

Sefton Council



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**Private Sector House
Condition Survey 2013**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT

Prepared on behalf of

Sefton Council



David Adamson & Partners Ltd.

February 2014

Ref : E2304



1. SURVEY BACKGROUND

1.1 David Adamson & Partners Ltd. was commissioned by Sefton Council to complete a review of housing and household conditions across the private housing sector. The last survey of housing conditions was completed in 2008. Information from the current study provides an up-to-date benchmark for private sector housing locally against national housing conditions and provides a base of information for the review and further development of private sector housing strategies.

1.2 The 2013 study has involved a comprehensive survey programme across a sample of 1,200 dwellings representing 1.1% of all private dwellings in Sefton. Survey investigation has included physical housing conditions (HHSRS and Decent Homes), energy efficiency (RdSAP) and the circumstances and attitudes of occupying households.

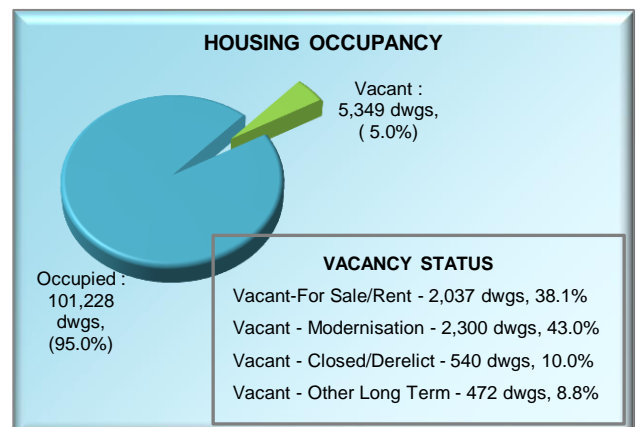
1.3 The house condition survey programme was designed and implemented according to national guidelines issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government in England. A sample size of 1,200 dwellings was agreed with the Council representing 1.1% of a total private sector housing stock of 106,577 dwellings. To adequately reflect the distribution and composition of private sector housing within the Council area the sample was stratified by local Committee Area. The survey does not include social housing owned by Housing Associations in the Borough.

SURVEY RESPONSE BY AREA COMMITTEE					
SURVEY AREA	PRIVATE HOUSING STOCK	SAMPLE TARGET	SURVEY RESPONSE		
	dwgs	dwgs	FULL SURVEY & INTERVIEW dwgs	FULL SURVEY ONLY dwgs	EXTERNAL SURVEY ONLY dwgs
Crosby	19300	125	110	12	1
East Southport	11155	180	179	1	27
Formby	9539	100	98	1	7
Linacre and Derby	8083	180	179	1	13
Litherland and Ford	7843	110	124	0	6
North Southport	11435	110	127	0	13
Sefton East Parishes	14343	125	114	1	5
South Southport	17896	160	118	5	17
St. Oswald, Netherton and Orrell	6983	110	104	0	4
TOTAL ALL AREAS	106577	1200	1153	21	93

2. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STOCK

2.1 Sefton Council Area contains a private sector housing stock of 106,577 dwellings occupied by 101,228 households and a population of 228,014 persons.

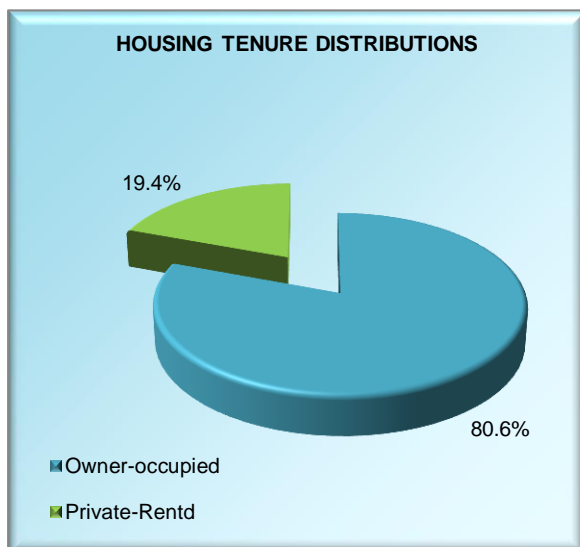
2.2 At the time of survey, 101,228 dwellings were occupied (95.0%), the remaining 5,349 dwellings (5.0%) were vacant. Within the vacant housing stock 3,312 dwellings (3.1%) have been vacant over 6 months.



