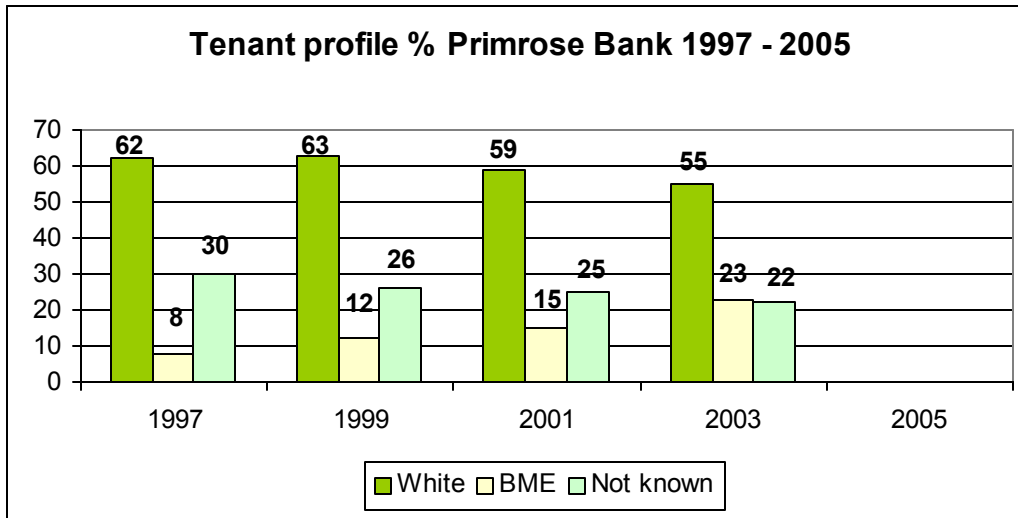
The work on widening rehousing choice for BME households has already seen positive results. For example, on West Street estate in central Oldham, the proportion of BME tenants has increased from 16 out of 362 tenancies in 1997 to 60 out of 345 tenancies in 2003<sup>88</sup> - see table below. [\(More up to date stuff here & table\)](#) Some of those who moved are now applying to buy their homes. This suggests that they feel comfortable and secure and see themselves as having a long-term future in the area.

Ethnicity of West Street tenants 1997 – 2005					
No. and (%)	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
White	209 (58%)	221 (59%)	201 (58%)	189 (55%)	tbc
Bangladeshi	14 (4%)	22 (6%)	26 (8%)	43 (12%)	tbc
Pakistani	0 (-)	1 (-)	1 (0)	4 (1%)	tbc
Other BME	2 (1%)	3 (1%)	8 (2%)	13 (4%)	tbc
Not known	137 (38%)	125 (34%)	110 (32%)	96 (28%)	tbc
Total:	362 (100%)	372 (100%)	346 (100%)	345 (100%)	tbc

Furthermore on the Primrose Bank Estate the number of BME tenants has increased from 31 tenancies in 1997 to 73 tenancies in 2003 [\(update and graph\)](#)<sup>89</sup> - see graph below.

<sup>88</sup> FCHO West Street Estate Analysis Report April 2004

<sup>89</sup> FCHO Primrose Bank Estate Analysis Report April 2004



In addition, FCHO’s Community Cohesion Working Group has reviewed the out of hours support service for tenants suffering racial harassment. The new service was relaunched in March 2005 with improved publicity and a using a 24-hour freephone number. Working closely with the CSU, the FCHO scheme will give better access to support for people moving to non – traditional areas and those suffering from racial harassment.

Taken together, the initiatives described above have achieved some notable successes in terms of assisting and supporting families who wish to move to “non-traditional” areas. However, with the exception of FCHO, initiatives were dependent on short term funding that expired in 2004, and this provided a stimulus to review the roles of the various teams. In October 2004 these were merged to form ‘Community Links.’

Funded by HMR, this team of 7 Community Development Workers will initially focus on primary intervention areas and to a lesser extent on the other HMR areas to support vulnerable residents and encourage involvement in the development of neighbourhood proposals. However, this has left a gap in terms of providing support to people who have recently moved or wish to move to other areas of the town.

### Tenancy support for other diverse groups

Tenancy support initiatives have also been developed to give help to other need groups, such as young people setting up home for the first time, people with addiction problems, and disabled people. There is more in depth discussion of these initiatives in Section 5 – Meeting Vulnerable People’s Housing Needs.

### Effectively tackling Hate Crime and Antisocial behaviour.

At the end of 2004 OMBC, in partnership with the CSU, FCHO and most OHIP members, published the new Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Policy and Procedures to meet the requirements of the ASB Act 2003.

