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**SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN  
BOROUGH COUNCIL  
AND THE  
HOMES & COMMUNITIES AGENCY**

**LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN**

**2011 – 2015**

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## Executive Summary

This Plan defines priorities for investment in Solihull by the Homes and Communities Agency.

Section 1 sets out the purpose and scope of the Plan, which covers the period 2011 to 2015, but looks ahead to a longer timeframe on planning for future housing growth and on the regeneration of North Solihull.

Section 2 outlines the strategic framework within which the Plan is placed. It is stressed that the Plan builds on approved strategies and plans at the local level. It will be reviewed as changes to the strategic framework are introduced and as new evidence is available. On this basis, the Plan is will be reviewed following the approval of the Local Development Framework, the revision of Solihull's Sustainable Communities Strategy and further definition of sub-regional strategic relationships. It will be reviewed at least annually thereafter.

Section 3 notes the investment in Solihull which the HCA has made and the welcome flexibility in the way that the agency has supported the North Solihull regeneration programme. The section discusses the proposed co-investment arrangement whereby the HCA will jointly commission investment with the Council in line with the agreed priorities of this Plan. The section notes that this is consistent with the Council's own shift toward a commissioning model and that it wishes to work with HCA on achieving Total Place / Total Capital, first in north Solihull.

Section 4 introduces a set of spatial and thematic priorities. North Solihull is clearly the prime priority for investment, but the Plan also notes the need for investment in the south of the Borough, particularly in and around Shirley, limited housing provision in the rural area to meet local needs and, in the longer term, the expansion of Solihull town centre to include residential as well as commercial development.

The thematic priorities are rooted in the Sustainable Communities Strategy and are divided into 'place' and 'people' priorities. The theme of 'closing the gap of inequality' underpins them all. Key amongst these is future housing and economic growth and support for communities and for people. Within the latter there is emphasis on the need for more options for independent living to help progress the Putting People First agenda.

Section 5 sets out governance and delivery arrangements and Section 6 deals with monitoring and review.

The appendices include references to key strategies and the evidence base together with data on future housing provision and planned activity through the North Solihull regeneration programme.

**Purpose of the Plan**

The Local Investment Plan (LIP) for Solihull sets out the principles and priorities for joint investment by Solihull Council (SMBC) and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to deliver Solihull's overarching vision and related strategies for regeneration, renewal and growth. The plan identifies the strategic context for investment and summarises the evidence base that will be used to direct investment and determine the outputs and outcomes expected from HCA, the Council and wider stakeholders.

The LIP should not be seen as a stand-alone document. It has been developed within the context of existing national, regional and local strategic and policy frameworks. The ambition of the LIP is to detail how investment in housing and regeneration will help to deliver shared strategic outcomes in a way that is integrated with investment from other funding streams such as transport, education and health.

The LIP is intended to provide a strategy for four years from 2011 to 2015, to enable alignment with HCA West Midlands Business Plan as well as complementing and supporting partners' existing and proposed activities. Its initial focus will be for 2011/12, although it does take a longer view through the Local Development Framework and the North Solihull regeneration programme.

The plan's initial scope will cover the following:

- Spatial priorities identified across the Borough, targeting investment for regeneration, growth and renewal;
- Thematic priorities within and beyond spatial priority areas, to address specific policy objectives
- Governance arrangements to enable Plan implementation;
- Delivery roles and responsibilities,

The LIP should not be seen as a fixed plan and will be subject to review at least annually to take into account changing policy context as well as to reflect wider stakeholders' priorities

The Plan will be aligned with, and add value to, the Council's existing strategies particularly the Sustainable Communities Strategy, the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the North Solihull Strategic Framework. It will establish an agreement between HCA, the Council and other public and private sector bodies to achieve the overarching vision.

Stakeholder consultation has been undertaken through existing SMBC and Solihull Partnership governance arrangements using work previously undertaken in the development of the LDF and other strategies. In the future there will be specific consultation on the further development of the LIP where required.

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## **Solihull - Introduction**

Solihull is one of the seven West Midland Metropolitan Boroughs, located between Birmingham (to the west) and Coventry and Warwickshire (to the east). It covers an area of almost 18,000 hectares, two-thirds of which is rural farmland. Much of the rural area is designated green belt. Solihull has two main built-up areas, in the north around Chelmsley Wood and in the south-west around Solihull town centre and Shirley.

Solihull is at the heart of the regional and national motorway and rail networks. The international gateway of Birmingham Airport ensures that Solihull has good transport links with the region and beyond. Birmingham International railway station is also located in the Borough as is the National Exhibition Centre.

These assets, along with a skilled workforce, a vibrant town centre, and an attractive environment and quality of life have brought new investment to the Borough and led to rapid and significant economic growth. Key to the regional distinctiveness of the Borough is the high quality of its built and natural environment.

The population of 205,500 is ageing, with the number of people over 70 forecast to increase by over a third in the next 20 years, and the number of people over 85 by more than 70%. The number of households is projected to increase from 84,000 households in 2006, to 96,400 in 2026.

80% of people live in the main urban areas of the Borough, 9% in the large settlements of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath and 11% live in smaller rural settlements.

According to the June 2006 estimate, 8.8% of Solihull residents are from black and minority ethnic groups, compared to 13.5% for the West Midlands. However, around 14% of children identify with a minority ethnic background.

Solihull is a Borough of significant contrasts. Ten of the 28 super output areas (around 1,500 people in each) within the North Solihull Regeneration area fall within the 10% most deprived areas in England. In contrast, 36 of the Borough's super output areas are in the 10% least deprived.

This leads to major differences in life chances. For example, the life expectancy gap between St Alphege in the south and Chelmsley Wood in the north is 9.7 years and there are also pockets of deprivation in other parts of the Borough (for example, in Lyndon).

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## **Solihull – Economy**

Solihull is home to approximately 6,615 businesses which employ in the region of 95,000 people.

Solihull has seen strong economic growth during recent years. Over the decade 1998 to 2008, Solihull's business base grew by an average of 2.8% per annum, growing more strongly than national and regional comparators. The business and financial services sector made the greatest contribution to growth in the business base over this period, accounting for nearly half (48%) of businesses locally in 2009 and constituting a significant concentration within the region.

Growth has also been focused around the key assets – Birmingham and Blythe Valley Business Parks, Birmingham Airport and the NEC which together make a key contribution to the regional economy. Over 3,350 jobs have been created at Blythe Valley alone since it opened in 2000.

The Touchwood retail complex, which opened in 2001 in Solihull Town Centre, has created approximately 2,000 jobs and has enhanced Solihull's reputation as a retail destination.

Solihull has been identified as having the potential for economic and employment growth in the medium-term (2015 onwards), despite public sector cuts. Growth is expected to be led by ICT; transport technologies (particularly automotive manufacturing); construction and building technologies and specialist business services. The tourism and leisure sector has also been identified as having significant growth potential locally, particularly if the NEC's development plans are realised. Potential major infrastructure projects – particularly the main runway extension at Birmingham Airport and the High Speed Rail proposals – would further enhance the potential for economic growth and job creation in Solihull.

Whilst Solihull's assets offer a strong basis for continued success in attracting growth sector investment in the future, they do not serve to promote economic opportunity as readily in the north of the Borough. One of the key challenges is the unequal spread of economic opportunity, evidenced by the major wealth differential between the affluent south and the north where a number of neighbourhoods fall in the 10% most deprived nationally.

This picture is most pronounced in North Solihull, but there are other areas and communities where business numbers and rates of self-employment are low, and where there are also significant pockets of worklessness. This is particularly the case for the urban areas neighbouring Birmingham – Castle Bromwich, Lyndon, Olton, Elmdon and Shirley, but there are challenges faced by Solihull's rural communities, including ready access to mainstream services.

## **Solihull – Housing**

Solihull generally provides an attractive residential environment and this creates a high level of demand for housing in the Borough. This demand is reflected in higher than average house prices for the region compared to the rest of the West Midlands region, strong Council and RSL housing waiting list data for affordable housing and no significant 'difficult to let' problems. There is relatively good occupancy stability in both the owned and rented sectors.

Solihull's tenure distribution shows a high level of home ownership at 78% and a smaller amount of affordable housing compared to the West Midlands region and England. In the period since 1981 there has been a trend towards greater home ownership due to the Right to Buy (RTB) and new private housing completions. There are significant tenure variations within the Borough with concentrations of high-value owner occupied homes in the south and lower priced owner occupation and a higher level of social renting in the regeneration area in North Solihull.

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Average house prices in Solihull are markedly higher than in the West Midlands region as a whole. Land Registry data for December 2010 shows the average sales value in Solihull for all properties to be £197,619 compared to £134,347 for the region. This represents a significant affordability challenge. First time buyers can find great difficulty entering the housing market, even with former Right to Buy stock. The result is that many people who grow up in the Borough and those needing to move into the area are unable to buy.

**Table 1 – Housing in Solihull**

<p><b>Population</b> Size: 205,500 BME population: 5.4% Households living alone: 26%</p> <p><b>Projections</b> Population Growth: Total population rising to 229,600 by 2026 Household Growth: Total households rising to 96,400 by 2026 Population by age: Elderly people (65+) rising from 37,100 in 2009 to 52,100 in 2021</p> <p><b>Tenure</b> Number of Homes: 88,161 Homes Owner Occupied: 79.0% Rented from the Council: 12.2% Rented from a private landlord: 3.6% Rented from a RSL: 2.5% Miscellaneous: 2.0%</p> <p><b>Affordability</b> Average property price in Solihull £197,619 (Land Registry, December 2010). Median income of taxpayers in Solihull £35,950 (CACI 2009) Since 2000 house prices have increased by 85%; Average earnings have increased by 27% in the same period 16,334 households on the Council's Housing Register (December 2010) Average time that people have been on the Housing Register: 997 days (December 2010)</p>
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Solihull has three housing market areas (HMAs) which each form part of a wider set of sub-regional housing markets. Broadly, this reflects the relationship of north and west Solihull with Birmingham and south and east Solihull with the Coventry/Warwickshire area.

These areas have significant housing market differences. These consist of supply-side differences in tenure profile, house prices, housing types and the age and condition of housing. There are also many demand-side variables that influence households' choice of home and area such as proximity to family, friends, and access to employment, education and other facilities

The Regeneration Area HMA (Chelmsley Wood, Kingshurst and Fordbridge and Smith's Wood)

- has the highest incidence of relative deprivation within the Borough
- has a relatively young population with 60% under the age of 40 at the time of the Census.
- has a markedly high proportion of lone parent families compared to the rest of the Borough and regional and national averages.
- Average median incomes are significantly lower than the rest of the Borough
- relatively high levels of social housing, the HMA containing just under half of the Borough's social housing stock.
- has high numbers of both terraced housing and social rented flats. It is home to 42 tower blocks.
- has a strong social and market relationship with East Birmingham.

The Solihull Urban Area (Castle Bromwich, St Alphege, Shirley South, Shirley East, Shirley West, Silhill, Olton, Lyndon, Elmdon)

- has low levels of deprivation

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- has the highest proportion of its population over 65 and over 85 years of age.
  - is relatively affluent
  - has low unemployment relative to regional levels
  - has a high proportion of semi-detached and detached dwellings and a relatively low number of smaller dwellings.

#### Rural Area (Meriden, Knowle, Blythe, Dorridge and Hockley Heath, Bickenhill)

- has attracted significant net in-migration
- is the most affluent HMA
- has a lower level of existing affordable stock
- the highest levels of detached housing and the lowest levels of smaller dwellings

Solihull's private rented sector has traditionally been limited (4% recorded by 2001 Census) but is growing. This is consistent with the recognised national trend of more Buy To Let properties. The sector is concentrated in the south and west of the Borough. Rent levels are generally higher than elsewhere in the West Midland Metropolitan area and market demand is strong. There is significant demand from company relocations and high earners on short-term contracts. Access to the sector for local people on lower incomes can therefore be difficult.

Solihull also has a traditionally low proportion of intermediate housing but has actively promoted the range of 'Homebuy' products in recent years and has experienced a strong take-up in comparison to other local authorities in the metropolitan area. Homebuy has been important in meeting housing need and helping to free up some social rented tenancies.

