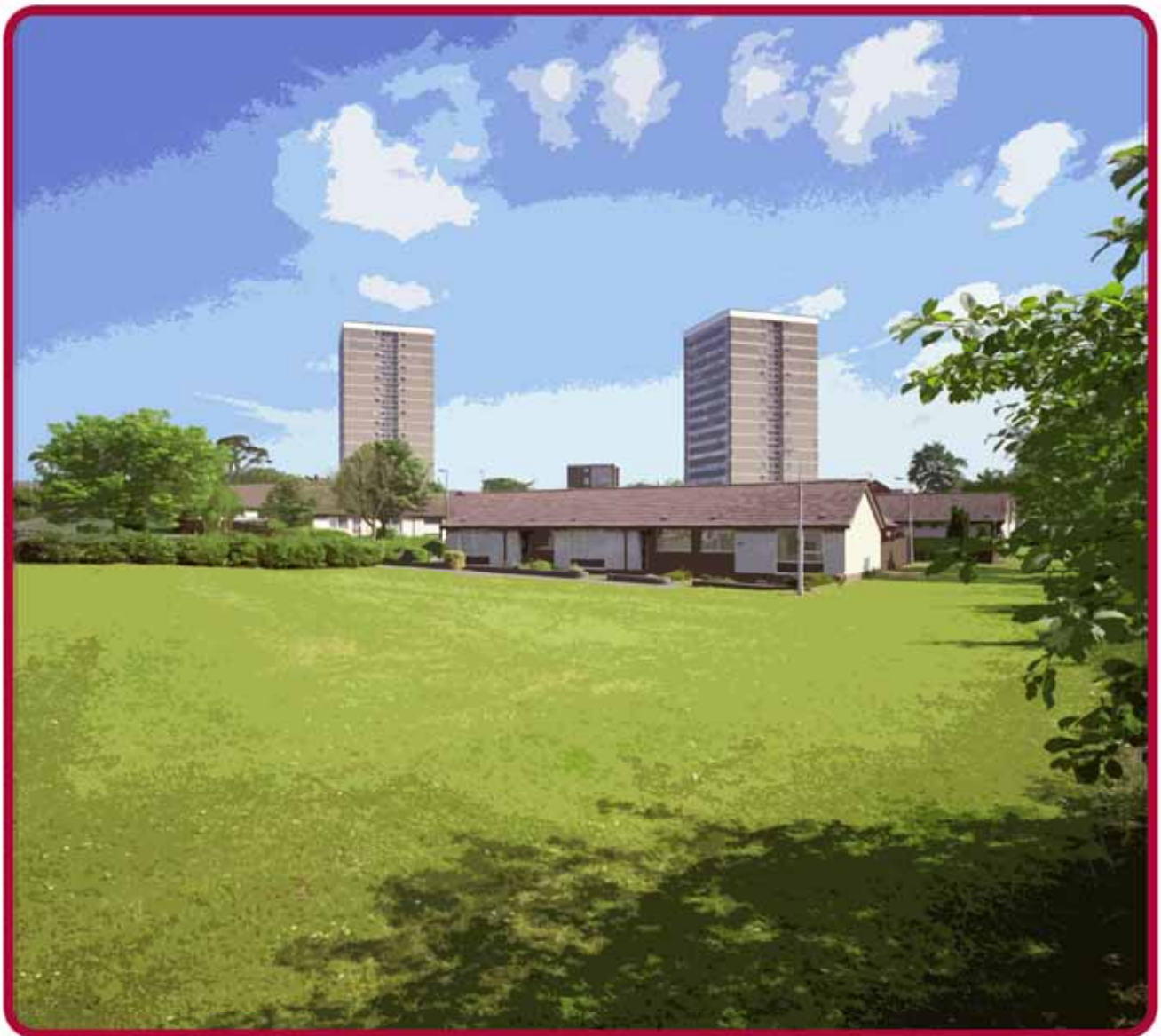


Corporate & Business Plans 2011-12 to 2013-14



Northern Ireland
Housing Executive

Corporate & Business Plans 2011-2012 to 2013-2014

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Foreword

We are pleased to present the Housing Executive's Corporate and Business Plans in its 40th anniversary year.

The plans have been developed at a time when economic conditions continue to have an impact on the entire public sector. Recent budgets from the UK Government and Northern Ireland Executive have pointed to continuing reductions in public expenditure, especially in capital projects, for the foreseeable future. In addition the ongoing depression within the property market has a direct effect on the amount of income that we receive from the sale of our houses and land.

The impact of a reduced budget for housing has directly led to reduced levels of public sector investment for new homes in the coming years. The target for the year ahead will be 1,400 starts and the budget for the succeeding two years will reduce further. Our latest analysis indicates 2,500 new social homes are needed each year to meet ongoing need.

In terms of our own houses, you will see from this year's plans that we are limited in the number of improvements that we will carry out compared to previous years. It is clear that there will be no short term turnaround in public finances and that the shortage of funds will continue if the present funding arrangements are not changed. We will continue to make the case for investment in our tenant's homes and for additional new houses across Northern Ireland.

In March the initial report of the fundamental review of the Housing Executive was submitted to the DSD. Hopefully these proposals will offer a long term solution to the financial difficulties within the housing budget.

Despite the serious financial situation, we remain committed to working with local communities to help improve the quality of life for those living in our estates. Our Board and staff will do all we can to deliver quality and value to our residents and other stakeholders.

We want to thank the large number of people and organisations who contributed to our consultation over the past months – your comments have been a great help in focussing our thoughts on what matters most to people.

Whilst the Corporate Plan has a three year horizon, we offer this Business Plan for the 12 months to 31 March 2012. We hope that you will let us know your views on how we can improve our work for the benefit of all we serve in our community



Stewart Cuddy
Acting Chief Executive



Brian Rowntree
Chairman

Our vision for housing in Northern Ireland

Our vision is one in which housing plays its part in creating a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous and fair society.

We look forward to a society in which everyone will have:

- The right to be housed with a real choice of decent, accessible and affordable housing options including shared future mixed housing in a diverse housing market;
- A renewed and strong sense of place and community;
- A sense of peace and well-being from living in a safe environment free from anti-social behaviour;
- A home which is set in a clean and pleasant environment;
- A home which is suitable to the individual's needs; which is well designed, well maintained and is energy efficient;
- A home which has access to appropriate infrastructure in terms of employment, transport, education, schools, shopping and recreation;
- Empowerment to have a real voice in matters affecting their home and community and access to capacity building for disadvantaged groups to encourage meaningful participation;
- Support where it is needed to promote independent living.

Our role in working with local communities and other agencies, whether public, private or voluntary sector, is to tackle issues that make a real difference to people's quality of life including:

- The physical and social regeneration of local neighbourhoods;
- Community Safety and anti-social behaviour;
- Good community relations.

Mission statement

"Working together to ensure that everyone has access to a decent affordable home in a safe and healthy community"

Core values

We are committed to:

Fairness and equity

Fairness and equity are values that have remained at the heart of our organisation since it was established. We will measure the impact of our work on stakeholders. We will continue our processes of regular policy review, including employment issues and Equality Impact Assessment, working along with our partners in the Consultative Forum.

Integrity and honesty

We will deal with people with respect and will work as an organisation that is principled and can be trusted.

Openness and accountability

We will work in ways that allow people to know why we make decisions. We will honour both the letter and the spirit of our Freedom of Information and Data Protection responsibilities.

Care for the environment

We have an Environmental Management Policy that aims to minimise any adverse effects our actions have on the environment. We will work with contractors and suppliers to minimise adverse impacts from things they do on our behalf.

Responsive to our customers

We will use both qualitative and quantitative research to measure customer satisfaction and consult before taking major decisions that affect customers. We will listen to the views of customers through the Housing Community Network.

Value for money

We will deliver a first class service while seeking to minimise cost.

Valuing and developing our staff

Our staff are the key to all that we do. We will treat them fairly and make sure that they have all necessary support, training and recognition.

Innovation and creativity

We will develop, encourage and adapt imaginative approaches to housing issues in Northern Ireland working alongside partners, stakeholders and customers to ensure the best possible services.

Our objectives

Delivering the Decent Homes Standard

Promoting independent living

Fostering urban and rural regeneration

Promoting affordable housing

Building a stronger community

Delivering better public services

Our Corporate & Business Plans

The Corporate Plan sets out our goals and objectives covering the period from April 2011 - March 2014. It also sets out the key targets and the milestones by which we measure progress.

Within each of the corporate objectives, we have set out associated business objectives and more detailed Key Performance Indicators and these make up our Business Plan for the year. The full set of performance indicators is included in the Business Plan at [Appendix 1](#).

We now use a shorter summary of the final plans for general distribution. Although we no longer print the full plans you can still find them on the website (www.nihe.gov.uk) along with the summary version. We also set out the main issues in the plans in Housing News (our annual performance report to all tenants, usually published in September).

We can let you have a copy of the plans in a language that meets your needs and in different formats, including large print, Braille, DAISY, audiocassette and computer disk.

Who has a say in our plans?

We welcome your comment or feedback on these plans. In November/December we invited stakeholders to suggest matters which this set of plans should cover and we consulted on the draft plans in February / March 2011.

We welcome comment at any time and if you want to comment or discuss matters relating to the plans please contact

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What do the plans cover?

The Corporate Plan shows our vision for housing, our mission statement, our values and our objectives. It summarises the main strategies that we will carry out to achieve these.

A number of factors influence the plans, including Government/housing policy, and our annual Review of the Northern Ireland Housing Market. The Programme for Government and the Department for Social Development's Public Service Agreements are major factors in shaping the plan. We also work to follow best practice in the field of housing and corporate governance. The final plans are agreed by our Board and delivered to the Minister for Social Development after wide consultation with stakeholders. Our plans are formally reviewed at a senior level every year.

The objectives and supporting strategies cover the whole social housing sector along with our role as Northern Ireland's largest landlord. They also deal with our wider strategic role and housing issues in all tenures across the housing market.

The Corporate Plan cannot cover every aspect of our work in detail. Our District Housing Plans which set out the key housing issues at district council level are published in May/June every year. They are developed in conjunction with the Corporate Plan. The District Housing Plans will be

developed into Local Housing Strategies which will enable better coordination with community plans when the proposed legislation is enacted. We can send these to you on request and they are also on our website. We are happy to discuss any policy or issue with you.

Together the Housing Market Review, the Corporate Plan and the District Housing Plans set out the Housing Executive's overall housing strategy for Northern Ireland over a 3 year period, while the Business Plan focuses on the detailed activity for the year ahead.

Measuring progress

We set targets and actions known as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). They are based on previous performance information, consultations with stakeholders and government targets. A number are based on UK-wide performance indicators for comparison.

As we join in partnerships with other public and voluntary bodies to deliver services, we will seek to establish criteria and other appropriate performance indicators by which progress can be objectively measured to demonstrate value added.

Our [Annual Report](#) includes details of achievements against each of the performance indicators. The performance shown is validated by Internal Audit to ensure accuracy and completeness of the report.

We show our performance information every quarter on the website: www.nihe.gov.uk

Risk management

We have a risk management system to help ensure delivery of our objectives and targets. It is based on the Treasury guidance in the "Orange Book". We update the process to reflect best practice and have undertaken a fundamental review of risk in preparation for the 2011 financial year onwards.

The Board receives reports on risk management every 3 months. The Audit Committee advises the Board on the risk management process and other corporate governance matters.

The monthly Director level Performance Review Committee and each Director's own Divisional Management Team meetings have risk as a standard agenda item each month. Divisional Risk Officers maintain the Divisional Risk Registers and feed in to the Corporate Risk Register.

Corporate governance

We have received a report by DSD following an inspection of the governance arrangements which the Housing Executive has in place to regulate how we carry out our business. In the main the report found that governance arrangements are good. However, the review highlighted a number of areas where the existing framework of checks and balances could be improved further. We are now working through an agreed implementation plan to address these matters, with reviews of progress undertaken by the Board and DSD on a regular basis.

There has also been a "Gateway Review / Health-check" of our maintenance contracts and again we are progressing an implementation plan to address the recommendations.

Key priorities for housing

New house building

The last few years have seen increasing numbers of new homes being delivered by the Social Housing Development Programme with over 2,418 starts in 2010-2011 (target 2,000).

We are grateful for the cooperation we have had from the Department for Social Development. Together with our colleagues in the housing associations we have delivered over the target of 5,000 new homes in the past 3 years.

The outlook however is less promising. With reducing levels of funding in the DSD budget for new housing in the coming years, the target for the year ahead will be 1,400 starts and the budget for the succeeding two years will reduce further.

Investment in social housing new build helps to both tackle the shortage of affordable homes and at the same time support the construction industry and employment opportunities with much needed work. Housing investment has a strong multiplier effect upon the economy. This conclusion is widely supported by consultees, the Northern Ireland Housing Council and Professor Mike Smith of the University of Ulster.

For our part we will make every effort to ensure that the Social Housing Development Programme is delivered efficiently and effectively to obtain best value. However it is clear that the funding available will not come close to meeting the need for additional social housing (see the [“Need for Social Housing”](#) in the Planning Context Section).

Maintenance and improvements

It is a false economy to restrict investment in maintenance and improvement work. Without sufficient investment we risk undermining the gains that have been made in previous years.

In addition, we still have a significant number of homes which fail to meet the Government’s basic Decent Homes Standard. We had originally hoped to have all Housing Executive homes up to that standard by 2010, but we can not now estimate when that might be achieved, because of the uncertainty over funding levels (See [Objective 1](#)).

As noted earlier a review of our maintenance contract arrangements is currently being concluded and in the year ahead we will seek DSD approval to a new maintenance investment strategy.

Promoting energy efficiency and helping to combat fuel poverty

As Northern Ireland’s Home Energy Conservation Authority (HECA), we are required to make a “significant improvement” (defined as a 34% improvement from the position as measured in 1996) in the energy efficiency of all residential accommodation in Northern Ireland. The 2009 House Condition Survey shows the level of improvement to have reached 21.4%.

Our overall work as the HECA sits alongside both the ongoing energy efficiency work we carry out to Housing Executive homes and our management of the Warm Homes Scheme, which targets vulnerable households in the private sector.

Although progress through energy efficiency measures has been excellent, fuel poverty has been set back badly by escalating fuel price rises over recent years and the level of fuel poverty has

risen from 34% (2006) to 44% in the 2009 House Condition Survey. Fuel poverty results from the interaction of three factors; the cost of energy; the disposable income of individuals and the energy efficiency of dwellings.

Our targeted interventions and investment have delivered significant improvements and our ongoing work on both Housing Executive homes and through the Warm Homes Scheme remain vital instruments in tackling the energy efficiency dimension of fuel poverty. However, fuel affordability continues to be a difficult area for individuals and families.

The Assembly has now passed legislation to allow us to implement an energy brokering scheme. This would involve us exploring options for a discounted price for energy products with suppliers and our tenants would be able to buy their fuel at that price. We are working to design such a scheme to allow early implementation.

Investment in private sector housing

Funding levels have forced us to restrict the payment of discretionary private sector grants. Funds have been mainly directed to the statutory Disabled Facilities Grant and Repairs Grants, with a small number of grants in some exceptional cases where we assessed that there was a danger to “life and limb”. This is unlikely to improve given the current financial circumstances.

Private sector grants have proven to be effective tools to tackle and contain deterioration of housing unfitness in that sector. Without these grants, housing unfitness will be compromised and we risk renewed deterioration in private sector housing conditions.

In reviewing the means of funding social housing Government must find ways of ensuring that conditions in the private sector are not allowed to deteriorate. If we do not tackle conditions in that sector the consequence is likely to reflect in increased pressure on social housing.