- These new documents, also available as a summary leaflet, will improve access to information and advice about ASB problems and the monitoring of ASB cases and their outcomes.
- This policy underlines the joint approach of The Council, FCHO and other OHIP members, and the Greater Manchester Police to tackle antisocial behaviour and other crime in Oldham as part of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP).

Over the past two years, CSU has undertaken 77 injunctions, 39 Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and 168 (check data) Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. ASBO's have been publicised in local areas to build confidence in local communities that action will be taken. During 2004/5 FCHO recorded 12 ASB related evictions and at least 7 ASBOs were issued. While performance figures prior to this period cannot be directly compared, there is no doubt that the CSU and FCHO are now far more responsive to the needs of local communities in tackling ASB and are developing local performance indicators to monitor the quality of service provided.

FCHO has also reviewed its approach to and procedures for dealing with hate crime and racial harassment, with Tenancy Support Officers or Community Safety Officers providing support and assistance to victims. This review has improved the partnership working of the agencies involved to prevent criminal or ASB by supporting vulnerable households who may become involved in antisocial activities, as well as effectively dealing with ASB that occurs using all the support and legal options available. Central to this is improved communication and intelligence sharing between partnership agencies and with residents.

OHIP partners and other agencies are also involved in the Community Cohesion for Real initiative. The project organises an annual seminar and joint training, e bulletins are produced on a regular basis and cohesion champions have been identified in the partner organisations. The findings from these seminar workshops have helped to develop the improved partnership approach to ASB.

The Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder has placed an emphasis on a 'Neighbourhood Solutions' approach to tackling the antisocial and criminal behaviour that so often blights the potential of communities and local housing markets, by improving the appearance of neighbourhoods and addressing the fear of crime.

Significant work is already underway in first wave areas to improve the community environment. As well as delivering improvement work such as reclaiming abandoned open space for community use, providing sports facilities or traffic calming schemes, HMR is involving members of the community - through community groups and volunteering - to actively manage and maintain the environment.

Neighbourhood Solutions initiatives include:

- The funding of two additional Community Safety Officers, who will work in HMR neighbourhoods to support victims of crime, tackle perceptions of crime and improve security, both for victims and wider neighbourhoods.
- The delivery of a package of measures in areas outside the first wave neighbourhoods to support these housing markets until major intervention begins, for instance by preventing the movement of antisocial activities from first wave to other areas and ensuring environmental quality does not drop below the baseline.
- The Street Scene project, which consists of a multi skilled team who tackle environmental nuisance to improve the neighbourhood environment and reduce perceptions of crime.
- Activities provided by Community Links for young people, to divert them from criminal or antisocial behaviour - see case study below.

HMR funds 'Stoneleigh Youthworks' – a project for young people in Derker who are at risk of getting involved in nuisance or criminal behaviour. Antisocial behaviour by young people and gangs was a key area of concern for residents in this neighbourhood. Activities are aimed at 13 – 16 year olds and are provided on at least 3 evenings a week to give young people something to do and to aid their personal development. So far more than 20 young people have gained qualifications - we aim for 40 young people to benefit during 2005/6 - and 10 environmental projects have been initiated.

In Addition, Derker and Freehold 'Positive Action for Young People Plus' (PAYP) expands the national project to provide diversionary activities for young people during term time, as well as over the school holidays. It is hoped that 67 young people will use this service during 2005 – 6.

### Community capacity building

Contour HA (formerly Portico) ran the St. Mary's Partnership for three years from 2001. This was set up in advance of the large-scale redevelopment of the estate. Deck access flats had been demolished and the site was to be redeveloped with homes for sale (through Gleeson's) and for rent (via Contour HA).

- There was concern that although the surrounding council estate already included houses suitable for families of all sizes, there was very little interest from BME applicants.
- There were also problems of racial harassment in the area for people from BME backgrounds who did try to move onto the estate.
- The project achieved impressive results within the area, focusing on community capacity building and bringing together individuals from different ethnic backgrounds, e.g. through sporting activities for children and young people, community events, etc.

Following lengthy redesign of the new homes to meet “excellent” eco-homes standards, construction is scheduled to start in Spring 2005. It is hoped that, thanks to the preparatory work carried out by the St. Mary’s Project, the redeveloped estate will attract purchasers and tenants from a variety of backgrounds and will develop good practice for future HMR work.

FCHO are working to develop ethnically mixed resident’s groups in areas where there are diverse communities living side by side. They hope to build links and better understanding between communities through joint activities and working together for the needs of their neighbourhoods. Neighbourhoods where a Tenants’ and Residents’ group is being developed include; Vale Drive, Featherstall Road and Howard Street in West Oldham and Clarkwell and Glodwick. FCHO aim to develop more T&R groups during 2005/6.

The DAWN arts project covers Derker and Freehold. It uses community arts initiatives to foster community involvement as part of the HMR process. The project also works with the HMR design team as another way of engaging local residents, giving them a voice and developing their skills. The project was set up with HMR funding and is now hoping to draw in external funding in order to expand its activities.