The social rented sector in Solihull comprises approximately 13,000 homes (15% of all homes), of which 83% are owned by the local authority (and managed by Solihull Community Homes (SCH), the Council's Arms Length Management Organisation), and 17% by RSLs. 72% is in the Regeneration HMA. Solihull Council now owns 10,423 homes. 51% of the Council's housing is flats, 39% of which are located in the Borough's 42 multi-storey blocks.

There has been a significant reduction in social rented housing in Solihull, due largely to the Right to Buy (RTB). Between April 1981 and March 2010 RTB sales have totalled 7,537 and a further 908 properties have been demolished. Acquisition and new build of social rented homes (Council and RSLs) have replaced only 25% of these in the same period.

One effect of the RTB, together with a low replacement rate, has been to leave Solihull with a high proportion of flats and smaller sized properties (bedsits, one and two bedroom). Only 29% of the Council's housing has three or more bedrooms.

At 31st December 2010 there were 16,334 households on the Housing Register. Numerically the greatest need is for smaller properties but when account is taken of social rented housing availability it is clear that there is a significant shortage of larger properties. There is a particular pressure on meeting the transfer needs of Council tenants as their household size grows. For example, the average length of time that people had been on the Housing Register (at December 2010) was 2 years 9 months. For applicants the average was 2 years 6 months and for Council tenants it was 3 years 1 month.

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Lettings of Council housing to homelessness households have taken a significant share of available social lettings each year, thereby further diminishing the housing opportunities of other applicants on the Housing Register. Homelessness acceptance levels have fallen over the years 2004/5 to 2009/10. This reflects service improvements and a new emphasis placed on prevention, however there has been a strong trend of increased applications in the last quarter of 2009/10 and during 2010/11.

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## **Section 2 The Strategic Framework**

The HCA recognises that the LIP will have as a starting point the framework of strategies at national and local levels. Locally, the Council's vision, objectives and priorities are now fully aligned with those of the Solihull Partnership.

### **National**

The LIP is fully supportive of the HCA's national goals which are set out in the agency's current Corporate Plan:

- To accelerate the delivery of housing growth;
- To secure the delivery of new affordable housing and ensure existing social rented stock is made decent;
- To accelerate the regeneration of underperforming areas and the renewal of deteriorating estates; and
- To ensure high standards of design and to embed sustainability, with a legacy of skills, knowledge and capacity.

It also reflects the 'cross cutting themes' identified by HCA in its Corporate Plan:

- Intermediate housing choices;
- Delivering integrated regeneration;
- Capacity and skills in housing and regeneration;
- Rural housing and communities;
- Creating opportunities for people, places and communities;
- Vulnerable and older people; and
- Equality and diversity.

The DCLG/HCA 2011-2015 Affordable Homes Programme framework takes a number of these goals forward with its aims to,

- meet housing need at a local level
- provide a more flexible offer for social housing tenants
- ensure that public funds are properly and effectively spent
- maximise delivery of new affordable housing supply.

### **Regional**

Solihull Council is involved at three 'spatial' levels – working with neighbouring Councils (and other public, private and third sector bodies) at West Midlands/Birmingham/Coventry and Black Country City Region (BCBC) and Coventry/Solihull/Warwickshire (CSW) levels..

The LIP is fully supportive of the HCA's regional objectives and priorities which are set out in the Agency's West Midlands Business Plan for 2010-14 below, as well as HCA's corporate objectives of growth, affordability, renewal and sustainability.

The LIP is also consistent with current regional strategies, notably Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), Regional Economic Strategy (RES), Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) and Regional Transport Plan (RTP). Amongst the regional priorities which it supports are:

- the urban and rural objectives of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) which in turn are supported by the regional housing and economic strategies. For example by providing additional homes and more choice in the Major Urban Area the Council will provide

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attractive alternatives to households who would otherwise have to move into the shires to seek a better home.

- Economic and housing growth – there are two Investment Impact Locations in Solihull. North Solihull is also recognised in the HCA Regional Investment Plan and Investment Statement. A second Investment Impact Location arising from the extension of the runway at Birmingham International Airport and the consequent realignment of the A45.
- balanced communities, with pathways of housing choice which includes the Birmingham / Solihull Eastern corridor as one of its focus areas for housing market restructuring, renewal and growth.
- accelerated sustainable economic growth and regeneration of deprived communities as set out in the Regional Economic Strategy. Solihull's priorities for building prosperous communities are aligned with the Regional Economic Strategy '*Connecting to Success*'. In particular, local priorities and action will support regional development of growth sectors.
- community cohesion – growth in the Birmingham / Solihull Eastern Corridor (which includes north Solihull) will extend choice for all residents and particularly those from ethnic groups who are currently concentrated in inner – east Birmingham and who lack attractive housing 'pathways'. In addition to current residents the growth of the Birmingham and Solihull economies will attract new households to the area and the improved housing offer of the Eastern Corridor will provide viable housing options

The Coalition Government intends to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) through the Localism Bill, but it is anticipated that this legislation will take some 12-18 months before it is enacted. Until this time the RSS remains part of the statutory development plan and remains, subject to legal challenge, a material consideration in decision making. The Regional Spatial Strategy is central to Solihull's agenda on growth, renewal and placemaking.

Prior to the Government's statement of intent to abolish RSSs the West Midlands RSS was under review. The draft preferred option proposed a housing provision target of 7,600 (net) additional dwellings in Solihull between 2006 and 2026. The report of the Panel examining the Regional Spatial Strategy Review was published in September 2009 and proposed an increase in the target to 10,500. This would increase the annual target from 380 gross additional homes to 525 net.

The Panel report welcomed the way in which the Council has recognised in the LDF Core Strategy '*Challenges and Choices*' that higher net housing provision would contribute to the regeneration of North Solihull, and recognised concerns about increased congestion and environmental deterioration undermining the Borough's attributes. The Panel has noted the Council's arguments about the inappropriateness of developing the safeguarded land in smaller rural settlements, such as Cheswick Green and Tidbury Green. It also considered that apart from the area of North Solihull, north of the A45 where green belt review is required to facilitate urban regeneration, it would be contrary to the long established strategy of maintaining separation of Birmingham/Solihull and Coventry to contemplate release of land in the Meriden Gap.

The Panel recognised the advantages that Solihull's character and environment bring to the region, but considers that there is likely to be increased potential for town centre housing and that some intensification of the urban area of south Solihull around public transport nodes is achievable without threatening character and attractiveness.

The proposed target of 10,500 was carried forward into the Solihull Emerging Core Strategy which was out for consultation from October 2010 to January 2011. Representations received following the consultation will be considered by Members during March.

## **Sub-Regional**

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The sub-regional strategic framework is evolving quickly. Solihull is connected to Birmingham spatially and economically, with overlaps in housing and labour markets, and whilst the strength of the Borough's economy is important for the wider West Midlands, the Council recognises the importance of supporting Birmingham as the regional capital.

Solihull shares a common Growth Point with Birmingham which covers the Eastern Corridor housing market renewal area (which in turn includes the North Solihull regeneration area). This forms a spatial framework within which the two authorities can jointly consider how regeneration and growth can be implemented. The Council have a common interest in improving the housing offer and the quality of neighbourhoods and in promoting the mobility of households across the area.

Regeneration activity in North Solihull has started at an earlier point than in eastern Birmingham but as the city's proposals for intervention in their part of the Eastern Corridor become more advanced, emerging opportunities for joint working will be taken. These will particularly concern issues arising for localities which are in close proximity but are either side of the Birmingham / Solihull boundary. They will also concern consideration where the implications of scheme proposals for housing, transport, retail, education, employment etc in one area may be expected to have an impact for communities in the other authority.

A Programme of Development was produced in 2007 and updated in 2008. This set out Solihull's vision for growth and how it will be delivered through the North Solihull regeneration programme and the development of land in other parts of the Borough.

Solihull has formed a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) with 'Greater Birmingham' which includes East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Tamworth, Cannock Chase, Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest. The LEP's vision is to "create a globally competitive knowledge economy" within the LEP area by creating a culture and supportive environment for innovation and enterprise and through infrastructure investment. It is the LEP objective to increase economic output within the LEP area by 30% (£8.25bn) by 2020, creating up to 100,000 private sector jobs.

A City Region Adult Employment and Skills Strategy and Commissioning Plan has been developed by Solihull with former City Region partners to deliver the commitments of the City Region Employment and Skills MAA to reduce the gap in benefit claimants between the City Region and national average. It is anticipated that the MAA arrangements will transfer to the LEP.

Solihull has also worked in partnership with Coventry and Warwickshire to develop sub-regional economic and housing growth, transport and planning strategies. The Council is also looking at joint interventions with Coventry and Warwickshire partners in relation to energy to waste, foster care, economic development and corporate functions.

## **Local**

Solihull's strategies on growth, regeneration, economic development, housing and transport are consistent with each other and national policy and strategy.

Solihull has achieved a complete fit between the Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Council Plan. This means that the work of the Council and other members of the Solihull Partnership are aligned to a common vision, and a common set of objectives and targets.

The vision is ***Solihull in 2018: where everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer, and more prosperous.***

Four 'drivers' have been identified: closing the gap of inequality, understanding the needs of our customers, doing more for less and living our brand (i.e. being open, being honest, being approachable and keeping our promises).

Of all the priorities facing the Council and other organisations in the Partnership a 'Top Five' have been agreed:

- North Solihull Regeneration
- Putting People First (transforming adult social care)
- Integrated delivery of children's services
- New ways of working
- Going lean

The last two priorities reflect the financial prospects for the Council and others and the need to reduce costs whilst still delivering excellent services. There will be an emphasis on transforming service delivery and aligning services to priorities.

Whilst growth, renewal and regeneration will have benefits for most aspects of the work of the Solihull Partnership – and can therefore be linked to most priorities - the outcomes which are perhaps the most relevant to this strategy are:

**Table 2: Solihull Partnership Thematic Groups – Selected outcomes**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Prosperous Communities	ensure the Solihull economy and its businesses can compete in the global economy
	conserve and enhance the local built and natural environment
	ensure that new development is well designed and enhances local distinctiveness
	protect and promote high quality public places and spaces
	minimise and adapt to climate change
	ensure strong transport connectivity and promote sustainable transport.
	everyone has the opportunity of a decent home and new housing meets the needs of the whole community
	increase participation and achievement in learning for people of all ages and ensure a well qualified workforce
	increase economic inclusion, particularly in North Solihull, addressing worklessness and low skills.
healthier communities	improve health and reduce health inequalities
	older people and people with disabilities
stronger communities	increasing social inclusion

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## Section 3 Principles of Co-Investment

The Local Investment Plan identifies the spatial areas and cross-cutting thematic priorities where future SMBC and HCA investment will be focused up to 2015 (Section 4). In the interim period, until specific projects and areas have been scoped, partners will also respond to opportunities which arise which have shorter lead-in periods. This will enable the LIP targets to be achieved and therefore meet strategic objectives for both SMBC and HCA.

### Joint Commissioning Model

HCA and SMBC will work together to jointly commission future projects/ areas for investment, reflecting SMBC's aspiration to become a commissioning Council to achieve key drivers.

- The need to meet the increasingly diverse needs of our customers and to ensure greater individualised services;
- The recognition that we need to work with our partners to commonly commission solutions to improving outcomes that no one partner can address individually; and
- The need to respond to cross cutting challenges, despite a diminishing resource base and still achieving value for money , in areas, for example, such as improving health, tackling unemployment and reducing crime.

There are three particular areas of focus over the next three years.

- Fully understand customer needs and usage patterns in relation to our services
- Plan for medium term changes – understand what our demographic service pressures will be and how we can adapt services to meet the needs of this changing population or local economy.
- Commission and decommission services, with promoting independence and co-production as key drivers according to the Common Commissioning Framework

HCA and SMBC will work collaboratively to develop a commissioning framework and suitable governance arrangements to implement the priorities contained within this Local Investment Plan.