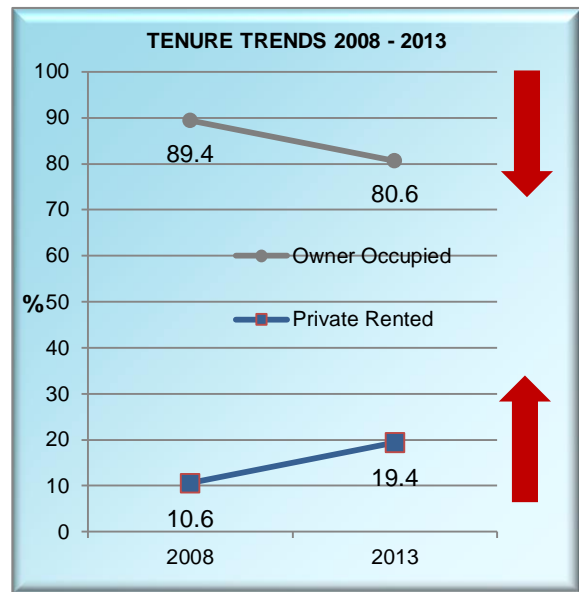


2.3 The age of a home is strongly associated with its condition and energy performance. The oldest homes (Pre-1919) generally perform less well in these respects than newer homes. The Sefton private sector housing stock is representative of all building eras and almost equally split between pre and post second World War Construction. 54,296 dwellings (51.0%) were constructed pre-1945. Within this group, 27,558 dwellings (25.9%) were constructed pre-1919, 26,743 dwellings (25.1%) in the inter-war period (1919-1944). 52,281 dwellings (49.0%) were constructed post-1944. Within this group, 14,974 dwellings (14.0%) are of post-1980 construction. Private sector housing stock in Sefton is older than the national average.

2.4 Owner-occupation is the predominant form of private sector tenure accounting for 85,875 dwellings or 80.6%. 20,702 dwellings (19.4%) are rented privately. Rates of private-rental in Sefton at 19.4% are slightly below the national average (21.4% of private dwellings nationally in 2011-12).



2.5 In line with the national trends, rates of private-rental in Sefton have increased in recent years with a consequent reduction in the proportion of owner-occupied homes. Rates of private-rental have increased in Sefton from 10.6% of private sector dwellings in 2008 to 19.4% in 2013. Conversely owner-occupation has fallen from 89.4% in 2008 to 80.6% in 2013.



2.6 Significant differences exist in the characteristics of private sector housing between the main tenure groups and the Area Committees. These reflect a more varied owner-occupied sector against an older private-rented sector concentrated in the terraced and flatted housing markets. Geographically the oldest housing profiles are associated with the East Southport and Linacre and Derby Committee Areas. These areas together with South Southport also contain the highest proportions of private rental.



