

SOUTH RIBBLE HOUSING FRAMEWORK

February 2016



SOUTH RIBBLE HOUSING FRAMEWORK 2016-19

FOREWORD



Councillor Michael Green Cabinet Member for Housing and Healthy Communities

As the Cabinet Member for Housing and Healthy Communities, I am delighted to present this Housing Framework for South Ribble. At a time of national policy change and the recently published Housing and Planning Bill, this Framework sets the direction the Council wishes to take in setting policies to help provide high quality homes for South Ribble residents.

South Ribble is an ambitious borough, and this is an ambitious Housing Framework. We want to ensure that all our residents, both current and future, have access to high quality homes, which meet their aspirations and needs throughout their lives. This Framework sets out three clear priorities for policy setting. Within these priorities are actions the Council will take. Given the changing legislation the Framework sets out the first year's actions showing clearly how the Council will target its activities. It also shows what we will address in the following years. We will review the Framework annually to ensure it remains robust and meets local need.




This Housing Framework –

- **Supports Planning policies to bring forward high quality homes of the right type, size and tenure.**
- **Promotes home ownership.**
- **Introduces a Commuted Sums policy.**
- **Introduces policies to help people stay independent in their own homes for longer.**
- **Includes a campaign to improve the quality of private rented homes.**
- **Reviews the current policy on Empty Properties.**
- **Sets clear policy to help attract funding to enable the Council to meet its aspirations.**

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Housing Framework Overview	3
1. Aim of The Housing Framework	4
2. Housing Framework priorities	5
Priority 1: Supporting the delivery of quality new homes.	5
Priority 2: Support The Health And Wellbeing Of Residents Through The Provision Of Supported And Adapted Accommodation	9
Priority 3: Improve The Quality Of Existing Homes	11

South Ribble Housing Framework 2016-2019 Overview (Bold actions to be undertaken in Year 1)

<p>PRIORITY 1: Support the delivery of quality new homes.</p>	<p>PRIORITY 2: Supporting the health and wellbeing of residents through the provision of supported and adapted accommodation</p>	<p>PRIORITY 3: Maintaining, and where possible improving, the quality of existing homes.</p>
		
<p>THE COUNCIL WILL:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a policy to support home ownership in the borough • Review the South Ribble Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document. • Develop and implement a policy for using commuted sums. • Introduce a list of and for residents interested in affordable home ownership. • Work with partners to bring forward sustainable methods of bringing forward a variety of new homes. • Bring forward the South Ribble Local Plan housing sites. • Create and support a Registered Provider Developer Partnership. • Ensure there is up to date housing information and data for each area of the Borough to inform housing development. 	<p>THE COUNCIL WILL:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and introduce a policy on Housing for Older and Vulnerable People to support independent living; accommodation moves to bungalows or apartments; positive lifestyle changes. • Work with health partners to seek funding opportunities for home improvements and adaptations. • Undertake a survey of all existing older person's accommodation. • Work with commissioners and a developer partner to develop an extra care scheme for South Ribble. • Deliver an effective and efficient Disabled Facilities service subject to passported funding. • Work with partners on the need of specialist/supported accommodation. 	<p>THE COUNCIL WILL:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce and maintain a database of empty properties. • Review the Empty Homes policy. • Develop an Empty Homes campaign to support the reoccupation of properties. • Produce an action plan based on the findings of the Private Stock Condition Survey. • Investigate the nature of the private rented sector in South Ribble, and determine future need and investment. • Run a campaign for landlords and tenants to support the improvement of the private rented sector. • Develop policies to respond to the Energy Act 2011 requirements. • Look for funding to support energy efficiency and carbon reduction projects for private homeowners.

1. AIM OF THE HOUSING FRAMEWORK

The Council will introduce and implement policies to help ensure there are high quality homes across South Ribble that meet the needs and aspirations of both current and future residents. These homes will be central to the development of healthy, sustainable and prosperous communities.