An important segment of the private rented sector is Houses in Multiple Occupation. It creates housing opportunities for those who do not require or can not afford housing for their sole use. It is however an area in which there are often poor housing conditions and / or poor management standards.

HMO landlords must register under the statutory HMO Registration Scheme in order to help us to ensure good standards of safety, accommodation and management. Landlords who have HMOs which are specified for registration and who fail to register them with the Housing Executive will be prosecuted. We have a substantial programme of inspection and registration in place for the year ahead.

Tackling the housing needs of disabled people

We address the housing needs of people with disabilities in two main ways – through adaptations to homes in our own stock and through grants to people in the private sector. We have worked with DSD and DHSSPS to review the overall approach to adaptations and grants for people with disabilities and believe that the review will help to improve our services in housing for people with disabilities.

Following on the work of our Wheelchair Housing Group, an assessment is made each year of the need for wheelchair-suitable housing and this is now incorporated as part of the process of assembling the Social Housing Development Programme.

We welcome the commitment made by the Minister to protect these areas. We will continue to work with occupational therapists to try to improve delivery times overall.

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Along with adaptations we will continue to support independent living through our Supporting People work.

Tacking homelessness and housing stress

The numbers of people who are accepted as homeless and who are in housing stress remain high. Put simply, the current numbers of homes being built or available for re-letting are not sufficient to meet the current levels of need. A further analysis of these facts is given in the [Planning Context Section](#) of the plans. It is clear that the present funding arrangements will not be capable of making a significant change in this position and the Government review of funding arrangements will be critical if we are to make inroads on these issues.

Community safety

Good community safety helps to increase confidence among individuals and the wider community, helping to create the sense of well-being which is an important part of building community cohesion and capacity building. It sits alongside our overall work to regenerate communities. Our work on community safety underpins many of the initiatives in these plans. Details of our community safety work are shown in [Objective 5](#).

Better community relations, community development, participation and cohesion

Quality of life is not solely a result of good housing conditions – the nature of the communities in which we live is no less important. Our community cohesion work is helping many communities to live and develop both within their own and with their neighbour communities. It is a priority area and we intend to play our part in realising the vision for a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous and fair society. We will continue to develop our own strategy in line with the Government's [Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy](#)

We are also working towards a presumption that all newbuild should be developed on the basis of the Shared Future principles and this is being incorporated as an underlying principle in the Social Housing Development Programme.

Beyond newbuild schemes we are working with existing communities through the Shared Neighbourhood Programme. These schemes allow many existing communities to show their commitment by signing up to the Shared Future principles and following through with a programme of community development. We have been supported with significant funding from the International Fund for Ireland and through the PEACE III programme. Further detail is included in [Objective 5](#).

Better housing for the Traveller community

We have helped improve living conditions for the Traveller community in many ways since we became responsible for Traveller accommodation. This has included improved facilities at Traveller sites across Northern Ireland and a number of high quality Traveller Housing Schemes.

However, we have been unable to do all that is needed in relation to transit sites, mainly because of problems in obtaining sites. We are re-doubling our efforts and intend to tackle the remaining area of need in the year ahead.

Urban and rural regeneration

Physical regeneration is an important means of ensuring the continued viability of housing areas. It goes hand in hand with our activities in building stronger communities.

Work in the past has enabled many communities to be re-invigorated and thrive following decline in the environment and migration out of those areas. Working along with DSD through its programmes and with councils in various Town Centre Living Initiatives, we have helped to improve the look and feel of many areas while contributing to stronger and more settled communities.

However, with declining budgets over recent years, (both our own and DSD budgets) we have been able to do less work of this kind. It remains an important area of work and should remain as a priority for Government in the housing agenda.

Planning context

Overview of critical housing issues

Recent years have seen significant reductions in the money we have to spend on building, maintaining and improving housing.

Demand for social housing and homelessness have increased. Many people are unable to obtain mortgages because of the much more onerous lending conditions applied by banks and building societies requiring substantial deposits. In the past mortgages of 95% or more were standard. Now 85% mortgages are more common, meaning that many first time buyers can not raise the deposit.

Despite the falls in house prices home ownership is not a realistic alternative for many who are now looking for affordable housing in the social housing sector and in the private rented sector. The availability of large numbers of private rented properties has certainly helped to ease pressure on social housing, but the recent fall in the numbers of people in housing stress on the waiting list was quite small and there has been an increase in the number of people accepted as homeless. Demand for social housing remains very high.

Whether or not the recession is coming to an end in the UK generally, most commentators agree that the position in Northern Ireland is likely to be worse and last longer. We are likely to see continuing instability in employment and reduced earnings for many.

The recession not only affects those who have lost their jobs; it also leaves fewer opportunities for new job seekers. Without the certainty of a regular income few people are opting to buy a home. The general freezing or reduction of pay levels will affect most people while inflation continues to add costs to household budgets. Likewise the review of housing benefit referred to later in this section, will have an adverse impact on people's housing mobility.

The restricted funding for new social housing development will give a considerably reduced programme in the coming years, which is certain to fall short of the numbers of new homes which our analysis shows to be needed (between 2,000-2,500 homes per year including backlog).

The level of need for social housing is unlikely to be met fully from conventional funding sources in future. This was again reinforced by Lord Best's Housing Commission Report in 2010. The arrangements for funding social housing and suitable delivery structures are being examined by Government and funding of all housing activity, including tackling private sector housing issues, must now be the focus for policy.

The Government's plans and Public Service Agreements

The Programme for Government published in January 2008 will not be revised until after the 2011 Assembly elections. The existing programme included a number of detailed actions for each Department which are known as "Public Service Agreements (PSAs)". Many PSA actions relate (directly or indirectly) to housing activity and these plans are developed to ensure that we reflect and support those actions.

Funding, the Comprehensive Spending Review and NI Budget

Delivery of our programmes and services depends on rental income, Government subsidy and the sale of assets including land and house sales. Details of the sources of funding can be found in the section titled [Funding the Plans](#)

The recession brought a virtual collapse in the sale of assets losing income, which at one time reached around £100m per year. Significant elements of our work and particularly capital improvement schemes and the grants service have been restricted or, in some cases, have ceased.

The knock-on effect of the reduction in expenditure for our main contractors has been considerable and many have had to reduce the numbers of employees. This goes along with the wider direct and indirect impacts on the economy from the loss of investments in housing.

Our budgets will continue to be restricted and will affect all areas of work including new build, improvements and grants. We can not plan for or deliver the level of investment that we know is needed to improve housing conditions in both the social and private sectors.

We will seek further funding during the course of the year through the “monitoring round” process, but this is likely to meet with only limited success as budgets across Government are tightened.

Details of the budgets available and how we intend to spend those resources in the year ahead are set out in the section titled [Funding the plans](#).

Overall the level of reductions in the Northern Ireland budget following the Comprehensive Spending Review 2010 is to reduce capital expenditure by 40% over the four years and 5% of revenue expenditure in each of those years.

We have a Workforce Plan in place to manage the staffing consequences of those reductions ([Appendix 4](#)). We have been progressively tackling reductions in technical staff which has been made possible by modernised forms of maintenance contract/new relationships with contractors whereby they carry out much of the planning and design work which was previously done in-house. (These contracts are currently being reviewed.) The Modernising Services Programme involving the use of more efficient and effective technology and working methods will help deliver an element of the savings required.

Investment in housing

Housing conditions across all sectors in Northern Ireland are now generally of a high standard. A combination of Government investment (mainly through the Housing Executive) and new construction has reduced housing unfitness from around 20% in 1974 to 2.4% in 2009 across all tenures (24,160 dwellings) ([House Condition Survey 2009](#)).

Our work to improve and maintain homes has been restricted by the limited money available in recent years. We had planned to reach the Decent Homes Standard by 2010 for all Housing Executive homes. The reductions in finance over recent years have set that goal back and we can not say when it might be achieved.

It is important to remember that housing conditions are not static and we estimate that around 2,500 homes become unfit every year (even at previous investment levels). We believe that ongoing investment in housing maintenance and improvement has to be supported and continued. If it is not, we risk a new decline in housing conditions, losing the gains made over many years. This applies to homes in the privately-owned, privately-rented and social sectors. Disrepair falls into unfitness rapidly if left unattended. The 2009 Audit Commission report [Building Better Lives](#) recognised that improvement work is at least as valuable as building new homes.

The private rented sector

As noted above, the private rented sector has grown significantly over the past 3 years from 11.5% of homes in Northern Ireland in 2006 to 16.8% in 2009. It now represents a larger segment of the housing market than all social housing.

Table 1: Northern Ireland housing by tenure

	2006 (%)		2009 (%)		Including vacants (%)	
Owner occupied	468,800	66.5	461,800	62.4	480,400	64.9
Private rented & other	80,800	11.5	124,600	16.8	142,000	19.2
Housing Executive	93,400	13.3	85,650	11.6	90,800	12.3
Housing association	21,500	3.1	24,550	3.3	26,700	3.6
Vacant	40,400	5.7	43,400	5.9		
Total	705,000	100	740,000	100	740,000	100

Source: 2009 House Condition Survey

The private rented sector is a significant provider of much needed homes.

In order to promote the private rented sector, applicants who might not have high points can be issued with a Housing and Homelessness Information Pack and a Personal Housing Plan. This advice service gives them specific information in relation to landlords who may have private rented accommodation available to let in the areas they have expressed an interest in being rehoused. Tenancies will be created on a “first come, first served” basis rather than on the basis of the highest pointed applicant, as currently happens under the [Housing Selection Scheme](#).

Landlords will advertise properties available for private rental on the database. The property database will be updated regularly as new properties are added. The scheme should particularly appeal to people who may not have enough points to be offered a secure tenancy under the Housing Selection Scheme in the area they want to live.

Private renting is a vital complement to social housing and a vital part of the affordable housing market. The DSD policy for the private rented sector - [“Building sound foundations - A strategy for the private rented sector”](#) published last year presents a series of initiatives aimed at encouraging the development of a healthy private rented sector.

Affordable homes

Although house prices have been falling dramatically, the market has continued to shrink with relatively low volumes of home purchases. This can be directly linked to the recession and the much tougher lending conditions set by banks and building societies.

Along with the general lack of confidence and the fear of job losses, these conditions suggest that the downturn of both value and volumes in the housing market will continue for at least the medium term.

The boom in “buy to rent” has ceased, but the private rental market has grown massively to 16.8% of all households, making it a larger housing resource than all social housing. Some potential social housing applicants and tenants appear to have been switching to private renting.

The problems facing people generally and young people in particular, in getting jobs may feed through to the housing market in the coming years, diverting would-be owner-occupiers towards the social and private rented sectors.

Review of the housing market

Every year we publish an [Annual Review of the Housing Market in Northern Ireland](#). The review sets out the trends in Northern Ireland's housing market and the key developments across the various tenures. This influences the context in which housing operates and helps in setting the policy direction and resource priorities for the year ahead.

This year's review again focuses on the interdependence of the economy and the housing market. Although housing prices fell by 7.7% in 2010 ([Quarterly House Price Index](#)), it has stabilised in recent quarters but any recovery is likely to be rather weak, resulting from the ongoing caution by lenders, the lack of confidence among potential buyers and the difficulty in raising high deposits.

The shortage of public funding will magnify the difficulties being felt across all sectors of the housing market. First time buyers will still face significant problems of affordability over the coming years. Entering the market during a much harsher economic climate with restrictive credit facilities will be difficult as average prices are unlikely to fall sufficiently to make a significant difference.

The review analyses the growth in the waiting lists for social housing along with increases in the numbers of people in housing stress and coming to us as homeless.

The growth of the private rented sector, often supported by Housing Benefit, has enabled many (who would previously might have been first-time buyers or social housing applicants) to meet their housing requirements. However this may be affected by important changes to Housing Benefit regulations and the Single Universal Benefit being introduced (which will reduce benefit levels) - see [Housing Benefit changes](#) on our website and the paragraphs dealing with [changes to Housing Benefit in the 2010 UK Budget](#) later in this section.

The House Condition Survey

We have carried out a [House Condition Survey](#) every five years since 1971. We use it to gauge levels of unfitness, the need for repairs, improvement and grant aid. We published the results of the 2006 survey in 2008. The results of the 2009 House Condition Survey are being finalised at the time of writing.

In 2009 Northern Ireland's total dwelling stock was approximately 740,000, a net increase of 35,000 (11,700 per annum) since 2006.

Other key findings from 2009 House Condition Survey include the following:

- The proportion of the housing stock failing the Decent Homes Standard fell from 23 per cent in 2006 to 15% in 2009.
- Over the same period, however, there was little change in the proportion of homes failing the Housing Health & Safety Rating: 19 per cent.
- The 2009 survey also recorded further improvement in the energy efficiency of the stock: the average SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) rating in 2006 was 52.35; by 2009 it had risen to 56.96 in 2009.

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- The level of fuel poverty in Northern Ireland rose rapidly between 2006 and 2009: from 34 to 44 per cent of all households, reflecting in particular the very significant rise in fuel prices over this period.

Unfitness

In 2009 there were an estimated 17,500 unfit dwellings in Northern Ireland, (2.4 per cent). This compares with an unfitness rate of 4.9 per cent (31,600) in 2001 and 3.4 per cent (24,100) in 2006. This decline in unfitness continues to be accounted for by the recent high rate of new dwelling construction, the interest in improving existing homes in the private sector (assisted by grants expenditure), as well as continued investment in social housing in the years 2006 to 2009.

Table 2: Northern Ireland's dwelling stock – unfitness by tenure

	2006	(%)	2009	(%)
Owner-occupied	7,500	1.6	4,400	0.9
Private rented	2,100	2.6	2,700	2.2
Housing Executive	500	0.5	50	0.1
Housing association	100	0.4	40	0.2
Vacant	13,900	34.5	10,300	23.5
Total	24,100	3.4	17,525	2.4

A comparison of unfitness figures shows that the highest levels of unfitness tend to be in Fermanagh and Omagh (6.6%), Mid Ulster (5.1%) and Mid Antrim (4.0%). In Belfast the level of unfitness is highest in South Belfast where an estimated 3.4 per cent of dwellings were unfit in 2009.

Research for the year ahead

As in previous years our core research programme will be based around 3 main strands covering strategic themes, customer satisfaction / social issues and technical topics.

We will undertake a series of new projects which will include: preparations for the 2011 House Condition Survey; affordability; Shared Future; living in a sustainable home; and attitudes to energy efficiency. Other important research will provide an evidence base for our Supporting People Programme (focussing on the support needs of older people) and the private rented sector.

Details of the current [research programme](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/research-2) are available at www.nihe.gov.uk/research-2.

The population of Northern Ireland

In March 2001 there were some 1,686,000 people living in Northern Ireland; by 2008 this had risen to 1,775,000. The most recent population projections for the period 2008 to 2019 indicate the following key trends:

- Overall population is set to increase to 1,906,000 by 2019. International migration which played such an important role in Northern Ireland's demography and housing market between 2004 and 2008 (between 2007 and 2008 net migration was

+5,700) is expected to fall sharply and by 2011, net migration is estimated to be only +1,000 a year.

- The proportion of people of working age will remain constant at approximately 62 per cent, partly due to the raising of the state pension age for women.
- The number of working age adults is projected to increase from 1,098,000 (61.9%) in 2008 to 1,179,000 (62.2%) by 2018, an increase of about 81,000 (7%), largely as a result of the pension age being increased.
- The number of children aged under 16 is projected to increase from 381,000 (21.5%) in 2008 to 393,000 (20.7%) in 2018 as a result of an increase in the birth rate, partly attributable to the increase in the number of migrant workers.
- The number and proportion of people of pensionable age will grow from 302,000 to 326,000; however, the number of people aged 75 and over is projected to increase substantially between 2009 and 2019, by 38,000 to 153,000.
- The number of households is projected to grow; however, the average household size is projected to fall from 2.52 in 2009 to 2.40 by 2019.
- Although the unemployment claimant count is lower than most of the European countries at 7.4%, the reliance on public sector jobs makes us vulnerable to reducing budgets.