**3. PRIVATE SECTOR
HOUSEHOLDS 2013**

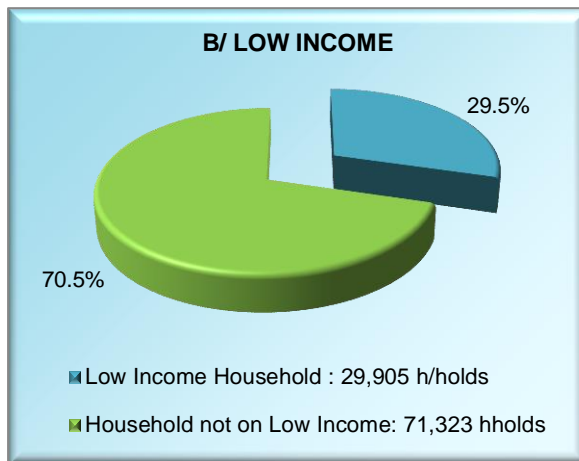
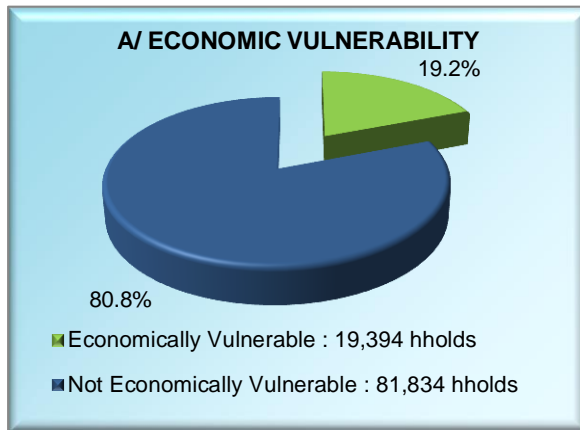
- 3.1 The private sector housing stock contains 101,228 households and a household population of 228,014 persons. Private sector households are predominantly small in size. 28,860 households (28.5%) are single person in size, an additional 40,044 households (39.6%) contain two persons. Average household size is estimated at 2.25 persons.
- 3.2 Private sector households exhibit a broad demographic profile. 37,987 households (37.5%) are headed by a person aged 65 years and over; 14,847 households (14.7%) are headed by a person aged under 35 years. Household type distributions are also mixed - 39,292 households (38.9%) are elderly in type; 10,384 households (10.3%) comprise a single person aged under 60 years. Married or cohabiting couples with or without children comprise 29,570 households (29.2%).

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSEHOLDS BY AGE OF HOH AND HOUSEHOLD TYPE		
AGE OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD	HHOLDS	%
Under 25 years	1879	1.9
25-34 years	12968	12.8
35-44 years	16958	16.8
45-54 years	14923	14.7
55-64 years	16513	16.3
65 years and over	37987	37.5
HOUSEHOLD TYPE	HHOLDS	%
Couple no Children	13891	13.7
Couple with Children	15679	15.5
Lone Parent Family	3638	3.6
Other Multi-Person	18345	18.1
Single Person Under 60 years	10384	10.3
Single Person 60+ years	18477	18.3
Two+ Persons 60+ years	20815	20.6

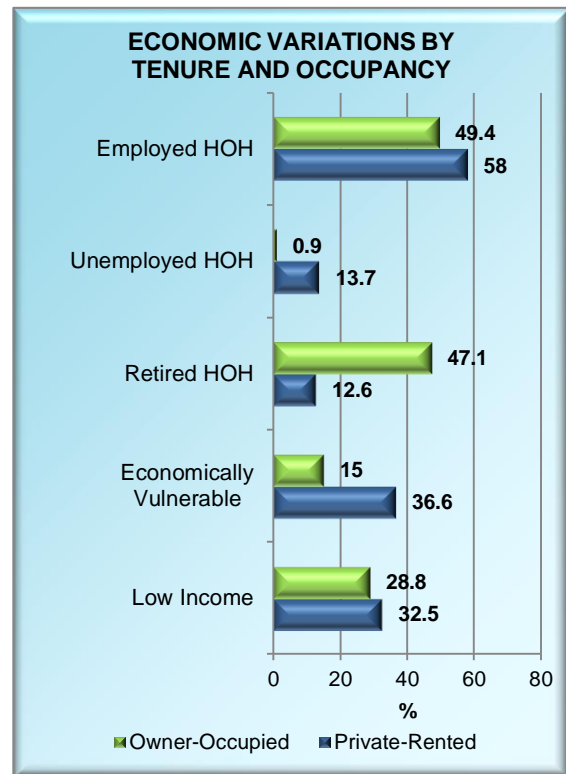
- 3.3 Demographic and social characteristics vary by tenure reflecting a younger, more mobile private-rented sector against an older owner-occupied sector. In 46% of private-rented households the head of household is aged under 35 years; 43% of owner occupied households have a head of household aged 65 years and over. Household type distributions reflect the demographic differences between tenures. 29% of private rented households are single person households aged under 60 years; 44% of owner-occupied households are elderly in composition. The private-rented sector is also highly mobile - 29% of private rented households have been resident in their current dwelling under 1 year; 10% definitely intend to move within the next year. In contrast, 63% of owner-occupiers have been resident in their current dwelling over 10 years; only 4% intend to move within the next year.
- 3.4 51,696 heads of household (51.0%) are in full or part-time employment, 3,424 heads of household (3.4) are unemployed and 40,907 heads of household (40.4%) are economically retired. 19,394 Households (19.2%) are in receipt of means tested or disability related benefits and are economically vulnerable. Applying definitions within revised fuel poverty methodologies 29,905 households (29.5%) have equivalised net annual incomes below the national median which is currently set at £11,553. These households can be defined as 'low income'. Average net annual household income for all private sector households is estimated at £19,443.



ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY AND LOW INCOMES



3.5 Economic circumstances vary significantly between the owner-occupied and private-rented sectors with private-rented households exhibiting higher levels of economic disadvantage.



4. KEY FINDINGS - HOUSING CONDITIONS 2013

4.1 89,719 dwellings (84.2%) meet the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard and can be regarded as satisfactory. The remaining 16,858 dwellings (15.8%) fail the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard and are non-Decent. Within the Decent Homes Standard itself the following pattern of failure emerges:

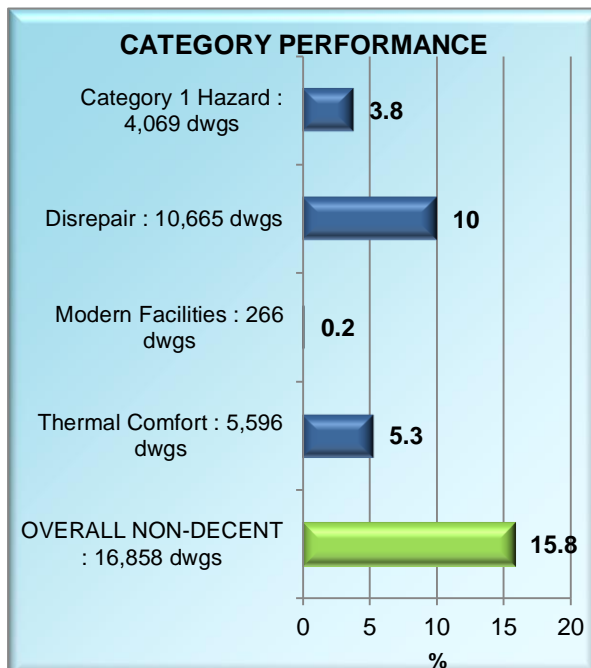
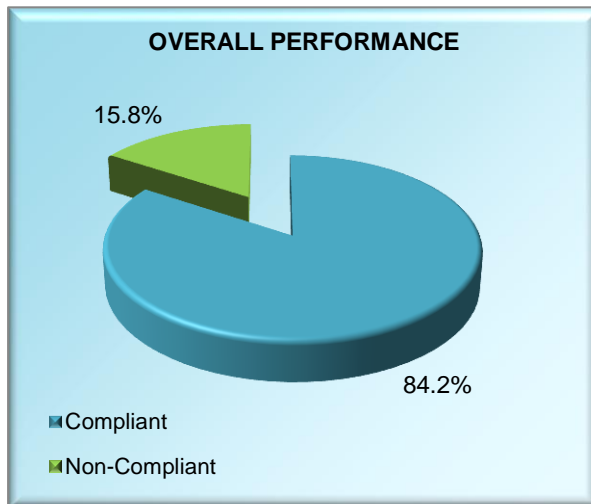
- **4,069 dwellings (3.8%) exhibit Category 1 hazards within the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).**
- **10,665 dwellings (10.0%) are in disrepair.**
- **266 dwellings (0.2%) lack modern facilities and services.**
- **5,596 dwellings (5.3%) fail to provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.**