This Housing Framework has been produced in light of current housing policy from Government. This particularly focuses on ensuring the delivery of quality new homes; supporting the aspirations of local residents through home ownership opportunities; tackling empty homes; and enabling older and vulnerable people live independently through the offer of suitable accommodation.

The Priorities

The priorities to drive policy are:

- 1. Supporting the delivery of quality new homes.**
- 2. Supporting the health and wellbeing of residents through the provision of supported and adapted accommodation.**
- 3. Maintaining and, where possible improving, the quality of existing homes.**

This Framework has been shared and consulted on with national Housing agencies as well as local partners and residents.



2. HOUSING FRAMEWORK PRIORITIES

PRIORITY 1: SUPPORTING THE DELIVERY OF QUALITY NEW HOMES

The Council has identified a supply of housing land for the period of the Local Plan. The Local Plan states these sites, if developed, will generate around 6500 units over the period. Whilst housebuilding did stall during the economic downturn, the number of completions is beginning to rise.

Completions

The below table shows the number of completions over the last 5 years.

Table 1: Number of new dwellings, 2010-15

Year	New Dwellings	Affordable Properties
April 2010 – March 2011	221	11
April 2011 – March 2012	170	11
April 2012 – March 2013	168	40
April 2013 – March 2014	346	48
April 2014 – March 2015	486	97

As the table shows, housebuilding is beginning to increase in the borough, with completions significantly rising since 2013/14. The Council is one of the first in the country to have its Local Plan approved in July 2015. The approved Local Plan gives developers information on sites and the infrastructure first approach in the City Deal helps bring sites forward. Although the housing market is still fragile after the global economic downturn, these strategic documents gives developers some mitigation of business risks. This strategic approach to delivering housing is working – both in terms of completions in general and an increase in affordable housing being built. However the market remains very volatile. The Housing and Planning Bill will impact on the market. The Council will ensure its planning policies remain effective.

Balancing the offer

For the economic regeneration of South Ribble to remain buoyant and for communities to remain sustainable, there is a need for a balanced housing market. This balanced housing market will be reflected in the homes being built. This mix will include family homes, starter homes, affordable homes, executive homes, bungalows, apartments, adapted homes and self-build. It will not be solely numbers which govern the Housing Framework and resulting policies, but also quality and mix to meet need.

Home Ownership

Supporting home ownership is not only a key strand of Government policy, but is also important at a local level. The Council is committed to supporting the aspirations of residents to own their own homes.

The Government has set out a number of measures and initiatives that help people own their own homes.

These measures include:

- Help to Buy and Help to Buy ISA
- Starter Homes
- Shared Ownership

Starter Homes

South Ribble Borough Council supports the development of Starter Homes, and will bring forward sites on which they will be developed.

This new home ownership product is a key element of the Housing and Planning Bill to support home ownership. Starter Homes will enable first time buyers under 40 to purchase a newly built home with a 20% discount. Developers will be able to include Starter Homes as part of their affordable housing contribution on new build sites. The Spending Review in November 2015 identified £2.3 billion to support the development of Starter Homes on brownfield sites, and for developers to build additional Starter Homes above their affordable housing contribution.

Shared Ownership

There are already a number of shared ownership schemes across the borough, and the Council will continue to support further development.

The Council will make sure that local residents have information and access to schemes and measures that support them to own their own home. An affordable home ownership register will be established, and the Council will also ensure investment into home ownership products.

Shared ownership schemes allow for a percentage share of a property to be purchased, with the remaining unsold share remaining with a housing association (or similar). This enables those on lower incomes and with smaller deposits to purchase their own home. Rent is paid on the unsold shares to the housing association. Occupiers can purchase more shares of the property, up to 100%. This is known as staircasing. The Government has committed £4 billion to support the development of shared ownership homes in the Spending Review.