From the point of view of understanding the housing market, the rate of household formation is of more significance than population growth. The most recent (2008 based) household projections were published in August 2010. They show that the number of households is set to grow by 83,300 (12%) between 2008 and 2018, with average household size falling from 2.53 to 2.41 persons per household. The rate of projected growth in the number of households is largest in West & South of Northern Ireland compared to Greater Belfast and the north of Northern Ireland.

These demographic projections have important implications not only for the number of new dwellings required, but also for their design, as well as the steadily growing need for housing support services to enable vulnerable people to live independently for longer in their own homes. The question of making best use of properties is an important issue with many existing homes being under-occupied. The need for adaptations to homes will continue in both the private and public sectors.

As a proportion of our population the number of older people is increasing and in particular the number of older residents in social housing is significant. The diverse range of problems facing older people includes poverty, particularly fuel poverty and isolation. In recognition of the increasing numbers of older people and their particular needs, we have developed an [Older People's Housing Policy and Action Plan](#) to help tailor our services more sensitively to this age group.

The Government has consulted on draft legislation and has agreed to a Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland. Housing will be an important area of work for the Commissioner and we look forward to working together to improve and better meet the housing needs of older people.

Migrant workers

Despite the recession and some people returning to their home countries recently, Migrant Workers remain a significant part of our economy and are an important theme in our policies. Initially, the arrival of large numbers of migrant workers was unexpected and therefore not planned. At the time this caused unprecedented pressures in a number of local housing markets. We have however, along with other agencies, significantly improved our services including language support both at district offices and homeless hostels.

However some migrant workers do not enjoy rights to state assistance and we are unable to offer direct aid but where they come to our attention we will do what we can to ensure that they get the best advice possible. The Human Rights Commission have produced a document entitled “[No Home from Home](#)” seeking funding arrangements for those migrants who are not eligible for financial assistance. The Housing Rights Service has developed [advice pages for migrant workers](#) on its website.

The number of incoming migrant workers has stabilised as a result of the recession and from a peak of around 10,000 (2006-2007) incoming migrant workers per year this is likely to reduce to 1,000 (net) by 2011. However the housing needs of migrant workers still present a significant workload for many of our offices.

Whilst we may have seen the peak of worker migration to Northern Ireland, it remains vital that we remain alert to their housing needs and the potential racism targeted on foreign workers. We are housing more migrant workers in areas such as Portadown and Dungannon than was previously the case. This may grow with the forthcoming changes in the A8 and A2 regulations which will give many other EU nationals full housing rights.

The need for social housing

Evidence for the need for social housing in Northern Ireland comes from two main sources: the Common Waiting List for social housing and the Net Stock Model developed in partnership with the University of Ulster in 1994.

The waiting list for social housing remains high. The number of applicants and those in housing stress have risen significantly.

Table 3: House waiting lists

	March 2009	March 2010	March 2011
Applicants on waiting list	38,923	38,120	39,891
Housing stress	20,481	19,716	20,967
Homeless (accepted full duty)	9,126	10,130	10,443
Homeless full year (applicants)	18,076	18,864	20,158
Total allocations made	8,132	9,192*	10,660 *

**(All social lettings – Housing Executive and housing associations)*

The Net Stock Model helps to determine the size of the Social Housing Development Programme. The most recent version of the model indicated that a minimum of 1,900 new social dwellings are required each year in order to meet the ongoing needs of the growing population and a further

600 to address the backlog that had built up since 2001, giving an overall annual requirement of 2,500 new social dwellings.

Homelessness

The number of people in Northern Ireland who presented as homeless rose in the year to March 2010 (18,864, a rise of 3% against the figure for the previous year). Of those who presented as homeless, 10,130 were accepted as statutorily homeless (a rise of 11% on the previous year.)

The numbers remain unacceptably high and yet, may not reflect the true levels of homelessness. A number of factors are affecting the number of people who are presenting as homeless. For instance, numbers of family break-ups may be reducing where couples are maintaining the family home for economic reasons. Likewise unemployed people are more likely to remain in a family home rather than seek alternative accommodation. In addition, the availability of more quality homes for private renting may mean that people are not applying for accommodation under the housing selection scheme. The shortage of social homes makes progress difficult if we are to meet people's housing needs.

Regeneration

Our regeneration activity has dealt with both physical improvements to buildings and the environment and to ensure that the community is supported and helped develop at the same time. These aspects of our regeneration work are discussed in detail under [Objectives 3](#) and [5](#) respectively later in the plans. Unfortunately many of the works can no longer be funded because of the general financial situation.

We continue to work in support of the DSD "People and Place" neighbourhood renewal strategy. This work has helped to improve the economic, social, community and physical status of communities.

Urban Renewal Areas (URAs) have been an important part of our work to make cities better places to live. URAs involve the demolition and replacement of poor housing. The new replacement housing tends to stimulate other investment into the area. A major URA in the "Village" area of the Donegall Road in Belfast is now in hand and further areas in the New Lodge, Fortwilliam and Victoria have been approved by DSD.

Further detail on URAs is included at [Objective 3](#).

When we deal with the housing needs of large areas, our approach is comprehensive drawing up "sectoral studies" which may result in specific strategies. Current studies are in progress in East, North, South and West Belfast, Derry/Londonderry, Belfast Shankill area, Lisburn and Brownlow.

Although rural areas present different sets of problems to urban regeneration, we believe that they must be treated with the same resolve and resources as urban ones. We have recently revised our rural housing strategy and action plan covering a wide range of work to help address those problems (see [Rural Housing in Objective 3](#)).

We continue to work in around 400 regeneration partnerships, including Health Action Zones; neighbourhood renewal areas; Areas at Risk (part of DSD programme), partnership working / delivery groups; and various district council initiatives.

Equality and human rights

We have worked hard to maintain consistency and fairness in providing housing and housing services.

When we develop (or revise) policies, considerations including equality, human rights and rural proofing are incorporated from the outset.

We have developed approaches which are designed to take account of the needs of all the Section 75 groups as we bring forward new or revised policies. We are also working with Disability Action to refresh our approach to advising training staff in their awareness of Human Rights issues.

We have also noted the report of the Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) Group on disability and will act to apply its findings as appropriate. We have also highlighted our concerns regarding the significant delays in the publication of the Equality Commission's Code of Practice in relation to race and housing, a much needed document.

We value the regular contact and consultation with our partners in the voluntary and community sectors through the Consultative Forum on Equality, the Black and Minority Ethnic Forum and through the Housing Community Network. We are in the process of establishing a Disability Forum to increase our communication and consultation with people with disabilities. We recognise and greatly value the work which these organisations and individuals put into helping us improve our services

We have begun working on the development of the next generation Equality Scheme. This new approach will move the emphasis from simple compliance with equality duties to one which sets goals for the reduction of inequalities. While this will involve different techniques for equality assessment, including an initial audit of inequalities we believe that with our current practices we are well placed to progress this.

Our programme of equality impact assessment shows us where some inequalities in aspects of our services may exist. We actively discuss these differences with our consultative partners with a view to the elimination or mitigation of any adverse impacts.

We await progress in the development of a Single Equality Bill for Northern Ireland. Since the implementation of the Equality Act in the rest of the United Kingdom, there are significant differences in the levels of protection from discrimination and in the positive equality duties relating to public bodies between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.

Following the Human Rights Commission report to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, the Secretary of State issued proposals for consultation on a Bill of Rights in November 2009. The proposals are less extensive than the commission had suggested but nonetheless represent a significant shift in rights based legislation. We look forward to the final proposals following the consultation.

Children and young people

We have begun implementation of our new policy statement on Children and Young People along with our child protection policy. It addresses issues concerning our services in relation to children and young people along with how we can work with social services to help protect them.

Regional Development Strategy

The Northern Ireland Regional Development Strategy (RDS), published in 2001, has played an important role in shaping the housing market. However the Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs) were the subject of considerable debate. They were increased by more than a quarter following public examination in 2006 to give a total figure for Northern Ireland of 208,000 (1998-2015). The Regional Development Minister has carried out a fundamental review of the Regional Development Strategy and highlighted that the housing figures had been seen by many as unnecessary and restrictive.

A consultation document on the review of the Regional Development Strategy was issued in January 2011 and we have responded to it.

Planning policy

Planning policy sets the context for housing provision and recent years have seen considerable changes most notably with the introduction of Planning Policy Statements 12 (PPS12 – Housing in Settlements) and 21 (Sustainable Development in the Countryside).

Developer contributions are a feature of planning policy in other jurisdictions. Developer contributions are used for securing delivery of additional social and affordable housing where developers agree to contribute towards the provision of social and affordable housing. We have worked with DSD and the DoE in preparing for the introduction of PPS 22 which will deal specifically with developer contributions. While it is important to have this policy in place, it is unlikely to yield significant benefits until housing construction picks up.

Sustainable development and protection of our environment

The Northern Ireland Executive published its updated strategy titled “Everyone’s Involved” for consultation last year. We responded to the consultation in October 2010 and we await the final action plan which we believe should build upon the commitments set out in the consultation draft.

We look forward to finalisation of the new strategy and will continue to work to avoid or mitigate adverse environmental and sustainability impacts from our activities. We actively monitor our own activities against a series of performance measures to help us gauge our progress in terms of sustainable development best practice.

Community and customer involvement and empowerment

Many organisations and people work with us in the interests of our customers. Partnership working is not only good for the stakeholder; it helps us to develop better policies and deliver better services.

The Housing Community Network continues to develop strongly with support from Sustainable Communities Northern Ireland (SCNI). It addresses the interests of the majority of residents, along with issues of segregation, race and the interests of children and young people. An additional forum on disability is being established.

The Consultative Forum on Equality is an important partnership, giving a direct say on housing policy to over 150 organisations from the voluntary and community sectors. A small but broadly-based steering group deals with detailed issues throughout the year.

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We thank all those from the community and voluntary sectors who help us in our work to deliver the best for our community.

Modernising Services

Over the last three years we have radically changed the ways in which we deliver services through our Modernising Services Programme. We have set up 5 customer service units to provide a telephone service to report repairs and apply for housing along with 6 back office service units to process housing benefits and rent accounting. Our network of district offices has been rationalised and continues to provide a local contact for customers.

We are continuing to work on service improvement using techniques such as “LEAN” and better use of information and communications technology. The coming year will see a significant upgrade to our housing management computer systems.

We have a vigorous programme of service improvement work in hand, led directly by the Chief Executive.

Review of Public Administration and community planning

While the proposed creation of 11 new district councils with a wider range of powers has not proceeded in line with the original timetable, the intention remains to reorganise and strengthen local government. The duty to draw up a community plan in partnership both with other public bodies and other interested parties including the voluntary and community sector will come in time.

We remain committed to the merits of community planning and until the legislation is published we will co-operate with councils in the spirit of community planning. We believe it represents an opportunity to improve the delivery of a wide range of public services by co-ordinating effort and resources within a framework of involvement with the local community and service users.

Anti-poverty Strategy

The recession and increasing unemployment will lessen people’s ability to make ends meet and pay their bills including rent and heating costs. The implementation of the anti-poverty strategy is therefore of critical importance at this time.

Government has adopted the principles of the earlier policy document “Lifetime Opportunities” as its anti-poverty strategy. It has consulted on the detailed actions for delivery of the goals in the original Lifetime Opportunities document and we look forward to the publication of the review. We welcome the recent NISRA publication setting out baseline measures against which progress can be measured.

We remain committed to play a full part in helping to alleviate poverty in Northern Ireland.

Housing Benefit – impact of the budget

Last year’s UK budget announcement included a series of steps to cap Local Housing Allowance rates. The first set of changes will have the most dramatic effects upon tenants in high rent areas such as London.

However further changes due in April and October 2011 will have the effect of reducing the level of money payable to large numbers of tenants in the private rented sector particularly where rent is greater than the Local Housing Allowance and Discretionary Housing Payments are in place.

Further changes are due in 2013 which will restrict the amount of benefit payable to working age claimants living in under-occupied properties.

The 2011 and 2013 changes will affect large numbers of people and may make significant differences to people's disposable incomes. We will keep tenants in touch with the implications of these decisions as a number of issues are clarified.

In addition the Government has announced its intention to combine all benefits into a Single Universal Credit in 2013. As yet the implications of this are unclear (e.g. will Housing Benefit elements be paid to the claimant or the landlord; who will process these benefits?)

Independent living and quality of life

As noted earlier the nature of our population is changing with a greater proportion of older people. Their needs can be coupled with the needs of people with disabilities. The Government has indicated that it will continue to work towards removing people from institutional care where possible following through from the Bamford Report. This will demand that Supporting People remains a key tool in supporting these people to live independently and to have a good quality of life. However there are concerns about the winding up of the Independent Living Fund and the impact this may have on the various forms of support which need to be in place alongside housing support to secure that quality of life.

Objective 1 - Delivering the Decent Homes Standard

Associated business objectives

- To provide effective programmes of improvement, planned maintenance, health & safety and response maintenance in accordance with the maintenance strategy.
- To reduce the numbers of vulnerable people living in houses which are unfit or in disrepair.
- To promote good standards of housing design and practice across all tenures.
- To improve energy efficiency in the residential sector dwellings and promote energy conservation and help to alleviate fuel poverty.

Improvement and maintenance

This area of work is discussed earlier in the section on [our priorities for the year](#). With restricted budgets in recent years, we have not been able to deliver all the maintenance and improvement work which is needed. We believe that maintenance and improvements to homes is no less important than building new homes.

We had planned to reach the Decent Homes Standard in all our properties by 2010 but could not do so because of reduced funding and we can not say when we might achieve the standard.

The 2009 House Condition Survey shows that the number of homes across all tenures not meeting the Decent Homes Standard had been reduced to 15.1% (23% in 2006) (or 111,840 homes failed the standard).

In the case of social housing, the thermal comfort element remains the main reason for non-decency and for this reason we have sought to protect the heating schemes budget. A combination of heating and thermal comfort schemes will result in 3,000 properties being upgraded to programmable heating in 2011/12, which represents a 3.5% increase in dwellings meeting the Decent Homes standard.

The case for funding improvement and maintenance is well recognised. The means of funding must be addressed if we are to avoid slipping into a new era of declining housing conditions. In the year ahead we will complete reviews of our maintenance contracts and also develop a retrofit strategy for energy efficiency.

Lessons from the severe weather of December 2010

The unprecedented weather conditions of December 2010 and the problems caused by the subsequent thaw presented a major challenge for the Housing Executive. It was a challenge where our initial response could have been much better. In subsequent days we managed the overall situation well, although of course in dealing with over 20,000 properties some individual cases were not handled as well as others.

As well as expressing our apologies to those who did not receive the best possible service, we acknowledge that any similar circumstances in future must be dealt with better. We have accordingly reviewed our emergency procedures.

While December 2010 was exceptional, with the most severe weather ever recorded in Northern Ireland, we will revise our systems to ensure a better response to any similar emergencies in the future. Our current review of emergency response processes will take on board all the lessons learned in that period.

The private sector

As noted earlier we believe that grants to the private sector should continue to be supported in its important role in tackling housing unfitness. A significant part in the improved fitness levels can be directly attributed to grants.

With housing unfitness now reduced to 2.4% it would be easy to believe that the need for further investment has gone. However in the private sector and particularly the private rented sector there remain significant pockets of unfitness amounting to over 7,000 homes.