The co-investment arrangements will bring to an end the joint commissioning agreement with selected housing associations which have been in place over the past five years. The new arrangements will involve the Council and HCA jointly commissioning developments rather than reacting to bids from associations. This may result in procurement from a wider range of suppliers than hitherto and may involve the HCA developer panel in some cases.

### Key Conditions for Co-Investment

The LIP establishes key conditions under which funding will be provided. Any potential scheme will have to demonstrate the following:

- Evidence of need;
- Strategic fit with the existing policy framework, including local strategies and the LIP;
- Potential for alternative or matched funding;
- Value for money;
- Deliverability – in terms of planning permission secured and site suitability for development;
- Revenue support guaranteed for completed projects where applicable, e.g. Supporting People;
- Satisfactory arrangements in place for procurement and delivery;

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- High quality design standards in line with HCA's and SMBC's minimum standards on design and sustainability;
  - Opportunities for local employment and training and apprenticeships, with additional support from other public agencies, including Job Centre Plus;
  - Support from statutory bodies for new developments;
  - Satisfactory arrangements for long-term stewardship of assets and neighbourhoods.
  - Help to achieve quality of place and the creation of sustainable communities through the alignment of complementary schemes and projects where relevant.

Co-investment will be based on a clear agreement on the roles and responsibilities for planning, investment and delivery of the HCA, the Council and other agencies such as Solihull Community Housing (SCH) and Registered Providers.

### Place Making Approach

The Council and the HCA wish to see progress toward Total Place (TP). The Council is working with CSW on a TP approach to children's services and both the Council and the North Solihull Partnership are cognisant of Birmingham City Council's TP strategy, one strand of which concerns the Outer East of the city. There are potential linkages to the Birmingham Solihull growth point and within this to the North Solihull regeneration programme, and these will be scoped and addressed.

The HCA are particularly concerned that all relevant agencies contribute assets such as finance, land and buildings to minimise the amount of money which is sought from the agency. Solihull wishes to pursue a Total Capital (as well as a Total Place) approach so is supportive of the HCA's view. In North Solihull there has been effective joining up of sources of public funding such as National Affordable Housing Programme, Building Schools for the Future and HCA direct investment.

The Council's approach to TP/TC will evolve through joint working with the HCA and other partners. In the meantime, and because bottom-up approaches may be as valuable as top-down, it is proposed to look closely at the most advanced of the new village centres in north Solihull (known as North Arran Way). The North Solihull Partnership will bring together all of the work which is being done or is planned in the area to see how close we are to achieving TP/TC in this locality, with attention then focused on filling the gaps.

There is a well established delivery board in the regeneration area in the North Solihull Partnership. As the Council's approach to TP/TC emerges, there will be agreement of what arrangements are required in other areas of the Borough (including a potential overarching Delivery Board).

The Council and the North Solihull Partnership are considering options for the long – term stewardship of areas which have received investment to ensure that improvements are sustained and that agencies deal quickly with disrepair to prevent subsequent decline. This will be a combined effort of the Council and partner agencies and will need to involve local people in a way which gives them a stake in the future of their area and ensures that they become engaged communities.

HCA and the Council will agree arrangements for developing public sector land possibly using the HCA Developer Panel.

The LIP will inform future co-investment decisions. The content of this LIP will be added to in future with an up to date schedule of development priorities and opportunities and prioritised infrastructure projects. The LIP will be flexible in responding to the availability of new products such as variants of intermediate tenure, market rent housing, and possible new development partners and investors into housing, as part of a balanced community.

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In addition to provision of funding, HCA support may be through non-financial interventions such as capacity building or design support such as ATLAS and the Land and Development Consultancy.

## Section 4 Targeting Investment on Need and Strategic Fit

The strategic context and primary objectives for the area have lead to the development of four spatial and 8 thematic priorities to take forward over the plan period (Table 2).

This plan sets out a number of spatial and thematic priorities, each based on established priorities within the Sustainable Communities Strategy or other approved or emerging assessments, strategies and plans. Amongst the most notable of these are the Local Development Framework, the Local Economic Assessment and the Local Transport Plan.

**Table 3: Spatial and thematic priorities**

Spatial			
North Solihull Regeneration	South Urban, including Shirley	Rural (affordable housing)	Solihull Town Centre

Thematic	
Places	People
growth – housing and economic	Support for communities
Regeneration	Support for people
improving housing	Affordable housing
Centres, local infrastructure and connectivity	Independent Living

### Spatial Priorities

The Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework will establish the key elements of the planning framework for Solihull, setting the vision for the future development of the Borough to 2026, including strategic housing allocations, and will facilitate the delivery of the Sustainable Communities Strategy.

The Core Strategy includes a housing trajectory to show the rate at which new housing will be delivered to meet the housing land provision target. This is the same trajectory that features in the Programme of Development and the Annual Monitoring Report.

Based on the trajectory, Appendix 3 provides a summary of overall housing capacity to meet the Emerging Core Strategy land provision target of 10,500 net additional dwellings (2006-26).

The four spatial priorities in this Plan are diverse in character, with different needs for investment and each offering different opportunities for delivery of thematic priorities.

**Table 4: Spatial Priorities**

- **North Solihull** is the prime spatial priority and is a recognised Impact Investment Location. It is the main focus for potential household growth which can deliver on all of the thematic priorities and which offers an outstanding Total Place / Total Capital opportunity and a strong sub-regional dimension given the links to the east Birmingham part of the growth point.

- The **urban south of Solihull** is quite different in character, need and opportunity. There are a number of potential development opportunities, particularly in the wider **Shirley** area, which could deliver affordable housing and improved supported housing whilst utilising small areas of redundant land, outdated housing and care accommodation and unsatisfactory areas of flatted accommodation. Shirley Centre offers scope for retail expansion and a range of housing
- The **rural area** offers opportunity for developments of affordable housing in existing settlements. The numbers are limited but these could still have a significant impact on the vitality of the places and on the ability of people to obtain an affordable home.
- **Solihull Town Centre** offers significant opportunities for retail and commercial growth linked to residential growth to take advantage of its vitality and transport links.

### North Solihull

In North Solihull, growth and housing market restructuring is an essential aspect of a long – term regeneration programme which is addressing significant and deep-seated economic and social problems, including:

- a restricted housing offer – too little choice and little in the way of housing pathways for people to move home within the area
- poor environments – many areas of poor layout and low quality public areas
- underserved markets – almost uniformly low value housing and low income households unable to support good quality shops and services
- poor multiple deprivation scores – with ten of the area's 25 Super Output areas ranked within the worst 10% of areas nationally, including one (Smith's Wood) in the worst 5%
- high levels of worklessness – with more than a quarter of the working age population claiming a workless benefit (Jobseekers' Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or Income Support)
- educational underachievement, low take-up of further education, low skills leading to poor labour market positions and low household incomes.

Major advantages for delivering sustainable growth in North Solihull include the area's advantageous location, which is six miles from Birmingham City Centre (closer to Eastside) and five miles from Solihull town centre. The southern part of Solihull has become a location of choice for businesses and households relocating from the South East but this has not yet spread to North Solihull, which is close to high quality sites (Birmingham Business Park etc).

North Solihull is within the region's primary economic growth pole encompassing Birmingham, Solihull, Coventry and Warwickshire. There is therefore significant scope for this area to be linked to the dynamic of the high – tech corridor and to achieve growth in local economic activity and local wealth.

North Solihull presents substantial spatial scope for growth and regeneration through:

- remodelling the built environment
- restructuring the housing market (improving quality and extending choice)
- creation of village centres with employment, commerce, social enterprise and community facilities
- creation of a new high quality mixed – use area

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## South Urban

It is imperative that all opportunities to provide affordable housing in the urban south of Solihull are taken. This is because the area has one of the least accessible housing markets in the West Midlands, with high house prices compared with other areas and a limited social and intermediate offer.

The area also offers opportunities for a limited remodelling of residential areas and for the modernisation of several housing and care schemes for older people. There is also potential for creating development packages from grouping a number of small sites on areas of underused or vacant land, a venture which Solihull Community Housing is keen to pursue.

Within the South Urban area a number of opportunities arise within and around Shirley, which is a mature suburb, well served by transport, retail and other infrastructure. There are opportunities to capitalise on its location and the Council has set up a partnership with a joint venture company, 'to remodel and expand the retail capacity of the Stratford Road whilst also providing an improved retail and residential offer.

There are a number of longer – term opportunities to improve the housing offer in the wider Shirley area through redevelopment. These include:

- Shirley Park estate. This area offers some possible scope for selective redevelopment. The Council housing in this area was built shortly after World War Two and is of non-traditional construction. Whilst not being an area of outstanding need for redevelopment there is scope for improvement which would secure significant benefits in affordability, design and layout and environmental sustainability. Because of the high uptake of Right to Buy over the years intervention in the area would be costly in terms of property purchase and compensation.
- Solihull Lodge estate. This is a smaller estate dating from the early 1960's with a central core of three blocks of 3-storey walk-up flats which are amongst the least attractive properties in the Council stock. Selective redevelopment could provide a small net increase in the number of homes but would significantly improve the housing offer in the locality. As with Shirley Park, this would require the purchase of a number of homes. Redevelopment would provide the means to reconfigure the local housing market and provide important benefits, including environmental sustainability.

In addition to these development possibilities further opportunities to remodel traditional provision for older people are being explored in other areas of Shirley. These currently provide around 71 homes mainly in flatted accommodation but offer scope to provide around 102 homes.

The Council and SCH recognise that these would be complex projects and welcome HCA support in scoping these potential interventions.

## Rural Area

In the past, opportunities to provide new homes for people with a local connection have been taken at Barston and Hampton-In-Arden in partnership with Warwickshire Housing Trust.

Through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, and other localised surveys, it has been established that there is an unmet need for affordable housing in several of the Borough's rural settlements. The Council will set out the policy position on rural exceptions sites through its Core Strategy development during 2011.

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An approved scheme in the Meriden area for 82 homes (33 of which will be affordable) will see the development of a Local Lettings Plan ahead of the delivery of affordable homes in 2012, so that some of the affordable homes go to people with a local connection to the Meriden area.

The Council attends and participates in the work of the Warwickshire Rural Housing Enabler Project Group to develop the best approaches in this area.

Any potential development sites will be identified by the LDF and, in common with urban sites, be added to this plan in an addendum in summer 2010.

### Solihull Town Centre

Solihull is one of the most attractive and vibrant centres in the West Midlands, has grown as a location of choice for business and as a shopping and recreational destination. There is scope to build on this in coming years in a way which maximises the economic potential of the centre without diminishing its character.

The Council commissioned GVA Grimley to carry out a town centre study published in 2009 and this identifies housing capacity for up to 1,270 new dwellings in four five-year phases. Because of the current economic climate it is now likely that only the first three town centre phases will be delivered within the LDF period to 2026. The first three phases of the Town Centre Study identify a total housing capacity of 1,065 units (240 in Phase One, 450 in Phase Two and 375 in Phase 3).

The Study was submitted in evidence to the RSS Phase II Review. The Panel concluded that the Council may be unduly pessimistic over the capacity for further town centre development and that there may be increased potential for town centre housing over the plan period. The indicative housing capacities may therefore need to be reviewed as town centre redevelopment progresses.

The study showed that there is clear scope for residential growth in mixed use developments. This was supported by the RSS panel.

As with Shirley, proposed improvements to the rail line to Birmingham will improve the accessibility of the centre.

### Longer Term Possibilities

SMBC and HCA will respond positively to opportunities which may come forward as a result of regionally significant developments such as the BIA runway extension, the NEC extension and casino and High Speed 2 (HS2). In doing so it will want to see that economic gain is balanced with environmental cost from the proposals themselves and from associated development pressures.

### **Thematic Priorities**

The thematic priorities derive from the Sustainable Communities Strategy and Council Plan which share the vision of a 'Solihull in 2018: where everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous'.

The objective of 'narrowing the gap of inequality' underpins all of the priorities in this plan. This reflects the clear commitment to improving outcomes for all people in Solihull. This means achieving faster rates of improvement to close the gap in outcomes between the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and the majority.

