

Improving performance through the strategic housing function



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The housing policy context is complex and changing

Nationally:

- Green paper *Homes for the Future; more affordable, more sustainable*
- PSA 20/NI 155
- Housing & Regeneration Act
- Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)
- Tenant Services Authority (TSA)



LHA Strategic Housing role

Sub-nationally:

- Sub-national review of economic development & regeneration

Locally:

- Agreeing LAAs (housing and non-housing objectives)
- Developing CAA

And to cap it all!

- Housing markets changing fast and unpredictably in response to credit crunch

Government definition of strategic housing role...

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- assess and plan for current and future housing needs of the local population
 - make the best use of existing housing stock
 - plan and facilitate new supply
 - plan and commission housing support services which link homes to support and other services that people need to live in them
 - have working partnerships that secure effective housing and neighbourhood management.

The research: ‘to review housing strategy’s contribution to both housing and non-housing objectives’

Research questions:

- what do local authorities need to have in place to deliver a strong strategic housing function that contributes to delivering their own ***housing objectives*** as well as those in the local area agreement;
and
- how can effective performance of the strategic housing function help local authorities and their partners achieve their ***wider objectives*** for their communities.

The research: ‘to help define what the strategic housing function is and how best to exercise it’

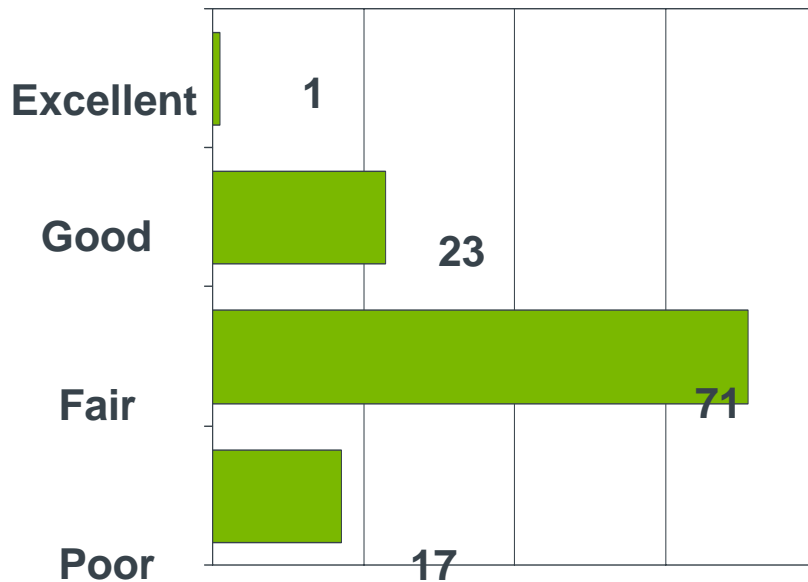
- The LHA’s housing strategy can make a substantial contribution to place shaping...
- ...but it is not clear how government’s aspirations for the strategic housing role can be delivered in a time of policy change and market turbulence
- We can add value by helping councils understand:
 - how housing strategy can help to deliver both housing and non-housing outcomes; and
 - how best to use information and work in partnership

The research: we will produce outputs in time to inform CAA and housing KLOE development

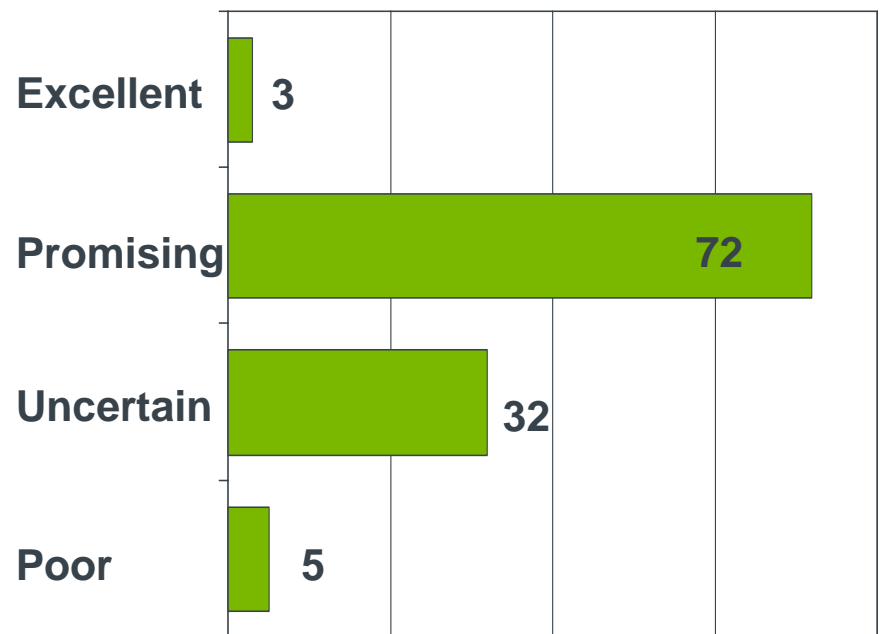
- Early output – post literature review on AC website
- Inform CAA (as it relates to housing's contribution to area outcomes) and revisions to KLOE on strategic housing
- A national report and summary – aim to publish 1st quarter 2009
- Guide for Councillors
- Briefing for Chief Executives
- Post publication series of conferences and seminars