Decent housing can be delivered by building new modern homes, but it is more cost-effective to ensure that existing buildings can be kept in use through repair and improvement. Home owners are of course responsible for the upkeep of their properties, but in some cases vulnerable people are unable to fund necessary works and the Grants Scheme can help to both meet their needs and retain a “fit” overall housing stock. Without investment homes will fall into disrepair over time and without a means to tackle unfitness and disrepair that will become an increasing risk.

We believe we need to develop new and innovative ways to support home owners and private tenants to repair, improve and maintain their homes if we are to preserve and build on the progress already achieved. To this end we are working with the Department for Social Development and other stakeholders to identify and develop the scope for alternative approaches to support repair and improvement in the private sector. This work will continue over the coming months.

The downturn in our capital budget and the introduction of new systems has meant that the grants workload has reduced. We have therefore had to reduce the number of offices and staff within the grants offices. However, we are making a small increase in the number of staff working on the registration of Houses in Multiple Occupation.

The private rented sector

The 2009 House Condition Survey has shown that the most significant occurrence of unfitness is in the private rented sector (2,700 dwellings - 2.2%).

The Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) part of the private rented sector is an area for concern. This is an important provider of accommodation for a significant number of people. While the vast majority of landlords maintain their properties well and exercise good standards of management, some do not. Accordingly our work remains focussed on effectively regulating HMOs through the inspection of properties and compliance with the HMO Registration Scheme and management standards. Our current approach to HMOs is set out in our [HMO Strategy](#) which we published in 2009. We will be working in the year ahead with the DSD to develop new quality standards for the private rented sector, including HMOs.

Home energy conservation

Our work, as Home Energy Conservation Authority for Northern Ireland, has helped to improve energy efficiency across the residential sector. In the years from 1996 to 2009 home energy

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efficiency had improved by 21.4%. This yields ongoing savings of 3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.

We now manage the Warm Homes Scheme, catering for vulnerable households in the private sector to improve energy efficiency of homes and help alleviate fuel poverty. We expect to deal with around 9,000 applications in the coming year.

In our own homes, our work to switch to efficient gas and oil heating systems has continued. We have initiated a review of the heating policy to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. Any changes will require both Board and DSD approval. All the main fuels (natural gas, oil, coal and electricity) have increased in price in recent years and the review will test if our approach needs to change. The review will include the role of new technologies such as wood pellet boilers, geothermal heating and air source heat pumps.

We believe that the use of new technology for heating, insulating and ventilating our homes must be developed and adopted. We have used pilot schemes for other forms of technology such as wind turbines, heat pumps, solar ventilation panels, photovoltaic systems as pilots for evaluation for future applications. Our own capacity to carry forward projects of this kind is limited, but we will continue our work with funding from partners.

We will continue to promote the benefits of energy conservation through advice schemes, marketing, school visits etc.

At the time of writing DSD has sought approval and funding to proceed with a pilot programme of boiler replacement.

Housing design

Last year we launched a competition for a sustainable housing scheme. The competition attracted a lot of extremely high quality entries; both local and international. The aim is to improve standards and to identify more efficient approaches than can be achieved through traditional building techniques. The scheme will start in the year ahead. It will comply with the [Sustainable Code for Housing](#) (Code Level 5).

Objective 1: Associated business objectives & critical performance indicators

Business objective	Critical performance indicators
<p>1.1 To provide effective programmes of improvement, planned maintenance, health & safety and response maintenance in accordance with the maintenance strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To start schemes including planned maintenance work on at least 4,700 dwellings including external maintenance work to an estimated 3,200 dwellings and 1,500 kitchen replacements. • Start heating installations to 2,400 dwellings. • Implement recommendations of the Gateway Review of maintenance contracts. • Conclude a full review of our emergency response plans, based upon lessons learned from the severe weather of December 2010.
<p>1.2 To reduce the numbers of vulnerable people living in houses which are unfit or in disrepair.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce disrepair in an estimated 700 private rented dwellings through the application of mandatory Repair Grant.
<p>1.3 To promote good standards of housing design and practice across all tenures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop and agree an appropriate set of monitoring procedures and systems for the Code 5 Demonstration Scheme and begin data collection in the first completion phase if achieved in year to inform Department policy on the code. • Review contracts for maintenance work by autumn 2011.
<p>1.4 To improve energy efficiency in the residential sector dwellings and promote energy conservation and help to alleviate fuel poverty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To upgrade the energy efficiency of at least 3,000 Housing Executive properties. • Develop a retrofit strategy for Housing Executive stock by October 2011. • Seek approval for the Heating Policy Review by December 2011. • Monitor and manage two service level agreements with the voluntary sector including the dissemination of energy advice to 33,700 households through NI Energy Agency Advice Centre and the Heatsmart Scheme. • Through the Warm Homes Scheme, address heating and insulation problems in 9,000 privately owned properties, and deliver an average SAP improvement of at least 15%.

Objective 2 - Promoting independent living

Associated business objectives

- To improve the quality of housing for people with disabilities.
- To deliver housing support services to vulnerable people through the Supporting People Programme.
- To provide a range of services to tackle homelessness.
- To meet the accommodation needs of Travellers.

A range of support services

With a population which is living longer and the high number of Housing Executive residents with disabilities, the need to support these groups will continue to be important and will grow in coming years. At some stage in life whether through old age, disability or financial difficulties most people will need some degree of support. Family support is important, but is often not enough on its own. We are not always able to respond fully to the needs people may have but we will work with other public services and the voluntary sector to make those improvements which are within our remit.

We can offer a wide variety of important housing-related services both for our residents and people in other tenures, whether through an adaptation to a person's home, financial support or advice or through a move to a more suitable home. At the centre of our support services is Supporting People.

Other important services include adaptations to people's homes, homeless advice services, services for Travellers, our work on Community Cohesion, Community Safety and welfare services based in each of our five area offices.

Supporting People

The need for Supporting People services continues to increase, particularly as the recession affects people's ability to cope and the process of moving people from care into supported independent living proceeds. We are currently assisting over 20,000 vulnerable people through Supporting People services.

This range of practical housing support services enables vulnerable people to live as independently as possible in the community. These services are over and above basic housing management services but do not include personal care services, which local health and social care trusts deliver.

In common with other public services Supporting People will face a range of challenges from the current financial circumstances. The likely reductions in new development point towards the need to shift from supported housing solutions towards more use of floating support.

The "Care in the Community" / "Bamford" policy is increasing demands on the Supporting People programme and the new build programme ("Bamford" will relocate people with mental health problems or learning disabilities into the community, living independently). To ensure that these services can be delivered adequately, there needs to be a properly resourced plan from Government. Because of existing funding constraints we are now in the fourth year when providers have not received increases in the budgets. We do not yet know what will be the impact

of the recent decision to cease the operation of the Independent Living Fund. This fund gives significant support to vulnerable people and a range of non-housing supports are dependent upon it.

We look forward to the outcome of the Department for Social Development's current review of Supporting People which will offer guidance on funding and governance issues.

All of the factors above will require a rebalancing of the Supporting People service, working in partnership with providers, other statutory agencies and the DSD.

We can not express too highly our gratitude to our partners in voluntary and statutory organisations who continue to undertake the provision of these services in the face of growing need and tight budgets.

Homelessness

As noted in the [Planning Context](#) section, the numbers of people presenting as homeless has risen. The numbers who were accepted as homeless also rose to 9,914 at March 2010.

Under the Housing (Amendment) Act 2010 we are required to publish a homelessness strategy every 5 years, with the first to be produced after consultation by 31st July 2011.

The strategy has involved a review of past progress in the providing of homelessness services since 2002. Using the lessons from that, it will set out in detail the way forward over the next 5 years.

The main themes in relation to future direction will be:

- To review the temporary accommodation portfolio in relation to its strategic relevance and effectiveness.
- To improve housing options primarily in the private rented sector.
- To develop a comprehensive prevention programme around the assessment process, delivery of advice and assistance and developing community advice and education projects.
- To further improve services to a range of vulnerable households.

Financial inclusion

The 2009 House Condition Survey and the Continuous Household Survey confirm the growing concentration of low income households in social housing.

When we asked residents recently about their finances through our Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey we found that:

- 43% of our tenants do not have access to a bank or building society account.
- 14.1% of tenants have access to Post Office saving accounts.
- 4.4% tenants have access to Credit Union savings accounts.
- 75% tenants do not have house contents insurance.
- 47% of households had incomes of less than £10,400 a year.

Table 4: Housing Executive tenants in receipt of benefits

Benefit	Tenants claiming	%
Income Support/ Jobseekers	36,322	41.6%
A Disability Benefit	30,397	34.8%
State Retirement Pension	27,581	31.6%
Child Benefit	24,401	27.9%
Pensions Credit	18,162	20.8%
Child's Tax Credit	15,240	17.5%
Incapacity Benefit	14,217	16.3%
Working Tax Credit	6,088	7.0%
Other	5,633	6.5%

These factors create a lack of housing mobility among social housing residents, which tends to make existing stock unavailable for letting and thereby increasing pressure on waiting lists.

Our financial inclusion and debt prevention strategies are highly important during the recession and aim to help people cope with financial insecurity and avoid debt. We have introduced financial advice and counselling services to help our residents cope with difficult financial circumstances and are working with DSD to develop advice services for private sector residents.

The strategies offer a range of services:

- Financial profiling at sign up of new tenants.
- Identification of improved financial capability via Floating Support.
- The availability of household insurance products in partnership with Supporting Communities Northern Ireland.
- Free and independent money advice in partnership with Citizens Advice Bureaux.
- Provision of gateways, with other partners, to financial products.
- More emphasis on potential and new tenants.
- Emphasis on a proactive and preventative approach.
- Maximisation of tenants income via benefits.
- Promotion and sharing of best practice.

- Ensure money advice is of high quality, consistent and widely available.

Adaptations to homes

We remain determined to give every possible help we can to people with disabilities or impairment to help people remain independent in their own home. As well as Housing Executive homes, homeowners and people in privately owned housing can have adaptations aided through the Grants Scheme.

We have good working relationships with occupational therapists and in some cases we can now proceed with an adaptation without the need to go through the sometimes lengthy referral process. However, more needs to be done to simplify the process.

We have worked with the DSD and the DHSSPS to review the adaptations process and how to make best use of all resources in a time of limited funding. We hope that we will be able to complete that work and agree the best way forward by October 2011.

Nonetheless, we provide thousands of adaptations every year to help people remain independent and get better use of their homes. Some cases are simple and straightforward, but others may need major changes to the facilities or layout of their home and these take the most time to have approved and carried out.

Traveller accommodation

Although we have made a lot of progress on accommodation for Traveller families, we still have not been able to secure transit sites in a number of key geographical areas.

In terms of Traveller specific accommodation there are currently 50 homes in 5 group housing schemes. In addition there are 5 serviced sites providing 38 pitches with amenities, 4 transit sites with basic amenities and 1 emergency halting site. The Traveller Accommodation Programme contains proposals for 127 homes over a period of 5 years 2009-2014 in various locations including Belfast, Craigavon, Coalisland, Antrim, Newry and Londonderry.

Despite extensive land investigations and the commitment of considerable resources, difficulties still persist in acquiring suitable sites for Traveller accommodation. These include not just issues around a willingness to sell land but problems related to planning issues e.g. access to such sites, DOE planning policy statements, topographical constraints as well as public perceptions. The operation of the planning system together with the extreme marginalisation of Travellers, prejudice against Travellers and indifference to the position of this minority group are all factors acting against acquiring and developing suitable sites.

There remain many problems for members of the Traveller community in relation to educational attainment, employment health and mortality. Securing good housing standards for travellers will be an important catalyst in tackling those problems. It is important to understand the unique nature of this specific group and their accommodation needs and therefore a proactive approach is required to address the issues outlined above. Site acquisition and planning approval are critical in successfully meeting the accommodation needs of Travellers.

Objective 2: Associated business objectives & critical performance indicators

Business objective	Critical performance indicators
<p>2.1 To improve the quality of housing for people with disabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to demand and finance, start 1,820 adaptations to Housing Executive stock, approve 1,200 adaptations to housing association stock, and approve 1,500 private sector Disabled Facilities Grants. • Contribute to the implementation of any agreed recommendations emerging from the interdepartmental review of the adaptations service.
<p>2.2 To deliver housing support services to vulnerable people through the Supporting People Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Supporting People Action Plan and report six-monthly on progress to the Board. • Implement actions arising from DSD evaluation by March 2012. • Continue to commission new schemes and manage the Supporting People Programme in line with identified priorities and funding by March 2012. • Issue contracts/funding agreements for 2011/12 year by April 2011. • Develop and issue revised SP Strategy by July/August 2011. • Facilitate capacity building in the sector and promote joint working/mergers by March 2012. • Develop pilot procurement approach by September 2011. • Monitor and report on unaccredited providers on a 6-monthly basis.
<p>2.3 To provide a range of services to tackle homelessness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a new 5 year Homelessness Strategy by July 2011 and begin implementation. • Redesign homelessness advice service in line with new legislation from June 2011. • Carry out a fundamental review of temporary accommodation needs commencing June 2011. • Introduce a protocol for dealing with homeless 16-21 year olds in April 2011.
<p>2.4 To meet the accommodation needs of Travellers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the Traveller accommodation programme and update by September 2011. • Implement the Traveller accommodation programme including group housing schemes transit / emergency site provision, and serviced sites. • Progress site acquisition for accommodation

Objective 3 - Fostering urban and rural regeneration

Associated business objectives

- To implement a Neighbourhood Renewal Programme (in support of the DSD Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy)
- To implement the Urban Renewal Programme
- To implement the Rural Housing Strategy - Rural Homes and People.
- Continue to implement a programme of sectoral studies and strategies across Northern Ireland.

Standards of planning new developments including housing design have changed radically over the years and much has been learned about what works and what does not. In many cases estate designs, layouts and standards used in the past in many cases fall short of present day standards. Whether it is older or newer housing, we believe that social housing should meet good standards of well-designed housing, set in a pleasant environment. Those aims are set out more fully in our [vision for housing](#) at the beginning of these plans.

While good physical housing and general environment are important, the strength of communities is equally critical in ensuring that areas succeed. We deal with the human and social aspects of community support and community capacity in [Objective 5](#).

Improving our estates

Our strategy over the years was to raise standards in all our estates through a range of environmental and landscaping works to improve the quality of the environment. The aim was to target the specific needs of estates and implementing regeneration strategies. However these strategies can be expensive. The future scope for this work has been affected by the level of funding which can be secured and it is unlikely that for the foreseeable future we will be able to resume this work.

Renewal in towns and cities

We have enjoyed productive partnerships over many years with the Department for Social Development (DSD) and local councils across Northern Ireland working to improve neighbourhoods and communities. The work centres on the DSD strategy “People and Place” which defines regeneration to include:

- Community renewal –developing confident communities that are able and committed to improving the quality of life in their areas.
- Economic renewal – to develop economic activity in the most deprived neighbourhoods and connect them to the wider urban economy.
- Social renewal - to improve social conditions for the people who live in the most deprived neighbourhoods through better co-ordinated public services and the creation of safer environments.
- Physical renewal – to help create attractive, safe and sustainable environments in the most derived neighbourhoods.

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We have supported the Department's strategy in different ways; by intervening directly; acting as a catalyst; in a facilitating/enabling role and in an agency/partnership role. As well as work within our own estates, the work has involved tackling the general standards of housing, in cities, towns, villages and the countryside. The work makes a lasting contribution to improving the quality of life in some of Northern Ireland's most deprived areas.

