

APPRAISAL OF THE HOUSING, RENEWAL AND SUSTAINABILITY NEEDS OF RURAL AREAS OF GATESHEAD

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

October 2006



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1. Introduction

Gateshead Council commissioned Sustainable Cities Research Institute (SCRI) and Banks of Wear Community Projects Ltd (BOW) to carry out a housing, renewal and sustainability appraisal of rural areas of Gateshead Borough between May and August 2006.

The work involved:

- A desk-based review of relevant strategies and documents.
- A door-to-door survey of 2,342 households in Gateshead's six rural wards (Birtley; Lamesley; Ryton, Crookhill and Stella; Crawcrook and Greenside; Chopwell and Rowlands Gill; and Whickham South and Sunnyside). The survey covered approximately 10% of the 23,266 households in these wards.
- Consultation with residents and other key stakeholders through focus groups and interviews. This process targeted: harder to reach groups such as younger and aspiring households, people who work, older people, and recent incomers to the area; estate agents, developers and other property professionals; local shopkeepers and traders; local businesses; public sector professionals active in relevant fields such as education, leisure, social and community services; elected members; and transport providers.
- The result of the survey and reports on focus groups is contained within the main report. This report is a further analysis of the findings, including further exploration of the policy and strategic context for the study area. It makes a number of general recommendations on housing how housing needs and aspirations can be tackled in the study area, and what approaches may assist further in renewing and sustaining the study areas, where this is required
- It also contains further analysis and recommendations on each of the settlements which comprise the study area

SCRI managed the project and delivered the desk-based review and survey, while BOW carried out the consultation with stakeholders as a sub-contractor to SCRI.

2. Policy context – Gateshead rural areas

2.1 The principal objective in the commissioning of this report is to examine the housing needs, renewal and sustainability needs of the rural areas of Gateshead, defined as the western and southern areas of the borough, which are set out in the larger report. This is to enable the development of a comprehensive approach to housing throughout the Gateshead council area; and to go on to examine the potential interventions that may be made to satisfy housing demand and aspiration, and to underpin community sustainability in the outlying areas of Gateshead. This is in the general context of investment priorities for funding lying elsewhere. Within Gateshead itself, this means that the Housing Market Renewal (HMR) area within the urban core. Elsewhere, as the main body of the report sets out, priorities for investment within the Regional Housing Strategy are renewal projects in the Durham coalfield and further south in the older housing areas of Teesside.

2.2 **Definition as Rural Housing Areas.** The main body of the report sets out definitions for the areas to the West and South east of the urban core. Although the broad context for the report frames these areas within a ‘rural’ perspective, this approach is restrictive in some respects. Determining housing policy and strategy in these terms potentially diminishes the opportunities that currently exist, and may be developed, to intervene in the areas in the most effective manner.

2.3 The study area comprises 23,266 households, which represents 26.7% of the total housing stock in the Gateshead MBC area, and 29.5% of the total population. Average household density is around 2.32 persons per household, as opposed to 2.04 (2003 figures) in the rest of Gateshead. This perhaps reflects the higher number of houses in the study area, and the proportionately higher number of flats in the housing stock elsewhere in Gateshead. The settlements are, in the large part, identifiable as separate and to some degree are self-contained, and residents have a strong identity, in general, with their local settlement area. The settlements in the area of study are distinct from one another and function differently in housing market terms: though there are some common issues that are shared by the communities. An example of the latter is an increasing concern throughout the study area over access to suitable affordable housing for local people in all housing market sectors. The policy and strategy context has tended to mean that the study area has not featured significantly to date in regional and sub-regional programmes, in terms of making a case for ‘structured investment’ in the area.

2.4 Issues relating to rural housing demand (objective 2) and housing market renewal and regeneration (Objective 1) are recognised as priorities in the North East Housing Strategy¹. This has resulted in a focus on supporting renewal and investment programmes in HMR areas which include large parts of Gateshead, to the Durham Coalfield villages area, and on the other hand to rural housing needs in areas such as Tynedale, Weardale and Teesdale. External resources under the RHS have tended to be determined under Objective 3, which supports investment directed to specific community and social needs, and for which a relatively modest 12.7% of overall resources have been provided. However, as the results of this study and other current and recent work shows (David

¹ North East Regional Housing Board Updated Regional Housing Strategy (July 2005)

Cumberland Associates update of Gateshead Housing Strategy² and the work of Outside Research and Development³ on elderly persons housing), there is a current and increasing housing need and aspiration in the study area, within both private and public sectors, which remains unmet. Issues with affordability exist throughout the area, and parts of it exhibit degrees of vulnerability in the local housing market that require intervention.

2.5 Housing Market Function. The overall vision of the Gateshead Housing Strategy, developed in 2003 and updated in February 2006, is that it is directed to *'local people who live in good quality affordable homes, which meet their needs and are located within pleasant, safe and sustainable communities'*⁴. The recent David Cumberland report has underlined that housing markets in the south and west of Gateshead MBC tend to function on a local basis. This is underpinned by this current work that shows that most people identify very strongly with the place (settlement) in which they live, and where they envisage themselves moving to another property, would like to make this a local move. The main reason for desiring a move is consistently given as the need to find a property that is more suited to their current or emerging need. It is noticeable that many people anticipate, due to issues of affordability, that such needs may only be satisfied by renting in the social housing sector, with a predominant expression that they would expect this to be with The Gateshead Housing Company (TGHC), if it can be satisfied.

2.6 A number of fundamental matters are related to **satisfying housing need and aspiration**. Firstly, significant parts of the study area functions as part of the wider Tyneside sub-regional housing market, with areas such as Ryton and the Derwent Valley attracting people from the wider area, with many residents commuting to work in Newcastle. At the same time, a lack of affordable housing for owner occupation results in a degree of migration out of the area, particularly on the western fringes to the Derwentside Council area (where market entry housing has been built on a large scale basis for a number of years). Further work on the sub-regional market is being carried out by the TyneWear Partnership at the current time. This trend of out-migration is also discernable to a lesser degree to the south, where a number of local people migrate out to Chester le Street, and indeed, it is possible to speculate that this area functions as a housing market which is adjacent to the A1 corridor, and stretches to the north at Low Fell, and to the south to Chester le Street.

2.7 The Nathaniel Litchfield report on housing aspirations⁵ identified a desire among a significant section of the population in the northeast (and amongst those who may be attracted here) for larger homes and for 'rural living'. This report relates this aspiration particularly to higher socio-economic groups. This Rural Needs study underlines that this desire for living in green, pleasant surroundings is not confined to this group, with this aspect of living conditions being commented on as a strong factor in determining housing choice by recent movers and the existing population throughout most of the area of study. In this respect, the study area has great intrinsic value in terms of meeting this desire, and this is commented on further below in terms of the emerging '**Vision for Gateshead**'.

² Gateshead Council (2006) Gateshead 2006 Housing Needs and Support Survey. Final Draft Report. Warrington: David Cumberland Regeneration Ltd

³ Outside Research & Development (2006) Draft report Gateshead Council Appraisal of Older People's Aspirations

⁴ Gateshead Council (2003) Housing Strategy Summary 2003-2008

⁵ Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (2005) Regional Housing Aspirations Study, Final Report March 2005

2.8 However, as is commonly recognised, there are significant problems throughout the study area in meeting both need and aspiration, in terms of how this relates to the existing housing stock. There is a major mismatch between the housing that people aspire to, and that which is available, or affordable to them. There is a lack of entry price level housing to people in the study areas and focus groups and stakeholders have commented that this is one of the motivational factors determining the movement of people out of the area.

2.9 An example of this mismatch is that there is very little desire for one bedroom property for the elderly (see for example Outside Research & Development report⁶), with an overwhelming aspiration for at least 2 bedrooms. TGHC, and others, report that there is a mismatch in stock, with insufficient property of this type, or for younger forming households, being available. Approximately 4,000 new households are forecasted to form within Gateshead by the year 2021 (See DCA pg 21). It is noted also that this requirement is based on current population trends. One of the primary functions of the comprehensive housing policy is to support the retention of the existing population within Gateshead, and reverse outward migration. Some significant opportunities exist within the rural housing strategy to contribute to this, both in terms of new provision and renewal and regeneration strategies in the existing housing stock.

2.10 **The Vision for Gateshead.** People in the study area strongly identified with their own neighbourhood and settlements. The area is also able to attract migration from other areas and has a number of neighbourhoods that are viewed as highly desirable. Gateshead MBC is currently undertaking an exercise about the perception of Gateshead, and the sense of Gateshead as a place with a particular or singular identity, projecting where Gateshead will be as a place to live by the year 2030

2.11 What makes Gateshead unique? It is recognised and supported in the responses to this research that the study area has a well developed sense of place, and that sense of place is a series of contained settlements, with a strong identity, in pleasant, green surroundings with good access to rural surroundings. As an area defined as predominately urban in character, the Western area in particular provides a unique potential resource for retaining and attracting population.

2.12 **Housing Provision.** The current draft unitary plan (UDP) (2006) estimates new gross housing provision of 760 homes per year, with a net addition of 560 homes to the Gateshead housing stock, which assumes a demolition rate of 200 homes per year. This would result in a net build rate of 5,600 homes in the planning period. On an extrapolated basis for the study area, this would further mean, if growth were to be proportionate, that the 'share' of the study area in new build terms would be approximately 1,494 new properties. Under the affordable housing requirements of the UDP, which sets out that 25% of all new developments (above 25 units) should be affordable housing, this would mean 393 properties would be affordable; or approximately 39 properties per year. Private sector builders are 'bullish' in relation to building in the study area, reporting that they would see all areas as being sound for investment. House Builders are content to work with other providers to produce affordable housing as elements in their schemes, provided this can practically be achieved, and the economics of particular schemes work, and are willing to explore the participation in projects that are more directed to a 'regeneration' approach. Issues relating to affordable housing policies are discussed further below.

⁶OR&D report Ibid

2.13 In reality, the new build sites available for new housing in the study area, assuming they proceed to development, would produce a higher total than this extrapolated figure. Three sites already identified at Birtley, Chopwell and Kibblesworth have a projected planning figure of 1,376 homes, with 343 homes earmarked for affordable housing. 30% of these homes are earmarked as 'lifetime homes' under the Gateshead definition, with a further 5% to be wheelchair homes. The impact on local housing markets on developing sites is considered in greater detail later in this summary and in comments on individual settlements.

2.14 New build private sector housing markets tend to be driven by private sector perceptions of the price levels they can generate on a particular development, which in turn influences land prices. There have been significant additions to the private sector housing stock, which has grown by 4.5% of the total housing stock to 69% of the total housing stock since 2001. A proportion of this growth is through the Right to Buy, though approximately 2,300 private sector homes have been built in this period, as the most significant area of new provision of housing. There has been marked growth in the last two to three years, with a number of developments in the urban areas. A number of properties have been sold into the investment area in this period, for private sector renting. It is the strategic ambition of Gateshead council to develop balanced housing markets and ensure gaps in all areas of the market, including at the executive end. Gateshead council wish to influence in a structured way the types of property being provided, as suggested below for affordable housing. This will need consistent and detailed dialogue with private sector housebuilders.

2.15 **Affordable housing policies.** As mentioned above, Gateshead, like many other local authorities, has adopted a policy approach towards the provision of affordable housing on sites capable of greater than 25 units of development. There is a perennial difficulty with the definition of affordable housing. The DCA report (page 65) suggests a definition of affordable housing as housing for social housing rent or intermediate tenure housing, i.e. housing at prices above social housing rent, but below market prices or rent. The definition of affordability is discussed further below. Other local authorities in the region are implementing policies with greater requirements, such as South Tyneside and Berwick, where requirements are for 50% and 100% respectively.

2.16 There are significant difficulties in implementing affordable housing policies, which require a highly structured approach. Subsidy is required to produce and make available housing at below market values. For example In the case of local authority land, if the housing is to be developed by a registered social landlord, The Housing Corporation approach is that this subsidy should be made available through sale of land at below market prices. However, there are many other pressures on developers to produce benefits (commonly referred to as planning gain), such as transport infrastructure improvements, as part of the development costs of a scheme. In order to deliver affordable housing, specific and detailed approaches are required for each site to determine exactly the costs, numbers and types of affordable housing required, in order that all parties to a development – particularly the local authority as the guardian of public resources, and the developer who has to make the project work on the ground – can be satisfied that objectives of the affordable housing policy are being met.