Research context: Our inspections paint a mixed picture of current performance on strategic housing

Performance ratings



Prospects for Improvement



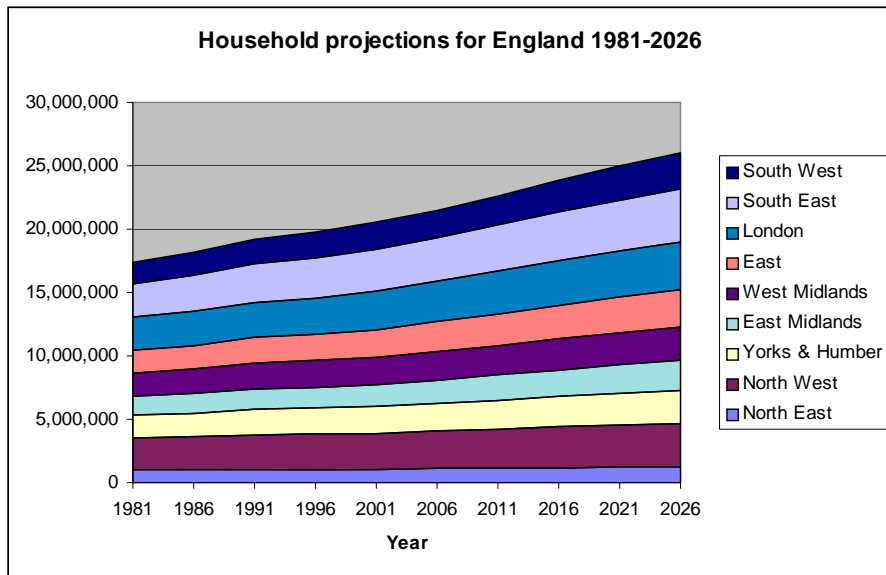
Source: Audit Commission – 112 Strategic Housing inspections to May 2008

Research finding from our literature review found scope for improvement and for better advice for councils...

- Much published material but no authoritative view of what constitutes good practice or understanding of how it can contribute to achieving other local goals;
 - Few good examples of partnership working between councils or between councils and local partners;
 - Councils are ‘data rich’ but ‘information poor’; few understand their housing markets or how to respond to changing environment
 - Councils lack skills
 - Effective performance management in the strategic housing function is rare.
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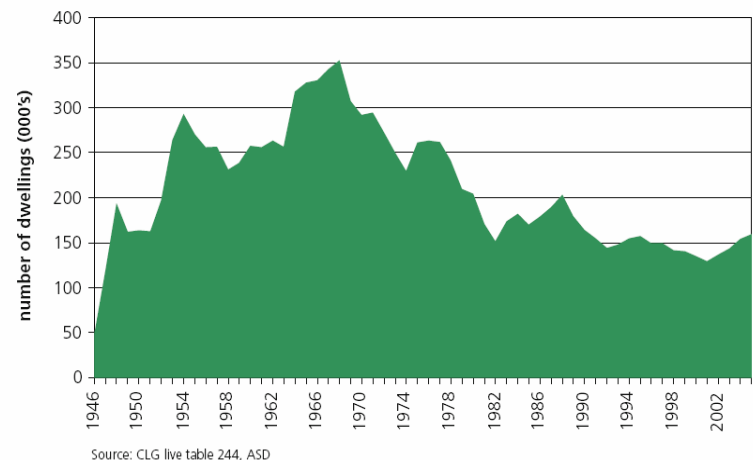
Affordable homes context: The rate of new build isn't keeping up with projections of new household growth