Through Town Centre Living Initiatives working along with councils we have helped to bring housing back to town and city centre areas, for instance above shops and commercial premises, which have been brought back into use with the aid of our grants scheme.

The "Living over the Shop"(LOTS) Scheme is one where we were able to use grants to bring accommodation up to standard. Not only did this increase the supply of available housing, but it tends to stimulate other aspects of that neighbourhood including its commercial life.

We have been allocated a budget of £0.5m for the year ahead to continue with LOTS Schemes.

Tackling urban housing issues

In tackling urban housing problems we now work to preserve housing where possible with demolition as a last resort.

We approach potential Urban Renewal Areas by applying a comprehensive housing-led regeneration and renewal system of "sectoral studies" for directing investment, intervention and managing change. Working with the communities involved is an integral part of this approach. Presently we have developed and are implementing major housing strategies for West Belfast, North Belfast, Shankill, South Belfast, East Belfast, Lisburn, Brownlow and Derry/Londonderry.

If a study identifies a cluster of housing problems, we may undertake a further Urban Renewal Assessment, which can lead to the declaration of an Urban Renewal Area (URA). The current 8 URAs are Lawnbrook, the Village, Parkside, Fortwilliam/Queen Victoria Gardens, Tudor, Mountcollyer, Gainsborough and Roden Street. URAs usually need large investment for replacing dwellings or upgrading existing homes and amenities, along with changes to the surroundings. Experience shows that they often help in attracting business to the area and ensure its sustainability. We will continue to work to identify areas which are in need of investment although again finding the necessary funding will be difficult. There is also an important regeneration scheme underway in Upper New Lodge in Belfast.

In previous years we used the Grants Scheme to target properties (mainly terraced homes) for group repair, providing modest grants aimed at improving the exterior condition and look of dwellings. This often helped not only the general appearance of the area but also encouraged other local improvements without further cost to public funds.

Renewal in rural areas, villages and communities

Over 30% of the population of Northern Ireland live in rural areas and that number continues to grow. All of the housing challenges facing urban areas (including lack of affordable housing, homelessness, long waiting lists, and in certain areas, poor housing conditions) equally apply to rural areas. However rural areas also suffer additional problems of isolation and remoteness from public service provision including transport. There is recent evidence that poverty levels in rural areas are slightly higher, particularly for older people. We have also been able to identify significant "hidden" housing need. Accordingly we put in place (and met) a target of 12.6% of all

new build to be in rural schemes for 2010/11 and are working to ensure that rural actions are embedded across all activities.

The full range of rural action is described in our [Rural Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2009/10 – 2012/13](#) in order to make our services more accessible and sensitive to rural areas. We also “rural proof” our policies to reflect the particular needs of people living in rural areas.

We are continuing to implement the rural housing strategy and action plan and we will publish a further update of the action plan during the year ahead. The most recent update can be read on our website at [Rural Action Plan 2010](#).

The action plan concentrates on the following main themes:

- Enabling new homes
- Improving existing properties
- Building and serving communities
- Supporting independent living
- Rural development and regeneration

The Rural White Paper Action Plan has been published for consultation, aimed at linking rural actions across government. The Housing Executive was represented on an advisory group which undertook the preparatory work.

Delivering improvements in rural housing not only provides decent homes but has a ripple effect in supporting schools, businesses etc. - thus aiding wider Government rural regeneration and rural development goals.

Emphasis on rural issues is increasing across government. DARD have been delivering revised rural proofing training across government departments to help embed consideration of rural issues as matter of routine when policies are being developed and implemented. We will deliver training in-house with assistance from DARD.

Objective 3: Associated business objectives & critical performance indicators

Business objective	Critical performance indicators
<p>3.1 To implement a Neighbourhood Renewal Programme (in support of the DSD Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in local regeneration partnerships, Neighbourhood Renewal Boards and local regeneration groups • Deliver DSD Neighbourhood Renewal funding in 17 areas through the Small Pockets of Deprivation Programme
<p>3.2 To implement the Urban Renewal Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To implement the Urban Renewal Programme in 9 areas • Continue to implement URAs in 8 areas including new areas – Parkside and Fortwilliam/Queen Victoria Gardens • Deliver the Upper New Lodge Regeneration Scheme • To assist councils in existing Town Centre Living Initiative Areas (TCLIAs) in the promotion and delivery of LOTS based regeneration.
<p>3.3 To implement the Rural Homes and People Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the 3-year Rural Action Plan launched in November 2009. This contains over 50 actions to tackle rural issues affecting all tenures. • Produce an annual rural report setting out progress against the action plan. By so doing, we aim to ensure appropriate share of resources are directed towards addressing rural needs.
<p>3.4 Continue to implement a programme of sectoral studies and strategies across Northern Ireland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement housing and regeneration strategies for greater West Belfast, North Belfast, Shankill, South Belfast, East Belfast, Lisburn, Brownlow and Derry/ Londonderry.

Objective 4 - Promoting affordable housing

Associated business objectives

- To work to widen the range of affordable housing options.
- To assess the need for new social housing and construct programmes and manage delivery by housing associations.
- Promote affordable home ownership through the Housing Executive's House Sales Scheme and land disposal activity.
- Promote private renting as a decent and affordable housing option.

Housing affordability remains a serious problem as a consequence of the recession and the much more stringent conditions being imposed by lenders. Potential buyers continue to be discouraged by the elevated level of uncertainty about the prospects for the economy, while on the supply side there seems no shortage of properties available for purchase or rent.

Accordingly more people are pursuing alternative housing options and routes in either the private rented sector or in social housing. This is witnessed by the massive recent growth in the private rented sector and there is evidence to suggest that the keen pricing in that sector (along with housing benefit), is leading some social housing tenants to move to private renting. The impacts of the planned reductions in Housing Benefits will have the effect of reducing benefits below current rent levels in many cases and along with the introduction of the Single Universal Credit in 2013, there may well be further adjustments in tenure choices.

The Quarterly House Price Index suggests that, measured as a proportion of total housing stock, housing market turnover remains very weak by historic standards, running at about one third of peak activity in 2003 & 2004. The decline in prices appears very mixed with Belfast prices continuing to decline and relatively few transactions in the higher end of the market, while other areas have remained stable or recorded small increases. Few transactions involve first time buyers and until that situation changes, the market is unlikely to recover significantly.

With many potential first time buyers effectively excluded from entering the market, social or private renting is likely to continue as the main target for those seeking to set up home, requiring that we do everything possible to facilitate people's housing options in both sectors.

It is vital that we harness every possible opportunity and resource to meet housing need. In the year ahead, we will work with DSD to develop and implement a more integrated approach to reduce the numbers of empty homes and maximise this resource.

Social new build

We estimate the need now is for between 2,000 – 2,500 (including backlog) new homes to be built each year to meet the needs of those in housing stress. With the reductions in capital funding in the DSD budget we will not be able to start anything like that number in the coming year. It will be important therefore to carefully target the reduced social newbuild programme towards areas of greatest housing need.

We will work with housing associations to ensure delivery of as many homes as possible within available funding. The target for 2011-12 will be 1,400 new starts (including 200 "Bamford" supported housing units).

House and land sales

The continuing recession and lack of confidence has left us unable to raise as much capital through house and land sales as in previous years. The House Sales Scheme produced considerable capital funds which were re-invested in housing stock. At one point in time, we had been selling as many as 6,000 houses per year but that level is unlikely to be repeated in the foreseeable future with only around 300 sales in the 2010 -11 year. Nonetheless the value of receipts has fallen dramatically from around £100m per year to around £20m, reducing our capacity to support Government financing for housing.

Planning policy

We have been working with the DOE Planning Service, DSD, DOE Planning Environmental Policy Group on a new draft planning policy PPS22, with a view to introducing developer contributions for affordable housing in Northern Ireland.

Although private development is likely to be limited in the current and short term housing market, it remains important that these policies should be in place for any upturn in development to supplement public financing of social housing.

Co-ownership

Co-ownership can still be a significant route to home ownership and may help in re-invigorating the market. Along with other parts of the social housing sector it is important that funding is available to support this avenue which in turn will help to sustain and reinvigorate the housing market. In the current reviews of housing finance, the role of co-ownership should be reinforced.

Renting privately

Private renting has grown in recent years to become a significant housing option for many people. The numbers of homes now available for private renting has increased significantly in recent years, in part due to the housing recession and the general slump in private house sales. Between the 2006 and 2009 House Condition Surveys, the private rented sector was estimated to have grown from 80,800 tenancies in Northern Ireland to almost 124,600, representing 16.8% of all housing.

In order to promote the private rented sector to applicants, they may be issued with a Housing and Homelessness Information Pack and a Personal Housing Plan. This advice service gives them specific information in relation to landlords who may have private rented accommodation available to let in the areas they have expressed an interest in being re-housed.

The Department for Social Development has published its strategy for the private rented sector "Building Sound Foundations", which sets out a package of initiatives aimed at encouraging the development of a healthy private rented sector capable of responding more effectively to meeting housing need.

Housing Selection Scheme

We are working with DSD to review the working of the Housing Selection Scheme and will consult on proposals for change during the year ahead.

We are also beginning pilot schemes of choice-based lettings for difficult to let properties in 5 districts where properties have been identified as void with no prospective tenants available.

Objective 4: Associated business objectives & critical performance indicators

Business objective	Critical performance indicators
<p>4.1 To assess the need for new social housing and construct programmes and manage delivery by housing associations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with associations to ensure delivery of a minimum of 1,400 starts and 1,450 completions in the 2011-12 programme year, subject to availability of resources. • Prepare District Housing Plans, incorporating the key stages of Local Housing Strategies for consultation by June 2011 and implement year 1 of the Housing Market Assessment Programme by March 2012. • Following Board/DSD approval to the EQIA on the Housing Need Report, implement the action plan through the Strategic Guideline Review by March 2012.
<p>4.2 To promote affordable home ownership through the Housing Executive's House Sales Scheme and land disposal activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the sale of 250 dwellings to tenants. • Manage a disposal programme for surplus land.
<p>4.3 Promote private renting as a decent and affordable housing option</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement any actions emerging from the DSD's Private Rented Sector Strategy • To register an estimated 1,100 HMO properties under the Statutory HMO Registration Scheme by March 2011 and improve compliance with standards by enforcing HMO standards through the inspection of an estimated 1,800 properties by March 2012.

Objective 5 - Building a stronger community

Associated business objectives

- To work with others to empower local communities to improve their quality of life.
- To help foster good relations.
- To work with others to improve community safety.

Safer communities

Community Safety is a quality of life issue which impacts on all of society, both collectively and individually. We are not complacent about the impact that anti social behaviour can have on communities; if left unchecked it can blight estates and lead to heightened criminality. In order to effectively tackle anti social behaviour, we have introduced a range of housing management services which are delivered through our network of district offices. In addition, we have also forged a range of partnerships with other agencies working in the field of community safety.

Government has given us a range of powers to tackle anti social behaviour. These powers are used in conjunction with a range of non-legalistic interventions designed to stop anti social behaviour. These interventions include the use of warning letters to those engaging in unacceptable behaviour, a mediation referral service, the use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and offers of tailored support to both victims and perpetrators of anti social behaviour.

While over 90% of all reported incidents reflect low level anti social activity requiring no legal action, we will not hesitate to use our legal powers where the situation requires us to do so, including the use of Injunctions and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) where appropriate.

Our comprehensive Community Safety Strategy sets out our approach to community safety. It provides focus to a proportionate and incremental approach to tackling anti social behaviour and champions partnership working as a means of addressing the broader strategic issues of community safety.

Dealing with community safety involves a balance of reactive and proactive action. We now encourage all tenants to sign up to ["Good Neighbour Agreement"](#). It sets out key principles for tenants, which include:

- Respect for all neighbours, irrespective of religion, race, colour, culture or religious belief.
- Acceptance that everyone is different.
- Tolerance of others' lifestyles.
- Accepting responsibility for the behaviour of your own children.
- Respect for young and old alike.
- Promotion of a positive community spirit.

We also use the agreement in cases of reported anti-social behaviour where agreement has been reached and the anti-social behaviour has stopped.

It is expected that we will be given new powers to address anti social behaviour within the Housing (Amendment)(No 2) Bill. New powers may include:

- Enabling the Housing Executive and registered housing associations to withhold consent to an exchange of tenancies on the basis of anti-social behaviour.
- Requirement for judges, when considering applications for possession orders, to take account of the likely effect of the behaviour on neighbours if allowed to continue as well as the effect that a possession order would have on the tenant.

New partnership working arrangements are in place with the PSNI and local councils. They include the provision of night time warden services in six locations across Northern Ireland and we are involved in a range of work to tackle local issues of low level crime and anti social behaviour and support to ex-offenders.

We are also partnering with PSNI and Atlantic Philanthropies in two community based restorative justice programmes in Belfast with Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI) and Northern Ireland Alternatives (NIA) to provide mediation and community support services.

Confident communities and the Community Involvement Strategy

Strong community engagement has always been at the heart of our work. We remain committed to empowering communities to have a real voice in matters affecting their home and community. We are now moving beyond engagement to involvement and participation for the community. We will help in that by providing tools and support in order to encourage participation and build confidence within communities.

This has resulted in a Housing Community Network (HCN) of 450 groups and a framework for communicating with tenants at estate, district, area and central level.

Our current [Community Involvement Strategy](#) sets out our overall approach to involvement of communities. It is a vital tool in ensuring that residents have a powerful voice in what happens within their areas and has resulted in:

- Provision of 213 mini websites, email facilities and training for community groups within the HCN.
- Tenant led inspection to examine how policies are translated into actual customer service provision along with a Tenant Involvement Register to facilitate consultation on policies and procedures impacting on tenants.
- Specialist support to “Hard to Reach” groups to fully engage with us. This includes a [Rural Residents Forum](#) and “[Village Voice](#)” initiative, Housing and Education Forum and work with young people. Working with Disability Action, we are setting up a separate forum to consider the particular needs and services delivered to people with disabilities.

We will be reviewing the existing strategy and will prepare a new Community Involvement Strategy 2011-2014 during the year ahead.

The strategy will focus on obtaining more feedback on the customer perceptions of the service provided along with developing systems for tenant scrutiny and co-regulation. This involves working along with tenants to set service standards, giving them a role locally in driving service improvement.

Cohesive communities

Over the past 5 years, we have made significant strides towards greater community cohesion within our estates. Through shared housing schemes we have been able to offer greater choice to those who chose to live in shared neighbourhoods. However, we recognise that a more integrated residential sector cannot be imposed; nor can it be achieved overnight or by our efforts alone.

The achievement of a cohesive, shared and integrated community in Northern Ireland is the responsibility of everyone in this province and we will work to deliver our cohesion strategy within the overall Northern Ireland Assembly CSI (Cohesion, Sharing and Integration) Policy Framework.

Our [Community Cohesion Strategy](#) addresses the main themes of:

- Flags, emblems and sectional symbols
- Shared future housing schemes
- Interface areas
- Transitional areas
- Youth engagement
- Our Good Relations activity
- Race relations

This comprehensive approach is a challenging area of work, but we are seeing progress in many areas. We await the final publication of the Northern Ireland Executive's Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Policy to help direct the delivery of good relations work across all agencies.

Despite the improvements gained in recent years, residential segregation remains significant with 90% of our estates continuing to be single identity. This is in spite of the community's overwhelming support for mixed housing (Life and Times Survey cited over 80% of those questioned wished to live in a mixed neighbourhood). The Shared Future Housing and Shared Neighbourhood Programmes are designed to tackle this and widen the choices available to those who would wish to live in an integrated neighbourhood.

Shared Future Housing

An important part of our approach to developing greater community cohesion is our Shared Future Housing initiative which involves creating new housing where prospective residents sign up to a set of Shared Future principles.