Limehurst Village Trust work closely with Surestart and other agencies to holistically regenerate the local area by providing skills training, advice and job opportunities for local people. The FCHO Capital Programme Partnership has also recruited 30 young people through its training and employment initiative, to work in various construction trades on schemes across the borough. This has led to work and/or training for 22 people from the Oldham borough, including 4 of BME heritage, giving local people access to improved job opportunities within a booming industry that is suffering from skills shortages both locally and nationwide.

### ***HMR delivering sustainable communities***

HMR activity, designed to reverse decline and reinvigorate local housing markets, is underway in the first wave neighbourhoods of Derker and Werneth / Freehold. The proposed physical regeneration framework will be closely linked with initiatives to help to build sustainable communities.

The Strategic Framework for other HMR intervention areas was published in March 2005<sup>90</sup>. Achieving community cohesion and sustainable communities was a key strategic objective of the document and these needs have been identified for each area.

The HMR scheme update will set several key measures for monitoring the development of community cohesion in the pathfinder areas. These include;

---

<sup>90</sup> Inner Oldham (South) Strategic Framework (EDAW) March 2005

- Over 80% of residents in the Pathfinder area to feel satisfied that theirs is an area where people of different backgrounds can live happily together.
- New developments will usually be occupied by people from different income groups and ethnic groups
- Surveys indicate that less than 10% of people are constrained in their choice of housing by fear of harassment

Lessons learnt from the primary intervention areas are being applied to the other neighbourhoods. In particular it was found that residents and stakeholders were not meaningfully involved at an early enough stage in the scheme. This left some residents feeling excluded and lacking in trust with the council. HMR will ensure all stakeholders are consulted for the second wave to build community ownership of the proposals.

- During the development of the Physical Regeneration Framework (PRF) there was consultation with a range of stakeholder partners. The PRF will set out the key priorities for both the communities' and authority's regeneration proposals and Housing Strategy priorities.
- The second phase of the PRF development used the strategic 'blueprint of key areas' to encourage further discussion by the community on the proposed priorities and areas of opportunity, rather than presenting detailed plans. This will enable the community to become more involved in the development of plans for their area and as the process moves on gain a better understanding of the issues and problems. This involvement will help residents to further influence the development of more detailed plans, right down to local street level.

We will use this as a basis for further consultation with all parts of the affected communities. The PRF and other consultation will inform the development of the scheme update prospectus, which will be submitted to ODPM in Summer 2005. HMR has established a Communication and Engagement Group to develop standards to ensure consistency and good practice in all HMR consultation.

### *Involving communities*

Oldham Council has acknowledged that consulting with; listening to and working with all communities is the key to achieving sustainable communities and community cohesion. We have used a range of techniques to give a wide selection of stakeholders the opportunity to put forward their views.

We have organised focus groups with key agency stakeholders, liaised with the Community Empowerment Network, the Housing and Neighbourhoods Panel, the Citizens Panel and staff / service users from a wide range of departments and organisations. This process has helped us to involve residents, the voluntary, statutory, community, and faith sectors. Similarly, the FCHO Community Partners Forum reaches out to over 100 organisations and provides a consultation forum for its strategies and policies.

Community engagement is a key objective of HMR and is essential if a sustainable community is to be developed:

- Through partnership working with residents, we have developed Derker Community Forums and held several workshops to discuss the issues and solutions for the area.
- Furthermore to help and support the communities through the HMR process, six Community Development Workers based with the Community Cohesion Agency have been employed to work in Derker and Werneth.
- The Werneth Community Forum, a group of very active residents, has been at the heart of the consultation process that has helped us to understand the needs and aspirations of the community.
- Moreover, to strengthen our partnership with the communities, we opened a new Area Office on Tamworth Street, Werneth during December 2004 and an office at Flint Street in Derker during January 2005, to improve access for, and to, local people.

We will continue to consult with or involve a wide range of stakeholders in the development and monitoring of strategies to tackle community cohesion issues. Much of the research currently being undertaken in the borough will further inform our understanding of and guide our approach to community cohesion and sustainability issues. For instance, current Housing Market Assessment recommendations have highlighted the need for further investigation into how perception and aspiration have affected local housing markets.

Research has shown that residents greatly value effective communication from public bodies. We will ensure that this document is available on the OMBC website [www.oldham.gov.uk](http://www.oldham.gov.uk), hard copies will be available in full and summary form from council offices and other agencies, and translations or other accessible formats will be provided on request.