Household Projections for England 1981-2026

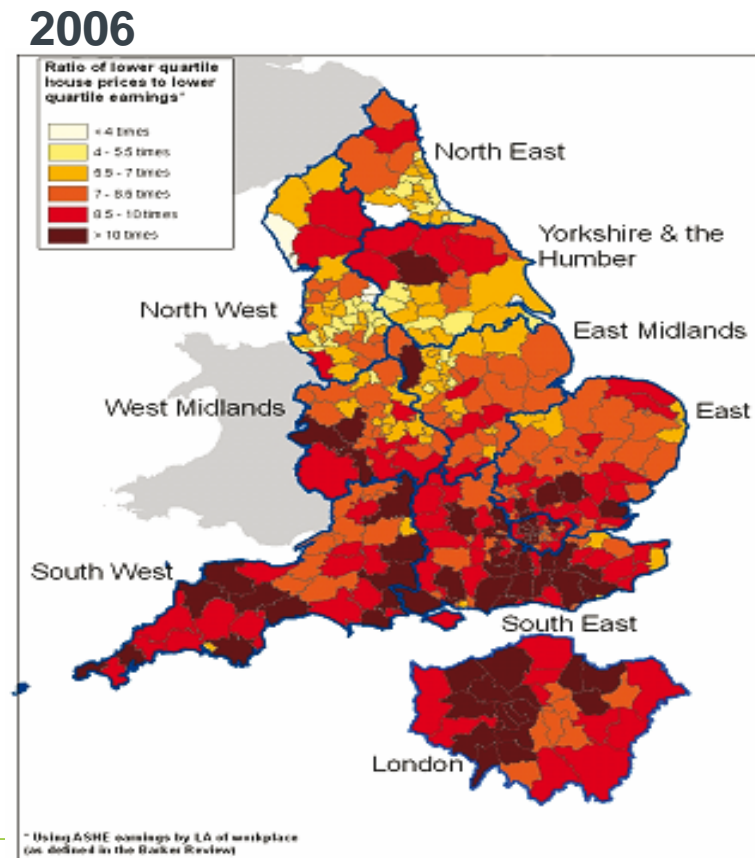
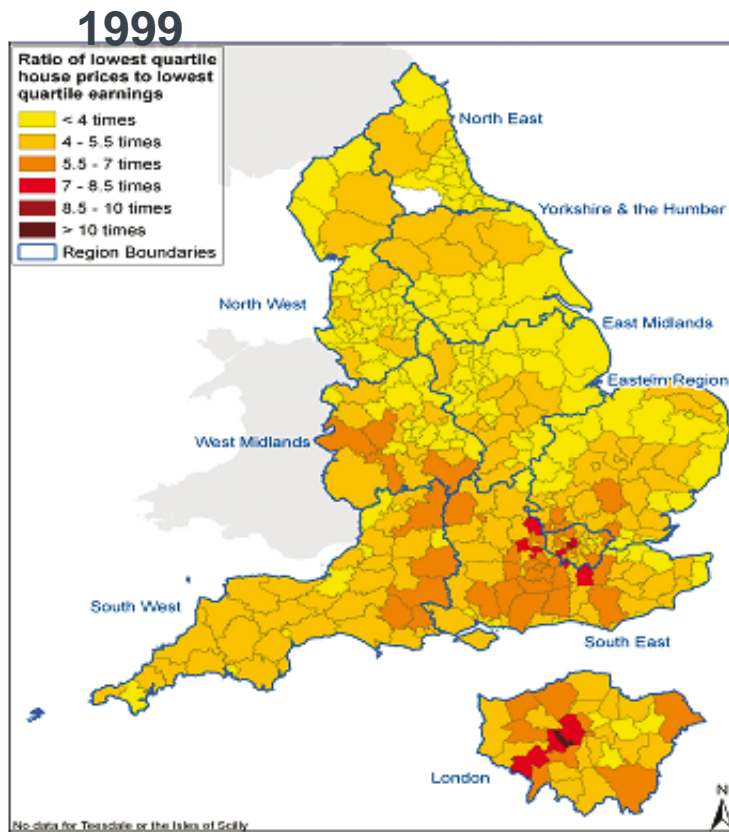