Solihull Partnership, lead by its Prosperous Communities group has developed a scorecard on "narrowing the gap" This provides a comprehensive evidence base to establish if

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measures have made an impact and this will assist in directing resources from across the wider Solihull Partnership, providing targeted support that will bring about accelerated change.

The Prosperous Communities Priorities Framework contains agreed priorities of organisations within the Solihull Partnership and these are reflected in the thematic priorities of this Plan.

Within this plan there are 'places' priorities and 'people' priorities, although of course they are often mutually reinforcing and overlapping.

#### 'Places' Priorities

The places priorities are about growth, regeneration and placemaking and reflect the desire to achieve a Total Place approach, first in North Solihull and later in other parts of the Borough.

#### Promoting Housing and Economic Growth

##### Housing Growth

Solihull's Programme of Development includes a housing trajectory based on the planned completions for each year to 2026 and is revised annually along with the Annual Monitoring Statement. The AMS shows that:

- Between 1<sup>st</sup> March 2006 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 some 2,113 homes have been provided
- a further 4,241 homes are planned to the end of 2016/17
- and a further 2,198 in 2017 to 2022
- and a further 3,076 in 2022 to 2027

The North Solihull regeneration area is the focus for growth with 62% of planned housing completions, the remainder spread over the Borough often on windfall sites.

Through the Local Development Framework process a long list of potential development sites have been proposed as part of Solihull's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). This identifies sites with potential for housing, their housing capacity and when they are likely to be developed.

The draft West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase II Review requires an annual average of 380 additional dwellings (2006-2026), however, the Emerging Core Strategy proposes that Solihull's housing land provision target be increased to 525.

The target has been met to date. Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010, 2,113 net additional dwellings had been provided (an annual average of 528).

New housing supply has been high in recent years through the development of a number of large strategic housing sites, high levels of apartment development on windfall housing sites and sites in the North Solihull Regeneration area. These sources of land supply will soon be exhausted and the completion of outstanding planning permissions has slowed because of the market downturn. In the short term, the priority for new housing development is within the North Solihull Regeneration area, but there is a planned programme of demolition to make way for development, so the rate of housing provision is likely to decrease.

##### Economic Growth

An over-arching priority is to realise the potential for growth. This will benefit not just the Borough, but the region as a whole, securing increased wealth and jobs.

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Within this, priorities include

- Increasing Solihull's attractiveness to inward investors as a location for knowledge intensive, high-value added activity, including in overseas markets
- Supporting the competitiveness and growth of businesses in the Borough through targeted support and workforce development to better meet business needs;
- Development of enterprise locally including development of enterprise education, increasing the supply of small business space and targeted support for new enterprise;

The implication of the downturn and analysis of vulnerable sectors means that Solihull needs to continue to ensure the competitiveness of its investment assets; to support local businesses to access new markets; to tackle unemployment, particularly in the north of the Borough and amongst young people; and to increase rates of new enterprise formation, survival and growth.

Solihull Council has led a series of Economic Summits of strategic partners to consider the impact of the economic downturn in Solihull and develop a response to help mitigate the effects. Following the first Summit, in October 2008, a Taskforce of local and regional Partners was established to develop and deliver an action plan to respond to local issues. The Taskforce's key aim is to identify and provide "rapid responses" to pressures and gaps in current service provision, supporting individuals, families and businesses in Solihull through the downturn and maximising their opportunities in the recovery.

There is increasing evidence that those areas that were performing best before the recession – areas such as Solihull – will be the first to emerge from the recession and to return to growth. Regional research has identified that Solihull is likely to be a key local area in leading the economic recovery of the region. Particular growth opportunities have been identified for Solihull in the automotive manufacturing, ICT, construction and building technologies, specialist business services and tourism and leisure sectors in Solihull, the latter closely linked to realisation of the NEC's development plans. Solihull's strategic economic assets (Birmingham Airport, the NEC, Jaguar Land Rover, Birmingham and Blythe Valley Business Parks and Solihull Town Centre) have the potential to continue to act as key drivers of future economic and employment growth in Solihull. There is a need therefore to ensure that this potential is realised in a sustainable way.

However, the Council and partner agencies also recognise the critical role played by high growth firms in driving new jobs creation. National research has highlighted that high growth firms accounted for 50% of new jobs growth between 2002 and 2008. Fostering high growth firm is therefore likely to be a key driver of future economic and employment growth.

There has been an increase in the proportion of small businesses in Solihull demonstrating employment growth, from 9.9% in 2002/03 to 12.4% in 2007/08. However, the average proportion of small businesses growing over this period was below national and regional average rates and for comparator areas. On average 11.1% of small businesses in Solihull demonstrated employment growth during this period compared to 12.6% across the West Midlands and 12.5% across England. This suggests that Solihull SMEs are not realising their potential for job creation and the need for targeted support for local SMEs to achieve growth, realising new market opportunities, including exporting opportunities.

New enterprise formation is an increasingly important driver of economic growth and employment. Recessions tend to act as drivers of innovation and enterprise, with new businesses ideas being generated and more people moving into self-employment. There is a need to reverse the declining trend in Solihull as regards resident engagement in self-employment – with the rate falling since 2004/05, with 7.2% of working age residents self-employed, compared to 9.3% across England and 8% across the West Midlands. Working

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with those people who have been or are being made redundant and supporting innovative and entrepreneurial individuals to set up successful businesses is essential if Solihull is to realise this potential for growth.

ONS data for new business births shows that levels of new business starts in Solihull have been significantly below the England average over the last decade (on average 9.9% fewer per year), although the level has been significantly above the West Midlands average (on average 5.1% more starts per year). Although business survival rates in Solihull exceed the England average, with 53.8% of businesses formed in 2003 surviving five years to 2008, compared to an England average of 46.4%. There is a need to increase levels of new enterprise formation, survival and growth in Solihull as key drivers of growth. There is evidence of greater potential for enterprise formation in Solihull, with both Business Link and Solihull's Enterprise for Success programme have reported increased numbers of people interested in setting up a business in 2009/10.

There is scope to promote and develop a greater culture of enterprise in Solihull, using the Enterprise for Success and Solihull for Success brand, positioning Solihull as the place for enterprise, packaging the available support to have a complete offer for potential entrepreneurs.

There is also a pressing need to ensure that the workforce has the skills that businesses need for growth. A recent local survey of 360 businesses identified that 14% of respondents felt that their workforce lacked the skills required to enable their business to grow. Technical and job specific skills were the most commonly identified as lacking. Furthermore, a significant proportion of respondents who had sought to recruit during the previous year had experienced difficulties, primarily due to a general shortage of candidates, although employability skills such as attitudinal and inter-personal skills were specifically identified. With a significant proportion of Solihull's working age population having low qualification levels, high rates of "worklessness" in a number of areas of the Borough and high rates of youth unemployment, there is a critical need to upskills the workforce to reflect the demands of the economy and business needs. This includes developing enterprise education and skills.

### Progressing Regeneration

As explained in the thematic priorities, the regeneration of North Solihull is a local, sub-regional and regional priority. In addition some locations in the South Urban area offer opportunities for redevelopment and housing market reprofiling though on a much smaller scale.

*Regenerating North Solihull* is a comprehensive 20 year programme to transform North Solihull; the top-level objectives of the programme are to:

- Change almost 40,000 people's lives for the better through retaining and supporting the existing communities and attracting economically active people into the area.
- Restructure the housing market with the majority of the 5,600 retained social housing homes improved through the Decent Homes programme, providing up to 8,000 new homes of mixed tenure (some 4,000 net) and changing the tenure mix to approx 60% private, 5% intermediate and 35% social rented (from current 55% private and 45% social rented).
- Develop a minimum of 10 new 'extended' primary schools to contribute to the wider regenerative outcomes for the area.
- Create up to five enhanced village centres and new town centre facilities at Chelmsley Wood

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- - To create high quality neighbourhoods, each with a distinctive sense of place.
  - To create healthy, safe communities where all have equality of access.
  - To increase prosperity through improved education, training, employment and transport.
  - To deliver sustainable development in order that the quality of life of present and future generations is protected and enhanced.

Homes are being provided on a range of redevelopment created from demolition of obsolete housing and reconfiguration of schools, road layouts and open space. The new housing will be better designed and better equipped to meet present day and future expectations, particularly on environmental sustainability.

To date three neighbourhood plans (North Arran Way, Craig Croft, Kingshurst and Babb's Mill) have been taken through design, consultation and are at various stages of delivery

As a partner on the North Solihull Regeneration Partnership, the HCA is fully cognisant of the aims of the project and the realities facing it. The HCA is playing a vital role in keeping the programme moving, albeit at a reduced pace, as the original private – finance led model which relies on reinvesting added land value has not been able to operate effectively in the recent market conditions.

A revised Spatial Strategy for North Solihull has been developed which focuses on grouping regeneration activity around large-scale investments such as new schools and village centres – in the form of nine Strategic Investment Clusters. A plan for these clusters indicates broad areas within which residential, mixed-use and non-residential development could take place and the key foci within each area. The focus for each cluster has started to be identified and includes Community Hubs (shops and community facilities), Employment areas, Education & Training facilities, Healthcare facilities, Strategic Transport routes and Open Space.

Housing activity continues to underpin the regeneration of North Solihull and although the level of change will vary from area to area, housing development forms an integral part of the spatial clusters and supports the other non-residential investments.

Specific regeneration proposals for each Cluster will be brought forward through a series of Spatial Masterplans developed in consultation with the local community and key stakeholders. These will identify the key areas of change within a cluster area, including areas for demolition, new housing, street networks, new facilities and improved open space. The Spatial Masterplans will also identify the type of buildings that will be built in the area.

The initial clusters, includes a high proportion of open space which is currently in the Green Belt, the latter also including part of Kingfisher Country Park. Nevertheless this area presents an unrivalled opportunity to provide new housing in a new setting featuring high quality, innovative design in an improved landscape setting providing a greater sense of place, and will be an attractor of people into the area which will help fulfil one of the longer term objectives.

It has always been acknowledged that the planned housing growth in North Solihull must be accompanied by improvements in employment opportunities and local infrastructure including roads, schools, community facilities and environmental improvements so that the area becomes and remains more sustainable.

Whilst it is close to Birmingham Airport, Birmingham International station and the motorway network North Solihull is not a well connected place. If it is to achieve its potential as a sustainable community there will need to be significant improvements in connectivity.

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Accessibility needs to be improved to employment and local services and facilities, by supporting improved local public transport links and ensuring that new business land and other development is brought forward in appropriate sustainable locations

As the regeneration area abuts the Birmingham part of the growth area opportunities will be sought for joint planning developments where there are common spatial interests including transportation and making the most of the River Cole as a feature

Progress on Regenerating North Solihull is reliant on leveraging-in sufficient public funding, and the HCA has made essential investments in these projects through the National Affordable Housing Programme and significant other funding (£9.6m from the Regeneration and Property budget in 2009/10). The need for this will continue regardless of any future upturn in land values, although the future upturn will hopefully allow the innovative funding model on which the programme was initially based to become effective and this will, to some extent, reduce the reliance on public funding and offer HCA some return on its investment.

There is no prospect for the regeneration programme to return to being private – finance led in the short to medium term. This is because land values are not sufficiently high to allow the innovative model on which this was predicated to function effectively. Subject to the speed and extent of the recovery, there may be scope for the funding model to come back into play in the next control period, 2015-20.

A business plan has been approved together with a business plan to the end of 2014/15.

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## Improving the quality of the housing stock

A sizeable proportion of the Borough's housing stock falls short of acceptable standards in terms of fitness, repair and suitability. Substantial investment will be needed in the Council stock beyond the attainment of the Decent Homes standard in 2012. In the private sector there are problems arising from under-investment in repair, often due to the inability of older person households to afford the work required

Many homes in Solihull do not reach present day standards of energy efficiency and this leads to a waste of energy resources. Where the occupant is on a low income it often results in fuel poverty. Increased investment in homes is required to meet the Council's efficiency targets and the Government's target for the eradication of fuel poverty

All of the homes owned by the Council and in the management of Solihull Community Housing (SCH) will be at or above the Decent Homes standard at the end of 2011/12, apart from refusals, which will be picked up on change of tenancies. The priority for the Council's stock is therefore completing the Decent Homes programme and putting in place an effective post – 2012 investment programme.