SEFTON COUNCIL EXECUTIVE REPORT OF SURVEY

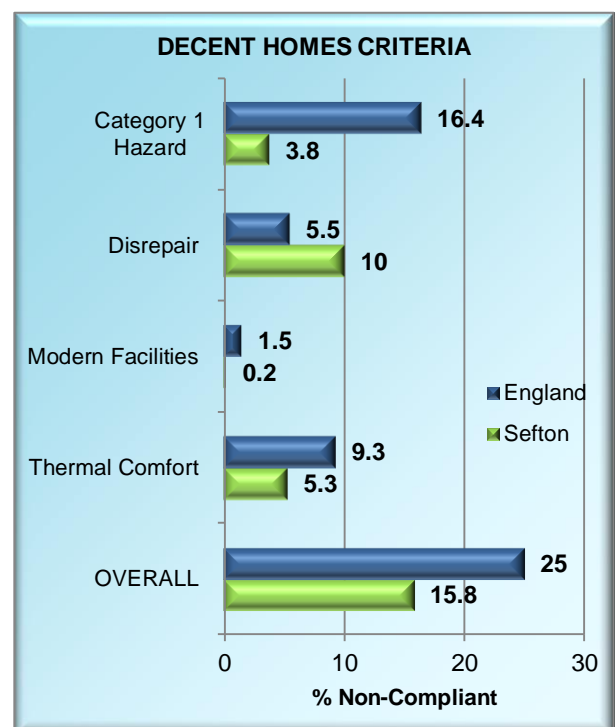
The majority of non-Decent homes fail on one item of the standard (13,362 dwellings – 79.3%); the remaining 3,495 non-Decent Homes exhibit multiple failures (20.7%).

DWELLING PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE DECENT HOMES STANDARD



4.2 Information available from the English Housing Survey 2011/12 enables housing conditions in Sefton to be placed in a national context. Housing conditions locally with regard to the Decent Homes Standard are better than the national

average. Locally, 15.8% of private sector housing fails the Decent Homes Standard compared to 25.0% of private sector housing nationally (2011/12). Local conditions with regard to Category 1 hazards and thermal comfort are better than the national average. Levels of disrepair locally are however above the national average and these have implications for future deterioration within the private housing sector.



4.3 Costs to address non-Decent homes within the private sector are estimated at £102.915m averaging £6,105 per non-Decent home. Above average rates of Decent Homes failure exist in the following groups of properties:

- *The private-rented sector.*
- *Dwellings constructed pre-1919.*
- *Flats in converted buildings.*
- *East Southport, North Southport and Linacre and Derby Committee Areas.*



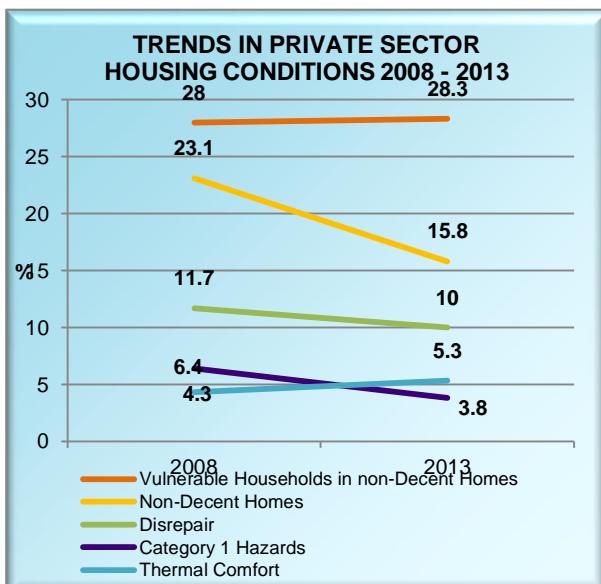
5. KEY FINDINGS - CHANGES IN HOUSING CONDITION 2008 - 2013