Assistance for other Affordable Housing

The Council recognises the need for affordable housing for residents who cannot access market housing. The Central Lancashire Core Strategy has a target of 30% affordable housing on sites over 15 units (35% in rural areas and 100% on rural exception sites), which is delivered through section 106 agreements. The Supplementary Planning Document for Affordable Housing advises on how affordable housing should be developed on-site. Given national policy changes we will review our Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document to help ensure affordable housing for residents who cannot access market housing will continue to come forward through the planning process.

The Council receives commuted sum payments in lieu of onsite affordable housing provision. The Framework document will be forward a policy to direct the investment of these monies in affordable housing, both home ownership products and rented homes.

DRAFT

THE COUNCIL WILL

- Develop and implement a policy to support home ownership in the borough.
- Review the South Ribble Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.
- Develop and implement a policy for using commuted sums.
- Introduce a list of and for residents interested in affordable home ownership.
- Work with partners to bring forward sustainable methods of bringing forward a variety of new homes.
- Bring forward the South Ribble Local Plan housing sites.
- Create and support a Registered Provider Developer Partnership.
- Ensure there is up to date housing information and data for each area of the Borough to inform housing development.



PRIORITY 2: SUPPORT THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF RESIDENTS THROUGH THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED AND ADAPTED ACCOMMODATION

Housing for Older and Vulnerable People

South Ribble has an ageing population and the Council's ambitions are to have a wide range of homes to meet needs and aspirations. The Council will bring forward policies to drive the building of a range of homes including bungalows, lifetime homes, adapted homes through to purpose built extra care provision. There are 38 sheltered housing schemes in the Borough. Currently, there are no purpose built extra care housing schemes.

The Council will introduce a policy for housing for older and vulnerable people to help make this ambition a reality. This policy will give a positive choice to people. It will support people to live in their homes independently for longer, or support a move if they wish to move to a different type of accommodation such as a bungalow or sheltered scheme. This policy will assist planning determinations.

A person's health is above price. Ill health costs in pain and suffering as well as medical costs. This policy will also be used to engage with commissioners and providers e.g. the Preston, Chorley and South Ribble Clinical Commissioning Group and Lancashire County Council, to help ensure that all partners recognise that high quality, safe and secure homes for older and/or vulnerable people are essential if people are to live well in South Ribble and has wide benefits in keeping people healthy and out of the care system.

In recent years the use of technology has grown to help people remain safe and secure in their homes. Across Lancashire commissioners have introduced Telecare - a form of distant medical support - to help people remain independent in their homes. The policy will seek to take advantage of opportunities, where ever possible, to look at further funding from commissioners to extend this and make use of future technologies. Ensuring that full benefits are seen by residents while at the same time keeping people out of hospital longer.



Disabled Facilities

The Council delivers a Disabled Facilities service enabling disabled people, (both children and adults) to remain within their own homes. New procedures have driven improvements including reduced waiting lists, more choice for customers and customer satisfaction rates are excellent.

Funding is provided as part of the Better Care Fund (passported via Lancashire County Council), as providing Disabled Facilities is seen as playing an important role in enabling individuals to live safely in their homes and reducing levels of delayed hospital discharges.

The Private Sector Stock Condition Survey undertaken in 2012 identified that adaptations are installed in 2410 homes across the borough, although there is still a significant need and with the demographic the need is likely to grow.

This will be a priority within the policy on Housing for Older and Vulnerable people.

Groups requiring specialist accommodation

The Council ensures there is a variety of accommodation to meet the housing needs of certain groups such as young people, households fleeing domestic violence and adults with learning difficulties. The existing accommodation and future need will be reviewed when necessary.

At the time of writing this Framework, the Council had just undertaken its Gypsy and Traveller Assessment and is reviewing the implications for the Borough.

Homelessness

This is addressed in the statutory Homelessness Prevention Review and Strategy.