2.17 A major issue is preserving the benefit of ‘affordable housing’ beyond the first sale. In the case of traditional shared ownership models of intermediate tenure, a purchaser has the right to ‘staircase up’ and purchase the remainder of the equity in their property. At that point, the housing can no longer be defined as ‘affordable’. Concern has been expressed by property services in Gateshead that the objective of the policy – creating access to the housing market - is therefore lost in the longer term, and is transferred to individuals, rather than embedded in perpetuity in the original land sale. The issue is referred to in Gateshead Council’s supplementary Planning Guidance to the current Draft UDP⁷. This is explored later in the recommendations section of the report. It is an issue that has been recognised nationally by the Audit Commission.

2.18 There is little desire expressed in this research amongst respondents for ‘shared ownership’ models. This is not surprising, as they are not commonly known or understood. There is some evidence that where potential purchasers understand or have explained the options available, shared ownership models, particularly shared equity or discounted sale, may be appropriate vehicles to explore.

2.19 The position is complicated further where land becomes available from private sources. Once a market price has been agreed on a price of land, the opportunity to influence the development in terms of the provision of affordable housing is lost. It is likely that many future sites that do come forward, particularly in the western area of the district, will be from this source. An affordable housing policy would have to be robust enough, and clear enough, to influence land prices before any particular piece of land enters the market.

2.20 **Exceptions policies.** ‘Exceptions policies’ in rural areas are designed to bring forward sites on a specific basis for housing development under Section 106 agreements, enabling sites to be developed that would not otherwise be eligible for housing (or other) development. The Current UDP⁸ states that it does not consider this approach to be appropriate at the current time, given the scale and distribution of settlements in the rural area. This report argues that in some locations, that approach should be reconsidered.

2.21 **Affordability.** There is an inevitable tension between providing homes at higher market levels, or even entry-level prices, and the issue of affordability. There has been comment in other research, through previous (as was) ODPM assessment and the work of DCA of whether there is an issue of affordability in the study area. Both DCA and Nathaniel Litchfield reported that prices at higher levels were beginning to fall, and there have also been reports of ‘more realistic’ prices being sought at entry level. More recent house price evidence indicates strengthening market prices in the general market. It is indicative that housing market prices have a degree of volatility, and that any strategy has to continually assess market conditions and the impact on local communities. As one of the major objectives of housing strategy is to stabilise and support housing market prices, it is also inevitable that there is likely to be a continuing concern of accessibility to owner occupation in all areas, which is a view that has been strongly expressed in the survey and focus groups.

2.22 This is particularly so in terms of housing aspiration. The percentages of people who live in the study area who expect that their future needs in terms of housing can be

⁷ Gateshead Council Draft UDP 2006, Supplementary Planning Guidance 11

⁸ *ibid*

met through purchase is almost certainly below aspirational figures, and is reflective of a realistic view of their incomes and their ability to meet mortgage payments. Differing measures are used to determine how affordable access to the housing market is. The DCA report (page 65) suggests measuring this on the basis of gross household income. It suggests a property is unaffordable to an individual if it costs more than 3.5 x a single or 2.9 x dual household income, assuming a deposit of 5%. Rented property is deemed unaffordable if it costs more than 25% of gross household income.

2.23 A further useful definition is from recent work by Steve Wilcox for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation⁹. In this case, the 'broad definition' is the proportion of working people who cannot afford to buy at the lower quarter point of house prices for two and three bed homes; the 'narrow definition' is the proportion of households in areas who can afford social housing without housing benefit but cannot afford to buy at the lowest decile price for two and three bed houses. The income calculation assumes a maximum mortgage of 3.75 x household income for working households with one earner, and 3.25 x household income for households with two (or more) earners. A much larger deposit of 18% is assumed (the recent average for deposits by first time buyers). It is likely that it is a significant proportion of the population – newly forming households – who have tended to move out of the area to meet their housing preferences in area where properties are available that they aspire to, at prices they can afford.

2.24 For **existing owners** the picture is more complex. In 2001 the level of owner occupation was nearly 6% higher in rural Gateshead than other areas of the Borough, and it can be presumed that the level of owner occupation has continued to grow in proportionate terms. The number of people owning their properties outright is significantly higher in the study area with 38.4% of people owning their property outright, some 54% higher than for the rest of Gateshead. In some of the specific study areas, the number of owner-occupiers is significantly higher again; in Whickham South and Sunnyside, for example, levels of owner occupation are 88%.

2.25 The survey confirmed that many people had significant levels of free equity in their property. At the same time, the elderly population in Gateshead is forecast to grow significantly by 16.4% and 23.5% respectively for people aged 60-74 and +75 in the population projections up to 2021¹⁰. Gateshead has an elderly population higher than the national average, with 29.5% as against 26.5% of the population being aged over 55. Nearly 50% of people who owned outright were aged over 60 in the DCA report, and this study confirms the high and increasing level of outright ownership amongst the elderly population.

2.26 **Income levels.** This study did not explore income levels, but the general picture is well documented elsewhere. This shows incomes in Gateshead significantly below national norms, and increasing problems of relative poverty. 59% of outright owners have gross incomes of less than £300 per week. The study area does contain areas where incomes are above the norm. 40-50% of households in Whickham South and Sunnyside have incomes of over £500 per week.

⁹ Wilcox, S. (2005) Limits to working household' ability to become home owners (Oct 2005), Joseph Rowntree Foundation

¹⁰ ODPM Population projection 2003

2.27 Private Sector Renewal and Repair. The vast majority of the housing stock is in the private sector, and a strategic approach needs to recognise the issues and problems that exist, and take account of the mechanism available to address them. There is significant disrepair in the older housing stock in the west area of Gateshead, particularly in the Neighbourhood West area, which includes 4 of 5 wards in the study area. In 2003, over 1,000 properties were unfit. A significant concentration of properties in disrepair has been identified in the Chopwell/Blackhall Mill settlements. Other pockets of disrepair are 'pepper-potted' throughout the study area. At the same time the demand for conversion of homes to meet the needs of an elderly population, which is growing in proportion, and to meet the needs of other vulnerable people, continues to place great strain on the resources available through Objective 3 of the Regional Housing Strategy, whether in the form of Disabled Facilities Grant or other forms of financial assistance through either Grants or Loans.

2.28 Gateshead Council has recently drawn up a revised Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy (PSHRS) for the period 2006-2009¹¹. This report has been framed within the Government direction that although local authorities must make some provision for assistance, *'it is primarily the responsibility of homeowners to maintain their own property'*. The policy recognises the fundamental issue of insufficient public resources, and sets out proposals for implementing equity release and loan schemes to enable owners to repair their own property; and to provide grant assistance in cases of financial hardship. The analysis in this study and elsewhere strongly supports this approach, with targeted interventions, as most owners state overwhelmingly that they wish to remain in their own properties.

2.29 The PSHRS sets out a number of other objectives, including providing guidance to homeowners and residents; improving the standard of private sector rental managed property; improving energy efficiency (and helping in the target of reducing fuel poverty by the Year 2010); dealing with empty properties, and assisting with housing affordability and intervening in areas showing signs of market vulnerability (including block investment). All of these interventions can be specifically targeted to parts of the study area, and this is discussed in detail later.

2.30 Private Sector rented housing. As mentioned above, The PSHRS sets out an approach to dealing with management and disrepair in the private rented sector. In some areas the level of private renting is at very low levels; in other settlements, the proportion of stock rented privately has grown significantly, and in specific streets levels are more than 30% of the stock. Turnover, instability and anti-social behaviour are often associated with higher levels of private renting in older housing areas.

2.31 Decent Homes. Having achieved the status of a two star body, The Gateshead Housing Company is now able to access money to enable it to carry out planned programme of works to bring property in the study area up to the Decent Homes Standard by the year 2010. TGHC sees no fundamental problems of demand at this stage in the general sustainability of the area, with increasing demand through all of the geographical areas. It is reported that this demand has been significantly increased following the introduction of 'your choice' allocations, throughout the study area, There are specific issues which TGHC will address as part of a housing asset strategy; for example, whether investment in some of the one-bedroom bungalow stock it has represents value for money

¹¹ Private Sector Housing Renewal: Financial Assistance Policy 2006-2009

long term, or whether potential conversion or restructuring of the stock by providing property which will be more desirable in the long term. The general analysis is continuing at the present time. A mismatch of resources is noted, with a shortage of larger property, including property for family housing, but opportunities for affordable housing also needed for single people or smaller households in the study area.

2.32 Neighbourhood Action Plans and Sustainability. The main report sets out broad current guidance on the characteristics that make a healthy, or 'sustainable' community. These are summarised again below for broad guidance

'What makes a sustainable community?

Some of the key requirements of sustainable communities are:

A flourishing local economy to provide jobs and wealth;

Strong leadership to respond positively to change;

Effective engagement and participation by local people, groups and businesses, especially in the planning, design and long-term stewardship of their community, and an active voluntary and community sector;

A safe and healthy local environment with well-designed public and green space;

Sufficient size, scale and density, and the right layout to support basic amenities in the neighbourhood and minimise use of resources (including land);

Good public transport and other transport infrastructure both within the community and linking it to urban, rural and regional centres;

Buildings – both individually and collectively – that can meet different needs over time, and that minimise the use of resources;

A well-integrated mix of decent homes of different types and tenures to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes;

Good quality local public services, including education and training opportunities, health care and community facilities, especially for leisure;

A diverse, vibrant and creative local culture, encouraging pride in the community and cohesion within it;

A "sense of place";

The right links with the wider regional, national and international community.'

ODPM, 2003

2.33 In real terms, these broad generalisations are converted to measurable indicators to enable an assessment to be made of the current conditions in a particular community, and monitored over a period of time to assess whether conditions, and the perceptions of them, are improving. Most local authorities have now prepared a range of key indicators relating to, for example, housing, employment, economic well being, transport, health, leisure activity and the environment, to assess the well-being and sustainability of a community.

2.34 Gateshead Council has over the last 3 years developed an approach based on sustainability of communities in 5 Neighbourhood Management areas, which assesses also the interventions required to support and enhance community sustainability. A 'Neighbourhood Vitality Index' approach has been developed which breaks the area down into more discrete areas, combining a series of statistics relating to housing (e.g. levels of void housing, tenure mix), health, crime, education, employment and income, to assess how a Neighbourhood plan area is faring in terms of being a desirable place to live.

2.35 The area profiles and management plans for these areas include (to at least some degree) three areas in this study; the West Area, Inner West and South. Information from the vitality index, supplemented by additional information has been utilised in preparing the recommendations later in the report. In broad terms, particularly relating to housing, most of the areas are showing reasonable degrees of sustainability, particularly related to the central area of Gateshead.

2.36 There are exceptions to this general picture. A number of neighbourhoods in the study area, particularly in the Chopwell area, show some indicators of vulnerability. A ranking system is used, and particular locations are ranked within 5 levels of 'housing vitality'. The ranking works by producing an index based on house prices, council tax band levels for properties, and empty properties, with a particular weighting on the level of house prices against market norms. The most significant variable in the index therefore relates to private sector house prices, and areas with average prices below the norm therefore rank as more vulnerable. A number of the neighbourhoods also have significant levels of empty property above the norm; the 'transactional rate' for public sector housing to allow mobility is calculated at 2% by the Government, and the regional target for void property overall is 3%. The two parts of Chopwell rank in either the highest or second highest degree of market vulnerability.

2.37 **Neighbourhood Management.** This Study approach is based on settlement areas, and analyses the perspective of local people on the activity and intentions required to enhance sustainability in each of the area. The focus is on housing interventions, the likely impacts that planned investments or development will make, and other potential housing interventions to aid sustainability. The study also explored broader issues of sustainability, as housing does not function in isolation, which can broadly be defined as a neighbourhood management issues.