### **Action Points:**

- We will implement the actions coming out of the Oldham Beyond study.
- We will support the delivery of HMR community cohesion and FCHO equality targets to ensure the impacts of regeneration initiatives are minimized for local people and local communities.
- We will deliver the market restructuring necessary to ensure that new housing is complemented by improved local facilities and services and by developing people's skills and knowledge.
- We will work with all our partners to tackle all hate crime and other antisocial behaviour and improve support for vulnerable households, so that everyone can feel confident in their neighbourhood.
- We will work with all our partners to improve consultation and involvement opportunities, and related capacity building, for all community members
- We will complete Equality Impact Assessments on all significant Strategies.

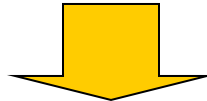
### Equality Impact Assessment

- We will monitor our performance on equalities impacts and their contribution to community cohesion;
- We will continually review our policies to ensure that fair and equitable access to services is provided;

Appendix 1.

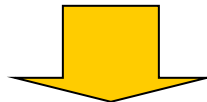
**The Golden Thread of Strategic Objectives**

**Regional Housing Strategy 2005**



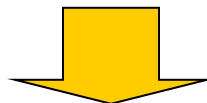
**Oldham Partnership Community Strategy 2005 – 2020**

**Key housing - related themes.**

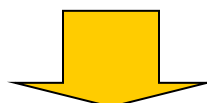


**Oldham Corporate Plan 2005 – 2008**

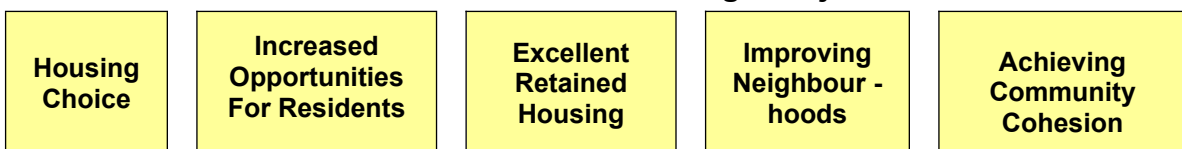
**Key housing - related themes.**



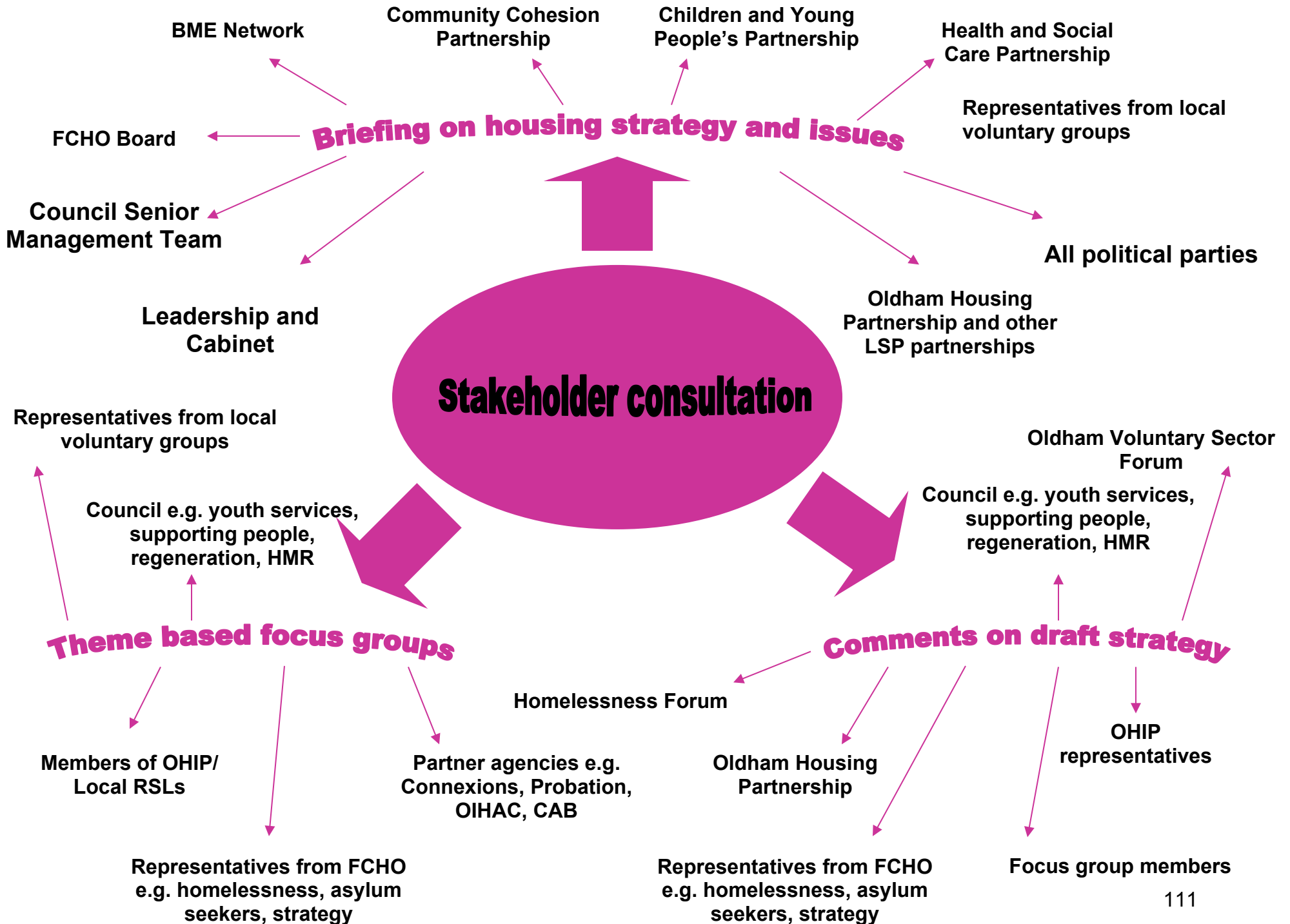
**Housing Strategy Principal Objectives 2005 – 2008.**