A further 4 new build Shared Future Housing Schemes were launched in the past year. The 3 year Social Housing Development Programme has a number of further new build schemes earmarked as shared future and these will be developed as the programme progresses.

Existing social housing areas – the Shared Neighbourhood Programme

We have also made good progress on Shared Neighbourhood Programme to designate 30 areas as Shared Neighbourhoods with complementary Good Relations Programmes. Presently Shared Neighbourhood areas represent over 20,000 households. The third phase of the shared

neighbourhood programme starts in 2010. We are grateful to the International Fund for Ireland in providing vital funding for this scheme.

We have also won a bid for a further £150,000 funding from Local Council Peace III to lead out a further 2 areas in Belfast.

Race relations

Our Race Relations Policy supports the promotion of good relations between and within ethnic groups. It aims to ensure that the increasingly diverse community within Northern Ireland can enjoy full and fair access to housing services. The main themes are:

- mainstreaming black and minority ethnic issues in policy development and tackling racial harassment and intimidation,
- promoting black and minority ethnic social inclusion, community participation and development
- migrant worker issues.

Some of the practical measures are noted below:

- The Hate Incidents Practical Action Scheme (HIPA Scheme) is a partnership initiative between us, the Northern Ireland Office and PSNI to give assistance where householders have had damage to their property as a result of a hate crime.
- We have developed an implementation plan to translate the Race Relations Charter minimum standards to practical action on the ground and will be rolled out with a small grant available to district networks for the implementation of this programme.
- We are working with Belfast City Community Safety Partnership and the PSNI to develop a 'tension monitoring system' in Belfast. This will provide 'upstream' information of community dynamics and areas of potential conflict. A hate crime officer has been employed by the partnership to implement the scheme.
- An Intercultural Awareness Training Programme is being rolled out to front line staff including neighbourhood wardens and maintenance staff.
- We want to ensure that there is a structured approach to race relations across all our estates and will follow this through in partnership with the Inter Community Network, the Housing Community Network and Supporting Communities NI (SCNI).

Housing and health

The quality of housing has direct links to people's quality of life. Poor housing can lead to poor health. Our [Housing and Health Strategy](#) and Action Plan involve us in work with a range of health bodies through initiatives such as the Belfast Healthy Cities Programme, the Investing for Health Partnerships and our Supporting People Programme.

Objective 5: Associated business objectives & critical performance indicators

Business objective	Critical performance indicators
<p>5.1 To work with others to empower local communities to improve their quality of life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To implement and report progress on the Community Involvement Strategy. • Review with the HCN their priorities for district performance information and demonstrate how best to present and report this information. • To work in collaboration with the education sector to obtain a further increase in the uptake of the Community & Education Partnership Award (Building Social Enterprise) to demonstrate partnership working between schools and the local community. • Explore the development of a separate forum to consider the particular needs and services available to people with disabilities. • Review pilot tenant led inspections and develop way forward. • Develop a mechanism for reporting on the Housing Executive’s corporate objectives against health and wellbeing outcomes. Progress to be reported on a 6 monthly basis.
<p>5.2 To help foster good relations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To implement the Housing Executive’s Good Relations Strategy through the Community Cohesion Unit, with quarterly progress reports on the five themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Flags, emblems and sectional symbols action plan ○ Segregation/ integration ○ Race relations ○ Interface areas ○ Communities in transition • Work in partnership with housing associations to implement the Shared Future Housing Programme. • Continue to develop the Shared Neighbourhoods Programme. • To implement the regional Good Relations Programme. • Continue to implement the Race Relations Action Plan.
<p>5.3 To work with others to improve community safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet the targets in the Community Safety Strategy; Building Safer Communities and report twice yearly to the Board. • To work in partnership with the statutory, community and voluntary sectors in developing and delivering improved community safety at estate level.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To review and establish a long term model for the delivery of Housing Executive mediation services which will include the contributions made through community restorative justice schemes and other forms of early intervention.• To respond to all reports of anti-social behaviour as soon as possible and in any case within 3 working days. |
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Objective 6 - Delivering better public services

Associated business objectives

- To inform policy and improve services through research and information.
- To provide high quality and responsive services to all customers.
- To manage services in a cost-effective manner.
- Improve services through the Modernising Services Programme and Information Technology.
- Maintain an excellent, well-trained and highly motivated workforce.

We deliver direct landlord services to over 90,000 households and provide Housing Benefit to 150,000 people. Along with this we deliver Supporting People services to more than 20,000 people and a considerable range of other services to customers in the private sector.

We aim to deliver services that meet the needs of our customers, whilst ensuring that we achieve value for money. The performance indicators set out below show how we monitor our performance through measures of customer satisfaction, service performance and efficiency measures. We monitor progress against each of the performance indicators and report them every month to the Board. Quarterly results are shown on our website - [Our Performance](#)

We continually strive to improve the quality of our service. To understand our customers' needs we use techniques such as customer surveys, mystery shopper and customer journey mapping. We also compare the quality and efficiency of our services with other housing organisations. These approaches allow us to identify areas of improvement which we use to develop our business improvement plans.

We accredit the performance of our services through a number of frameworks such as Customer Service Excellence. We use the European Foundation for Quality Management (through which we achieved the UK Excellence Award in 2009) as an external validation of our service standards and we hold a number of ISO 9001 accreditations and Investors in People.

Risk and governance

We will implement a series of recommendations relating to the governance of the Housing Executive based upon a recent review of our governance arrangements by DSD. This will include risk management. We will also implement recommendations from a separate "Gateway" review of our procurement arrangements, along with a review of maintenance contracts mentioned earlier in these plans.

A number of improvement projects will be progressed this year including reviews of our policy development and review processes.

People Strategy

Our people are at the heart of all we do and this is reflected in our People Strategy approved by the Board. The aim of the strategy is to ensure that our staff are deployed, managed and developed in a way that supports achievement of the Executive's Corporate/Business Plan objectives. The plan sets out the steps which we have taken and will take to create an

organizational environment which enable staff to realize their full potential and maximize the contribution which they make to the organisation. The commitment displayed by staff can be seen in the quality of service provided to the people we serve.

In line with other public bodies the organisation faces major challenges in meeting the budget reductions required over the next four years, including our salaries budget. Much work has already been undertaken through our Modernising Programme, structural reviews, the application of lean methodologies and our benchmarking activities to ensure that our staffing levels match our budget and activity levels and provide value for money. The current spending round will require further reductions which we will manage in line with our Manpower Plan which is attached as [Appendix 4](#) to these plans.

Rent collection

Rent arrears are a drain upon our resources. It represents a loss of ability to fund important work which peoples' rents pay for. We are making progress in reducing the overall level of arrears and our financial and debt prevention services are designed to help people avoid debt and arrears. We will re-double our efforts to ensure that progress is maintained in reducing arrears.

A sustainable organisation as part of the community

Our environmental policy has been built over the past 10 years. Our environmental management systems are designed and developed to make a positive contribution to the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland. Paying attention to protection of the environment and making the best use of resources is part of our business strategy.

Our policy includes:

- an independently accredited Environmental Management System (ISO 14001),
- training for all staff in sustainable development awareness,
- performance targets which are monitored in keeping with the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy,
- application of the "Reduce, Re-use, Recycle" approach to waste streams,
- prevention of pollution of air, land and water,
- initiatives to develop sustainable local communities, and
- environmental and sustainability advice to business, community and voluntary sector stakeholder organisations.

Our Sustainable Development Policy is based on the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland ([Everyone's Involved](#)). We have responded to the Government's consultation on the draft Sustainable Development Action Plan and we look forward to publication of the final plan.

Complaints

We receive about 500 complaints a year (bearing in mind that we manage over 90,000 homes and we provide services to many other households in the private sector). Most of these are resolved at an early stage after they are brought to our attention. Over the years our complaints system has

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been a valuable resource in measuring how well we deliver our services and helping us to make improvements.

Our two-stage Complaints Scheme is simple – firstly we aim to answer the complaint within 15 days with a response from a senior member of staff. Secondly, if the person is not happy with the answer their complaint is referred directly to the Chief Executive. Where this does not resolve the issue, the individual may contact the Commissioner for Complaints.

The process gives us a simple but important insight as to whether or not policies and procedures are working as well as they should and it allows us to consider whether any changes are needed.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Working with local communities we tackle issues which can improve people's lives. Apart from the direct actions shown earlier, we help our staff to support a range of charitable causes in the communities where they work and live. We and our staff gain from broadened experiences and team working.

Communication

We want to be an organisation which lives up to its core values including the commitment to be open and transparent. We will continue to be open about our work and successes or failures. We believe that making information available improves public understanding of our actions and improves the quality of discussion about our policies and services. In times of organisational change we will ensure staff information work is a priority.

We will continue to co-ordinate our information activity with partners, including the Department for Social Development, to ensure that everyone who either uses our services or works alongside us has a clear understanding of our work.

Our part in democratic government

Despite the delay in the expected reorganisation of local government, we are continuing to build on the excellent cooperation we have enjoyed over the years with the present district councils. Our relationship with the Housing Council is at the core of our dialogue with elected representatives. We will continue and try to further improve our formal contact with each council, particularly in discussion of the District Housing Plans, in which we set out our detailed intentions for the local area in the year ahead.

We continue to provide input to a massive numbers of questions from Assembly Members to the Minister on housing-related issues along with significant amounts of information and presentations to Social Development Committee.

Objective 6: Associated business objectives & critical performance indicators

Business objective	Critical performance indicators
<p>6.1 To inform policy and improve services through research and information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the 2011-12 research programme to inform housing policy and service delivery including customer satisfaction and meet the needs of users within the Housing Executive and the Department for Social Development. • Develop a research programme for 2012-13.
<p>6.2 To provide high quality and responsive services to all customers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver services in line with the Customer Charter and increase customer satisfaction with the overall service and with the repairs service. • Deal with complaints in an effective and efficient manner. Analyse the nature of complaints and identify trends and aim to improve performance. (Reply to 90% within 15 days). • Continue the programme of equality screening/impact assessment and rural proofing of policies identified through consultation and develop our policies in ways which will further promote equality of opportunity. Work toward these ends in partnership with others, including the Equality Commission. • Implement the findings of the Governance and Procurement Gateway Reviews in line with agreed timescales.
<p>6.3 To manage services in a cost-effective manner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that total arrears at 31 March 2012 show at least a £100k reduction from the figure at 31 March 2011. • Continue to develop the financial inclusion strategy to ensure tenants receive appropriate financial advice and access to financial services. Continue to develop the Debt Prevention Strategy.
<p>6.4 Improve services through the Modernising Services Programme and information technology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an overarching strategy for the use of 'LEAN' reviews by May 2011 and deliver a programme of 'LEAN' reviews by March 2012. • Develop Phase 2 of the Modernising Services Programme by October 2011.
<p>6.5 Maintain an excellent, well-trained and highly motivated workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the actions agreed in the People Strategy by March 2012. • Implement the Manpower Plan for the year, ensuring that the efficiency savings required are met and develop the 2012/13 Manpower Plan by February 2012. • Implement the Absence Strategy and achieve the absence target of an average 12.1 days per employee by March 2012.

Funding the plans

This section briefly outlines the sources of the Housing Executive’s funds and the main areas of expenditure. The figures included for the 2011/12 year reflect the Housing Executive’s current budget proposals and have been based on the Draft Budget 2010 document issued in January 2011 by the Department for Social Development. Indicative funding allocations for subsequent years have been provided by the Department for Social Development in the same document but are subject to change.

Table 5: Funding & expenditure

Overall funding and expenditure	2009/10*	2010/11*	2011/12
	£m	£m	£m
FUNDING			
Government funding	450	439	380
Rental income	247	251	257
Capital receipts	6	30	20
Total funding	703	720	657
EXPENDITURE			
Social Housing Development Programme	157	160	143
Programme expenditure - property improvement	22	25	21
Programme expenditure - maintenance	127	134	138
Private sector grants	20	34	21
Supervision & management /accommodation	77	76	75
Land & Property	19	23	17
Supporting People	62	64	65
Energy efficiency/Warm Homes Scheme	21	21	15
Loan charges	170	156	139
Miscellaneous	28	27	23
Total expenditure	703	720	657

Note- both income and expenditure exclude £1.5m for SPED sales and SPED acquisitions

** Original budgets*

Sources of funds

The Housing Executive has three main sources of funds as follows:

- rental and other income;
- capital receipts from the sale of land and houses; and
- contribution from Government, which includes funding of loan debt.

Rental and other income is a major source of funding. The rent increase has been set at 3.75% and provides a total income of £258.9m for 2011/12, including £1.5m receipts from sale of SPED properties. This emphasises the importance of the Housing Executive operating as an efficient and effective landlord in the areas of rent collection, control of voids and the management of Housing Benefit and arrears.

Income in the form of capital receipts from the sale of dwellings and land makes a contribution of £20.0m in 2011/12. This greatly reduced figure reflects the state of the market following the economic turmoil experienced during the last few years.

The direct funding from Government will be £380m. This shows a further decrease from the budgets set for previous years.

Application of funds

The Housing Executive's funds are applied in two main areas:

- Mainstream programme expenditure, including capital costs associated with the improvement programmes, together with the revenue costs of maintenance and other improvement programmes, private sector grants and the Social Housing Development Programme.
- Ancillary expenditure to support the mainstream programmes. This includes capital expenditure on land & property and accommodation, together with revenue expenditure on loan charges, staff and related costs and other miscellaneous areas.

Mainstream programme expenditure is summarised in Table 6 (not including Supporting People, Warm Homes and loan charges).

Table 6: Mainstream programme expenditure (£m)

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Social Housing Development Programme	157.2	160.0	142.6
Capital improvement	21.6	24.5	19.3
Maintenance	126.1	133.8	138.0
Private sector grants	20.6	34.2	21.4
Total	325.2	352.5	321.3

The funding available for the Social Housing Development Programme will enable delivery of 1,400 new build starts (including 200 "Bamford" units).

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The funding for the capital improvement programme will cover the committed expenditure from previous years along with some very limited capital work but will not permit any new multi-element improvement programmes to be started.

The revenue maintenance and improvement programme funding will cover the entire maintenance of Housing Executive properties.

Expenditure for private sector grants will be £21m, based on only approvals for mandatory disabled facility grants and repairs grants, and together with the committed expenditure from approvals on all grant types in previous years a limited number of discretionary grant approvals in exceptional circumstances.

The numbers of dwellings involved in the key programme areas are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7: Mainstream programme numbers

	2010/11 targets	2010/11 outturn	2011/12 targets
Social Housing Development Programme starts	2,000	2,418	*1,400
Adaptations (revenue & capital)	1,820	1,878	1,820
Maintenance			
Heating replacement	1,350	3,802	2,400
External maintenance	3,500	5,646	3,200
Response (all categories)	200,000	246,564	200,000
Kitchen replacement	2,000	2,595	1,500
Private sector grants			
Repairs Grant	800	889	700
Disabled Facilities Grant	1,750	1,143	1,500
Non-mandatory grants			
(Renovation / Replacement / HMO / Home Repair Assistance / Group Repair)	No targets set	1,069	-

** includes 200 supported housing units*

Table 8: Ancillary expenditure to support programmes

Category	2009/10 £m	2010/11 £m	2011/12 £m
Land & Property	19.0	23.0	17.0
Accommodation	0.1	1.4	2.0
Loan charges	169.8	155.6	138.7
Supervision & management	77.5	75.6	75.4
Energy efficiency - Warm Homes	20.5	20.5	*15.0
Miscellaneous	26.9	26.3	23.3
Supporting People	62.0	63.9	65.2
Total	375.8	366.3	336.6

** A further £5.0m has been allocated to improve energy efficiency in Housing Executive properties.*

Appendix 1 - Key Performance Indicators for 2011 – 2012 (and selected performance information for previous years)

Objective 1 - Delivering the Decent Homes Standard

1.1 To provide effective programmes of improvement, planned maintenance, health & safety and response maintenance in accordance with the maintenance strategy.