2.38 The Department for Communities and Local Government has now published its White Paper, 'Strong and Prosperous Communities'¹². The aim of this White Paper is '*to give local people and local communities more influence and power to improve their lives. It is about creating strong, prosperous communities and delivering better public services through a rebalancing of the relationship between central government, local government and local people*'. There are a number of strong and active local partnerships throughout the study area that have already been developed in partnership between the community and Gateshead Council. There will be a continuing and growing opportunity to tackle identified neighbourhood problems through this partnership.

2.39 **Supported and Specific Housing Needs.** Gateshead Council plans for meeting supported and housing needs, both in terms of provision and in continuing support through 'Supporting People'. The requirement in terms of special needs housing, mainly allied to

¹² Department for Communities and Local Government (2006) Strong and Prosperous Communities

long-term illness and disability, has been calculated at twice the national average rate. Specific needs such as for people with learning disabilities, with mental illness and drug and alcohol problems have not been calculated as part of the survey data, but provision will need to be planned, particularly in relation to new build housing as sites become available. Some extrapolations can be made on the basis of survey data, and applying weighting for a bias in the age of respondents. Although generally described as a small requirement later in the report, it is calculated just under 300 people in the study area require help with disabled adaptations in the near future. In terms of other support needs, those expressing a need for help with general repairs now, or in the near future, extrapolates at approximately 950; around 800 people believe they will need help with bigger improvements; and around 600 people with energy improvements on their homes. Similar numbers express support needs for personal services such as gardening help, and with tasks around the home.

2.40 BME Population. The BME population in the area is less than 1%, and too small to provide reliable data through this survey. Ability to attract in-migrant communities into the area, either through existing property or in newly available housing will be interesting to track in the future.

2.41 Transport. Access to transport is an issue, particularly in the western area of the study. Car ownership is at relatively low levels in some communities and access to public transport that serves community needs is considered to be a major problem. Issues over traffic management are more commented on in the south of the study area. As there are plans to develop large sites at Kibblesworth and in Birtley, transport is an area that will need to be carefully planned.

2.42 Access to other services. Distance from, and access to, leisure facilities are major issues in a number of the settlements, particularly though not exclusively in outlying areas. There is often particular concern expressed relating to facilities and activities for young people.

3. Summary Approach – Analysis and Recommendations

3.1 This report presents the research findings as a series of short summaries or profiles. Survey findings for rural Gateshead as a whole are given in the main body of the report, which also separates out findings for the West of rural Gateshead and the South East area, and for particular geographical areas and groups of areas. Further analysis of the findings is set out below, with recommendations based on the findings, conversations with a series of stakeholders, and appraisal of opportunities within the wider context of national, regional, sub-regional and Gateshead housing policy and other strategies.

3.2 Summary

- Nine out of ten people lived in a house. 5% lived in a flat. Half lived in three-bedroom homes and 37% in two-bedroom homes.
- Nearly 70% of people were owner-occupiers. A quarter were Gateshead Housing Company tenants and 6% rented privately or from a Housing Association.
- Eight out of ten people had lived in their homes for at least five years, and six out of ten for at least ten years.
- Eight out of ten people were satisfied with the state of repair of their home. This compares favourably with Gateshead as a whole, where just seven out of ten were satisfied with the state of repair of their home.
- Over half of people found it easy to afford their rent or mortgage. Nearly one in ten found it difficult.
- Half of households had two occupants, a quarter had just one, and most others had either three or four.
- Over half of survey respondents were aged 60 years or over. Nearly two thirds were female.
- Around fifty people expressed a need for bathroom adaptations for disabled people, and a smaller number expressed interest in various other adaptations for disabled people, e.g. external handrails (48), external ramp (40), and a downstairs toilet (37).
- The most common general support needs were for gardening work (136 people) and general repairs (121 people).
- Three-quarters of people were happy with the appearance and reputation of their neighbourhood. Over half thought vandalism and hooliganism, crime, litter and rubbish, harassment, or dogs and dog mess were not a problem in their neighbourhood.

- Over half of people were happy with the choice of housing to buy locally, and four in ten were happy with the choice of housing to rent.
- High satisfaction levels were displayed with regard to local amenities such as schools and shops, and people generally thought local access to amenities was good, with most living in walking distance of a bus stop, doctor's surgery, pub, bank/cash machine, and primary school.
- One third of households had no access to a car. However, a number of amenities were accessible by foot or within a twenty minute bus journey, with the main exception being the nearest general hospital.
- 368 people had moved house in the last five years. The most popular reason for moving was the need for more space. Property size, property condition, and affordability were the most important factors for these people when they chose their current home.
- More than half of the recent movers also commented that reasons for moving to their current home included access to the countryside, and quietness. The general environment and reputation of the area, and feeling safe were important factors in choosing their current home
- Nearly 300 people thought they would be likely to move home in the next five years, and 81 people said a member of their household wanted to move into separate accommodation. The need for a smaller property, a larger property, or a different type of property were the most common reasons for wanting to move.
- Most people who wanted to move wanted to remain in rural areas of Gateshead (321 preferences). Areas outside Gateshead received 81 preferences and other parts of Gateshead 51 preferences.

3.3 Analysis

- 3.3.1 The settlements in the study area are broadly sustainable, but there are significant regeneration/renewal issues in some specific settlement. Demand for housing is generally robust throughout the study area
- 3.3.2 There is generally a high level of satisfaction throughout the area, but people in specific settlements express concern over anti-social behaviour, crime and housing conditions. A sense of place is strongly expressed, and the rural/ semi-rural setting, and access is highly valued
- 3.3.3 There is an opportunity to promote the settlements within the study area as desirable places to live. However, different settlements serve a different function within the wider housing market. In the area around Ryton and in parts of the Derwent Valley the areas function as part of wider Tyneside housing market, and are able to attract new people into them from outside the Gateshead area. There may be an opportunity to encourage this market in other parts of the study

area, particularly in the south of the area where there is some connection to the Durham/Chester le Street A1 corridor

- 3.3.4 Housing developers, both private housebuilders RSL's, and TGHC all report strong demand throughout the area, and desire to invest and develop in the area. Developers welcome the opportunity to be involved in long-term investment programmes involving the construction of new housing, and a number are experienced and willing at working on larger scale and cross-tenure regeneration projects
- 3.3.5 Other settlements have a very local housing market at the current time, such as Chopwell and Greenside. In these areas, the market shows signs of more vulnerability, and area based approaches based on a 'holistic' regeneration approach, including neighbourhood management have been and are developing to address housing and other issues
- 3.3.6 The vast majority of people who are considering moving home would like the opportunity to buy or rent locally. In many cases, however, there are shortages of the property types which people aspire to move to
- 3.3.7 The issue of affordability is commented on throughout the study area. Houses are available at affordable levels in many settlements, but they are often not the types of property that people aspire to.
- 3.3.8 There is no common understanding or robust definition of affordable housing, which has created problems in the past in terms of its provision. Clarity is needed if strategic ambitions for the area are to be achieved. This applies not only to housing developers and local authority officers involved in the implementation of affordable housing policies; and also to working with the communities and settlements in which the developments will take place
- 3.3.9 Exceptions policies as applied to rural areas are discouraged in the Council's UDP, but may have some ability to bring forward schemes in particular locations which have a more rural setting in the West area of the study. However, it is recognised that there is some opposition to development in a number of locations, and if the Council is to reconsider its approach, a dialogue would need to take place within settlements where this approach may be adopted in the future
- 3.3.10 There is a case for developing the intermediate housing market, and also seeking to influence developments to produce housing at lower end market levels to cater for people who wish to stay in or move to the area. There is a demand for family housing, including larger types of accommodation in the rental and sale sector throughout the area.
- 3.3.11 There is a shortage of smaller accommodation for rent or sale, including flats in higher value locations. There is a general aspiration, particularly amongst the elderly for 2 bedroom (or more) accommodation for rent and sale throughout the study area, and this demand will continue to grow

- 3.3.12 There is also strategic opportunity to build higher value homes on sites in the study area, both to retain and attract new households into the area
- 3.3.13 The rate of provision of new homes at 560 homes per annum exceeds the current forecasts for new household formation within the Gateshead Council area. Many of these new homes will be provided on sites within the study area. The ability of these developments to not only retain population which may move out of the Gateshead council area, but also to attract new households is therefore critical and will need to be closely monitored. This monitoring will relate to wider strategy for regeneration in the HMR area, and also in very local impact on housing markets within the settlements
- 3.3.14 Approaches to the provision of new housing are important in achieving strategic aims, but the condition and function of the existing stock is of over-riding significance. Much of the social rented housing stock will be improved by TGHC through 'decent homes' funding. Where resources are available, TGHC aims to replace stock where improvement represents poor value for money with that which meets current and projected housing aspirations. Some housing types in particular represent poor long-term viability (e.g. one bedroom bungalows); in other cases improvement is disproportionately expensive and represents poor value for money.
- 3.3.15 The great proportion of the stock is in the private sector, and is growing as an overall sector, through the right to buy and new provision, and strategic responses that recognise that resources to improve these houses will come from private sector sources – mainly individual homeowners – are being developed through the Private Sector Regeneration Strategy. There are opportunities for area based approaches which are discussed later
- 3.3.16 The study area has significantly higher proportions of people who own their property outright – it is 54% higher than Gateshead as a whole, and extrapolation suggest that around 9,000 homes are owned outright in the study area. This provides a range of potential opportunities for the release of equity for repair or conversion of the owned stock. The level of free equity is significant in many areas and suggests that a proportion of owners will be able to meet their future housing requirements by purchase of another property.
- 3.3.17 The proportion of pre-1919 housing is slightly higher in the study area than the rest of Gateshead, which includes the HMR area. Levels of dissatisfaction with the condition of repair of peoples' homes were relatively low compared with the rest of Gateshead, though there are specific areas where the problem is recognised as being significant, such as in Chopwell
- 3.3.18 6% of respondents were private renters. This is higher than previously reported rates of around 3.5% as shown in statistics gathered through the vitality index and other sources. Levels of renting are significantly higher in specific locations and this has led to a perceived difficulty with social behaviour and management of the property. It may also be indicative of the difficulty of selling property on the open market. Previous interventions have recognised that is an area based

problem and started to tackle the problem of this basis. There is community and political support to extend this approach further

- 3.3.19 Just under 10% of respondents said there was a requirement for investment in insulation in their property; extrapolating this out, this suggests 2,280 self-identifying as living in homes requiring investment in the fabric of their homes to improve thermal performance. There is a correlation with unfitness and a requirement for general repairs required on properties.
- 3.3.20 The population is ageing and households containing people over the age of 60, and more over the age of 75, are due to increase significantly in the next 15 years. This study supports and re-enforces the findings of the Older Person's Aspiration's Study that the great majority of people wish to stay in their own homes. The ageing population contains a relatively high (and growing) proportion of those who own their homes outright. There are relatively low levels of housing income amongst the population in the study area, particularly
- 3.3.21 In terms of supported and special housing needs, the survey has not uncovered significant levels of demand. However, there needs to be caution with these figures. Firstly, a number of people identify themselves as requiring help with repairs and home improvements within the next 5 years (12% and 14.5% of respondents respectively), and other practical help related to personal services such as gardening and help in the home. This supports the findings of the Older Person Housing Aspirations study which forecasts growing need in the older population.
- 3.3.22 Other supported needs for the mentally ill, homeless, people with learning disabilities are identified in the wider housing strategy and have not been explored in any depth in this study. However, opportunities through housing Corporation funding for special needs housing will continue to be pursued on a planned basis, and development of new sites facilities opportunities for providing housing built for people with specific disabilities, including wheelchair adaptable homes,

3.4 Recommendations

3.4.1 The **summary approach** that is **recommended as a strategic approach to housing in the areas is**

- (i) There needs to be a planned approach to each settlement area
- (ii) There are opportunities to link specific initiatives which apply across the whole of the study area
- (iii) Each settlement area has particular issues to address, and specific policy needs to be attenuated to each settlement area

3.4.2 Settlement Plans

Neighbourhood management plans exist at the current time. Gateshead council should

- Consider the development of Settlement Plans for locations throughout the area of study
- Settlement plans will draw together information set out in this report and from other sources. The plans could cover, for example, the function of the area in the housing market, strategic approach, opportunities for investment, which partners can deliver particular aspects of the plan, funding opportunities and arrangements for monitoring. In areas displaying higher levels of market vulnerability
- Where sites are identified for development (or potential development) and the planning brief is setting out the mix of housing, how local and strategic housing objectives, and how affordable housing elements and other potential community benefits are to be realised by the development needs to be determined
- A formal Neighbourhood Action Plan should be developed to provide a planning framework
- The neighbourhood action plans will identify other interventions required to assist in meeting long-term sustainability objectives
- Two areas suggested for immediate attention are Chopwell and Crawcrook.