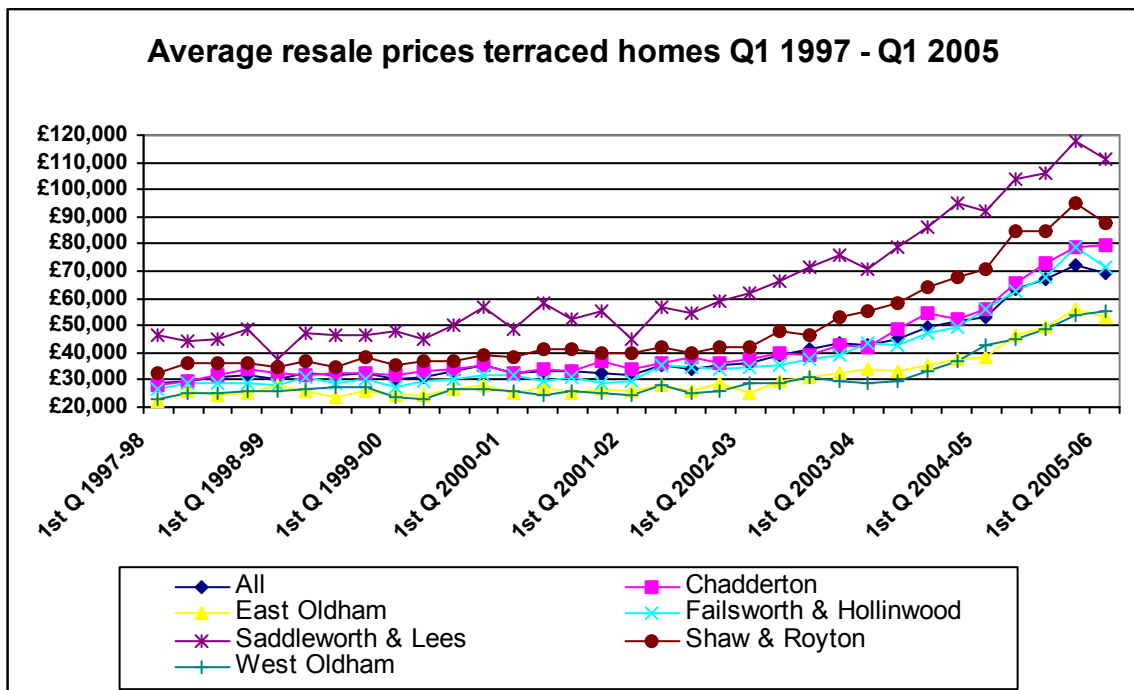
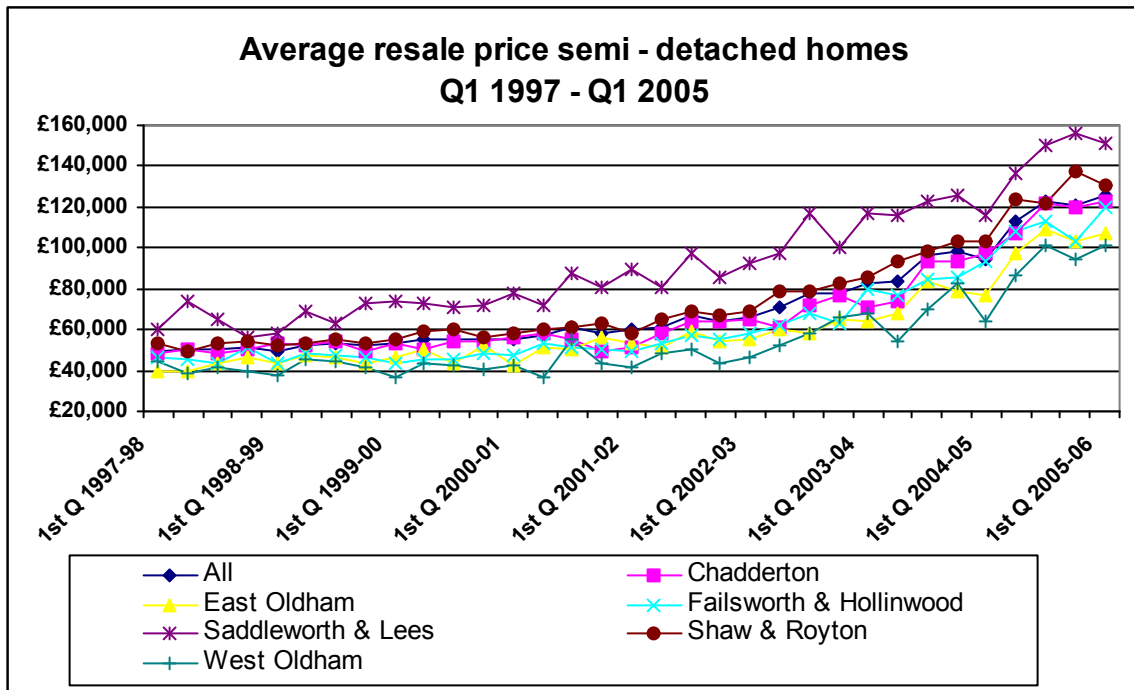
**Oldham HMR Pathfinder Strategic Objectives**