Complementary investment of £12m has been carried out to homes providing renewal of externals including doors, windows and fascias. This was funded by prudential borrowing on a Spend to Save basis (producing a reduction in future maintenance costs). This has put the stock in a condition which is substantially above that required by the Decent Homes standard.

Additional investment of £578m is estimated to be required in the period to 2039/40 to maintain homes at the present standard and to meet rising tenant expectations. This will include extensive investment in the 37 retained multi-storey blocks. The review of the North Solihull Strategic Framework identified the need to look specifically at the future of tower blocks. SCH is leading the way on this by looking at innovative ways to improve blocks such as overcladding and the introduction of biomass heating systems that will increase the energy efficiency of the blocks and make them more affordable to heat.

Housing association property is in a good state of repair with only 7 properties (0.3% of the total) not reaching the Decent Homes Standard at 31 March 2010.

Whilst Solihull's private sector stock is generally of reasonable quality and repair, the most recent private sector stock condition survey showed that around 10% of homes were unfit or in serious disrepair. There is a concern about increasing chronic disrepair and the adverse externalities that arise from this together with the effects on the often vulnerable occupiers.

On the basis of this the Council carried out an area improvement programme in three wards in the South Urban area and followed this in 2010/11 with a second area – based private housing initiative, seeking to improve up to 500 homes in the Cranmore area of Shirley.

There will be a continuing effort to assist home owners and private landlords to invest in their homes to avoid property falling into disrepair and obsolescence.

The Council introduced loans – based assistance in place of renovation grants after joining the West Midlands Kickstart Partnership in 2010/11. However, given the imminent demise of the partnership following withdrawal of regional funding allocations, the Council must self – finance loans from a reliable source or return to a restricted grants regime.

In the HCA 2011-15 funding round the Council invited interest from Registered Providers in being a partner on encouraging and assisting owners of homes which are empty to bring them back into residential use, particularly those which have been empty for six months or more.

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### Promoting Environmental Sustainability

A major part of improving housing will be helping and encouraging owners and landlords (including SCH and housing associations) to improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock and particularly where this can reduce the number of people in fuel poverty:

The Council is working with SCH to identify and take opportunities for retrofitting for energy efficiency of the Council's housing stock. At the commencement of SCH's Decent Homes programme the overall SAP for homes in their management was 46. By the end of the programme in 2012 this is expected to have increased to 67. Appendix 4 details current activity on home energy and affordable warmth

The regeneration of North Solihull, which will involve the construction of up to 8,000 new homes, provides an exceptional opportunity to raise the level of environmental efficiency. A Design Code has been adopted for all new housing developments in the regeneration area. This requires all new homes to be at least at level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and a statement on the use of renewable sources to accompany all planning applications for new housing developments.

The work on improving the sustainability of housing is part of a wider Climate Change Strategy and a Sustainability Action Plan which also cover the Council's buildings and schools. In addition SCH have a climate change strategy for housing.

The Council has approved a Carbon Management Plan and Climate Change Strategy and has signed up to a challenging target to reduce the Council's carbon emissions by one third by 2013.

### Developing Centres and Local Infrastructure and improving Connectivity

The priority on centres and providing local infrastructure are central to the Regenerating North Solihull project and, as discussed above, those at Shirley and Solihull Town Centre. In addition there is investment in schools, healthcare and other infrastructure in North Solihull and elsewhere in the Borough.

Whilst Solihull is generally a well – connected place by air, rail and road, some of the connections – such as to Birmingham Business Park and the NEC/Birmingham Airport – are often not good enough, particularly for people working non-standard hours. Connections between north Solihull and Solihull town centre are also less well developed. There are much lower levels of car ownership in North Solihull and therefore a greater reliance on public transport access to jobs and services.

The Council has taken a proactive approach to remedying this, including the introduction of bus services via Centro to link communities with the NEC and to provide tailored transport solutions to workers through the Workwise scheme.

The £12.5m Airport and NEC Integrated Transport Access (ANITA) project will provide significantly improved public transport between the north Solihull regeneration area and jobs at the NEC, the airport and nearby areas. This will lead to a review of bus services in north Solihull following on from a review of routes in the south of the Borough last year. ANITA is major scheme within the Local Transport Plan.

The proposed A45 Corridor Improvement Scheme aims to ease actual and potential road capacity problems through improvements to strategic intersections. This is aimed at improving current and anticipated increasing traffic flows as a result of the growth of economic activity along the corridor and in preparation for the possible Metro route and the potential impact of HS2.

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The A45 scheme will also acknowledge potential demand from household growth (including a planned 4000 net increase in homes in the north Solihull regeneration area) as well as potential growth activity in outer East Birmingham.

The scheme also recognises the potential regenerative benefits for communities where it is able to link to transport connections into neighbouring communities such as North Solihull and parts of Solihull's Urban South, thereby improving connectivity of those communities to centres and employment locations.

The Council has started preparatory work on a new Local Transport Plan for the West Midlands, LTP3. Key priorities will be the economy, congestion, accessibility and social inclusion, air quality and climate change.

### **'People' Priorities**

Support for communities is an essential part of placemaking and regeneration.

The mission to narrow the gap of inequality, referred to above, derives from the high degree of polarity between affluent areas of the Borough (mainly in the south urban and rural areas) and the less affluent or deprived areas (mainly in the north Solihull regeneration but also in pockets elsewhere in the Borough).

The inequality manifests itself in sharply differing outcomes for people, for example, in respect of health, educational attainment and employment opportunities. Therefore, an underpinning driver in all that the Council do is to seek to narrow the gap.

This means that the spatial priorities for development (and redevelopment) to deliver growth and better housing and infrastructure must be accompanied by measures to develop and maintain sustainable communities.

The priorities therefore concern support to communities to increase social capital and promote cohesion and to individuals who are vulnerable socially or economically.

The Plan is also cognisant of the demographics of Solihull, particularly the growing number and proportion of older people. A specific key driver is the increasing number of people aged over 85.

The Council has developed an Independent Living and Extra Care Housing Strategy which sets out a vision for the development of accommodation and housing related support services for vulnerable people within Solihull. This builds on the completed 'backcasting' exercise to more accurately predict future demands for services, the optimum design of services and the resources required, and sets out the need for additional supported housing investment. The strategy considers the housing needs of older people and other vulnerable groups (people with learning disabilities, people with physical and sensory disabilities and people with mental health needs).

### **Support for Communities**

With the new 'duty to involve', the Council, together with its partners, is reviewing its current arrangements for community engagement and consultation and is seeking more effective ways in which to engage customers.

Ensuring people have a greater 'voice' and 'choice' will help re-energise democracy and enhance local accountability and responsibility for services. In further developing the trust of our customers the Council must, working with its partners, develop a feeling of collective social responsibility and promote community cohesion.

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A key challenge is to create networks, communication, trust and a sense of collective responsibility, which enable people to work together for mutual benefit. An example of this is provided by the network of environment champions who work with the Council to monitor and improve the quality of the local environment.

Benefits flowing from this will include reducing the demand communities place on services by litter dropping, graffiti, anti-social behaviour and so on.

The Neighbourhoods Project and work with the Third Sector will be key developments.

The Neighbourhoods Project is about exploring more effective approaches to community involvement and engagement be they communities of place or of interest. It has three main objectives:

- To further improve community engagement;
- To further integrate services at a locality level; and
- To promote democratic engagement by the local community.

There is also a developing relationship with the third sector as evidenced by the publication of *'Working Together, Strengthening Communities – The Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy for Solihull 2007-2012'* and *'The Compact Plus for Solihull 2008-2013 – An Agreement to improve relations between the Solihull Partnership and third sector'*.

The Council and its partners are developing a Community Cohesion Strategy and have designated targets relating to cohesion in the Local Area Agreement, such as NI 1, 'measuring the extent to which people get on well together'.

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## Education

Educationally, children and young people in Solihull achieve well, but there is a need to ensure that support, challenge and intervention is as sharply targeted as possible to ensure achievement is raised further and gaps are closed. The challenge is to ensure all children achieve their potential and for schools, and the Borough as a whole, to add value at a better rate than that of our best performing neighbours.

A key priority for the Council and its partners is to narrow the gap in attainment and achievement.

The Asset Management Plan for Solihull's schools, which is currently under review, provides a clear rationale to effectively prioritise individual programmes and projects to address issues of condition, sufficiency and suitability of school premises to improve educational outcomes.

The Education and Children's Services Capital Programme, reviewed bi annually by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, deploys the external grant and corporate borrowing approvals that underpins the Council's aims and objectives and discharges its obligations.

The focus for improvement to the Primary estate is the Primary Capital Programme (PCP). Captured in the Primary Strategy for Change the Council is working towards meeting DCSF (Department for Children Schools and Families) targets that 5% of the worst condition schools are to be rebuilt or taken out of commission, and at least 50% are to be rebuilt, refurbished or remodelled to bring them up to modern day standards. The initial focus of this programme was North Solihull with £6.5 million of exceptional DCSF capital funding for 2008-2009 used to pump-prime the first three primary school rebuilds within the North Solihull Primary Regeneration Programme.

DCSF has since given their approval to a further £8.378 million of capital investment for the period 2009-11, focused upon the Borough's southern estate. Subject to the next Comprehensive Spending Review, the DCSF still maintains that Local Authorities should plan on the assumption that for future years, the Primary Capital Programme will be funded at 2009-10 levels that is £3 million per annum for Solihull. The strategy requires some £35m in total to be spent across the primary estate.

The initial priority of building 10 new primary schools in the Regeneration Area is to be supported by the Partnership's Business Plan requiring additional investment to that already committed of circa £45m.

The first phase of development including Kingshurst and Smiths Wood Primary (formerly Kingfisher) has been completed. The second phase is well underway with St Anne's due for completion in October 2010. A Design Brief has been prepared for Bishop Wilson (the second school in Phase 2) and is presently the subject of consultation.

In respect of Bishop Wilson the Council has secured a co-location grant of £2m and in allocating this, Partnerships for Schools (PfS) are looking for the Council and the Partnership to deliver a number of key deliverables around the co-location of Children's and Health services within the school development as part of the redevelopment of Craig Croft Village Centre.

The delivery of Phases 3 and 4 will have to be evaluated by the NSP and Council within the next 12 months as preparations for the new Capital Programme for 2011/12 onwards are considered.

In parallel to the deployment of PCP, £2.611 million of investment is being sourced from DCSF modernisation capital for primary schools outside the Regeneration Area.

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Improvements at over twenty schools either complete or nearing practical completion in time for the September 2010 intake.

The last 6 months has seen the completion of the construction stage of the Council's BSF Phase 1 Programme following the handover of the main block at Smiths Wood in August 2009. Together with Lanchester, Park Hall and Archbishop Grimshaw planned capital investment of £83.5 million has been completed in the Regeneration area.

The construction programme has effectively drawn to a close so the commencement of the PFI Operations Phase (the provision of Facilities Management for 25 years on the Lanchester, Park Hall and Smiths Wood campuses) is now the principal focus for the BSF Project. The cost of the FM operation, in a full year, will be approximately £1.5 million

The Council has submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) to PfS to secure a second phase of BSF funding to transform the southern estate. The EOI highlight a need for £110m investment in 13 secondary campuses. The Council's place in the National Programme has been identified but as yet there has been no request to develop our strategy further.

During the course of the current Programme a £4 million budget was approved in 2007 for a further phase of modernization for the southern area secondary schools covering the period 2008-2011. The budget is based on each school receiving £0.5 million towards their highest priorities with an expectation that the schools also make a financial contribution.

#### Promoting the Provision of Affordable Housing

Solihull has one of the most severe affordability problems in the West Midlands. Although house prices have reduced due to the economic downturn, they are still high compared to the remainder of the region. The withdrawal of mortgage products from the market has made accessibility even more difficult for many people.