3.4.3 Partnership working

Partnership working is a cornerstone of the Housing Strategy. In terms of each settlement, it would be useful to identify particular partners who are integral to the realisation of housing strategy objectives for the area. Requirements on partners, and the process of working through the project, and what can be delivered could be set out under the following:

- Working with the community – including voluntary organisations
- Working with developers – private sector, RSL's
- Working with Individual householders
- Working with other service providers
- The local authority contribution – roles of local politicians, local authority services

3.4.4 Affordable Housing Policy

The issue of what 'affordable housing' means, and its potential impacts needs to be clarified and made explicit. Although this is an issue that applies to the wider Gateshead area, there are specific features that will apply here. The following elements could be included in an affordable housing statement

- A definition of how affordability is calculated. The JRF findings report¹³ is a useful starting point
- Conduct a debate with housing developers, relevant sections within the local authority (i.e. property services, the planning department, legal services), The Housing Corporation and other relevant bodies on the current Supplementary Planning Guidance 11 on affordable housing, with the aim of

¹³ Wilcox, S. (2005), *ibid*

- producing an agreed statement on how the objectives of the statement can be realised in practice
- Agree what elements of any potential scheme can be described as affordable; e.g. what are target level prices for shared ownership, and what form this shared ownership should be
- Explore how the benefit derived from land value can best be realised; for example, this could be in the provision of affordable housing on a particular site by selling at below market value, or by transferring the benefit derived to provision of affordable housing elsewhere, or by investing in other opportunities that create community benefit
- Explore opportunities for other models of preserving affordable housing in perpetuity' within the affordable housing policy e.g. discounted price models where a body such as an RSL owns part of the equity as a 'sleeping partner'
- Explore the role that 'exceptions' policies may be able to play in the rural areas where values are particularly difficult for local people, in bringing forward sites that otherwise are not designated for development
- Explore with The Housing Corporation how resources through the National Affordable Housing programme may supplement the delivery of strategic housing objectives in the study area
- Ensure the policy, and where it applies (e.g. on all schemes above 25 units) is widely promoted and understood in order that land values may be influenced at the earliest possible stage

3.4.5 Regeneration Approaches

Some settlements in the area require a longer-term approach to regeneration.

- Build on Community partnerships that already exist in many of the areas, or how they may be instituted and supported
- Select developers from amongst willing private developers and RSL's who are prepared to engage in a long term commitment and to invest and develop in an area
- Investigate opportunities for joint venture arrangements with the developers for the potential transfer of benefit from land development, whether this in the form of providing affordable housing or other forms of community investment
- Explore the opportunities for linking development elsewhere in the study area, especially in relation to local authority land, for the potential transfer of benefit

3.4.6 Private Sector Housing Approaches

Private sector housing approaches are an integral feature of the strategic housing approach in the study area. Recommendations here build on the recent PSHRS¹⁴ published recently by the authority.

- Gateshead Council should 'front' and promote a scheme which explores the opportunities for equity release in particular settlements within the study area
- As an initial phase, this should concentrate on those areas which are perhaps not in the highest degree of vulnerability (where area plans need to be first developed to frame long-term investment), but those areas, such as Winlaton Mill and Greenside which are displaying signs of 'housing stress', and there are significant issues with older property

¹⁴ Gateshead Council (2006) Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2006 –2009

- There will be start up costs and other associated expense with establishing a scheme (see the JRF report on equity release¹⁵); it would be useful also to calculate other resources under private sector renewal headings (e.g. Disabled Facilities Grant) needed to operate a comprehensive service in an area. It may be possible in these circumstances to seek funding through the NEHB, or other sources, to develop an innovative scheme which does not draw on the public purse in the long-term
- Other such interventions would also include 'block improvement' schemes and improvements to the public realm. In the initial roll-out of a programme, it seems sensible to focus these on particular areas where a comprehensive approach is agreed
- In areas where it is suggested Neighbourhood Action Plans need to be developed, there may be a view that a small number of properties have no long-term market viability. Further analysis is required in these areas, but in such cases, the approach could perhaps be linked to the type of work being undertaken in the Durham villages where resources are being made available through English Partnerships for market intervention
- Fuel poverty. Investment for improving the thermal performance of properties is available from a number of sources and should supplement the approach to improvement of properties in the private sector

3.4.7 Decent Homes

TGHC is now in the process of implementing its investment plan to bring homes up to the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. TGHC reports that it is confident about investing in all settlement areas. This programme should resolve most issues relating to satisfaction with repair.

¹⁵ Gibson, R and Terry, R. (2006) Overcoming Obstacles to Equity Release, Sept 2006, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

4. AREA PROFILES

RYTON PROFILE

SUMMARY

- Nearly half of respondents lived in a semi-detached house.
- More than two thirds of people owned their own homes, four in ten outright. Two in ten rented from Gateshead Housing Company and only 6% rented privately.
- Two thirds of respondents lived in housing dating from 1945 or later.
- More than six out of ten had lived in the same property for over 10 years, and two in ten for 5-10 years.
- A third of homes had only one occupant, and nearly three quarters had only one or two.
- A low level of need was shown for either adaptations for disabled people, or a range of other support needs. Older people preferred the option of continuing to live in their current home with support if needed.
- Satisfaction levels with the appearance and reputation of the area were high compared to rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with the choice of housing to buy or rent were low. People thought there was a need for more affordable family housing and bungalows for elderly people to free up existing housing for families.
- Three in ten people had no access to a car.
- 51 people had moved home in the last five years.
- 22 were planning to move in the next year, and 38 were planning to move in the next five years. The desire to move to a better area, the need for a different type of property, and the need for a larger property were the most common reasons. Detached houses or bungalows were the most sought after properties. Most people wanting to move were hoping to either buy a property or rent from Gateshead Housing Company. Available financial resources to buy a property were variable, though 11 people said they had more than £250K to spend. Most of those who wished to move were hoping to stay in Ryton or move to Crawcrook.

Analysis

- Levels of pre-1919 property are 37% higher than the Gateshead norm, and a higher proportion of people (42%) owned their property outright

- The area has a variety of populations and distinct sub-neighbourhoods, which was commented on in the focus groups, and which require different approaches, and has fairly complex local housing market. Although the area has a wide variety of choice of property in different tenures, access to affordable housing for young people and first time buyers is identified as a problem in the area
- Although satisfaction with reputation and appearance was high in comparison to the study area, there was some concern that a lack of investment had led to a small decline in recent years. This was reflected in the number of comments about related to improving the general environment
- Satisfaction with leisure facilities was low, and there is concern about activities for young people, though some good local services were also commented on
- The level of social renting is 28% overall. It is noted that a specific regeneration plan is being drawn up for the Crofts estate, which was an area that was identified for improvement in the focus group
- The numbers of people stating that they thought they would need help with general repairs and home safety and security issues was slightly higher than the norm
- The desire to move to a 'better area' is essentially a choice of local better area. The survey suggests a growing requirement for accommodation for the elderly, and for larger accommodation, but people recognise the difficulty with being able to afford a move locally. Indicative demand for social renting is quite high.
- The Stella south housing development is likely to function as part of the local housing market, and is also likely to be attractive to people from outside the area. It is noted there is an intention to provide affordable bungalow accommodation on the site
- There has in the past been some local opposition to affordable housing development and the survey indicates that this may persist in the fu

Recommendations

1. There will be a growing demand for interventions in the private housing sector to enable people to remain in their own homes. An equity release and loan scheme for private sector owners in properties could play a prominent role in a strategic approach in the future
2. Issues of affordability are difficult to address in the local market due to the lack of appropriate sites in the immediate settlement. The impacts of the development at Stella South are likely to offer the opportunity to retain population who may otherwise leave the area. Prices and mix are set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance, and this will require monitoring for impacts on the market.
3. The site should also be developed to attract people into the local housing market from outside the Gateshead area. Realising the affordable housing element on the site requires a detailed structured approach with developers. Opportunities to

increase the potential resource should continue to be explored through the National Affordable Housing Programme, under Objectives 2 and 4.

4. The need for affordable housing, in the Ryton area, and the type of needs is to be met, should be promoted and discussed with the community through the forums available.
5. A requirement for housing for rent and at intermediate market levels is identified. There is a requirement for younger households wishing to form households, or those in the middle age wishing to move to more suitable property, and for older people wishing to move to more appropriate housing forms. It will be difficult to fully meet aspiration for detached and larger bungalow property.
6. The investment by TGHC in Council property to bring property up to decent homes standard will continue to be supported, as will the implementation of the neighbourhood investment and management plan for the Crofts estate.

CRAWCROOK PROFILE

Summary

- Eight out of ten people owned their own homes, while 14% rented from Gateshead Housing Company.
- A quarter of respondents lived in properties that dated from before 1919, while half of homes had been built since 1965.
- Six out of ten had lived in the same property for over 10 years, and two in ten for 5-10 years.
- Half of households had two occupants, and a further quarter had only one.
- Satisfaction levels with the state of repair of people's homes were considerably lower than in rural Gateshead as a whole.
- A low level of need was shown for either adaptations for disabled people, or a range of other support needs. Older people preferred the option of continuing to live in their current home with support if needed.
- Satisfaction levels with the appearance and reputation of the area was relatively high compared to rural Gateshead as whole
- Satisfaction with the choice of housing to buy and rent were low compared to rural Gateshead as a whole.
- More people thought dogs and dog mess were a serious local problem, compared with rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Three in ten people had no access to a car.
- 29 people had moved home in the last five years.
- 14 were planning to move in the next year, and 18 were planning to move in the next five years. The need for a smaller property, or for a different type of property, were the most common reasons. Detached houses or bungalows were the most sought after properties. Most people wanting to move were hoping to buy a property with or without a mortgage. Available financial resources to buy a property were variable, with eight people indicating they had more than £200K.

About the data: The survey data is based on 239 responses, including 224 from Crawcrook and 15 from Clara Vale.

Analysis

- The number of older housing properties is 56% greater than that for Gateshead as whole and above the norm for the rural area. This is related to more people reporting problems with disrepair

- The level of owner occupation at 80.6% is higher than the rural housing norm and substantially above the Gateshead average. A relatively high number of people (40.5% of the total and over 50% of all owners) in the survey own their property outright
- A higher proportion of people considered they needed (and would need) assistance with improving their property, including help with energy efficiency measures. A lower proportion of people thought there was no problem with poorly maintained properties
- The population is very stable with 83% of respondents having lived in their property for more than 5 years. Whereas is common, most people would wish to stay in their current property. A relatively high number of people would consider sheltered housing or some other form of housing for older people
- Levels of private rented property are slightly above the norm for the rural area. Levels of social renting are below the norm. A high proportion of the stock is 2 bed bungalows
- The relative dissatisfaction with choice of property to buy or rent reflects a number of factors; firstly, there is an aspiration to move to either bungalows of two bedrooms or more, and in some cases people consider there is a lack of housing for larger families. At the same time, a number of people are seeking property smaller than their current home. It is interesting to note that a relatively high number of people (nearly 17% said they would consider a move to Birtley if they were to move, though the great majority wished to stay in the area
- The amount of empty property was not considered to be a problem in the area, statistics show that the level of vacant property in the area is around market norms
- Crawcrook is not an area that experiences any significant levels of in-migration and the housing market functions on a very local basis. The potential development of the site at Long Rigg, which is earmarked for 120 units of housing, can help substantially with balancing the local housing market. Retention of younger households and accommodation for older people, construction of some smaller homes in the rental and for sale sector, could all be considered. There is likely to be some potential for intermediate tenures, including homes in this sector for older people.
- Respondents view of the area is reasonably positive with concerns over vandalism, hooliganism and crime lower than the norm
- Most concerns could be classified as neighbourhood management problems, though there are relating to parking and conditions of back lanes that are also related to the housing form. The level of satisfaction with access to leisure facilities is high for the study area and in absolute terms, *working with the local community*