**Appendix 2.**



Appendix X (link page 17)



## **Appendix X.**

	Issues	Progress 2002 – 2005	Actions 2005 – 8	Contact Officer	Delivering partners	Targets/ outcomes
<b>Meeting Housing Market Need and Demand</b>	Analyse the findings coming from the Housing Market Assessment (HMA) and Housing Needs Survey (HNS).	Desktop HNS completed 2004 HMA completed March 2005	<b>Act on the findings of the surveys and factor these into HS and future HMRF proposals</b> <b>Undertake periodic updates to HMA and carry out full HNS</b>	Anna Charlton (HMR)	HSDT/ HMR executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30% of new housing should be affordable with most of this being for rent</li> <li>At least 30% of housing for sale to be at sub-market prices through equity loans, S106 discounts, shared ownership etc (hmr or borough wide?)</li> </ul>
	Develop affordable housing policy	Steering group set up xx 200x	Implement and monitor action plan	Barbara Neville	HST/ Strategic planning/ Regeneration/ OMBC/ OHP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop policy to meet affordable housing needs by managing and monitoring changes in need and aspiration</li> <li>XX affordable homes to be delivered annually (net of clearance) by 200xx</li> </ul>
	Address the stock mismatch in the borough and provide more appropriate and better quality housing	HMR prospectus and project update set out proposals and targets for meeting this - 65 homes have been acquired for HMR purposes in Derker	Meet HMR outputs as set out in project prospectus/ update  Work with partners to ensure that developments/ initiatives meet the needs of Oldham residents and people wanting to move into the borough.	Alistair Graham (HMR)	HMR Executive/ Regeneration/ OMBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People more able to access, suitable accommodation of an excellent quality:</li> <li><b>Derker:</b> 110 owner occupied &amp; 24 private rented homes refurbished &amp; 24 new homes built in 2005/6.</li> <li><b>Werneth/ Freehold:</b> 92 owner occupied homes and 12 private rented homes refurbished, 135 properties cleared in 2005/6</li> <li>Ensure all new developments over 30 homes have an appropriate mix of house type, tenure and size.</li> <li>Implement targeted developments in currently homogenous neighbourhoods to introduce a mix of property type tenure and size.</li> <li>Reduction in number of obsolete social rented flats</li> </ul>
<b>Improving Housing Quality and Choice</b>	Introduce Choice Based lettings for FCHO properties	Allocations review underway and will be completed by xx 2005	Monitor impact of CBL	Tim English	OMBC/ FCHO	
	Establish a common housing register		Establish common housing register by December 2005 using CBL principles	Tim English	OMBC/ FCHO/ OHIP/ PSR/ RSLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish common housing register to give greater customer focused service</li> </ul>
	Ensure council homes are managed effectively to offer quality and choice	FCHO gain 2 stars at inspection	Review options for future of ALMO in advance of contract end in 2007	Alan Caddick	FCHO/ OMBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver recommendations of ALMO review</li> </ul>
	Provide affordable housing in the social sector (OMBC and RSLs)	Xx new homes built or converted during 2004/5		Barbara Neville	FCHO/ OMBC/ OHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2,500 new social rented homes to be provided by 2019 (how many in Oldham not Rochdale)</li> </ul>