5.1 A previous private sector house condition survey programme was completed by Sefton Council in 2008. A comparison of the results of this survey with the current survey permits an analysis of recent changes in housing conditions in Sefton. Housing conditions overall within the private housing sector have improved since 2008. Over the five year period 2008 - 2013 the number of dwellings failing the Decent Homes Standard has decreased by 7,475 dwellings or 30.7%. The overall rate of non-Decency has witnessed a corresponding decline from 23.1% of private housing in 2008 to 15.8% in 2013. Within the Decent homes Standard rates of Category 1 hazard failure have declined. The number of dwellings experiencing Category 1 hazards has decreased by 2,662 dwellings (39.5%). Disrepair within the Decent Homes Standard has also decreased from 12,301 dwellings (11.7%) in 2008 to 10,665 dwellings (10.0%) in 2013. Rates of disrepair do however remain above the national average (5.5%).

5.2 A key target for many Local Authorities is to achieve Decent Homes for economically vulnerable households as previously contained in the Public Service Agreement (PSA) Target 7. In Sefton the number and proportion of economically vulnerable households in non-Decent Homes has remained almost static increasing slightly from 4,050 households to 4,236 (28% to 28.3%). Economically vulnerable households must also be viewed against a significant increase in the number of economically vulnerable households in the private sector since 2008. The number of economically vulnerable households has increased from 14,465 households (14.7%) in 2008 to 19,394 households (19.2%) in 2013.

5.3 Overall rates of energy efficiency within Sefton have improved significantly since 2008. The average SAP rating for private sector housing has increased from 56 in 2008 to 63 in 2013 - an increase of 12.5%. Over the same period annual CO2 emissions for private sector housing have reduced by 267,302 tonnes - an improvement of 36.2%.

5.4 Changes in housing conditions indicate significant progress against key targets identified in the 2008 survey. At an area level the largest reductions in rates of non-Decency are recorded for Linacre and Derby, Litherland and Ford, and Sefton East Parishes. Significant improvements in non-Decency are also recorded for all main tenure groups.

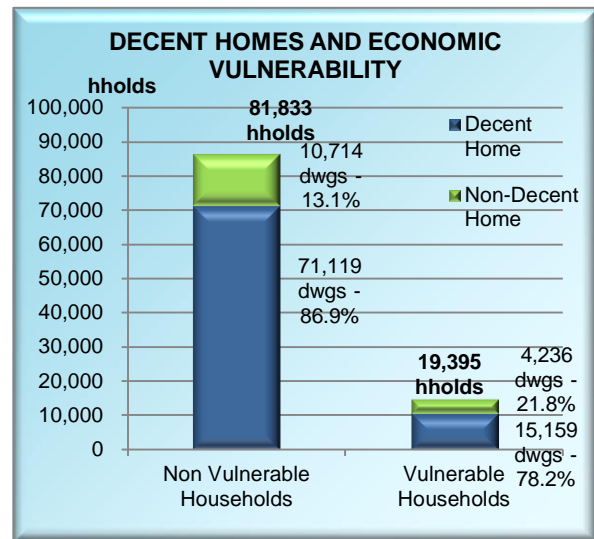




RATES OF NON-DECENCY 2008 AND 2013 BY AREA AND TENURE		
	NON-DECENT HOMES	
	2008	2013
	%	%
AREA COMMITTEE		
Crosby	15.7	8.8
East Southport	23.1	25.9
Formby	5.3	9.5
Linacre and Derby	40.9	26.5
Litherland and Ford	26.8	15.1
North Southport	19.0	22.3
Sefton East Parishes	50.3	11.2
South Southport	14.7	16.8
St. Oswald, Netherton and Orrell	15.6	12.4
TENURE		
Owner-Occupied	22.0	13.7
Private-Rented	35.2	24.4
ALL SECTORS	23.1	15.8

6. KEY FINDINGS - HOUSING AND HOUSEHOLD ISSUES

- 6.1 Poor housing conditions are compounded by the socio-economic characteristics of private sector households. As such, poor housing conditions are over-represented in economically and socially disadvantaged households including in particular the elderly, the economically vulnerable and those on low incomes.
- 6.2 The survey estimates 19,394 economically vulnerable households representing 19.2% of all private households. Currently 15,159 economically vulnerable households (78.2%) live in decent homes. This figure is above previous PSA Target 7 requirements for 2011 and 2021.