Recommendations

1. Support and intervention in the private sector would be helpful in maintaining long-term sustainability. This should be part of the wider strategy of support and intervention in the private sector market which is focussed particularly on the outer west area

2. There is evidence that older owner occupiers require significant levels of support to remain in their own homes. The emerging 'equity release' scheme could play a significant role in this area, and Crawcrook could be considered as a target area to develop and deliver this strategic intervention, as part of an area approach to 'Gateshead Villages' in the outer west
3. Continue to support the investment of TGHC to bring their homes up to the 'decent homes' standard by 2010
4. The construction of new homes should include affordable housing to both retain and attract new and younger households to the village. There is scope for some smaller units of accommodation, for rent and for sale at intermediate market levels.
5. A close working arrangement with the developer(s) of new housing will be required to realise the benefits of an affordable housing strategy for new site development.
6. Practical proposals to develop affordable housing in 'perpetuity' should be explored for new sites. This would entail close working with developers of the housing to deliver workable models.
7. One of the potential models for delivery of intermediate housing at sub-market levels could be where a provider of the property retains equity in the property as a 'golden share'. Gateshead Council should investigate what partner, likely to be a Registered Social Landlord, is prepared to develop this model in partnership with the local authority. Long-term commitment from any partner chosen will be required to implement this approach
8. There is likely to be a requirement for specific specialist housing for older people in the settlement
9. The impact of new development on the settlement's housing market needs to be monitored in the future, including development elsewhere in Gateshead
10. Further interventions to continue to improve neighbourhood management and the delivery of neighbourhood services in the settlement need to be explored to underpin sustainability

WHICKHAM AND FELLSIDE PARK PROFILE

Summary

- Over a third of people lived in a semi-detached house, and a further third in a detached house.
- Two thirds of people owned their own homes outright, and most of the others had a mortgage. Only two people rented privately.
- Three quarters of people lived in properties built between 1965 and 1984.
- Two thirds had lived in the same property for over 10 years, and 15% for 5-10 years.
- Nearly half of households had two occupants, and two in ten had three.
- A low level of need was shown for either adaptations for disabled people, or a range of other support needs. Older people preferred the option of continuing to live in their current home with support if needed.
- Satisfaction levels with the appearance and reputation of the area and the choice of housing to buy and rent were very high.
- Satisfaction levels with local amenities such as schools, shops, leisure facilities, and access to a doctor were high compared with rural Gateshead as a whole.
- More people thought vandalism, hooliganism, crime, dogs and dog mess, and litter in the streets were not a problem locally, compared with rural Gateshead as a whole.
- There were fewer people with no access to a car compared with rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with regard to public transport were slightly higher than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- 25 people had moved home in the last five years.
- Seven were planning to move in the next year, and eight were planning to move in the next five years. The need for a smaller property or a different type of property were the most common reasons. Detached houses or bungalows were the most sought after properties. Most people wanting to move were hoping to buy a property with or without a mortgage. Available financial resources to buy a property were variable. Most people wanting to move home wished to stay in the Whickham and Fellside park area, although several said they would consider moving to Ryton.

Analysis

- This stock in the area is predominately newer with very few properties dating from before the end of the Second World War. Unsurprisingly, very few people identify problems with disrepair. The area has a high degree of stability in terms of turnover of property.
- Virtually all property (over 98%) in the area is owner occupied; it could be argued that the local settlement has an ‘unbalanced’ housing market with little (almost no) choice of tenure. Over 63% of people own their property outright, the highest figure in the study area.
- There is some evidence that the area attracts people to it from outside the area, and that it (together with Ryton and the Derwent Valley area) functions as a sub-area of the wider Tyneside market. It is clear that people who live in the area value it very highly in terms of reputation and appearance, and there is little desire to move away from the area, except fairly locally to Ryton, which shares many similarities. It is again also interesting to note that a number of potential movers are seeking smaller properties than the one they currently occupy.
- Current residents express a high degree of satisfaction with the choice of housing in the market, but the difficulty for local people, particularly younger households, in terms of affordability (including younger local people) is also recognised as a serious problem, with property prices well above the Gateshead norm
- There was some support for building of affordable homes for rent and at ‘entry level’ prices for sale in the area. Local people also thought that building smaller bungalows might release some larger properties. However, opportunities to build housing are difficult to realise due to a lack of sites, and land values for sites are high in the area when there is availability. No ‘windfall’ sites are identified in the UDP.
- Also, some opposition is expressed to building new homes in the area. For example, plans to demolish garages on a site at Fellside Road were criticised, though this could also be related to perceived traffic problems in the area.

Recommendations

1. Any opportunities that emerge in the future to construct homes for affordable housing should be supported. However, current opportunities are scant. In view of this, the consideration of ‘exceptions sites’ for development for affordable housing policies may be considered at a future date.
2. It is unlikely that a convincing case could be made under rural housing strategies in Objective 2 of the Regional Housing Strategy. However, the balancing of the local housing market, and offering affordable housing for rent or sale at intermediate tenures could be supported under this objective.
3. The actions outlined in the PSHRS in terms of assisting older people to stay in their current accommodation, from giving advice on repairs to extending a loans/equity scheme will assist the relatively small number of individual owners in need
4. Work with the local community on the need and case for affordable housing, and its type and mix, could be pursued to lay the ‘groundwork’ should any potential sites emerge at a later date.

GREENSIDE PROFILE

Summary

- Half of people lived in a terraced house, and nearly three in ten in a semi-detached house.
- Three quarters of people owned their own homes either outright or with a mortgage.
- Half of people lived in properties built before 1919.
- Over half had lived in the same property for over 10 years, and two in ten for 5-10 years.
- Two thirds of homes had either one or two occupants.
- A low level of need was shown for either adaptations for disabled people, or a range of other support needs. Older people preferred the option of continuing to live in their current home with support if needed.
- Satisfaction levels with the reputation of the area were higher than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with local amenities such as schools, shops, leisure facilities, and access to a doctor were lower than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Fewer people thought vandalism, hooliganism and crime were serious local problems compared with rural Gateshead as a whole, although more thought dogs and dog mess was a serious problem.
- There were fewer people with no access to a car compared with rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with regard to public transport were lower than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- 26 people had moved home in the last five years.
- Ten were planning to move in the next year, and 19 were planning to move in the next five years. The need for a larger property or housing suitable for an elderly or disabled person were the most common reasons. Semi-detached or detached houses or bungalows were the most sought after properties. Most people wanting to move were hoping to buy a property with or without a mortgage. Available financial resources to buy a property were variable although fairly low compared with rural Gateshead as a whole. Most people wanting to move home wished to stay in Greenside or move to nearby areas such as Ryton, Crawcrook and Tynedale.

About the data: The survey data is based on 138 responses, including 117 from Greenside, one from Low Greenside, 15 from Folly, four from Coalburns, and one from

Dyke Heads. Seven people took part in the focus group. They had lived in the area for periods of time varying between 16 and 33 years.

Analysis

- Greenside has a very high proportion of pre-1919 homes compared with the norm for either the study area or Gateshead as a whole. In some respects, it has similar characteristics to that of ex-coalmining villages in County Durham.
- The number of people who owned their homes outright (35%) is slightly lower than the norm for the study area, but still over 40% greater than the norm throughout Gateshead
- Although there is a long-standing stable population, there are a higher number of recent moves in the area
- The number of private rented homes is nearly three times the average for the study area, and almost twice that of Gateshead as a whole. Higher levels of private renting are often an indicator of a degree of market vulnerability. This is often based on particular streets where private sales are more difficult to realise
- Although local people do not see a problem with empty properties, the area is in the second rank of the vitality index for void properties (3.6% – 5%).
- A high percentage of people said they found their housing costs fairly easy to meet. However, average house prices in the area are higher than the Gateshead average, and local people identify a problem of affordability for young people and a lack of choice of accommodation. There is a lack of suitable housing for the elderly. However, there is a shortage of potential sites in the area, with no probable or marginal site originally identified in the UDP, although a ‘windfall site’ may occasionally become available
- Local people value the area as a good place to live, but consider there are environmental and neighbourhood management issues to address. There is a level of dissatisfaction with leisure amenities and 33% of people were also dissatisfied (or worse) with public transport, reflecting on the more outlying nature of the settlement.

Recommendations

1. Support and intervention in the private sector should be focussed on the Greenside area as a major tool in maintaining long-term sustainability, particularly in respect of enabling people to remain in their current homes.
2. This should be part of the wider strategy of support and intervention in the private sector market which is focussed particularly on the outer west area, and could perhaps be conjoined with Chopwell and other outlying outer west settlements as a ‘Gateshead Villages scheme.’
3. To enable this to be framed within a considered process, Greenside should be considered as an area that requires an area action plan to be drawn up.

4. The issue of empty homes in the area requires further investigation, and where necessary intervention to prevent any deterioration in specific locations. Any relationship with the private rented market needs to be considered, specifically in regard to turnover of property and disrepair.
5. A feature of a private sector renewal approach that could be particularly helpful is the emerging 'equity release' scheme could play a significant role in this area, and as mentioned Greenside should be considered as a target area to develop and deliver this strategic intervention. This could potentially include 'block intervention' on particular streets, either where high levels of owner occupation are evident, or in strategic 'public realm' locations.
6. Although an equity release scheme should be essentially self-funding in the longer-term, there is likely to be some demand for grant and other small scale assistance to owners, and potentially for finance to intervene in the private rented market, where required.
7. Demand will also increase for supported housing options for the elderly. The willingness or ability of people to move if they could be provided in adjacent settlement should be explored further.
8. However, there is little desire from the settlement for moving to Chopwell, which is the area that offers the greatest opportunity in terms of site availability. Potential future provision of housing for older people, including extra care housing, should be explored on the basis of the local settlement. The location of accommodation for older people at Rockwood Hill Road is considered to be in a poorly accessible location, and this should be discussed further with TGHC in terms of long-term sustainability.
9. Support for the investment of TGHC to bring Council homes up to the 'decent homes' standard by 2010 will continue
10. Greenside can be considered to be a settlement in semi-rural area, but does not attract a significant degree of inward migration. Any future opportunities for development, should they emerge, should consider the objective of attracting new people into the area.
11. Opportunities to pursue any newbuild development are however limited, though if they come forward at some future point, accommodation for the elderly and for younger, both family and smaller, households should be considered. The construction of new homes should include affordable housing to both retain and attract new and younger households to the village. There is scope for rent and for sale at intermediate market levels.
12. Practical proposals to develop affordable housing in 'perpetuity' should be explored for new sites. This would entail close working with developers of the housing to deliver workable models.
13. One of the potential models for delivery of intermediate housing at sub-market levels could be where a provider of the property retains equity in the property as a 'golden share'. Gateshead Council should investigate what partner, likely to be a Registered Social Landlord, is prepared to develop this model in partnership with the local authority. Long-term commitment from any partner chosen will be required to implement this approach
14. Further interventions to continue to improve neighbourhood management and the delivery of neighbourhood services in the settlement need to be explored to underpin sustainability. This should be carried out in conjunction with the local community.

CHOPWELL PROFILE

Summary

- Six out of ten people lived in a terraced house.
- Two thirds of people owned their own homes, while two in ten rented from Gateshead Housing Company and one in ten rented privately.
- Most properties were older, with three quarters dating from before 1945.
- Six out of ten had lived in the same property for over 10 years, and one in ten for 5-10 years.
- Eight out of ten homes had only one or two occupants.
- A low level of need was shown for either adaptations for disabled people, or a range of other support needs. Older people preferred the option of continuing to live in their current home with support if needed.
- Satisfaction levels with the appearance and reputation of the area, the choice of housing to buy, and local shops, were low compared to rural Gateshead as a whole.
- There was concern about the amount of property owned by private landlords and the potential anti-social behaviour of some private tenants.
- More people thought vandalism and hooliganism was a serious problem, and fewer thought crime was a serious problem, compared to rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Four in ten people had no access to a car. Satisfaction levels with public transport were low compared to rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Few people thought there were serious problems with heavy traffic or traffic noise compared to rural Gateshead as a whole.
- 40 people had moved home in the last five years.
- 11 were planning to move in the next year, and 17 were planning to move in the next five years. The need for a larger property or for a different type of property were the most important reasons. Most people wanting to move were hoping to either buy a property or rent from Gateshead Housing Company. Available financial resources to buy a property were relatively low. Most of those who wished to move were hoping to stay in Chopwell or Blackhall Mill.