	Issues	Progress 2002 – 2005	Actions 2005 – 8	Contact Officer	Delivering partners	Targets/ outcomes
	Ensure developers offer a good choice and high quality design to new homes		Confirm partners for delivery of HMR renewal	HMR	HST/ OHIP/ OHP/ OMBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of sustainable communities with a mix of housing which reflects long term aspirations and findings of HMA</li> <li>• New homes to meet eco-homes 'very good' standard</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting vulnerable people's housing needs</b>	Undertake a Supported Accommodation Strategy	Strategy completed March 2005	Implement and monitor action plan	?	SP core strategy group /OHP/ OHIP/ Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring clients currently housed outside the borough back to Oldham (need <b>REAL target here</b>)</li> <li>• Provide supported housing that meets the needs of the most vulnerable (need <b>REAL target here</b>)</li> </ul>
	Carry out review of homelessness service	Review completed xx 2005	Implement and monitor review action plan	Homelessness Strategy Team	HST/ FCHO/OHIP/OIHAC/ Community and voluntary sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide homelessness service which meets needs in most effective way (need <b>REAL targets here</b>)</li> <li>• Prevention of homelessness (need <b>REAL targets here</b>)</li> </ul>
	Deliver DHS and modern sheltered housing provision in council homes	<b>PFI contract for 1614 council properties under negotiation</b> Review of sheltered properties completed xx 2005	Finalise, implement and monitor PFI contract Implement recommendations of Sheltered review	Alan Caddick David Smith (FCHO)	Housing 21/ PFI Team/ OMBC/ SP FCHO/ HST/ OMBC/ SP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater choice for suitable modern sheltered accommodation across the borough</li> <li>• <b>Some PFI delivery targets</b></li> <li>• <b>Target from sheltered review</b></li> <li>•</li> </ul>
	Extend access to support services for older people in all tenures				SP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable the provision of at least 1000 units 'designated for older people' by 2015 (SP)</li> <li>• Increase number of older people in leasehold/ shared ownership homes to 300 by 2015 (SP)</li> <li>• Extend service to cover up to 300 older people receiving Floating Support on a phased basis by 2010 - Including floating support for BME older people. (SP)</li> </ul>

	Issues	Progress 2002 – 2005	Actions 2005 – 8	Contact Officer	Delivering partners	Targets/ outcomes
	Improve access and choice in supported housing for other vulnerable groups		Deliver Supporting People strategy action plan		SP/ HST/ Social services/ FCHO/ OHIP/ PSR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All SP funded support organisations signed up to 'cultural competence approach' to BME communities, via Providers' Forum, by end 2005/6</li> <li>Better signposting of support services to all need groups, including in BME languages</li> <li>Improved support for ex offenders leading to lower reoffending rates</li> <li>Double the supported provision for women fleeing domestic violence by 2010</li> <li></li> </ul>
<b>Investment to provide excellent retained housing and improved neighbourhoods</b>	All public sector rented homes to meet Decent Homes Standard (DHS) by 2010	XX FCHO homes made decent by April 2005 XX RSL homes decent by April 2005 FCHO Business Plan completed xx 2005	FCHO deliver investment targets to ensure DHS targets met RSLs to meet standard through their investment programmes	Colin Greenwood (FCHO) OHIP	FCHO RSLs/ OHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% FCHO homes decent by 2007</li> <li>100% of PFI properties decent by 2010</li> <li>100% RSL homes decent by 2007</li> <li>Resident's quality of life will be improved by DHS</li> </ul>
	Achieve Decent Homes in private sector, particularly for most vulnerable	Borough – wide all tenure stock condition survey commissioned in January 2005  LAS piloted in Derker  Development of 'Home Improve' equity release product in partnership with Rochdale MBC, HMR and WPHA	Develop Private Sector Renewal Strategy & Policy by March 2006  Stock condition survey to be completed August 2005 Carry out Bi-annual survey update Develop system to coordinate data & information on Stock condition by March 2006  Identify private sector investment needs  Identify vulnerable residents through the stock condition survey and targets	Joanne Cavanagh (PSR)  Joanne Cavanagh (PSR) HST  Neil Crabtree (PSR)	HST/ Regeneration/ OMBC/ OHIP/ FCHO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>ODPM PSA7</b> At least 70% of vulnerable households in private sector to have decent homes by 2010</li> <li>To provide information on stock condition, which will inform future investment priorities and programmes</li> <li>Stock condition surveys show improvement in housing quality</li> <li>Surveys to indicate increased willingness by residents to invest in their own homes</li> <li>Residents are more able to afford and carry out repairs and maintenance to their home</li> </ul>