6.3 Variations in progress towards decent homes for economically vulnerable households exist both geographically and by housing sector. Key sectors remaining below the previous 2011 target threshold of 70% include:

- *Pre-1919 housing where 62.5% of economically vulnerable households live in decent homes.*
- *Private-rented dwellings where 66.2% of economically vulnerable households live in decent homes.*
- *Converted flats where 63.0% of economically vulnerable households live in decent homes.*
- *Geographically the lowest proportions of economically vulnerable households in Decent Homes are found in East Southport, Litherland and Ford and North Southport Committee.*

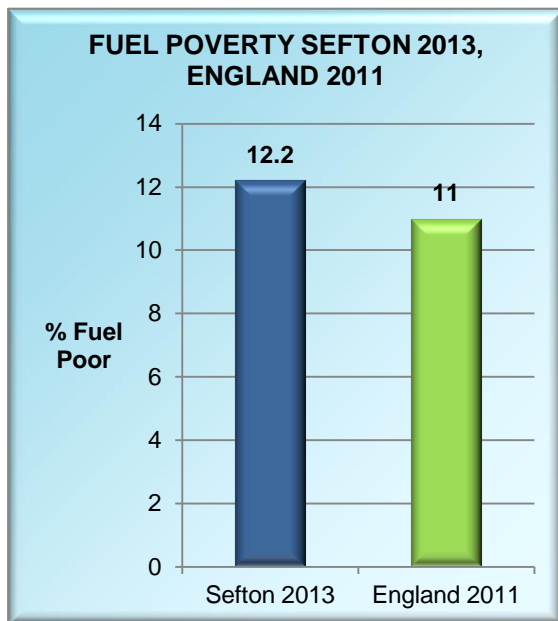
6.4 The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) has recently announced a new definition of fuel poverty based on a Low Income High Costs (LIHC) framework recommended by Professor Hills. Under the



new definition a household is considered to be fuel poor where:

- *They have required fuel costs that are above average.*
- *Were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.*

6.5 Under these definitions 12,352 households in Sefton (12.2%) have low incomes and high fuel costs and are in fuel poverty. Rates of fuel poverty are marginally above the average for England estimated at 11% of households in 2011.



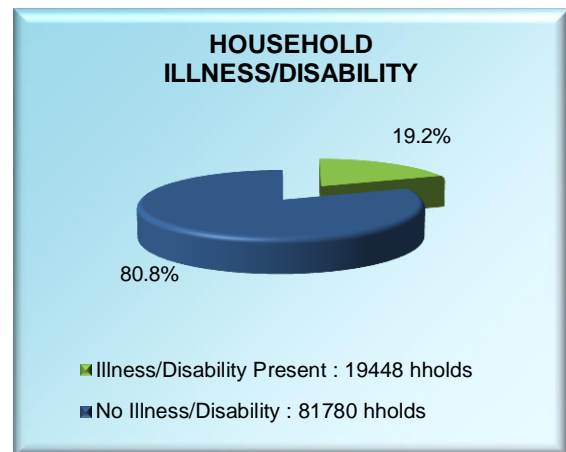
6.6 Demographically, fuel poverty impacts most strongly on younger and older households. 13.5% of households headed by a person aged under 25 years are in fuel poverty as are 19.0% of households headed by a person aged 65 years and over.