Analysis

- The communities of Blackhall Mill and Chopwell share several characteristics, but the market in Blackhall Mill is more robust

- The overall area, and particularly Chopwell, has shown significant signs of market vulnerability for a number of years. This is reflected in the high levels of private renting in the area, which is early 4 times the rate for the study area, and three times that for the study area as a whole. Although there is a stable core and majority population, it tends to be the aging, and there are many more people who have moved recently in the area (8% of respondents have moved within the last year, with a further 8% having moved in the last 1-2 years)
- There is a perception and some evidence that a number of these moves into private renting have been from outside the area. Concern over the management of properties and behaviour of some tenants has been a long-standing concern locally, and was one of the significant drivers behind Gateshead's championing of the move to licence private landlords.
- The base level of private renting conceals figures for some street that have levels of private renting far beyond this. Specific mapping exercises have been carried out by the Private Sector Housing Team which show some streets in the rivers estate which have levels above 45% in two streets and between 23% and 45% in a further nine streets
- The Chopwell south area is in the first rank of vulnerability in terms of housing appraisal within Gateshead's Neighbourhood vitality index, while the south area is ranked in the second level of viability. Chopwell North and Blackhall Mill both of levels of vacant property above the norm. Empty properties, particularly shops were commented on by residents has detracting to the general appearance and reputation of the area
- Levels of owner occupation are still relatively high for Gateshead, although below the norm for the study area. The number of people who own their homes outright is high at 40% of households (60% of all homeowners), reflecting that there are a high number of older people who own home in the area
- The levels of satisfaction with the appearance and reputation of the area were considerably below other parts of the study area. However, people do praise the recent interventions in neighbourhood management, and believe that a number of interventions have contributed to an improvement in the area.
- There is an active community partnership which is well recognised in the area and has been involved in a number of the interventions which are perceived to have improved the area
- Levels of car ownership are low, and there is a level of dissatisfaction with public transport which reflects both this and the position of the community as the most outlying in the Gateshead area
- There is some anecdotal evidence that property has become easier to sell, as reported by local estate agents.

- Blackhall Mill has a different function in the housing market. It has attracted people into the area from outside who value the location as pleasant environment in which to live
- Comments have been made that there is a lack of accommodation for older people in the area, and a number of properties (together with some wheelchair accommodation and lifetime homes) are planned on the large Chopwell heartlands site, which is adjacent to the Rivers estate, and which is earmarked for 279 units of development, which includes 70 affordable housing units, 30% of the whole to be lifetime homes, and 5% of homes to be to wheelchair standard. The mix of this development is likely to have some bearing on the robustness of the housing market, as it may attract a number of older occupiers into the property, leaving homes for which there is not a ready market for sale behind. Residents have welcomed recent development of housing for sale and it is likely that new people can be attracted to the area. Impacts on the local housing market need to be carefully considered, as the Heartlands site, and other smaller sites, prior to full entry into their development phase

Recommendations

1. Chopwell requires a broad 'regeneration' approach, with an Area Action Plan drawn up, through which all investment and interventions, including that in housing, can be focussed, and the effects monitored.
2. Support and intervention in the private sector should be focussed on the Chopwell area as a major tool in maintaining long-term sustainability, particularly in respect of enabling people to remain in their current homes.
3. This should be part of the wider strategy of support and intervention in the private sector market that is focussed particularly on the outer west area, and could perhaps be conjoined with Greenside and other outlying outer west settlements as a 'Gateshead Villages' scheme. Chopwell itself (and to a lesser degree Blackhall Mill) is exhibiting the highest degree of market vulnerability in the study area.
4. The issue of empty homes and shops in the area requires further investigation and action. Opportunities for investment in 'block schemes' in sustainable locations, particularly in visible areas such as main routes through the village should be considered.
5. The high level of private renting in some streets, anti-social behaviour and turnover of properties all suggest that current, and more intensive interventions, are required to produce a sustainable housing market.
6. A feature of a private sector renewal approach that could be particularly helpful is the emerging 'equity release' scheme. This could play a significant role in this area, and Chopwell should be considered as a target area to develop and deliver this strategic intervention. However, longer-term investment that emerges through this route needs to be in a framework of assessment of the sustainability of particular streets, particularly in regard to those exhibiting a high degree of instability.
7. Although an equity release scheme should be essentially self-funding in the longer-term, there is likely to be some demand for grant and other small scale assistance to owners, and potentially for finance to intervene in the private rented market, where required and supported
8. Demand will also increase for more appropriate housing (2 bed bungalows) and for supported housing options for the elderly, including extra care. Options available to

pursue these are available through the council owned large 'Heartlands' site and other smaller sites, also owned by the local authority, which are identified in the UDP.

9. The development of new sites needs to draw more people into the settlement, as well as retaining those local people who may have moved, particularly into Derwentside, through lack of choice of the right kind of property in the past.
10. The impacts of the new developments on local housing markets, in all tenures, needs to be carefully monitored. There is likely to be some impact in terms of demand on both older terraced streets, and on the TGHC stock.
11. The ability to realise the benefits from land values to produce affordable housing, to invest in other amenities in the settlement, and to potentially support the interventions in the private housing sector, will require careful consideration, and a long term structured approach.
12. Opportunities to seek additional money, potentially under all objectives set out in the Regional Housing Strategy, are much more likely to succeed against a fully coherent planning and regeneration framework.
13. Careful selection of developers, who are likely to include RSLs as well as private sector housebuilders, will be required. They should be partners who are enthusiastic in terms of embracing the processes of working in a regeneration partnership, and who are prepared to commit to working in the area for a long period of time.
14. Gateshead Council may wish to consider a special purchase vehicle, such as a joint venture arrangement, to undertake this work. It may be possible to apply this approach to other settlements, including working jointly on other sites, to realise the full benefits of the approach.
15. This approach would also facilitate the development of housing to meet other special needs, and potentially housing for the intermediate market that can be kept in perpetuity for the intermediate market.
16. Support for the investment of TGHC to bring their homes up to the 'decent homes' standard by 2010 will continue. TGHC will also wish, as noted to monitor effect on their stock of development, and to be part of any regeneration partnership.
17. The regeneration partnership proposed should also be closely integrated with the current community partnership working in Chopwell, which is well known and supported. Interventions through Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and other sources, such as SureStart, should be integrated into the wider regeneration approach.

HIGHFIELD PROFILE

Summary

- Nearly half of people lived in a terraced house, and three in ten lived in a semi-detached house.
- Nearly half of people rented from Gateshead Housing Company, while four in ten owned their own homes either outright or with a mortgage.
- Nearly six in ten people lived in properties built between 1945 and 1984.
- Six out of ten people had lived in the same property for over 10 years, and three in ten for 5-10 years.
- Satisfaction levels with the state of repair of properties were lower than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Two thirds of homes had either one or two occupants.
- There were no wheelchair or motorized scooter users and a low level of need was shown for either adaptations for disabled people, or a range of other support needs. Older people preferred the option of continuing to live in their current home with support if needed.
- Satisfaction levels with the appearance and reputation of the area were lower than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with local amenities such as schools, leisure facilities, and access to a doctor were lower than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Fewer people thought vandalism, hooliganism, dogs and dog mess, and litter in the streets were serious local problems compared with rural Gateshead as a whole.
- A similar proportion of respondents had no access to a car compared with rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with regard to public transport were lower than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Seven people had moved home in the last five years.
- Four were planning to move in the next year, and another four were planning to move in the next five years. The need for a larger property or a larger garden were the most common reasons. Semi-detached, detached or terraced houses with at least three bedrooms were the most sought after properties. Most people wanting to move were hoping to buy a property or rent from Gateshead Housing Company.

About the data: The survey data is based on 65 responses, including 63 from Highfield and two from Hooker Gate. (Please note that where percentages are given for survey data, they are based on 65 or fewer responses and should be treated with caution). Six

participants took part in the focus group, including one outreach worker and five local parents. The participants had been Highfield residents for between two and 17 years.

Analysis

- The Highfield area is a small area that has connections to the wider Rowlands Gill local market. This is described as 'buoyant' by local estate agents. The area has a high level of social renting.
- There are no significant issues with sustainability in the area. The area is in the second rank in terms of the housing indicators of the neighbourhood vitality index, but that is a function of lower prices in ex-council housing bought under the right to buy. Vacancy rates for property are around the norm. TGHC sees no problems with long term viability of its housing stock in the area
- House prices are high in the area and seen as a barrier to local people getting access to the private housing market
- Satisfaction is relatively low with the state of repairs of property but that is likely to be addressed by the implementation of the decent homes programme. The reason for the low level of satisfaction with reputation and appearance of the area is related to past issues on the Highfield estate which are being addressed by TGHC
- There was support for the building of homes for rent for local people, especially young couples. Shared ownership was mentioned as a potential way of making the housing market accessible

Recommendations

1. Support and intervention in the private sector would be helpful in maintaining long-term sustainability. This should be part of the wider strategy of support and intervention in the private sector market.
2. There is evidence that some older owner-occupiers require significant levels of support to remain in their own homes. The emerging 'equity release' scheme could play a significant role in this area. A number of properties are built in the inter-war period, and it is likely that disrepair in this period stock will become a growing problem in the future
3. Continuing to support the investment of TGHC to bring Council homes up to the 'decent homes' standard by 2010 will resolve the higher level of dissatisfaction with disrepair in the area.
4. TGHC has also undertaken estate planning and management work in the area and this has, and will continue to have, positive effects on the stability and sustainability of the area.
5. Opportunities for the construction of new homes are limited, but should include affordable housing to both retain and attract new and younger households to the settlement. There is scope for rent and for sale at intermediate market levels.
6. The construction of affordable bungalow accommodation for older people will help to meet current and future needs, and release family stock for rent in the area

House prices are considered unaffordable in the area, and there is scope to include intermediate market housing, including housing in this tenure for older people.

ROWLANDS GILL PROFILE

Summary

- Nearly four in ten people lived in a semi-detached house, and a quarter lived in a detached house.
- Two thirds of people owned their own homes either outright or with a mortgage, and three in ten rented from Gateshead Housing Company.
- Around half of people lived in properties built before 1965, and just over a third in homes built between 1965 and 1984.
- Over half of people had lived in the same property for over 10 years, and two in ten for 5-10 years.
- Satisfaction levels with the state of repair of properties were similar to the average for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Half of households had two occupants, while nearly a quarter had only one.
- A low level of need was shown for either adaptations for disabled people, or a range of other support needs. Older people preferred the option of continuing to live in their current home with support if needed.
- Satisfaction levels with the appearance and reputation of the area were higher than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with local amenities such as schools, shops, leisure facilities, and access to a doctor were lower than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Fewer people thought vandalism, hooliganism, crime, dogs and dog mess, and litter in the streets were serious local problems compared with rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Fewer respondents had no access to a car compared with rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with regard to public transport were lower than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- 33 people had moved home in the last five years.
- Seven were planning to move in the next year, and another ten were planning to move in the next five years. The need for a smaller property was the most common reason. Detached or semi-detached bungalows were the most sought after properties. Most people wanting to move were hoping to buy a property or rent from Gateshead Housing Company. Most people wanting to move home expressed a preference to remain in Rowlands Gill.