New dwelling completions in England 1946-2006

Figure 6: New dwelling completions in England

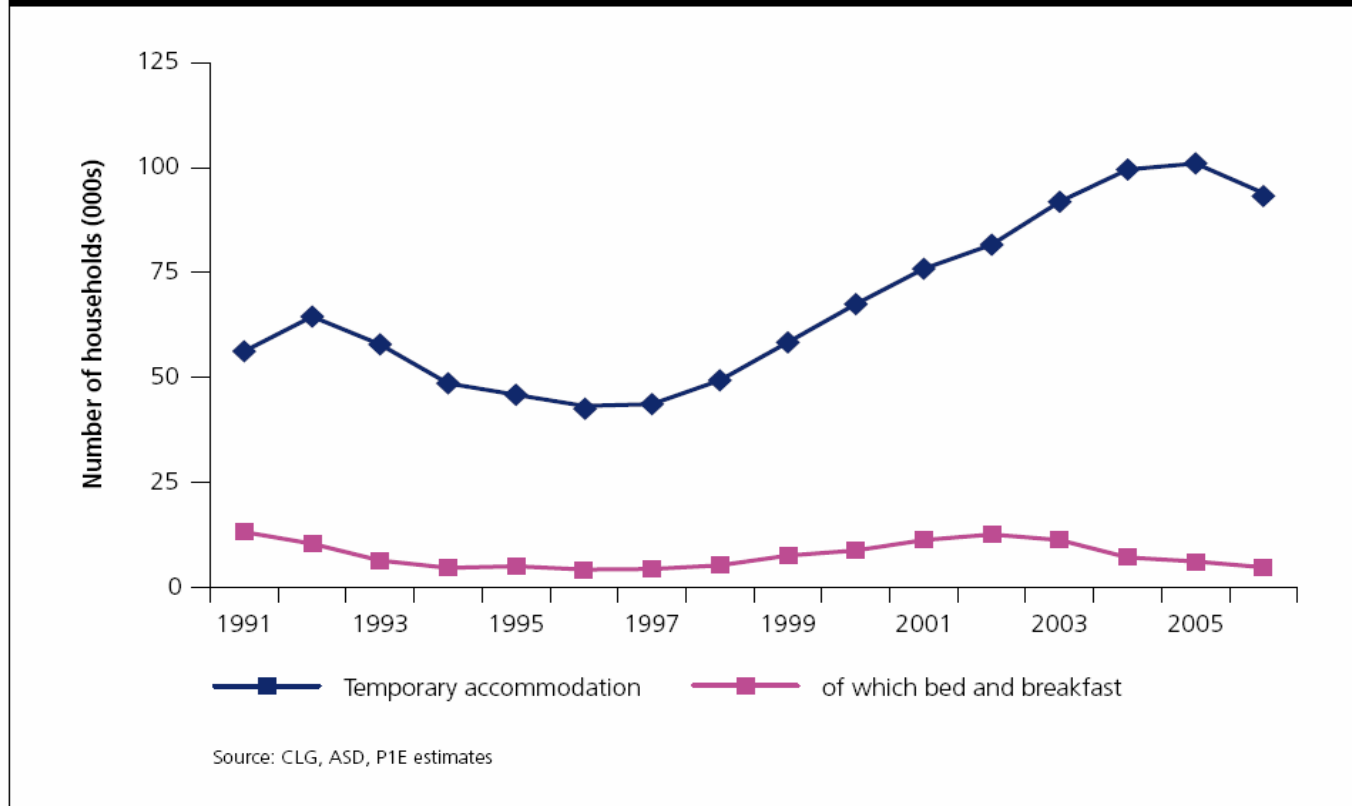


Affordable homes context: Affordability issues have worsened and spread beyond London and the South East



Affordable homes context: Homelessness has increased (but may now have passed its peak or be about to increase again due to credit crunch)

Figure 8: Households in temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast in England



Research methods

- Telephone survey of 100 local authority chief executives
- Email survey of LSP leads
- Analysis of housing inspection reports and other data sources
- Stakeholder interviews
- Fieldwork site visits
 - delivery chain workshops
 - interviews with key staff