THE COUNCIL WILL

- Develop and introduce a policy on Housing for Older and Vulnerable People to support independent living; accommodation moves to bungalows or apartments; positive lifestyle changes.
 - To work with health partners to seek funding opportunities for homes improvements and adaptations.
 - Undertake a survey of all existing older person's accommodation; and determine a plan for future accommodation needs.
 - Work with commissioners and a developer partner to develop an extra care scheme for South Ribble.
 - Continue to deliver an effective and efficient Disabled Facilities service subject to passported funding.
- Work with partners on the need of specialist/supported accommodation

PRIORITY 3: MAINTAINING AND WHERE POSSIBLE IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EXISTING HOMES.

Ensuring the housing stock of South Ribble is of good quality is essential in promoting health and wellbeing, safety and sustainability. Legislation sets standards, and the Council has existing Empty Properties and Private Sector policies and actions to improve stock and provide warm, safe homes.

Decent Homes Standard

The existing housing stock in South Ribble is better than the national average in meeting the national Decent Homes Standard. Nationally 78% of housing stock meets the Decent Homes Standard (English Housing Survey, 2012), for South Ribble the figure is 80.2%. The criteria for the standard is set in legislation. Homes not meeting the Decent Homes Standard do so for varied reasons (e.g. energy efficiency, trip hazards, ventilation).

Private Sector Stock

Homes in the private sector are divided into owner occupied and private rented. The majority of homes across South Ribble are owner occupied. Most of the homes in this sector are well maintained and to a high standard. The Council's existing policies help home owners maintain their homes to high standards (e.g. energy efficiency initiatives.)

Private rented sector properties are more likely to be non-decent than other tenures in South Ribble. This reflects the national picture as identified in the English Housing Survey. Whilst the level of private rented sector properties in South Ribble is considerably lower than the national and county average, the Council will monitor both the growth and quality of the sector, to ensure the sector remains sustainable. Private sector housing plays an important role within local communities by providing accessible and flexible accommodation for economically active residents. It can also support the reduction of homelessness, now local authorities can discharge their duty by placing households in private sector accommodation

The Council will continue to seek funding and use legislative powers to help ensure homes meet the Decent Homes Standard. As well as using its statutory powers, the Council will run a campaign to improve the standards across the private rented sector. It will seek to engage with landlords to educate them about their duties, and offer guidance and support where it can. It will also seek to engage with tenants, so they are more aware of their rights, and can highlight issues where the landlord is not fully undertaking his/her duties.

Empty Homes

At the time of writing this strategy, there are 354 long term empty homes, which accounts for approximately 0.73% of total housing stock. 100% of these properties have been fully inspected and each has a case file.

In the last 6 months every empty property has been contacted to establish the reason the homes are empty. The Council will continue to implement its Empty Homes policy (which was approved in June 2013) to ensure current stock is fully used and communities remain vibrant. The policy is giving a targeted approach to Empty Homes and it will be reviewed to ensure it remains robust.

Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth

The Council has an excellent record in securing funding for energy efficiency initiatives. It has a duty to report to government on energy efficiency standards every two years. In the last report the Council's successes were:

- Installation of 258 boilers
- 782 loft insulations
- 115 cavity wall insulations



The activities the Council and its partners undertook resulted in a 2.17% reduction in residential carbon emissions, which was higher than the target of 1.66% set.

The Council's focus on reducing fuel poverty and carbon emissions to vulnerable households will remain (e.g. the Winter Warm campaign.)

New Legislation is being introduced. The Energy Act 2011 is bringing in new laws on energy efficiency which will impact on private rented sector homes in 2016 and 2018.

The Council will review its policies and seek funding opportunities to ensure it remains in the forefront of energy efficiency.

THE COUNCIL WILL

- Produce and maintain a full database of all empty properties.
- Develop an empty homes campaign to support the reoccupation of properties.
- Produce an action plan based on the findings of the Private Stock Condition Survey.
- Investigate the nature of the private rented sector in South Ribble, and determine future need and investment.
- Run a campaign for landlords and tenants to support the improvement of the private rented sector.
- Develop policies to respond to the Energy Act 2011 requirements.

- Look for funding to support energy efficiency and carbon reduction projects for private homeowners.

DRAFT