About the data: The survey data is based on 237 responses, all from Rowlands Gill. Six people (five women and one man) took part in the Rowlands Gill focus group

Analysis

- The area has a stable population that values the area highly. The housing market is buoyant and is capable of attracting people from a wider area, as well as being a popular choice with local people. Recent house building has attracted new people into the area
- House prices are 50% higher than the Gateshead average and close to the national average. Access to the market for local people is seen as problematic, although estate agents reported prices as levelling off, or becoming 'more realistic' at the lower end of the market. It was thought there was a lack of housing for older people who may wish to move to find a property more suitable to their needs. Although there was some support for building affordable housing, there was also opposition expressed to building any more property at all in the future.
- The area was thought to have a good mix of housing by those people attending the focus group, and there is variety of stock with higher levels of social housing (32%) than the study norm, or of Gateshead in general
- Some mention was made of the condition of repair of the Council stock, but it was believed this would be resolved by the decent homes which was scheduled to take place on the property
- The level of home ownership is below the norm for the area, although the number of people who own their property outright is higher than the norm at 40%
- The housing stock has fewer pre war Second World War properties than most other areas, with 77% of the housing having been constructed since 1944.
- Satisfaction levels with general maintenance of the area was praised by a number of people, and dissatisfaction focused on the relative isolation of the area in terms of public transport and a perceived lack of amenities. Comment was made on the need for traffic management and control measures as need in improving the area
- While a relatively low lack of need was expressed for support needs, over 10% expressed a wish to receive help with gardening, carrying out repairs, with household task, and improving security and safety in their home; with some expression of requiring help with energy efficiency measures and on undertaking bigger home improvement work. This need is likely to increase in the future.

Recommendations

1. Support and intervention in the private sector would be helpful in maintaining long-term sustainability. This should be part of the wider strategy of support and intervention in the private sector market.
2. There is evidence that some older owner-occupiers require significant levels of support to remain in their own homes. The emerging 'equity release' scheme could play a significant role in this area. A number of properties are built in the inter-war period, and it is likely that disrepair in this period stock will become a growing problem in the future

3. Continuing to support the investment of TGHC to bring their homes up to the 'decent homes' standard by 2010 will resolve issues with disrepair in the public sector stock
4. There is scope for construction of new homes on small number of sites, most of which are in the ownership of Gateshead Council, and which will be available for development in the development plan period. The construction of new homes should include affordable housing to both retain and attract new and younger households to the settlement. There is scope for rent and for sale at intermediate market levels.
5. The construction of affordable bungalow accommodation for older people will help to meet current and future needs. However, there is a shortage of affordable housing for rent or at intermediate market levels, and consideration should be given to prioritising them in the development of sites.
6. In order to plan coherently, Gateshead Council may wish to consider 'packaging' development sites it has for sale, which will make them more attractive to developers, and will facilitate the delivery of an affordable housing element, and will assist in the delivery of housing for special needs.
7. Gateshead Council may wish to consider a 'partnering approach' to deliver the housing it wishes to see developed, and forming a longer term relationship with developers
8. House prices are considered unaffordable in the area, and are considerably above the norm for Gateshead. There may be opportunities to seek funding under Objectives 2 and 4 to provide a balanced housing market in the area
9. There is likely to be a degree of opposition to the development of sites for housing. Work should proceed with the community to set out the need for new development and the purpose its construction is serving.

SUNNISIDE PROFILE

Summary

- Nearly four in ten people lived in semi-detached houses, and a similar number lived in terraced housing.
- Seven in ten people owned their own homes either outright or with a mortgage, and a quarter rented from Gateshead Housing Company.
- Over half of people lived in properties built between 1965 and 1984.
- Six in ten people had lived in the same property for over 10 years, and a quarter for 5-10 years.
- Satisfaction levels with the state of repair of properties were slightly higher than the average for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Two thirds of households had either one or two occupants.
- A low level of need was shown for either adaptation for disabled people, or a range of other support needs. Older people preferred the option of continuing to live in their current home with support if needed.
- Satisfaction levels with the reputation of the area, and with the choice of housing to rent locally, were slightly higher than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with local schools and leisure facilities were lower than for rural Gateshead as a whole, while satisfaction levels with local shops was higher.
- Fewer people thought vandalism, hooliganism, crime, and litter in the streets were serious local problems compared with rural Gateshead as a whole, although more people thought there were serious problems with dogs and dog mess.
- Fewer respondents had no access to a car compared with rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with regard to public transport were lower than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- 31 people had moved home in the last five years.
- Seven were planning to move in the next year, and another 11 were planning to move in the next five years. The need for a smaller property, a larger property, or a different type of property were the most common reasons. Detached or semi-detached bungalows and semi-detached houses were the most sought after properties. Most people wanting to move were hoping to buy a property.

About the data: The survey data is based on 220 responses, including 168 from Sunnyside, 32 from Marley Hill, 12 from Street Gate, and eight from Byermoor.

Analysis

- There is a high degree of stability in the area, and people value its reputation and appearance. The area is made up of a series of settlements that have a distinct identity. Detailed analysis of the smaller settlements may be worth considering to assess what specific issues there are in particular locations.
- Levels of social renting are slightly higher than the Gateshead norm and there is good mix of properties and choice in the local market. The numbers of private rented properties is around the norm for the study area, and lower than the Gateshead norm; levels of owner occupation are around 5% above the Gateshead norm. 31% of people owned their property outright.
- There are relatively low numbers of older stock in the area. The stock owned by TGHC is predominately 2-bed bungalow and three bedroom family housing.
- The number of void properties is the around the norm, and what would be expected to be seen in a functioning housing market to allow moves between properties
- Most concerns are related to the generally ‘outlying’ nature of the settlements, which are reflected in the lower satisfaction levels with public transport and amenities. A number of the settlements are small and do not have a full range of amenities close by. Traffic management issues were again mentioned by a number of respondents. Again, a concern over the opportunities for young people were commented on, with expression of the view that more and better facilities and activities for young people
- There were fewer people expecting to move than in other areas. Some views were expressed that there was a lack of affordable housing for young people and first time buyers, and that more social housing was needed for young people and older people. However, there is again a lack of sites identified for development in the area

Recommendations

1. Any opportunities that emerge in the future to construct homes for affordable housing should be supported. However, there are no current opportunities available. In view of this, the consideration of ‘exceptions sites’ for development for affordable housing policies may be considered at a future date.
2. It is unlikely that a convincing case could be made under rural housing strategies in Objective 2 of the Regional Housing Strategy. However, the balancing of the local housing market, and offering affordable housing for rent or sale at intermediate tenures could be supported under this objective
3. The actions outlined in the PSHRS in terms of assisting older people to stay in their current accommodation, from giving advice on repairs to extending a loans/equity scheme will assist the relatively small number of individual owners in need
4. Work with the local community on the need and case for affordable housing, and its type and mix, could be pursued to lay the ‘groundwork’ should any potential sites emerge at a later date

SUNNISIDE PROFILE

KIBBLESWORTH PROFILE

Summary

- Half of people lived in semi-detached houses, and a quarter lived in terraced housing.
- More than half of people rented their homes from Gateshead Housing Company, while four in ten owned their own homes either outright or with a mortgage.
- More than two thirds of people lived in properties built between 1919 and 1964. No one lived in a home built later than 1984.
- Six in ten people had lived in the same property for over 10 years, and over a quarter for 5-10 years.
- Satisfaction levels with the state of repair of properties were similar to those for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- More than half of households had two occupants.
- A low level of need was shown for either adaptations for disabled people, or a range of other support needs. Older people preferred the option of continuing to live in their current home with support if needed.
- Satisfaction levels with the appearance and reputation of the area were slightly higher than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with local schools, shops and leisure facilities were higher than for rural Gateshead as a whole, while satisfaction levels with access to a doctor or a place of worship were lower.
- Fewer people thought vandalism, hooliganism, crime, dogs and dog mess, and litter in the streets were serious local problems compared with rural Gateshead as a whole.
- More respondents had no access to a car compared with rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with regard to public transport were higher than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Six people had moved home in the last five years.
- One was planning to move in the next year, and another two were planning to move in the next five years. The need for a different type of property or a property suitable for an elderly or disabled person were the most common reasons. The most common preference was to move to a rented property in either Kibblesworth, Lamesley or Birtley.

About the data: The survey data is based on 63 responses, including 49 from Kibblesworth and 13 from Lamesley. (Please note that where percentages are given for survey data, they are based on 63 or fewer responses and should be treated with caution). Seven people took part in the focus group. They were all long-term Kibblesworth residents, having lived there for periods ranging from 50 to 68 years.

Analysis

- The areas included in this profile are relatively small. They are areas of great stability, with populations who have lived in their property for a long time (85% of people have lived in their current home for over 5 year. Kibblesworth and Lamesley are distinct settlements.
- The area has a high proportion of social housing stock, with 55% renting from TGHC, and a further 2% from a housing association. Around half of the TGHC homes are 3 bedroom family houses, with a further 35% being 2 bed bungalows. TGHC considers the rental market for its homes to be robust.
- The number of empty properties is below the Gateshead norm and in line with the amount of housing needed to facilitate movement in the market. The area is not regarded as vulnerable in terms of the housing index in the neighbourhood vitality statistic, the percentage of housing in the social housing sector does not represent a balanced housing market
- Some of the Kibblesworth stock is systems built, and a number of residents believe it detracts from the appearance of the village, and believe it should be replaced, rather than renovated. A number of family homes in the social stock are occupied by older single people or couples, and the building of more suitable accommodation for them locally would 'free up' housing for younger people.
- Although there is a high degree of satisfaction with the area in virtually all categories on which views were expressed, residents do recognise that there is a need for change in the area. The population is ageing, and the comments were made that 'new blood' was need in the area if it is to thrive in the future.
- House prices in the area are considered to be more affordable for local people, again probably a reflection to some degree of the availability of homes previously purchased under the right to buy, and average house prices are around the Gateshead norm.
- The development of the privately owned Kibblesworth North¹⁶ site has been proposed since the late 1990's. The amount of housing proposed, which is planned for 240 homes, will have a significant effect on the local market. There will be an opportunity to attract new people to the area and to better 'balance' the housing market. 60 homes are planned to be for affordable housing, and 30% and 5% respectively of the properties are to be 'lifetime' and wheelchair housing
- The development of the site, assuming it finally comes forward for development, will have major impacts on the settlement. Private sector homes will potentially capture some local demand, but will also attract people to it from other parts of Gateshead and from outside the area. It has the potential to be an attractive development, and in addition to the affordable housing earmarked for the site, could support a variety of market housing, from entry level prices to larger, perhaps detached homes,

¹⁶ Draft SPG 17 of Gateshead UDP

which would support wider sub-regional strategy. Other smaller sites are also planned for development within the planning period.

- Impacts on the wider community in terms of transport and education will need to be planned for as part of the overall development. The provision of family housing on the site will support and maintain the local primary school

Recommendations

1. The current housing market will be better balanced with the development of the Kibblesworth North site, and other smaller sites earmarked for development.
2. The construction of a range of housing is planned on the Kibblesworth North site. The site will need to be developed to attract new people to it, and particularly those who may previously have left Gateshead due to a lack of choice in the housing market, i.e. younger households, and those seeking family accommodation
3. The site could also be developed to serve the wider housing market, through the construction of larger homes.
4. The construction of some bungalow accommodation on the site would release housing from the social rented stock for occupation by families. Other affordable family housing, for rent or for intermediate market purchase, is likely to prove attractive. Some specialist accommodation is also planned for the site, which would serve the needs of disabled people. The construction of this type of property (and the requirement for 'lifetime homes' across the development) is however expensive and is a further challenge in achieving affordable housing objectives
5. Consideration will need to be given to retaining affordable housing properties 'in perpetuity'; in order to achieve this, Gateshead will need to hold discussions with potential managers of the property, almost certain to an RSL, in order to explore whether they are prepared or able to develop a scheme which achieves this.
6. The realisation of affordable housing on this site, therefore, together with any other community benefits that may be desired from the development, will require a highly structured approach. Detailed discussions will be required with the developers, with all parties to the proposal, and a clear plan of how this may be achieved.
7. It is not tenable that the provision of affordable housing on the site could be framed within a rural housing perspective. However, there may be some opportunity to generate additional resources through the NAHP programme, under Objective 2 and 4 of the RHS. Although there is significant competition for these resources, having schemes ready to pick up funding could assist in accelerating the achievement of affordable housing objectives.
8. Impacts on the local and wider housing market, particularly that in the Gateshead HMR area will need to be carefully monitored over the period of development
9. Continuing to support the investment of TGHC to bring Council homes up to the 'decent homes' standard by 2010 will resolve issues with disrepair in the public sector stock. However, TGHC will need to monitor the impact of development of the site in terms impact on its stock in the area, and the value for money associated with improvements to non-traditional forms, and their long-term sustainability
10. The actions outlined in the PSHRS in terms of assisting older people to stay in their current accommodation, from giving advice on repairs to extending a loans/equity scheme will assist the relatively small number of individual owners in need, and help to contribute to sustainability of the local housing market

BIRTLEY PROFILE

Summary

- Four in ten people lived in terraced houses, and three in ten in semi-detached houses.
- Nearly six in ten people owned their own homes either outright or with a mortgage, and nearly four in ten rented their homes from Gateshead Housing Company.
- Four in ten people lived in properties built between 1945 and 1964, and three in ten in homes built between 1965 and 1984.
- Six in ten people had lived in the same property for 10+ years, and two in ten for 5-10 years.
- Satisfaction levels with the state of repair of properties were lower than those for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Four in ten households had two occupants, while three in ten had only one.
- A low level of need was shown for either adaptations for disabled people, or a range of other support needs. Older people preferred the option of continuing to live in their current home with support if needed.
- Satisfaction levels with the appearance and reputation of the area were lower than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with the choice of housing to buy or rent were higher than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with local schools, shops and access to a doctor were similar to those for rural Gateshead as a whole, while satisfaction levels with leisure facilities were higher.
- More people thought vandalism, hooliganism, crime, dogs and dog mess, and litter in the streets were serious local problems compared with rural Gateshead as a whole.
- More respondents had no access to a car compared with rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with regard to public transport were slightly higher than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- 87 people had moved home in the last five years.
- 31 were planning to move in the next year, and another 40 were planning to move in the next five years. The need for a larger or smaller property were the most common reasons. Detached, semi-detached or terraced bungalows, and detached or semi-detached houses were the most sought after properties. Most people were hoping to buy a new property or rent from Gateshead Housing Company. The most common location preference was to remain in Birtley.