Market difficulties include:

- a shortage of homes to buy and to rent at prices which are affordable to households with average incomes and below. The affordability problem is particularly acute in the south and east of the Borough
- patterns of supply and price of housing in Solihull are leading to constraints on labour and social mobility. Price differentials make it very difficult to move from north Solihull to other parts of the Borough and present barriers for households wishing to move within the urban and rural areas south of the A45
- a lack of 'balance' in local housing markets leads to a lack of effective housing choice for many households. Acute affordability problems in the south and east of the Borough are counterbalanced by a lack of available opportunities for 'trading up' in parts of North Solihull. There are few 'pathways of housing choice' allowing for people to move as their circumstances change

The squeeze on access to home ownership has contributed to a significant increase in demand for homes to rent on the private market and through social landlords. The number of households on the Councils housing register has increased by 115% since April 2008 and stood at 16,334 cases at 31 December 2010.

The 2009 Strategic Housing Market Assessment found that:

- of the 1,544 households predicted to form between 2006 and 2011, over 70% will be unable to afford in the open market.

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- there is a backlog of need for 3,777 households in the Borough, as well as net newly arising need of 427 households per year (based on gross newly arising housing need of 1,344 households less a supply of 917 re-lets each year)
  - there is a need for 1,342 additional affordable homes per year over the 5 year period 2009-2014. Of these 81% are required to be for social rent and 19% for intermediate housing (such as shared ownership or intermediate rent). The study also shows that 69% of the affordable dwellings should be houses, to accommodate families.

Priorities are providing more affordable housing in the urban south and rural east to improve access to the housing market for low and medium income households and widening choice in the North Solihull regeneration area by providing more housing for sale and for intermediate tenure as future market conditions allow.

A sizeable proportion of new homes will be 'affordable' as defined in Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Council currently has a target of 40% affordable on qualifying sites (those generally above 15 dwellings). Affordable housing policy is likely to be revised through the Core Strategy.

The Council is required to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers through the provision of permanent and transit pitches. The draft regional policy statement for gypsies and travellers is recommending that Solihull should provide a further 28 pitches by 2017 and an indicative figure of 22 pitches in the next 10 years after 2017. In 2011 the Council will be asked to approve criteria for designation of gypsy and traveller sites as part of the LDF process.

### Support for People

#### Extending Training and Employment Opportunities

Solihull has seen relatively low unemployment compared to the regional and national average although the recession has caused it to rise to just above the national level. Unemployment in parts of north Solihull is typically double the Borough average at over 9%, with male unemployment even higher.

In response to the economic downturn, the Council is leading on the 'Weather the Storm' package of advice and practical assistance for people and businesses.

The Council is involved in a number of specific measures to support employment and tackle worklessness in the Borough:

- City Region Future Jobs Fund to deliver job opportunities to young people aged 18-24 who have been claiming Jobseekers allowance for just under 12 months or for long term unemployed people who live in unemployment hotspots including the North Solihull wards. The Council is managing 20 opportunities in 2010/11.
- The Council has secured £1.2 million from AWM and ERDF to support a programme of interventions over the next five years, addressing the growing problem of worklessness in North Solihull. Projects will deal with specific barriers to employment, linking individuals and families particularly from hard to reach groups, to relevant employment support and job opportunities and assisting businesses in recruiting adequately skilled and experienced individuals.
- The Council is also developing its approach to tackling worklessness as an employer, procurer and service deliverer and is a lead for the European Social Fund (ESF) Public, Health and Social Care Hub employer engagement project.

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There is particular concern on young people not in education or employment (NEETs) and there is a partnership strategy to focus assistance on this group. This includes tracking individuals who are at risk and offering personalised support and guidance. This is effective early intervention to re-engage young people, to ensure they have the life skills and knowledge to access education, training or employment and can make informed choices; and to enable them to overcome barriers to participation and take up flexible learning opportunities.

Analysis of the NEET Group has indicated that many young people are seeking employment rather than education or training. Many of these young people have completed their education/training to NVQ Level 2 sometimes NVQ Level 3, and employment is the next progression.

Partner agencies within the Solihull partnership are supporting the Council in providing work opportunities. For example Solihull Community Housing have invested in training for local people since the inception of the Decent Homes programme and are currently supporting a substantial number of young people through the Future Jobs Fund.

### Improving Health and reducing health inequalities

The majority of Solihull residents often enjoy better health and live longer than people elsewhere. However, there are marked health inequalities between different areas of the Borough.

Perhaps the greatest concern is the gap in life expectancy of ten years between the 'best' and 'worst' wards. Reducing these health inequalities is a key priority for the Solihull Partnership and embodied in the '*Strategic Framework for Reducing Health Inequalities in Solihull 2005-2010*' which focuses on tackling the underlying determinants of ill health (including for example, poor housing and fuel poverty)

The five Healthier Communities priorities in Solihull's Sustainable Community Strategy are to:

1. Reduce health inequalities.
2. Improve people's emotional well-being and support people with mental health needs.
3. Increase the proportion of people making healthy lifestyle choices, particularly on diet, exercise, smoking and alcohol.
4. Enable older people and those with disabilities to live with dignity and independence.
5. Support carers.

The Council is clearly focused on a range of objectives to reduce inequality and close the gap in health status and life expectancy of people between the best and worst areas. It also sets out to transform the way people are supported to promote a personalised approach which offers individuals greater choice and control; and develop comprehensive, high quality, integrated care and support services in the community to enable more people to be cared for at or closer to home.

### Promoting Independent Living

Many residents have problems with their home as a result of age, disability or long term limiting illness. This includes mobility difficulties and inability to undertake works to keep their homes in satisfactory condition. In some cases the changing needs of the occupant mean that their current home is so unsuitable that moving is the only feasible option. There is a lack of accessible alternatives to residential care.

The Council is committed to enabling older, disabled and other vulnerable people to continue to live in their own home and to return some people currently in institutional settings to independent living.

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'Putting People First' is one of Solihull's major projects which aims to transform and personalise care and support. This will require a shift of investment focus to helping people to stay well, living with their families and remaining active in the economic and social life of local communities.

This includes establishing provision to ensure more people are supported to live in their own home and retain independence. Increasing housing options for people with learning disabilities is imperative to securing personalised key outcomes. Personalisation aims to enable more people with learning disabilities to commission their own services to live independently and have real choice about the way they live their lives.

Key actions include:

- Local authority care managers to have an increased focus on facilitating 'Supporting Living' models with a reduction on the reliance on more traditional residential models. This includes more home ownership and assured tenancy housing options with care and support delivered as part of a package.
- Local authorities to have an appropriate housing strategy reflecting local population housing needs, including those of people with learning disabilities.
- Every local area to have a multi-agency employment strategy, linked to Public Service Agreement 16.

The policy driver for this will become even stronger as the joint Backcasting exercise considers how services will need to change in order to meet the higher future demand which will derive from the Borough's demographic and the personalisation of service responses.

To support the Putting People First (transforming adult social care) agenda the Council has developed an Independent Living and Extra Care Housing Strategy (ILEX)..

The main aims of the strategy are to:

- Develop services to enable people to continue living in their own homes wherever possible and desirable.
- Widen the choice and increase the availability of good quality alternative housing (with support where required) for those who need or wish to move.
- Encourage the provision of appropriate accommodation, self-contained or otherwise, for vulnerable people.

This will require a significant policy response, for example in the design of housing and the demand for home adaptations and other services which enable people to live independently

One of the main objectives of the strategy is to provide viable alternatives to people who might otherwise enter residential care and to provide alternatives for people already in care.

The strategy also integrates the help that people can get to stay in their own homes, from small repairs and gardening through to major adaptations. To ensure that this is done effectively the Council, Care Trust and Solihull Community Housing pooled their functions and resources to create a Home Improvement Agency (*Solihull Independent Living*) from April 2010.

There will be a continuing need to provide suitable accommodation for vulnerable people of all age groups including people with Learning disabilities, physical and sensory impairments, and mental health conditions.

The need to continue to provide suitable accommodation for people with learning disabilities has also been highlighted as a priority. Despite this being the best served client group in terms of new housing (95 additional units 2005-10), Solihull has missed its target to have 50% of adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation by 2010.

Settled accommodation includes purpose built and standalone supported housing schemes, but for both client groups it is also important to access both existing housing and units in new build developments. Solihull Council and HCA will work together to ensure that more settled accommodation is made available for these two client groups.

While there has been no overall appraisal of stock condition, it is accepted that a number of current supported housing schemes are currently in inadequate and inappropriate accommodation. In some cases relocation is required; in others refurbishment (including a reduction of shared facilities) may be sufficient.

Investment should therefore be targeted at those client groups where:

- there remains an ongoing need for accommodation based services
- there is an understanding of the stock condition across providers and schemes

and at schemes where the provider has demonstrated:

- clear application of an asset management strategy across their supported housing stock
- that a range of investment options have been evaluated

Table 5 below summarises these new affordable development needs.

**Table 5: Summary of Supported Housing Needs**

Client group	Accommodation and Support Requirements
People with learning disability aged 18 - 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing needs analysis of people with learning disabilities living in Solihull found that 136 people with learning disabilities will require a move to accommodation with domiciliary care / support over the next 5 years. 61 of these people will need to move within the next 12 – 18 months and 75 will need to move over the next 2 - 5 years.</li> <li>• With just over half of the 136 people (54%) requiring shared accommodation (e.g. 3 or 4 bed houses) the overall requirement is for 94 units of accommodation over the next 5 years. This may be met from new or existing housing.</li> <li>• Over half of the new units required (56 or 60%) will need to be specialised or adapted homes to meet the needs of those people who also have physical disabilities</li> <li>• Given the overall economic position of the client group the expectation is that the vast majority of people will need 'affordable' rented housing, though the ability to rent at higher levels, part own or buy will be investigated in all cases</li> </ul>
People with mental health needs aged 18 – 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The overall priority is to increase access to mainstream accommodation with appropriate support for people with mental health needs rather than to provide significantly higher numbers of specialist units of accommodation</li> <li>• The re-provision of Ipswich Walk which currently provides 16 units of registered care for people aged 18 – 65 with mental health problems as a new build scheme in an alternative location with 20 units of mixed tenure accommodation (from registered care through to supported living) plus community facilities and outreach.</li> <li>• For adults and older adults with mental health problems (excluding dementia) there is a need for additional units of supported accommodation over the next 3 years for people who are currently in inpatient rehabilitation services but would be able to move out if appropriate provision were available. It is estimated that there is a need for an additional 5 units of supported accommodation per annum. Part of the requirement would be met through the re-provision of Ipswich Walk leaving a requirement for a further 10 units of supported accommodation over the next 3 years.</li> <li>• In addition there is a need for appropriate move-on accommodation to enable those who are ready for independent living to move out of supported places freeing them up for continued referrals from inpatient rehabilitation services. This would need to be found from existing accommodation / re-lets.</li> </ul>
Older people (including frail elderly, older people with dementia, older people with mental health needs, older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The strategy identifies 2 main priorities for meeting the housing needs of older people:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To assist people to remain in their existing homes</li> <li>ii. To provide alternative accommodation for those who wish to move or who cannot remain in their current home.</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p>This will require the remodelling of existing services and developing new housing services where required (the provision of more appropriate accommodation will focus on extra care housing for a range of needs and private retirement housing). Some opportunities exist:</p>

Client group	Accommodation and Support Requirements
people with learning disabilities & older people with physical disabilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning permission has been approved to provide 32 units of extra care accommodation at Hampton Lane, South Solihull. The suggested tenure mix is 28 affordable units and 4 for open market sale although this is yet to be confirmed.</li> <li>• A Housing with Care Scheme may be provided as part of North Solihull Regeneration Project (North Arran Way Village Centre). The priority will be to provide an estimated 50 units of mixed tenure accommodation to cater for older adults with differing levels of need (to include an estimated 6 – 8 units for people with learning disabilities and 5 – 6 units for people with physical disabilities as well as some provision for people with dementia and the option for couples to stay together).</li> <li>• Private developer (Kelpoint Ltd) has planning permission for a 56-bed registered care home on land at Cooks Lane &amp; Tower Croft, North Solihull. The Council and Care Trust will be working with Kelpoint Ltd to assess how this might meet the needs and priorities identified in the strategy.</li> <li>• There is a need for additional provision in the South of the Borough and the priority for this area would be a 'retirement village' which would take into account the needs of both self funders and those needing sub-market housing (providing a mix of affordable housing, shared ownership and owner occupied).</li> </ul>
People with physical / sensory disability aged 18 – 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information gathered from people with physical and sensory disabilities about their accommodation needs and aspirations concluded that there was a need for more variety and choice in terms of the type of accommodation available, with a particular need for transitional supported accommodation, adapted properties and affordable one and two bed provision.</li> </ul>

## How delivering spatial priorities helps deliver thematic priorities

Each of the spatial priorities presents opportunities to deliver the thematic objectives as shown in table 6 below.

