

HOUSING STOCK CONDITION SURVEY 2002



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents an executive summary of the findings to emerge from a comprehensive sample survey of housing conditions across the Isle of Wight. The study has been conducted on behalf of Isle of Wight Council by David Adamson & Partners Ltd.
- 1.2 Using national guidance issued by The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the study has involved a sample of 1400 randomly selected dwellings representative of all areas and of all housing types, ages and tenures. At each sampled dwelling a full internal and external survey of physical attributes and conditions has been completed; supported by a short interview with occupying households. Information from the survey can be applied to national planning within the Housing Investment Programme (HIP) and Regulatory Reform Order framework and also locally to ensure the equitable distribution of resources for housing in the seven identified areas.
- 1.3 This report is supported by a detailed report of survey findings and by a computerised database of information on sampled properties.

2. HOUSING CONDITIONS - AN OVERVIEW

- 2.1 In house condition surveys it is traditional to describe the physical condition of the housing stock in terms of two basic indicators: Housing Unfitness and Disrepair. For the purpose of the survey the Standard of Fitness applied was that defined in Section 604 of the Housing Act 1985 as amended by Schedule 9, Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The Standard of Repair applied has been related to a cost threshold for outstanding works - namely comprehensive repairs costing over £10,000.

- 2.2 At the time of survey the housing stock in the seven identified areas was estimated at 45770 dwellings.
- 2.3 In unsatisfactory dwellings, unfitness and repair can occur either singly or in combination. Allowing for the multiple occurrence of defects, 42086 dwellings (92%) were assessed to be in a satisfactory condition; that is - not unfit and not in disrepair. The remaining 3685 dwellings (8%) were assessed as unsatisfactory either through unfitness or disrepair. Of the 3685 dwellings found to be unsatisfactory, 1743 were assessed as unfit representing 3.8% of all dwellings in the seven identified areas, whilst the remaining 1942 dwellings were assessed as not unfit but in disrepair, representing 4.2% of all dwellings in the seven areas.

3. HOUSING UNFITNESS

- 3.1 An estimated 1743 dwellings in the seven identified areas are unfit, representing an average rate of 3.8%. Unfitness rates are below the equivalent regional and national averages, measured at 5.6% & 7.6% respectively in the last English House Condition Survey.
- 3.2 Unfitness is not evenly distributed across the seven identified areas but is higher in particular areas and housing sectors; these are:
- *The Cowes and Ryde Areas*
 - *Vacant housing stock*
 - *Pre-war terraced housing*
- 3.3 Factors influencing the decision to classify a dwelling as unfit accord closely with the national pattern. 42% of unfit dwellings are defective on repair, 45 are defective on dampness.

4. HOUSING DISREPAIR

- 4.1 A further 1942 dwellings while not unfit experience disrepair and require comprehensive repair works in excess of £10,000. These dwellings are at risk of deteriorating into unfitness, and represent 4.2% of all dwellings.
- 4.2 Rates of disrepair are higher in the owner-occupied sector, for pre-war housing and in the Cowes Area.

5. COSTS TO REMEDY UNSATISFACTORY HOUSING

- 5.1 The cost to repair and improve unsatisfactory housing is estimated at £26.64m of which £20.32m is required to improve unfit dwellings.

6. EMERGING STANDARDS

- 6.1 The survey has permitted the measurement of dwelling performance against emerging housing standards including the Decent Homes standard and the Housing Health and Safety Rating system:

- *2652 dwellings (5.8%) fail the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.*
- *10137 dwellings (22.1%) fail the Decent Homes Standard.*

7. DOMESTIC ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- 7.1 Home Energy Efficiency in the seven identified areas is above the National average.....

- *Average SAP Rating - 49*
- *Average CO2 Emissions - 5.98 tonnes p.a.*
- *Average annual energy costs - £590 per household*

- 7.2 3281 households, or 7.4% are estimated to live in fuel poverty.

8. HOUSEHOLDS IN UNSATISFACTORY DWELLINGS

- 8.1 Poor housing conditions in the seven identified areas are associated with households in social and economic disadvantage. This affects the ability of households to repair and improve their dwellings; in particular

- *Elderly Households*
- *Single Person Households*
- *Households on benefit and/or low incomes*

- 8.2 While economic and social disadvantage can impair a households ability to improve or repair their dwelling, other factors apply and in particular attitudes to and awareness of actual housing conditions.

There is a significant lack of perception of housing condition problems among households ...

- *50% of households living in unfit dwellings are very satisfied with their current housing*
- *73% of households have not carried out major repairs/improvements to their home in the past 5 years.*
- *Only 8% of households living in unfit dwellings intend to repair or improve their home in the next 5 years.*

9. EMERGING ISSUES

- 9.1 Overall the survey indicates that 42086 dwellings, or 92.0%, are in satisfactory condition. The remaining 3685 dwellings, or 8.0% are unsatisfactory due to unfitness and/or poor repair. Housing conditions are better than the national average but local problems are nevertheless apparent and require to be addressed in any future housing strategy. To facilitate informed decision making on the targeting of housing resources the survey reveals several factors which ought to be considered. These include

- *The uneven geographical spread of unfitness and also its concentration in the pre-war housing stock.*
- *The association of poor housing conditions with social and economic disadvantage affecting the elderly in particular, together with those on low incomes and on state benefit support.*
- *The high cost of repair and improvement against available budgets for private housing investment.*

- 9.2 The Government has recently published details of a new regulatory framework for Private Housing support and regeneration which came into force on 18 July 2002 [The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002]. This Order repeals much of the existing prescriptive legislation governing renewal grants to home owners and provides Council's with new wide ranging powers to assist housing renewal. Information from the current survey provides Isle of Wight Council with a detailed base of information from which to develop pro-active housing strategies within this new regulatory framework.