About the data: The survey data is based on 523 responses, including 452 from Birtley, 54 from Barley Mow, and 17 from Vigo. The Birtley focus group had six participants, at least four of who had lived in the area for a considerable length of time (i.e. between 26 and 43 years).

Analysis

- The Birtley area has a high degree of stability, with 82% of people having lived in their homes and turnover of property around 4% per year
- The number of void properties in one neighbourhood in Birtley is above the norm for the study area, with between 3.6 and 5% of empty properties in the central area of Birtley. Issues with empty properties and the state of repair of private homes are on a generally 'pepper potted' basis. There are a number of empty shops in the area. Levels of private renting are very low, and half the study area, and one third of that for Gateshead as a whole
- There is a small percentage of pre-1919 property in Birtley (8%) compared with the study area and Gateshead as a whole. A great percentage of property has been built since the end of the Second World War – 79% compared with 69% for the study area and 63% for Gateshead as a whole. There is a relatively high proportion of social rented housing in the area with 39% of homes in this tenure. The dissatisfaction expressed with repairs at focus groups and in the survey is related to this, an issue that will be addressed through the decent homes programme. This latter point was the issue identified as the most important issue for local people, with over 12% identifying modernisation and repair of TGHC homes as being the key issue to improving housing in the area, twice as much as any other issue.
- Levels of satisfaction with the appearance and reputation of the area and a number of other social issues – including those related with traffic are higher. Indeed, nearly half of the people expressed dissatisfaction with traffic management in the area, which is much higher than other study areas.
- The area has, of course, much more of an urban character than most other parts of the study area. There is some conflict in reported satisfaction with that reported by the very active Birtley Partnership, who have reported much higher levels of satisfaction, at least in terms of services
- Local people believe that access to the housing market for sale in particular is difficult, with house prices (although below Chester-le-Street to the south and Low Fell to the north) being 32% above the norm for Gateshead. Local people believe there is a difficulty for local people, including those forming new households, from accessing larger family housing and flats, either for purchase (because of affordability), or for rent (because of a shortage of smaller and larger types and the popularity of housing in the area). Local estate agents report prices at the lower end of the market becoming more realistic, and also that sales of recently completed new build housing schemes have gone well

- The approval of the Birtley Northside side site is a key matter for the area, and indeed within Gateshead's overall housing strategy, and can address issues of local needs and aspirations. This is subject to the 34-hectare site for approximately 852 homes being approved. One of the major ambitions for this site should be that is able to retain local people in the area, and potentially attract people from outside the Gateshead boundary. People are attracted to the A1 corridor because of the access to routes to work, although the traffic load onto the A1 and the local road network is also one of the major issues to resolve to enable development to proceed. The impacts on the local housing market will need to be considered as the site is developed, though in general terms it is likely to consolidate the local housing market over time
- Significant levels of affordable housing provision are planned on the Birtley Northside site, with an estimated 213 homes in the allocation (likely to be developed over the 10 year planning period. Gateshead Council aims to produce a significant proportion of this affordable housing benefit through realising land value; approximately two thirds of the site is in local authority ownership. Detailed supplementary planning guidance had been produced to steer development of the site.
- It should be noted firstly that 10% of the sum generated for land sales has already been earmarked for town centre up grades, following a recent 'planning for real' carried out in conjunction with the Birtley partnership. Secondly, producing this level of affordable housing will require careful negotiation, close collaboration and partnership with developers. A brief consideration of the likely revenues from land sales suggests that it will be challenging to generate 25% of homes at an affordable level, relying on land value alone. This depends on the type and mix of affordable housing to be built; though it is noted that 30% of the total are to be Gateshead standard lifetime homes, and a further 5% are to be wheelchair standard homes.

Recommendations

1. The current housing market will be better balanced with the development of the remainder of the Birtley Northside site, and other smaller sites earmarked for development.
2. The construction of a range of housing is planned on the Birtley Northside site. Similar to the Kibblesworth site, the site will need to be developed to attract new people to it, and particularly those who may previously have left Gateshead due to a lack of choice in the housing market, i.e. younger households, and those seeking family accommodation
3. The site could also be developed to serve the wider housing market, through the construction of larger homes.
4. Affordable family housing, for rent or for intermediate market purchase, is likely to prove attractive. Scope seems to be available to construct some smaller homes for people forming their first households. Some specialist accommodation is also planned for the site, which would serve the needs of disabled people.
5. Consideration will need to be given to retaining affordable housing properties 'in perpetuity'; in order to achieve this, Gateshead will need to hold discussions with

- potential managers of the property, almost certain to an RSL, in order to explore whether they are prepared or able to develop a scheme which achieves this.
6. The realisation of affordable housing on this site, therefore, together with any other community benefits that may be desired from the development, will require a highly structured approach, and this has been recognised in planning guidance. There are opportunities to realise value to contribute to the provision of the affordable housing on this site, as approximately two-thirds of the remainder of the site is in the ownership of Gateshead Council
 7. Detailed discussions will nevertheless be required with the developers, with all parties to the proposal, and a clear plan of how this may be achieved. The developers have already expressed anxiety and anxiety about achieving the affordable and lifetime homes/wheelchair standards on the site, and this issue needs to be explored further
 8. Again, it is not tenable that the provision of affordable housing on the site could be framed within a rural housing perspective. However, there may be some opportunity to generate additional resources through the NAHP programme, under Objective 2 and 4 of the RHS. Although there is significant competition for these resources, having schemes ready to pick up funding could assist in accelerating the achievement of affordable housing objectives.
 9. Impacts on the local and wider housing market, particularly that in the Gateshead HMR area will need to be carefully monitored over the period of development
 10. Continuing to support the investment of TGHC to bring their homes up to the 'decent homes' standard by 2010 will resolve issues with disrepair in the public sector stock. A number of investments are being framed within estate appraisals of particular schemes, and intensive local management and a neighbourhood approach is supported
 11. The actions outlined in the PSHRS in terms of assisting older people to stay in their current accommodation, from giving advice on repairs to extending a loans/equity scheme will assist individual owners who require assistance in undertaking repair, improvements and potentially some adaptations to their property, and help to contribute to sustainability of the local housing market.
 12. Further work in investigating relatively high levels of vacant property in part of the Birtley area needs to be undertaken to ensure there are no specific problems. It is possible that some of the 10% of money earmarked for investment in schemes generating community benefit in Birtley itself could be used to tackle issues of empty properties if required, or other issues of disrepair in the private sector
 13. It is also noted that resources are required to continue with support for general neighbourhood management interventions. Close continued working with the community through existing partnerships would help to target investment to areas where action is most required.

WREKENTON & EIGHTON BANKS PROFILE

Summary

- Over a third of people lived in terraced housing, and three in ten in semi-detached housing.
- Three quarters of people owned their own homes either outright or with a mortgage, and 15% rented their homes from Gateshead Housing Company.
- A quarter of people lived in properties built between 1919 and 1944, a similar number in homes built between 1945 and 1964, and just over a third between 1965 and 1984.
- Seven in ten people had lived in the same property for over 10 years.
- Satisfaction levels with the state of repair of properties were similar to those for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Half of households had two occupants, while a third had only one.
- A low level of need was shown for either adaptations for disabled people, or a range of other support needs. Older people preferred the option of continuing to live in their current home with support if needed.
- Satisfaction levels with the appearance and reputation of the area were lower than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with local shops and access to a doctor and place of worship were higher than those for rural Gateshead as a whole, while satisfaction levels with local schools and leisure facilities were lower.
- Slightly fewer people thought vandalism, hooliganism, crime, dogs and dog mess, and litter in the streets were serious local problems compared with rural Gateshead as a whole.
- More respondents had no access to a car compared with rural Gateshead as a whole.
- Satisfaction levels with regard to public transport were higher than for rural Gateshead as a whole.
- 19 people had moved home in the last five years.
- One was planning to move in the next year, and another three were planning to move in the next five years. The need for a different type of property or a larger property were the most common reasons. Detached or terraced houses or detached bungalows were the most sought after properties. The most common choice was to buy a new property or rent from Gateshead Housing Company. The most common location preferences were Birtley, Lamesley and Low Fell.

About the data: The survey data is based on 122 responses, including 58 from Wrekenton and 64 from Eighton Banks. Focus groups were held in Wrekenton and in Eighton Banks. Eight people (five men and three women) attended the group in Eighton Banks. They had

lived in the area for periods ranging from three months to 59 years. Ten people attending a community meeting took part in the Wrekenton focus group.

Analysis

- The area has a very stable population though more people have moved in the last year than the average for the study area. People who did wish to make a move would like to move locally.
- Levels of owner occupation are 10% above the average for Gateshead, with a far greater number of people, 64% of all owners, owning their property outright. This is reflective of the relatively older population that lives in the study area. Unsurprisingly, a high level of respondents commented that they found their housing costs relatively easy to meet
- There are fewer pre 1919 properties in the area than for the study area as a whole, but a higher level of homes built in the inter-war period (26% as against 21.5%).
- The communities are appreciated as being pleasant places to live, in green surroundings with good views, although they are not considered by residents and cannot be defined as rural communities
- Housing was considered to be expensive for people to purchase, particularly for the young, and there was considered to be a lack of social housing for rent, for all groups, including the older population. The closing down of a local sheltered scheme for older people was commented on. Housing associations have built in the area recently, and the survey had a higher proportion of RSL tenants than the norm for the study. 16% of respondents lived in TGCH property. Of the 323 properties it owns in Wrekenton, over a third are one-bedroom properties bungalows. TGHC reports no issues with demand for property in the area that is described as robust.
- The concerns that were expressed, at a lower level of dissatisfaction than for the study area as a whole, tended to be in relation to social behaviour and what can be characterised as 'neighbourhood management'. Traffic management was thought to be an issue by a significant number of people.

Recommendations

1. As in most other areas, the actions outlined in the PSHRS in terms of assisting older people to stay in their current accommodation, from giving advice on repairs to developing a loans/equity scheme will assist individual owners who require financial assistance to repair their own properties, and help to contribute to sustainability of the local housing market.
2. The area is likely to function in conjunction with other large sites being developed locally. Local housing needs in the aging population can to some extent be addressed by new provision on these sites
3. Continuing investment by TGHC in decent homes improvements will resolve issues of repair in the public sector stock

4. Investment in public realm is considered to be neglected and programmes to improve the external environment should be considered

8. References

This list of references includes all sources of information used in the research. Some of these are referred to in the *Policy context* section while others have provided local data for the geographical areas being studied, which has been cited along with the main research findings. References additional to the main study report are included below.

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