**Table 6: Spatial & Thematic Priorities**

	Delivery	Themes	HCA objectives	Delivery Agents	Funding (committed and potential)
<b>North Solihull</b>	immediate and longer term (to 2025)	ALL	ALL	NSRP	ARP, PSLI, KS, ERDF, GF, RIF, DH, P&R, PGF, PB
<b>South Urban / Shirley</b>	medium term, post LDF	G,R,P,Sus, IL, Con, AH, Emp	ALL	HoS, SCH, RP	ARP, GF, S106, Cnl, PB
<b>Solihull TC</b>	longer term	G, P, Sus, IL, Con, Aff, Emp,	G, A, S	To be determined	ARP, S106
<b>Rural</b>	medium term, post LDF	G, P, Sus, IL, Aff	G, A, S	Various HCA Delivery Partners	ARP, S106, Cnl, PB

### Key

#### HCA Strategic Objectives

G	growth
A	affordability
R	renewal
S	sustainability

#### Themes

G	growth
R	regeneration
P	place-making
C	centres
Con	connectivity
Sus	sustainability
CGI	closing the gap of inequality
SC	social capital
IL	independent living
Aff	affordable housing
Emp	employment
SfP	support for people

#### Delivery

NSRP	North Solihull Regeneration Partnership
HoS	Heart of Shirley
SCH	Solihull Community Housing
RP	Registered Providers

#### Funding (Existing programmes)

ARP	Affordable Rent Programme (HCA)
PSLI	Public Sector Land Initiative (HCA)
KS	Kickstart (HCA)
ERDF	Sustainable Urban Redevelopment (AWM)
GF	Growth Fund (HCA)
RIF	Regional Infrastructure Fund (AWM)
DH	Decent Homes (HCA)
P&R	Property and Regeneration (HCA)
PGF	Property Gap Funding (AWM)
PB	Prudential Borrowing
S106	Section 106 (planning)
Cnl	Council Enabling Budget

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## **Section 5 Governance Structure/ Delivery Arrangements**

### **Solihull Partnership**

The Solihull Partnership is the Local Strategic Partnership which is responsible for improving outcomes for all people in Solihull.

The Partnership has been created by the public, private and voluntary sector organisations in Solihull that commission and deliver services for the people of Solihull to find solutions where there is a shared concern and responsibility.

The Partnership Governing Board consists of representatives of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, West Midlands Police, Learning and Skills Council, West Midlands Fire Service, Probation West Midlands, Advantage West Midlands, Sustain (representing the Voluntary & Community Sector), Solihull Chamber of Commerce (representing the Business Sector), and a representative of the Higher Education Sector.

Solihull Council has two seats at the Governing Board to ensure both political and officer representation. All other members have a single seat. Government Office for the West Midlands is a non-executive member of the Board.

The partner organisations remain accountable for commissioning services to meet the needs of the people of Solihull.

The Solihull Partnership Assembly is the 'full partnership' of people who have a stake in achieving the vision for Solihull set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy'. The Assembly is open to all and actively develops and challenges the direction and priorities of the Solihull Partnership.

The Partnership mission:

- To produce and implement a Community Strategy to improve outcomes for all people in Solihull
- To lead commissioning against the Community Strategy where a multiagency approach will be more effective than single agency
- To inform and involve the public and other stakeholders at every stage of Partnership business, and develop shared and inclusive responsibility in delivering the Community Strategy;
- To manage performance against the Community Strategy, providing support and challenge.

The Solihull Partnership has five Strategic Groups which deliver thematic elements of the Sustainable Communities Strategy on behalf of the Governing Board. These groups reflect the Partnership priorities for change and are:

- Prosperous Communities
- Safer Communities
- Stronger Communities
- Healthier Communities
- Children and Young People

A number of partnership groups sit underneath the Strategic Groups. For example the Prosperous Communities Group is informed by partnership groups on economic growth, training employment and skills, housing, transport environment and sustainable development.

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The lead thematic group as regards the LIP will be Prosperous Communities but the plan is also very relevant to Healthier Communities in independent living and in various ways to the other thematic groups.

### **Solihull MBC**

The Local Investment Plan is within the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration. The Cabinet Member has approved the Plan and in doing so has taken into account the views of the Economic Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Board which received a joint presentation of officers from the Council and HCA.

### **Engagement of key stakeholders**

The LIP expresses the shared priorities of the Solihull Partnership as set out in the Sustainable Communities Strategy and Solihull's Local Area Agreement.

A presentation on the LIP was made to the Prosperous Communities Group of the Solihull Partnership and the Healthier Communities Board were consulted on the Independent Living and Extra Care Housing strategy, which is key to the LIP.

Partner agencies, notably SCH and the North Solihull Partnership were consulted in the development of the LIP

The cross-authority Growth Point Executive Board considered the plans for Birmingham and Solihull and agreed to follow up any scope for cross-boundary planning and project development arising from the plans.

Further consultation on the development of the LIP is being conducted primarily through the consultation on its key components such as the LDF but also directly with stakeholders where required and as agreed with HCA.

## Section 6 Monitoring and Review

The HCA and the Council will jointly agree when the plan will be reviewed. This will be at least annually and sooner if significant new evidence or policy drivers become available. In April 2012 it is expected that the LDF will be approved and a formal review of the LIP will then occur. The approval of the LDF will also allow the identification of further potential development sites.

From the Council perspective, monitoring and reporting progress will be primarily through the arrangements which are already in place for the main components of the plan, including the Annual Monitoring Report, which records housing growth through new construction, and the North Solihull Regeneration progress reports to the Partnership Board (on which HCA is represented)

Additionally it is proposed to report on the further development of the LIP to the portfolio holder and scrutiny board for economic development and regeneration together with the prosperous communities group of the Solihull Partnership.

### **Resourcing the Delivery of the LIP**

The LIP will be delivered through a wide range of partners' resources.

The funding through **National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP)** and the outputs achieved are set out in table 7 below

**Table 7: HCA investment in Solihull through NAHP 2008 – December 2010**

<b>Low Cost Home Ownership</b>	<b>Rent</b>	<b>Total</b>
138 units (£3,670,000)	443 units (£25,770,000)	581 units (£29,440,000)

**Table 8: Milestones**

<b>Key Milestones</b>	<b>Date for Completion</b>
Final LIP to be formally signed-off (SMBC and HCA region)	31 March 2010
Approve North Solihull Four year Business Plan (2011/12 – 2014/15)	31 March 2011
Update LIP review with HCA	31 October 2011
Consultation on Draft Core Strategy will take place in October 2011	October 2011
Submission Core Strategy submitted to the Secretary of State in April 2012	April 2012
Formal LIP review with HCA	April 2012
Core Strategy adoption	December 2012
Ongoing review to meet key actions from LIP	Ongoing through SC process
Formal LIP review with HCA	April 2012

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## Appendix 1 Key Strategies and Plans

### Sustainable Communities Strategy

Solihull's Local Area Agreement sets out targets for the most important priorities and partnership actions to meet them

The Solihull Partnership has five Strategic Groups taking forward the five themes of the SCS:

- An Equal Chance for Children and Young People (Children and Young People's Trust)
- Healthier Communities
- Safer Communities
- Stronger Communities
- Prosperous Communities

The Prosperous Communities Strategic Group is responsible for shaping, coordinating and ensuring the delivery of activity – either locally or through regional and sub-regional working – on economic growth, regeneration, housing, transport and environmental sustainability.

Priorities for improvements identified within the Sustainable Community Strategy, which are supported by Solihull's Economic Development Strategy (2008-2011) are:

- Ensuring the Solihull economy and its businesses can compete in the global economy, developing local enterprise particularly in North Solihull.
- Conserving and enhancing the local built and natural environment, and ensuring that new development is well designed and enhances local distinctiveness
- Protecting and promoting high quality public places and spaces.
- Seeking to minimise and adapting to climate change by ensuring sustainable forms of economic activity and lifestyles which reduce carbon emissions and make more efficient use of natural resources
- Ensuring strong transport connectivity and promoting sustainable transport
- Ensuring that everyone has the opportunity of a decent home and that new housing meets the needs of the whole community.
- Increasing economic inclusion, particularly in North Solihull, addressing worklessness and low skills.
- Increasing participation and achievement in learning for people of all ages and ensuring a well qualified workforce to serve the people of Solihull.

The Strategy also highlights that closing the gap of inequality between north and south Solihull is a significant challenge to be met in order to achieve the vision of an equal chance for all: the Group has a key role in enabling Solihull to meet this challenge through delivery of the North Solihull Regeneration programme and related activity.

A three year Prosperous Strategic Framework identifies key outcomes and priorities agreed by partners to help deliver the SCS aspirations for Prosperous Communities over the next three years.

The Solihull Partnership has taken a lead during the economic downturn through the organisation of a series of Economic Summits and a focus on tackling the effects of the recession through the work of its theme-groups, particularly Prosperous Communities.

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The SP partner organisations have combined to support households and businesses during these difficult times. However Solihull is well placed to take advantage of the next upturn in the economy and the housing market, due to its location, economic base and quality of life including its housing offer.

The Solihull Partnership wants to ensure that Solihull remains a destination of choice for business and households and therefore the quality of the Borough's offer must be maintained. This will benefit not only the Borough itself but also the West Midlands.

### Local Development Framework

Together with the RSS (while it remains in effect) the LDF will form the development plan for Solihull and will shape the future of the Borough to 2026.

The RSS Panel Report was published in October 2009 and proposed a revised new build net housing target for Solihull of 10,500 up to 2026 and this target is proposed in the Emerging Core Strategy, which converts to a land requirement for around 15,000 dwellings taking into account demolitions and conversions. New housing will be spread across all local housing markets but regeneration policies highlight North Solihull and Solihull Town Centre as a focal point for new build.

The LDF Emerging Core strategy sets out the key spatial elements of our plans for developing Solihull and will make a significant contribution towards meeting the objectives of the Solihull SCS

The Core Strategy issues and options paper "Challenges and Choices" was published early in 2009 and put forward three options to accommodate development.

- Consolidation – Maintains the current RSS principles & the principles in the emerging RSS revision by concentrating new development in the main urban area and promoting the re-use of previously developed land.
- Corridors - Focusing development in the main urban areas along key transport routes - this included urban extensions.
- Clusters - Major development within Solihull Town Centre, with development in the main smaller centres of Shirley and Chelmsley Wood accompanied by development around railway stations in the major urban area and at larger settlements in the Green Belt.

The Emerging Core Strategy was published for consultation in October 2010 and identified the key challenges facing the Borough and a series of objectives to address them. It also sets out a draft vision for the Borough in 2026 and proposes a strategy and set of policy directions to achieve the vision by directing growth to sustainable locations and guiding development.

All options proposed though Challenges and Choices and the Emerging Core Strategy support the regeneration of North Solihull.

The Core Strategy is planned for submission to the Secretary of State in April 2012

The current Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policy on Affordable Housing is to seek 40% affordable on qualifying developments and this is set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Through the development of the Local Development Framework, the Council will assess the case for treating housing market areas differently, including considering

- 
- Housing Need and Demand by type, size and Tenure
  - Opportunities to accommodate new housing
  - Maximising affordable housing provision to address acute affordability issues
  - the case for a rural exceptions policy

The LDF will set out how the economic development and regeneration of Solihull will be pursued taking account of recent Government advice contained in PPS4.