	Issues	Progress 2002 – 2005	Actions 2005 – 8	Contact Officer	Delivering partners	Targets/ outcomes
			Develop HMO registration and LAS to support DHS in private rental sector Deliver 'Home Improve - Oldham' Develop home maintenance project across borough Develop strategic commissioning in the RSL sector	Joanne Cavanagh (PSR)		
	Assist RSL sector to provide more affordable homes	XX affordable homes developed 2004 - 5	Identify investment needs and facilitate development of further affordable homes in RSL sector	Barbara Neville	OHIP/ OMBC/ HMR/ HST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>XX affordable homes to be delivered by RSLs using ADP during 2005/6</li> <li>XX affordable homes provided by RSLs using other funding during 2005/6</li> </ul>
	Maximise budget to improve existing housing and build quality affordable homes	FCHO granted £XX to deliver DHS and further £xx after presentation of BCM XX homes transferred to RSL management after options study 1614 homes identified for PFI initiative	Develop successful bid for PFI 4 Bid for further external funding	Alan Caddick	HMR/ PSR/ OHIP/ FCHO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PFI 4 bid accepted XX 200X</li> </ul>
	Deliver improvement in the private sector	Landlord Accreditation Scheme piloted	Develop and monitor Private Sector Renewal Policy (RRO) and programme Expand and monitor Landlord Accreditation Scheme Launch registration of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)	Joanne Cavanagh (PSR)	PSR/ OMBC/ HMR/ Landlord Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>XX HMOs registered by xx 2005</li> </ul>
	Deliver high quality sustainable neighbourhoods			Alan Caddick HMR	HMR/ PSR/ OHIP/ FCHO/ OMBC/ CSU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfaction ratings from residents of the pathfinder area of over 70% in relation to crime, harassment, anti – social behaviour and environmental cleanliness (by 2019?)</li> <li>Over 80% of residents in the pathfinder area to feel satisfied that theirs is an area where people can live happily together (by 2019?)</li> </ul>

	Issues	Progress 2002 – 2005	Actions 2005 – 8	Contact Officer	Delivering partners	Targets/ outcomes
<b>Achieving Community Cohesion and Sustainable Communities</b>	Ensure all communities have opportunities to be consulted with or to get involved Involving resident and community groups in building community cohesion (from Com Strategy)	HMR opinion survey undertaken 2003 HMR opinion survey update commissioned March 2005	HMR communication and engagement group established Opinion update survey (Kwest) completed by July 2005 BME 'drivers' research completed by end 2005	Sue Dearden (HMR)	Communication and Engagement group HST/HMR/OHIP/OMBC/ RMBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All communities to be consulted or involved in development of HMR plans</li> </ul>
	Ensure that accessible advice and appropriate information for the needs of diverse communities are provided	OMBC website updated Review of FCHO access and advice completed	Continue to implement good practice Local area teams to work with residents in HMR areas to ensure their support and information needs are addressed Work with landlords and estate agents to improve property letting and sales practice	HST  Joanne Cavanagh (PSR)	FCHO/ PSR/ OHIP/ OHP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community development workers support empowerment and community cohesion in HMR areas</li> <li>Working through the Private Rented Sector via The Landlord's Forum etc</li> </ul>
	Ensure strategies are accessed for possible negative equality impacts	Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) completed on Homelessness and Housing Strategy	Undertake EIAs on all major housing related strategies	HST	OMBC/ FCHO/ OHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality impacts will be addressed</li> </ul>
	Ensure the needs of a diverse range of groups are addressed	FCHO BME strategy completed	Monitor FCHO BME Action Plan Complete Young People's Housing Strategy	Zahid Amin	FCHO/ OHIP/HMR/OMBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenants of social rented stock will be more representative of the communities in the borough</li> <li>Affordable housing options will be taken up by people from a range of ethnic groups</li> </ul>
	Ensure hate crime is prevented and dealt with appropriately	FCHO/ OMBC Hate Crime Policy Completed	Ensure all victims of hate crime are offered appropriate support and options Monitor FCHO hate crime policy	Sam McConnell (CSU) Abdul Malik Ahad (FCHO)	FCHO/ CSU/ OMBC/ OHIP/ GMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some kind of satisfaction target when dealing with hate crime?</li> <li>Surveys to indicate that less than 10% of people are constrained in their choice of housing by fear of harassment</li> </ul>
	Effective mainstreaming of community cohesion in all activities (from com strategy)				HST/ HMR/ OMBC/ FCHO/ OHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>

	<b>Issues</b>	<b>Progress 2002 – 2005</b>	<b>Actions 2005 – 8</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>	<b>Delivering partners</b>	<b>Targets/ outcomes</b>
	Improved services provided for refugees and asylum seekers to meet their needs and minimise problems for community cohesion (from community strategy)				OMBC/ CAB/ FCHO •	