Emerging messages

Strategic housing function has a complex delivery chain

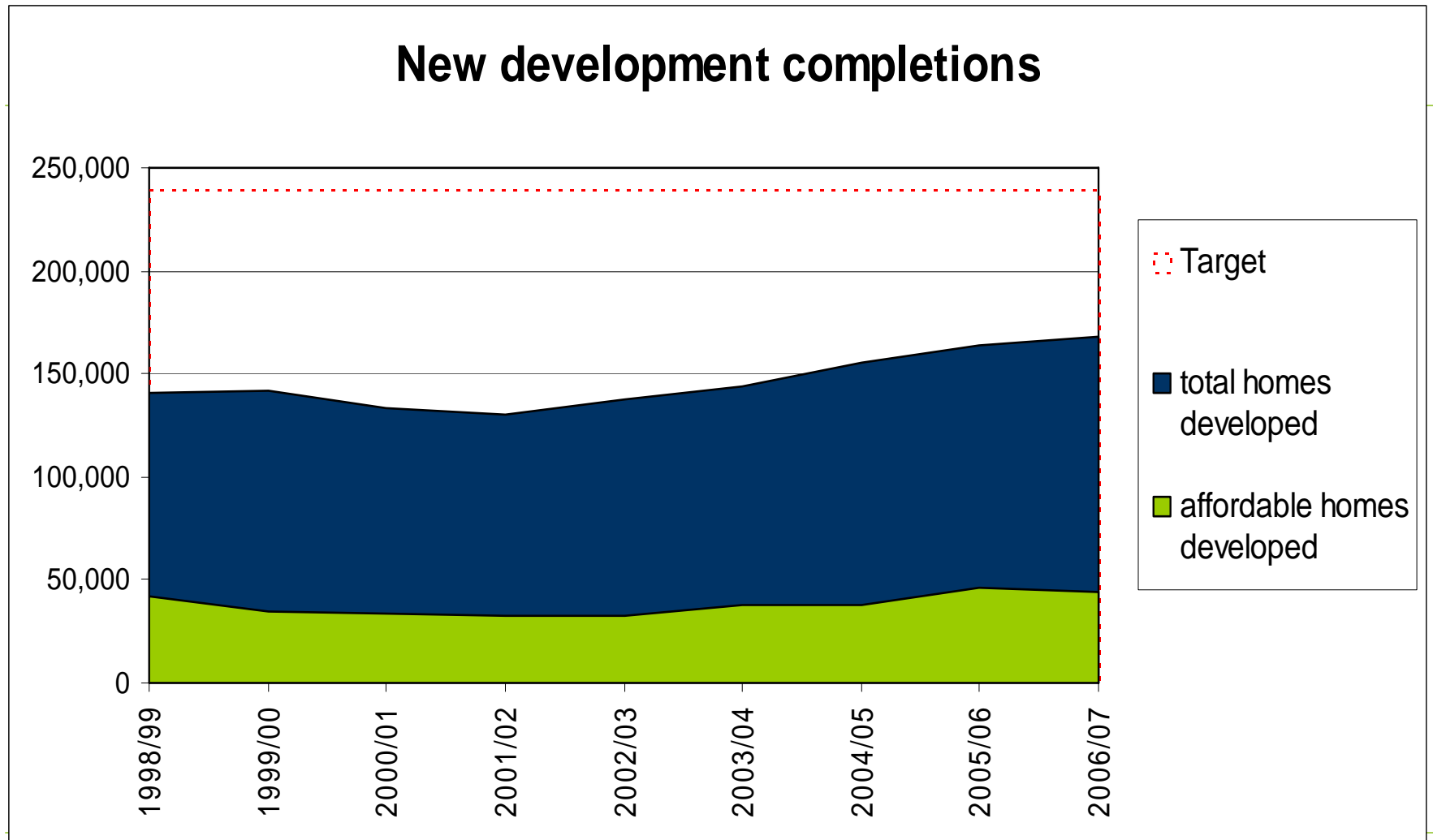
- National, regional, sub-regional, council and local area agreement targets
- Multi-billion pounds of funding
- Targets and funding not aligned
- Plethora of organisations involved
- Plethora of initiatives

Emerging messages

Govt has high expectations of this role

- 3 million new homes 2020
- Halve the number of households in temporary accommodation to 50,500 by 2010
- Zero carbon by 2016
- Lifetime homes
- Decent homes – social & private

Housing completions have risen in the last 5 years, but they are still a long way below Government aspirations



Emerging messages

Significant barriers to delivery

- Credit crunch
 - Individuals
 - Housing associations
 - Developers
 - Local authorities
- Land availability
 - Contaminated
 - Flood plain
 - Land banking
 - Asset management
- Community consent (or lack of)

....And annual new build accounts for less than one per cent of England's housing stock but many think new & affordable housing is all the strategic housing function is about



Current housing stock

In 2006 new developments accounted for 0.7% of the current housing stock

Emerging messages

- Lack of priority for private sector renewal
- Lack of priority in addressing needs of vulnerable people
- Slow response to contextual change
- Lack of understanding of costs of the service
- Few areas doing this function well

Emerging messages

A strong strategic function:

- **Is well informed**
 - **Has effective partnerships**
 - **Uses regulatory powers as well as influence**
 - **Has skilled & competent staff**
 - **Recognises housing's wider contribution to communities not just homes**
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Over to you....

What are your **experiences** of the strategic housing role?

What should we be saying to different **audiences** – nationally, regionally, sub-regionally, locally?

Thanks for listening
Any questions?

Any comments

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