1.1.1 To start schemes including planned maintenance work on at least 4,700 dwellings including external maintenance work to an estimated 3,200 dwellings and 1,500 kitchen replacements.

1.1.2 Start heating installations to 2,400 dwellings.

Table 9: Heating installations performance

Apr – Mar 2010/11	Performance target	YTD Actual	YTD Performance	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
ECMs	3,500	5,646	161%	3,927	2,105	9,762	10,990
Kitchens	2,000	2,595	130%	4,041	2,556	4,947	4,514
Heating installations	1,350	3,802	282%	2,707	1,726	2,315	3,032
Totals	6,850	12,043	176%	10,675	6,387	17,024	18,536

1.2 To reduce the numbers of vulnerable people living in houses which are unfit or in disrepair.

1.2.1 Reduce disrepair in an estimated 700 private rented dwellings through the application of the mandatory Repair Grant.

1.3 To promote good standards of housing design and practice across all tenures.

Table 10: Repair grant performance

Apr – Mar 2010/11	Target	Actual	Performance	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
Repair Grant	817	889	109%	851	765	925	832

1.3.1 To develop and agree an appropriate set of monitoring procedures and systems for the Code 5 Demonstration Scheme and begin data collection in the first completion phase if achieved in year to inform Department policy on the code.

1.3.2 Implement the recommendations of the Gateway Review of maintenance contracts by autumn 2011.

1.3.3 Conclude a full review of our emergency response plans, based upon lessons learned from the severe weather of December 2010.

1.4 To improve energy efficiency in the residential sector dwellings and promote energy conservation and help to alleviate fuel poverty.

1.4.1 To upgrade the energy efficiency of at least 3,000 Housing Executive properties including, as appropriate, the provision of double glazing, cavity wall and loft insulation and gas or oil-fired central heating systems.

Table 11: Energy efficiency measures - performance

Apr – Mar 2010/11	YTD target	YTD actual	Performance*	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
ECM	450	1,998	444%	1,223	N/A	N/A	N/A
Heating adaptation	200	387	205%	472	286	533	998
MEI	0	0		0	164	1,131	1,197
Heating installation	1,350	3,802	282%	2,707	1,726	2,315	3,032
Totals	2,000	6,187	312%	4,402	2,547	5,394	5,227

* Additional funds secured in year

1.4.2 Through the Warm Homes Scheme address heating and insulation problems in 9,000 privately owned properties, and deliver an average SAP improvement of at least 15%.

1.4.3 Develop a retrofit strategy for Housing Executive stock by October 2011.

1.4.4 Seek approval for the Heating Policy Review by December 2011

1.4.5 Manage the performance of the Warm Homes Scheme contractors, ensuring that installation works meet the required quality and service standards.

- 40% of households assisted are to be in rural areas.
- 90% of surveys to be completed within 6 weeks from date of first contact to date of survey.
- 90% of installations to be completed within 6 weeks from date of survey to date of installation.
- All installations to be completed within 3 days.

1.4.6 Monitor and manage 2 service level agreements with the voluntary sector including the dissemination of energy advice to 33,700 households through NI Energy Agency Advice Centre and the Heatsmart Scheme.

Table 12: Dissemination of energy advice

Apr – Mar 2010/11	Target	Actual	YTD % Actual v Target	2009 /10	2008 / 09	2007/08	2006 / 07
Customers advised	50,000	40,358	80.7%	47,700	60,100	51,619	67,279
Heatsmart visits	12,000	11,033	91.9%	11,750	11,761	7,600	11,780
Housing Executive school visits	120	220	183%	160	160	115	187

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- 1.4.7 Develop where opportunities arise, partnership schemes using Energy Efficiency Levy funding for private sector households.
- 1.4.8 Deliver, in partnership with others, the energy efficiency message to 120 schools throughout Northern Ireland.
- 1.4.9 Develop the energy marketing plan by September 2011 and implement it by March 2012.
- 1.4.10 Develop, where feasible, demonstration schemes using innovative or renewable energy technologies in Housing Executive properties.

Objective 2 - Promoting independent living

2.1 To improve the quality of housing for people with disabilities.

2.1.1 Subject to demand and finance, start 1,820 adaptations to Housing Executive stock, approve 1,200 adaptations to housing association stock and approve 1,500 private sector Disabled Facilities Grants.

2.1.2 Seek approval to the review of the housing adaptations service by October 2011.

Table 13: Adaptations delivered

April – March 2010/11	YTD Target	YTD Actual	Performance	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
Heating adaptations	189	387	205%	472	286	533	998
Lifts	193	203	105%	180	216	178	162
Extensions	179	154	86%	188	202	211	222
Showers*	1,285	1,125	88%	1,302	1,186	1,471	1,494
Minor adaptations	0	9		9	13	19	30
Sub- Total	1,846	1,878	102%	2,151	1,903	2,412	2,906
Grants Adaptations	1,750	1,143	65.3%	1,750	1,755	1,666	1,710
Totals	3,596	3,021	84%	3,901	3,658	4,078	4,616
Housing association adaptations	1,200	1,430	119%	1,472	1,210		

* Figures represent the number of showers completed (all other figures are starts)

2.2 To deliver housing support services to vulnerable people through the Supporting People Programme.

2.2.1 Implement the Supporting People Action Plan and report six-monthly on progress to the Board.

- Implement actions arising from DSD evaluation by March 2012.
- Continue to commission new schemes and manage the Supporting People Programme in line with identified priorities and funding by March 2012.
- Issue contracts/funding agreements for 2011/12 year by April 2011.
- Develop and issue revised Supporting People Strategy by July/August 2011.
- Facilitate capacity building in the sector and promote joint working/mergers by March 2012.
- Develop pilot procurement approach by September 2011.

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- Monitor and report on unaccredited providers on a 6-monthly basis.

2.3 To provide a range of services to tackle homelessness

- 2.3.1 Develop a new 5 year Homelessness Strategy by July 2011 and begin implementation.
- 2.3.2 Redesign homelessness advice service in line with new legislation from June 2011.
- 2.3.3 Carry out a fundamental review of temporary accommodation needs commencing June 2011.
- 2.3.4 Introduce a protocol for dealing with homeless 16-21 year olds in April 2011.
- 2.3.5 To process at least 95% of homeless applications within 33 days.
- 2.3.6 Seek approval for a Sustaining Tenancies Strategy by October 2011.

2.4 To meet the accommodation needs of Travellers.

- 2.4.1 Develop the Traveller Accommodation Programme and update by September 2011.
 - Implement the Traveller accommodation programme including Group Housing Schemes, transit/emergency site provision and serviced sites.
 - Progress site acquisition for Traveller accommodation.

Objective 3 – Fostering urban and rural regeneration

3.1 To implement a Neighbourhood Renewal Programme (in support of the DSD Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy)

3.1.1 To implement a Neighbourhood Renewal Programme (in support of the DSD Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy)

- Participation in local regeneration partnerships and initiatives.
- Deliver DSD neighbourhood renewal funding in 17 areas through the Small Pockets of Deprivation Programme.
- To assess the impact on our support of any changes arising from DSD's review of its urban regeneration policy and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

3.2 To implement the Urban Renewal Programme

3.2.1 To implement the Urban Renewal Programme in 9 areas:

- Continue to implement URAs in 8 areas including new areas – Parkside and Fortwilliam/Queen Victoria Gardens.
- Deliver the Upper New Lodge Regeneration Scheme.
- Assist councils in existing TCLIAs in the promotion and delivery of LOTS based regeneration.

3.2.2 Continue to implement a programme of sectoral studies and strategies across Northern Ireland by implementing housing and regeneration strategies for greater West Belfast, North Belfast, Shankill, South Belfast, East Belfast, Lisburn, Brownlow and Derry/Londonderry.

3.3 To implement the Rural Housing Strategy - Places for People.

3.3.1 Implement the 3-year Rural Action Plan launched in November 2009. This contains over 50 actions to tackle rural issues affecting all tenures.

3.3.2 Produce an annual rural report setting out progress against the action plan. By so doing, we aim to ensure appropriate share of resources are directed towards addressing rural needs.

Objective 4 – Promoting affordable housing

4.1 To work to widen the range of affordable housing options

4.1.1 To implement appropriate actions arising from the Minister’s New Housing Agenda to address affordable housing.

4.2 To assess the need for new social housing and construct programmes and manage delivery by housing associations

Table 14: Social housing starts & completions

Apr – Mar 2010/11	Target	Actual	Performance	09/10	08/09	07/08	06/07 DSD	05/06 DSD
Social housing units starts	2,000	2,418	121%	1,838	1,136	1,595	1,032	1,519
Social housing units completions	1,450	1,409	97%	1,504	1,365	1,410		

4.2.1 Work with associations to ensure delivery of a minimum of 1,400 starts (includes 200 “Bamford” supported housing units) and 1,450 completions in the 2011-12 programme year, subject to availability of resources.

4.2.2 Construct a Social Housing Development Programme; maintain the Prospectus of Unmet Need and secure Board approval by January 2012.

4.2.3 Following Board and DSD approval to the EQIA consultation recommendations on the Housing Need Report, implement the action plan through the Strategic Guideline Review by March 2012.

4.2.4 Prepare District Housing Plans, incorporating the key stages of Local Housing Strategies for consultation by June 2011 and implement year 1 of the Housing Market Assessment Programme by March 2012.

4.3 Promote affordable home ownership through the Housing Executive’s House Sales Scheme and land disposal activity.

4.3.1 Complete the sale of 250 dwellings to tenants.

Table 15: Tenant sales

Apr – Mar 2010/11	Target	Actual	% Actual v Tar	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
Tenant sales	240	249	104%	274	52	804	2,201

4.3.2 Ensure that 95% of all offers made under the House Sales scheme are issued within 10 weeks of receipt of application.

4.3.3 Manage a disposal programme for surplus land.

4.4 Promote private renting as a decent and affordable housing option.

4.4.1 To register an estimated 1,100 HMO properties under the Statutory HMO Registration Scheme by March 2012 and improve compliance with standards by enforcing HMO standards through the inspection of an estimated 1,800 properties by March 2012.

Table 16: HMO registration and inspection

Apr – Mar 2010/11	Target	Actual	Performance	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
Register HMO under the Statutory HMO Registration Scheme	1,000	1,008	101%	986	530	404	277
Enforcing HMO standards through inspection	1,600	2,423	151%	2,198	1,201	1,440	1,178

4.5.1 Implement any actions emerging from the DSD's Private Rented Sector Strategy.

Objective 5 - Building a stronger community

5.1 To work with others to empower local communities to improve their quality of life.

5.1.1 To implement and report progress on the Community Involvement Strategy.

- Review with the HCN their priorities for district performance information and demonstrate how best to present and report this information.
- To work in collaboration with the education sector to obtain a further increase in the uptake of the Community & Education Partnership Award (Building Social Enterprise) to demonstrate partnership working between schools and the local community.
- Explore the development of a separate forum to consider the particular needs and services available to people with disabilities.
- Complete review of the pilot tenant led inspections scheme and develop way forward.

5.1.2 Develop a mechanism for reporting on the Housing Executive's corporate objectives against health and wellbeing outcomes. Progress to be reported on a 6 monthly basis.

5.2 To help foster good relations.

5.2.1 To implement the Housing Executive's Community Cohesion Strategy through the Community Cohesion Unit with quarterly progress reports on the five themes:

- Flags, emblems and sectional symbols action plan
- Segregation/ integration
- Race relations
- Interface areas
- Communities in transition

5.2.2 Work with housing associations to implement the Shared Future Housing Programme.

5.2.3 Continue to develop the Shared Neighbourhoods Programme.

5.2.4 To implement the regional Good Relations BRIC Programme.

5.2.5 Continue to implement the Race Relations Action Plan.

5.3 To work with others to improve community safety.

5.3.1 To meet the targets in the Community Safety Strategy; Building Safer Communities and report twice yearly to the Board.

To work in partnership with the statutory, community and voluntary sectors in developing and delivering improved community safety at estate level.

To review and establish a long term model for the delivery of Housing Executive mediation services which will include the contributions made through community restorative justice schemes and other forms of early intervention.

To respond to all reports of anti-social behaviour as soon as possible and in any case within 3 working days.

Objective 6 – Delivering better public services

6.1 To inform policy and improve services through research and information.

- 6.1.1 Deliver the 2011-2012 research programme to inform housing policy and service delivery including customer satisfaction and meet the needs of users within the Housing Executive and the Department for Social Development. Develop a research programme for 2012-13.
- 6.1.2 Meet and brief the Housing Council on a monthly basis, the Social Development Statutory Committee and other public representatives and groups as appropriate.
- 6.1.3 Provide all tenants with details of the Housing Executive’s performance on a district/ service centre basis through the publication of Housing News by September 2011.

6.2 To provide high quality and responsive services to all customers

- 6.2.1 Deliver services in line with the Customer Charter and increase customer satisfaction with the overall service and with the repairs service. (3% over 3 years)

Table 17: Customer satisfaction with services

Jan – Dec 2010	Target	Actual	% Actual v Target	2009	2008	2007	2006
Satisfaction with the overall service	86%	88%	102%	99%	96%	99%	101%
Satisfaction with the repairs service	74%	76%	103%	101%	99%	109%	103%
Satisfaction with the grants service	85%	92%	108%	121%	121%	121%	121%

Table 18: Customer satisfaction with staff

Jan – Dec 2010	Target	Actual	% Actual v Target	2009	2008	2007	2006
Attend tenants visiting the district office within 15 min	95%	91%	96%	96%	103%	99%	97%
Demonstrate satisfaction with telephone service	87%	91%	105%	101%	105%	98%	98%
Satisfaction with opportunities for participation in management of their estate/area	54%	50%	93%	96%	93%	102%	95%
Demonstrate satisfaction with staff courtesy	96%	95%	99%	99%	104%	103%	98%
Demonstrate satisfaction with consultation	69%	70%	101%		91%	95%	103%

- 6.2.2 Deal with complaints in an effective and efficient manner. Analyse the nature of complaints and identify trends and aim to improve performance. (Reply to 90% within 15 days).

Table 19: Complaints

Apr – Mar 2010/11	Complaints (90%)	Processed	Performance %	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06
Number of complaints dealt within 15 days	417	422	101%	102%	100%	101%	100%

6.2.3 Minimise the number of complaints upheld by the Commissioner for Complaints.

Table 20: Number of complaints upheld by the Commissioner

Apr – Mar 2010/11	Actual	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
Number of complaints to Commissioner	7	8	8	24	29
Number of complaints upheld by Commissioner	5	5	7	10	1

6.2.4 Maintain and develop externally verified quality accreditations including Customer Service Excellence, IIP and ISO. Continue to use the EFQM model as a basis for business improvement.

6.2.5 Continue the programme of equality screening/impact assessment and rural proofing of policies identified through consultation and develop our policies in ways which will further promote equality of opportunity. Work toward these ends in partnership with others, including the Equality Commission.

6.2.6 Renew accreditation of the ISO 14001 Environmental Management System and promote cross-sectoral stakeholder awareness through continued participation in the Northern Ireland Environmental Management Survey.

6.2.7 Monitor progress against the Sustainable Development Policy and update the policy if necessary to take account of the revised Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Action Plan when published. Continue to identify opportunities for the reduction of adverse environmental impacts, including monitoring CO₂ producing activities and waste outputs.