Until the adoption of the LDF the Unitary Development Plan is still relevant to the LIP, Particularly:

- Policy H4 which sets out the target of 40% affordable housing on qualifying sites and which is supported by Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Policy H5: *'Density, Design and Quality of Development'*, which has been used as the starting point for assessing the number of dwellings likely to be delivered on each site. This seeks densities of 30-50 dwellings per hectare and encourages greater density in locations with good access to public transport.

The Council publication 'New Housing in Context' sets out requirements for design of dwellings and layouts and is complemented in the regeneration area by a design guide.

### Transport

The basis of transport policy is LTP 2 which sets out key policy aims objectives and the capital programme of transport improvements. From April 2011, LTP 3 will be the key transport document and this policy will be led by Centro in its role as the Integrated Transport Authority, (ITA) key issues will include airport policies, rail and road policies and development of walking and cycling policies and schemes.

### Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) programme

The focus of 'Sustainable Urban Development' is to stimulate renaissance in the key urban areas by encouraging job growth and targeting communities to help them join the mainstream economy. In June 2008, the Council submitted a programme of activities to realise the benefits of SUD for North Solihull. The North Solihull Sustainable Urban Development Package Plan has the potential total investment will be £21 million (£10.5 million European Regional Development Fund and £10.5 million match funding through public sector agencies). The key aims of the package are to:

- Reduce the level of worklessness across North Solihull by creating and connecting local residents to employment opportunities;
- Increase the level of entrepreneurship and sustain SME's;
- Improve transport connectivity to major employment centres;
- Exploit the wider opportunities created through the regeneration of North Solihull ensuring direct economic benefits for local residents and assist in sustaining existing SME's.

### Solihull Action against Poverty Strategy.

This will also respond to the requirements laid out in the Child Poverty Bill 2009 to produce a joint local child poverty strategy aimed at ending poverty in UK by 2020.

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## **Appendix 2 Evidence Base**

The LIP is informed by a robust evidence base which enables the Council and partners to understand the dynamics of regional and local economies and housing markets and other key areas so that strategy and policy interventions are well informed and therefore effective.

### **Understanding Solihull**

This brings together a range of information including; consultations, census data, deprivation indices, performance indicators and provides it in a graphical format with a clear explanation, at ward level and below, where possible.

It provides a clear evidence trail of what the local issues are to inform the aims and objectives of the Community Strategy and Council Plan through effective intervention.

The development of the Solihull Observatory will assist both the Council and Solihull Partnership in underpinning Commissioning activity with a robust understanding of the needs of our communities.

### **Local Economic Assessment**

The Plan draws on the Solihull Local Economic Assessment (LEA) that covers a wide range of issues including:

- Demographics, socio-economic indicators, etc
- Household incomes and deprivation
- Structure, performance and competitiveness of the local economy including sector profile, levels of inward investment and enterprise activity
- Labour market analysis including a worklessness assessment and analysis of the supply and demand for skills
- Housing market and housing needs
- Future growth potential including the potential for sustainable economic growth and business needs
- Analysis of internal and external economic linkages (functioning economic geographies) including commuting patterns

The LEA identifies future growth potential, providing evidence – based analysis on key issues that will determine the level and nature of growth to come, including:

- Solihull's future prospects for economic and employment growth
- Past and future drivers of economic growth (sector and investment trends; key developments/role of key strategic assets (BHX, NEC, Town Centre/Touchwood, RIS); key investment attractors - quality of life factors)
- Past and future constraints on growth (macro-economic factors; employment land supply; infrastructure capacity – transport, digital)
- The impact of the recession on Solihull's economy/businesses (business impact and response)
- Opportunities for Solihull residents to benefit from future growth and employment opportunities

### **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2009)**

The JSNA provides data and analysis on health and its determinants, including demographic, economic and social indicators, including housing. The intelligence that it provides will inform commissioning priorities of the Independent Living and Extra Care Housing Strategy, the Sustainable Communities Strategy and other strategies including this Local Investment Plan.

Amongst the priorities for commissioning which the assessment identifies are:

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- designing and targeting services to meet the diverse needs of the population
  - planning for an increase in health and social care needs over the next decade and a 'radical shift' in service provision to respond to this
  - target initiatives at 'high-need' particularly deprived communities
  - develop community services to support independent living for older people, people with disabilities and mental health conditions to avoid institutional care
  - develop intensive home support, intermediate care and reablement services
  - develop services to support and care for people with dementia
  - develop services to support carers

The JSNA is an 'ongoing, iterative process' which will be continually updated and developed.

### **The 'Place Survey'**

The National Indicator Set contains 25 indicators which are informed by residents' views and perspectives, 18 of these are collected through a single Place Survey, designed to track user satisfaction with local public services. This postal survey was sent to 2,500 households in Solihull and secured 1,100 responses from residents. The indicators gauge satisfaction, perceptions around safety of the area and how local people feel about parents taking responsibility for their children's behaviour.

The indicators also measure how people feel about how they are treated by local services and if local services understand local concerns:

- Overall, 88% of people experienced general satisfaction with the local area; and,
- Over 74% of people felt they received fair treatment from local services.

Information provided by the survey will be incorporated into planning for service delivery

### **Solihull Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Interim Report (SHLAA)**

The SHLAA is key evidence for the Borough's development plan (the Local Development Framework) until 2026.

The latest Solihull SHLAA is based at the start of the current monitoring year (1<sup>st</sup> April 2010). To meet Government requirements housing land supply is assessed for five, ten and fifteen years from April 2012 when the Core Strategy is anticipated for adoption. The SHLAA will be updated annually and published each December with the Annual Monitoring Report.

The SHLAA identifies

- sites with potential for housing, their housing capacity and when they are likely to be developed
- the choices available to meet the need and demand for new housing and provide a basis for making decisions about how to shape places in the future.
- whether action will need to be taken to ensure sites can be delivered or whether policies need to be reviewed to enable identified sites to be developed

It includes windfalls and sites proposed for allocation through the Emerging Core Strategy, including potential green belt land identified to support North Solihull Regeneration to meet our housing land provision targets.

The Emerging Core Strategy directs the focus in identifying sites and supports green belt release in North Solihull and protects the Meriden gap. It notes there may be an argument

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for development south of Shirley centred on the rail line in the longer term, but not until post 2026.

Solihull's interim assessment was approved in November 2009 and put out to consultation to establish detailed points of agreement and accuracy from those initially submitting the sites. The assessment elicited approximately 200 sites each being individually assessed..... Sites are still being submitted.

**Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2009)** - this was carried out by Ecotec, building on previous work done sub-regionally and found that:

- of the 1,544 households predicted to form between 2006 and 2011, over 70% will be unable to afford in the open market.
- there is a backlog of need for 3,777 households in the Borough, as well as net newly arising need of 427 households per year (based on gross newly arising housing need of 1,344 households less a supply of 917 re-lets each year)
- there is a need for 1,342 additional affordable homes per year over the 5 year period 2009-2014. Of these 81% are required to be for social rent and 19% for intermediate housing (such as shared ownership or intermediate rent). The study also shows that 69% of the affordable dwellings should be houses, to accommodate families.

**Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2008)** - the assessment was carried out on a sub regional basis which included the 3 local authorities Solihull, Birmingham and Coventry. The assessment identified for Solihull 8 sites of which 4 are unauthorised accommodation giving 46 pitches in total. The GTAA also recommended for Solihull taking on board family growth & new household formation and meeting need where it arises an additional 26 permanent pitches and 5 transit pitches up to 2017. At the regional level as part of the Phase 3 Revision to the RSS a soon to be agreed policy statement currently identifies a proposal to increase the number of additional permanent pitches to 28

### **The Solihull Town Centre Study (GVA Grimley, May 2009)**

This identifies housing capacity for 1,270 new dwellings in four five-year phases. Because of the current economic climate it is now likely that only the first three town centre phases will be delivered within the LDF period to 2026. The first three phases of the Town Centre Study identify a total housing capacity of 1,065 units (240 in Phase One, 450 in Phase Two and 375 in Phase 3).

The Study was submitted in evidence to the RSS Phase II Review. The Panel concluded that the Council may be unduly pessimistic over the capacity for further town centre development and that there may be increased potential for town centre housing over the plan period. The indicative housing capacities may therefore need to be reviewed as town centre redevelopment progresses.

### **Settlement Studies**

Settlement studies are being prepared as part of the evidence for the Local Development Framework and will provide information on the character of settlements and their ability to meet the needs of their residents.

**Energy Efficiency and Fuel poverty** - Using the data from annual surveys conducted by the Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre and data from Solihull Community Housing (November 2009), it can be estimated that the overall SAP rating for all homes in Solihull is 57. This divides into ratings of 66 for social sector (SCH and housing association) homes and 56 for the private sector. Homes in Solihull fall into 3 categories of SAP:

- The least energy efficient with a SAP of 0-39 = 5% of dwellings
- The average energy efficiency rating with a SAP of 40-70 = 75% of dwellings
- A good energy efficiency rating of 71 and above = 20% of dwellings

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The latest progress report for the period April 2008 - March 2009 estimates that there are approximately 13,000 'fuel poor' households in Solihull which accounts for 15% of households. This estimate is calculated using data for energy efficiency improvements carried out in Solihull, average fuel price rises and average increases in income over the same period. Solihull has seen an increase of 4,000 fuel poor homes from 2007-08 estimates. This increase in the number of fuel poor homes is mirrored nationally and is largely due to the fuel price increases in the Autumn of 2008.

**Transport** - Borough wide mapping to identify the areas of the Borough which have high, medium and low accessibility by non-car modes of travel to a range of services and facilities, including fresh food, schools, further education and employment. This will help identify the most accessible locations for development to help reduce car dependency and to identify locations where service improvements may be required.

**Other significant data and intelligence sources include**

- Coventry/Solihull/Warwickshire Employment Land study (sub regional)
- Retail Capacity Study
- Accessibility Planning of Spatial options
- Employment land Study

The Council uses HomeTrack, CACI and Land Registry data to produce a monthly summary of the key housing indicators and trends for Solihull together with an annual summary of the Social Housing Market. These documents are available at <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/policies/housingstrategy.htm>

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## Appendix 3: North Solihull Regeneration: 2010-11 Outputs

### Housing (land assembly)

- Private home acquisitions 22
- Re-housing SCH tenants 113

### Demolitions

- High-rise 58
- Houses / maisonettes etc 209

### New Development

- Land transfers 4.5Ha
- New homes 204

### Schools

- Completion of St Anne's Primary School
- Design development for Bishop Wilson Primary School

### Village Centres

- Completion of North Arran Way high street
- Commencement of NAW village centre ph1 (subject to development agreement)
- Commencement of Craig Croft village centre (subject to grant funding)

### Socio Economic

- Contributions towards 4 revenue programmes

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#### Appendix 4 Energy Efficiency projects (April 2011)

- **Renewables pilot project** - the installation of solar thermal hot water systems, air source and ground source heat pumps including external cladding to one solid wall property. Value = £240,000 approx. (£100,000 SCH, £50,000 SMBC, £90,000 external funding).
- **Community Energy Support Programme (CESP)** - installation of external cladding and central heating fuelled by Biomass to two high rise blocks (Clare and Pembroke) . Includes a training and support programme for residents. Value estimated at £1.3M (potential for 70%+ external funding).
- **Carbon Emissions Reduction Target** funding - Decent Homes works i.e. cavity wall and loft insulation, heating controls and low energy lighting. Value up to £900,000 over the term of Decent Homes.
- **Fuel switching** - connecting properties to the gas network.
- **Photovoltaic systems** - finalising external grant funding. Official launch September 2010.
- **Retrofitting renewable technologies** - in a void property via Frank Haslam Milan. No cost to SCH.
- **PV on domestic dwellings** – Feasibility study completed and project developed that will see 100 domestic dwellings have PV solar panels installed, subject to support funding being secured.
- **New Build** – installation of renewable technologies in the Masons Way development, 2011 (photovoltaic systems to be installed)
- **Energy Monitors and standby savers** – Offered to all SCH tenants and leaseholders and available to loan free of charge via all libraries throughout Solihull. Standby Savers 922 and 994 Energy monitors delivered by British Gas. This equates to £58,200 in levered funding to date. Standby savers are now available to all new tenants.