6.2.8 Implement the findings of the Governance and Procurement Gateway Reviews in line with agreed timescale.

6.3 To manage services in a cost-effective manner

6.3.1 Arrears management

- Ensure that total arrears at 31 March 2012 show a £100k reduction from the figure at 31 March 2011.
- Reduce total arrears figure to 4.6% of collectable income.
- Reduce the number of tenants more than 13 weeks in arrears to 3.8% of all tenants by 31 March 2012.
- Reduce arrears written off to 0.36% of collectable income by 31 March 2012.
- Reduce past tenant debt to 1% of collectable income by March 2012.

Table 21: Arrears

Apr – Mar 2010/11	YTD Target	YTD Actual	Performance	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
Arrears	£13,211k	£12,657k	104%	104%	99%	107%	105%

6.3.2 Continue to develop the financial inclusion strategy to ensure tenants receive appropriate financial advice and access to financial services. Continue to develop the Debt Prevention Strategy.

6.3.3 Re-let properties within 26 days.

6.3.4 Ensure that the number of void properties does not exceed 1% of stock.

Table 22: Voids

Apr – Mar 2010/11	YTD Target	YTD Actual	Performance	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
Total housing stock		90,188		90,182	90,500	90,607	92,115
Voids	902	774	114%	131%	115%	137% *	139% *
%Voids v. stock	1%	0.86%					* Target 2%

6.3.5 Continue to develop the Benchmarking Strategy.

6.3.6 Process at least 90% of housing applications within 20 working days.

Table 23: Processing housing applications

Apr – Mar 2010/11	YTD Target	YTD Actual	Performance	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
% processed within target	90%	97%	108%	108%	106%	107%	108%

6.3.7 Complete for each classification, 95% of emergency, urgent and routine repairs within the agreed time scales of 24 hours, 4 days and 4 weeks respectively.

Table 24: Repairs completed within target timescales

Apr – Mar 2010/11	YTD Target	YTD Actual	YTD % Actual v Target	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
Emergency	113,534	115,259	102%	102%	102%	103%	103%
Urgent	66,481	65,622	99%	101%	103%	103%	103%
Routine	78,597	78,683	100%	101%	102%	103%	103%

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6.3.8 Analyse the nature of post inspection results from CSU and maintenance officers and identify trends and aim to improve performance.

6.3.9 Grants processing

- To issue at least 90% of all schedules of grant aided works within twelve weeks of inspection.
- To issue a formal approval within six months of completed documentation for 100% of applications.
- To make at least 90% of payments within six weeks of the request for inspection.

Table 25: Grant payments

Apr – Mar 2010 /11	Target	Actual	% Actual v Target	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08
Issue schedules of grant aided works within 12 weeks	90%	84%	93%	107%	102%	104%
Issue formal approval within 6 months	100%	78%	78%	97%	92%	97%
Make payments within 6 weeks	90%	94%	104%	92%	90%	100%

6.3.10 To ensure performance of 90% for disabled adaptations against the following standards:

- 12 weeks for lifts
- 46 weeks for extensions
- 12 weeks for urgent heating
- 35 weeks for standard plus heating
- 52 weeks for standard heating

Table 26: Disabled adaptations

Apr – Mar 2010 /11	Target	Actual	% Actual v Target	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08
12 weeks for lifts	90%	63%	70%	92%	76%	97%
46 weeks for extensions	90%	32%	36%	40%	80%	52%
12 weeks for urgent heating	90%	62%	69%	99%	82%	80%
35 weeks for standard + heating	90%	82%	91%	103%	23%	110%
52 weeks for standard heating	90%	94%	104%	101%	76%	111%

Minor Adaptations

- 10 weeks for urgent showers
- 40 weeks for non-urgent showers
- 8 weeks for other minor adaptations (including ramps)

Table 27: Minor adaptations

Apr – Mar 2010 /11	Target	Actual	% Actual v Target	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08
10 weeks for urgent showers	90%	100%	111%	110%	111%	110%
40 weeks for non-urgent showers	90%	100%	111%	111%	111%	111%
8 weeks for other minor adaptations (including ramps)	90%	90%	100%	109%	109%	109%

6.3.11 Deliver an efficient and effective Housing Benefit service

- Process new HB claims within an average of 25 days
- Process changes of circumstance within an average of 10 days.
- Ensure an accuracy rate of 97.5% for Housing Benefit assessments.
- Recover at least 85% of overpayments raised during the year
- Reduce the level of fraud and error in Housing Benefit to 2.8% of annual benefit expenditure by March 2012
- Ensure that 100% of overpayments have timely and appropriate action taken

Table 28: Processing new Housing Benefit applications within an average of 25 days

Apr – Mar 2010 /11	YTD Target	YTD Actual	YTD % Actual v Tar	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
Public & private	25	21.40	114%	101%	69.0%	104%	84%

Table 29: Processing change of circumstance claims within an average of 10 days

Apr – Mar 2010 /11	YTD Target	YTD Actual	YTD % Actual v Tar	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
Public & private	10	5.9	141%	67%	44.3%	99%	62%

Table 30: Ensuring an accuracy rate of 96% for Housing Benefit assessments

Apr – Mar 2010 /11	YTD Target	YTD Actual	YTD % Actual v Target	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
Accuracy	96%	96%	100%	103.8	103%	103%	101%

Table 31: Recovering at least 86% of Housing Benefit overpayments

Apr – Mar 2010 /11	Target	Actual	% Actual v Target	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
% overpayments recovered	85%	71.3%	83.9%	87.6%	99%	103%	101%

Table 32: Housing Benefit overpayment recovery

HB overpayment recovery	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
Amount outstanding at March 2010	- £23,447,234	- £20,339,062	- £18,635,596	- £16,701,003	- £19,748,025
Overpayments raised	- £18,350,128	- £17,190,434	- £14,119,029	- £13,680,423	- £14,969,875
Overpayments recovered	£13,081,587	£12,793,495	£11,825,065	£11,754,121	£11,931,853
Amount outstanding at March 2011	- £28,715,775	- £24,736,001	- £20,929,560	- £18,636,305	- £16,710,003

6.3.12 Implement and report on an asset management plan. Carry out a formal corporate land and property assets review.

6.4 Improve services through the Modernising Services Programme and Information Technology.

6.4.1 Develop and overarching strategy for the use of ‘LEAN’ reviews by May 2011 and deliver a programme of ‘LEAN’ reviews by March 2012.

6.4.2 Develop phase 2 of the Modernising Services Programme by October 2011.

6.4.3 Implement the Security Improvement Plan, ensuring that the Housing Executive retains NICS accreditation, by March 2012.

6.4.4 Ensure that the agreed Housing Management System is implemented by March 2012.

6.4.5 Implement the action plan agreed as part of the Business Improvement Strategy by March 2012.

6.5 Maintain an excellent, well-trained and highly motivated workforce.

6.5.1 Implement the Action Plan agreed in the People Strategy by March 2012.

6.5.2 Implement the Manpower Plan for the year ensuring that the efficiency savings required are met and develop the 2012/13 Manpower Plan by February 2012.

6.5.3 Achieve the absence target of 12.1 days by March 2012.

Table 33: Absence

Apr – Mar 2010/11	Target	Actual	Actual v Target	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
% Sickness absence	5.81%	5.53%	105.5%	6.1	6.18	5.93%	6.70%
Days lost per employee	12.8	12.1	105.5%	13.22	13.60	13.22	14.80

Appendix 2 - Summary of main functions

Organisation background and structures

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is a non-departmental public body, established by the Housing Executive Act (Northern Ireland) 1971. Under the terms of the Act, the Housing Executive assumed the housing responsibilities of some 65 separate authorities and became Northern Ireland's single comprehensive regional housing authority.

Main functions

The Housing Executive's primary responsibilities are to:

- Regularly examine housing conditions and housing requirements;
- Draw up wide ranging programmes to meet these needs;
- Effect the closure, demolition and clearance of unfit houses;
- Effect the improvement of the condition of the housing stock;
- Encourage the provision of new houses;
- Establish housing information and advisory services;
- Consult with district councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Council;
- Manage its own housing stock in Northern Ireland.

The Housing Executive is the Home Energy Conservation Authority for Northern Ireland and administers Supporting People and Housing Benefit. We are responsible for management of the Social Housing Development Programme and the Warm Homes Scheme.

The organisation

The Housing Executive reports through the Department for Social Development to the Minister for Social Development.

The Housing Executive's general policy, management and operation is controlled by a 10-person Board. Members are appointed through the public appointments process by the Department for Social Development following Ministerial approval. The Housing Council, from its membership, makes recommendations to the Minister for appointment to four positions on the Board.

The names of the current Board Members are shown in [Appendix 3](#).

Delivery of programmes and services

The Housing Executive is managed by Stewart Cuddy, Acting Chief Executive assisted by the Deputy Chief Executive and four Directors.

The Housing Executive has five divisions, each of which reports to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive's management team meets each week to consider proposals for action and to co-ordinate activity.

John McPeake is the Acting Director of Housing and Regeneration and Deputy Chief Executive. The division has four main areas of responsibility.

- Housing & services
- Business & programme management
- Regeneration services
- Technical support

Five area managers are responsible for the delivery of housing services through area and district offices, along with 5 customer service units and 6 “back office” units, providing a full range of services including allocations, homelessness, Housing Benefit, maintenance and redevelopment and other regeneration initiatives.

The Corporate Services Division is currently headed by Clark Bailie. The division is made up of four parts; an Information Department which handles our communications and publicity; the Internal Audit Department; the Strategic Partnerships Department dealing with housing associations, the private rented sector, Supporting People and our Corporate Planning Department which produces and manages our Corporate and Business Plans, risk management, equality, rural housing, environmental management, the Research Programme and produces the District Housing Plans and other planning documents. This division also manages the Housing Executive’s role as the Home Energy Conservation Authority (HECA) for Northern Ireland. In addition this division is also responsible for the management of land and commercial property assets.

Dolores Ferran is the acting Director of the Design and Property Services Division, which manages delivery of the private sector grants schemes and delivery of the Social New Build Programme. The division is also responsible for the delivery of all planned housing maintenance and improvement schemes through a multi-disciplinary design and project management service. Similar services are provided to housing associations in respect of new build. The Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) undertakes building and grounds maintenance contract work. This division also manages the Warm Homes Scheme.

The Finance Division provides a professional service in dealing with issues of financial planning and financial services across all the Housing Executive’s activities. The division is presently headed by David Lamb.

Maureen Taggart directs the Personnel and Management Services Division, which has departments dealing with personnel, learning & development, legal issues, Information Technology, procurement and Modernising Services.

Our headquarters are in Belfast, with customer services provided through a network of area offices, district offices, and grants offices across Northern Ireland.

Appendix 3 - The Board of the Housing Executive

Board Members are appointed by the Minister for Social Development.

Current Board Members

Here are the Board Members at 1st April 2011. Click on the name to see their full biography



Brian Rowntree
Chairman

[more...](#)



Anne Henderson
Vice Chairman

[more...](#)



Jenny Palmer

[more.....](#)



Jim Speers

[more...](#)



Monica Wilson

[more...](#)



Brendan Curran

[more...](#)



Eamonn O'Neill

[more...](#)



Edna Dunbar

[more...](#)



Angela Coffey

[more...](#)



Kenneth Millar

[more...](#)

Appendix 4 - Manpower Plan 2011/12

The Housing Executive currently has a workforce of 3,136 staff. The salary costs of our administrative, professional and technical staff (2,712) are met by way of the salary budget. The salary costs of our 'non-administrative' staff (424) – direct labour operatives, caretakers, concierges, hostel assistants and neighbourhood officers – are met via other revenue blocks.

Salary budget costs for the year 2010/11 amounted to around £75.6m. A further £9.8m was required to meet the salary costs of 'non-administrative' staff.

A significant proportion (around 70%) of the 'administrative' workforce has been subject to a review process over the last 2-3 years, with the aim of ensuring that staffing numbers and structure continue to be aligned to organisational objectives and workload. In this period there have been significant reviews in relation to the technical services function, Private Sector Improvement Service and efficiency reviews of the Housing Benefit, accounts, customer service and district office functions within Housing and Regeneration.

In addition, each business unit is required to take account of an efficiency saving (and relevant benchmarks where appropriate) when developing the resource element of their annual business plans.

It is considered therefore that the Housing Executive has, currently, the right numbers of staff, in the right place, in order to meet organisational objectives.

However, in anticipation of the need for efficiency savings in 2011/12, the salary budget has been struck at £73.5m, a reduction of around 5% in real terms.

This reduction in the salary budget will give rise to a reduction in the workforce of around 120 posts. This reduction will be achieved by way of staff leaving on the basis of early release schemes which were applied during 2010/11, by natural wastage in 2011/12 and by management of temporary contract staff.

On the assumption that in the years 2012/13 to 2013/14 the Housing Executive will be required to make year on year savings of 5% on its salary budget, the annual budget figures and the consequent impact on posts in the organisation is projected below:

Year	Budget (m)	Post Reduction
2011/12	£73.5m	120
2012/13	£71.361m	132
2013/14	£69.285m	125

On the basis of that assumption the Housing Executive would be required to reduce by some 377 posts over the 3 year period.

The Housing Executive would seek to achieve the savings/post reduction required by way of:

- I. Management of vacancies arising from voluntary retirements and other leavers – this could amount to around 250 people over the period;
- II. Deployment of early release mechanisms in order to induce other staff to leave, subject to business case;
- III. Management of temporary contract staff;

Corporate & Business Plans 2011- 2012 to 2013-2014

IV. Seeking efficiencies arising from ongoing Lean reviews.

In terms of its Workforce Plan, however, the Housing Executive will be seeking to ensure that the right numbers as dictated by salary budget allocations are in the 'right place' – in terms of meeting organisational objectives.

In that regard, it is anticipated that the outworking of the Internal Structural Review during 2011/12 will inform where staff reductions can be targeted so that efficiencies can be made which have least impact on the effectiveness of the organisation in meeting its objectives.

The Workforce Plan over the three year period will also place a considerable emphasis on addressing the implications of the age profile of the organisation, which increasingly reflects a 'middle aged' characteristic with 63% of staff over the age of 45.

In particular the Workforce Plan will look at ways of improving the Housing Executive's succession planning processes in terms of critical posts in key functional areas and leadership/management posts. In addition, the plan will focus on ways in which the organisation can affect significant change in its age profile against a backdrop of reducing job opportunities and developments in age discrimination law, including the removal of the default retirement age.

Learning and development

While our manpower planning processes will endeavour to ensure that the organisation has the right numbers of staff in the right place in order to meet organisational objectives, our learning and development plans will endeavour to ensure that staff have the right skills in order to deliver on organisational objectives.

In this regard the key learning and development themes for the year will be:

I. Functional/Knowledge Based Learning

- ensuring that staff know and understand the policies and processes required in their job role and understand the importance of compliance with policy and controls; ensuring that staff know, understand and can operate effectively, the IT systems (e.g. HMS, PSIS, finance) associated with their job role;
- ensuring that staff know and understand corporate policy in regard to key areas of Health & Safety, equal opportunities, counter-fraud measures, good governance and the broad principles underpinning public service.

II. Generic Skills

- providing skills training in regard to IT competence, customer relations, personal effectiveness, communication, etc.

III. Developing the Learning and Development Framework

- further developing the aim of seeking accreditation from awarding bodies for internal courses undertaken and competences acquired;
- continuing to refine the framework for learning and development with the aim of achieving re-accreditation against the I.I.P. framework in August 2011.

We can let you have a copy of the plans in a language that meets your needs and in different formats, including large print, Braille, DAISY, audiocassette and computer disk