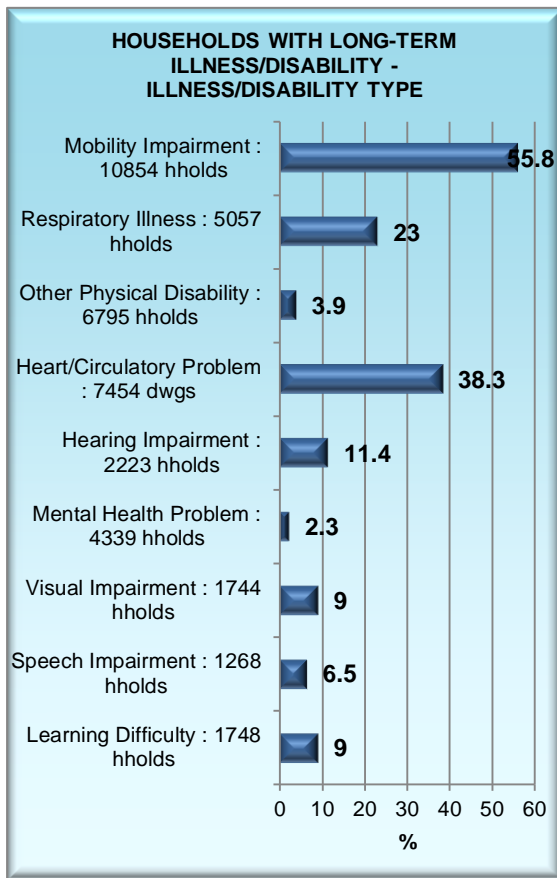
6.7 Rates of fuel poverty show limited variation by tenure but are higher for households living in pre-1919 (20.9%) and inter-war (15.7%) housing. Geographically the

highest rates of fuel poverty are associated with St. Oswald, Netherton and Orrell, East Southport and Linacre and Derby Committee areas.

6.8 19,448 households in Sefton (19.2%) indicated that at least one household member was affected by a long-term illness or disability. The most common complaints were related to mobility impairment or physical disability, respiratory illness and heart/circulatory problems.

6.9 Long-term illnesses and disability place significant pressure on local Health Service resources. 85% of affected households had made health service contact in the past year with predominant contact through GP and hospital outpatient services. Annual NHS savings through one-off intervention to address Category 1 hazards are estimated at £0.148M.





6.10 While housing conditions are significantly worse for households living in the private-rented sector owner-occupiers are not unaffected. 10,012 owner-occupied households (12.3%) live in homes which are non-Decent with total outstanding improvements of £58.585M. 1,813 households within this sector are economically vulnerable, 4,922 households while not economically vulnerable are elderly.

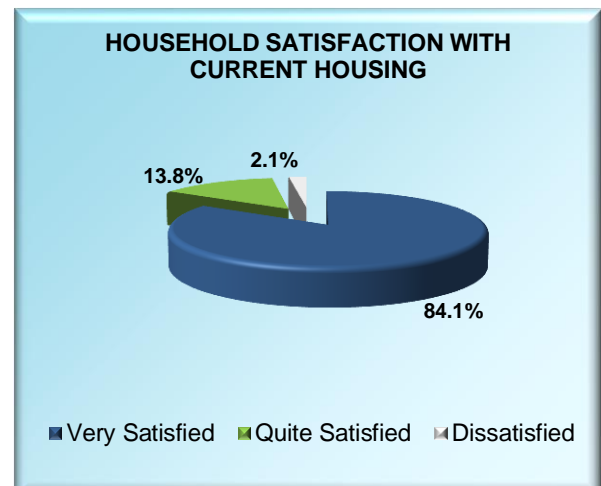
6.11 Economic factors will influence the ability of owner-occupiers to improve their homes but other factors will also impact. 99% of owner-occupiers in non-Decent housing are satisfied with their current home; only 1% expressed direct dissatisfaction. Against this background, 72% of owner occupiers in non-Decent homes have completed no major repairs/improvements in the last 5 years;

60% of households have no intentions to carry out future repairs/improvements in the next 5 years.

6.12 52% of owner-occupied households have no existing mortgage/financial commitments against their home. Taking into account existing mortgage holdings and local property values equity potential of £8.180 Billion exists within the owner-occupied sector. The central issue locally is not the existence of owner-occupied equity but the release of this equity for home improvement/repair. Among owner-occupiers in non-Decent housing only 3.1% of households stated that they would re-mortgage for home improvements, 15.3% would however be interested in Council interest free loans.

7. KEY FINDINGS - HOUSEHOLD ATTITUDES TO HOUSING AND LOCAL AREAS

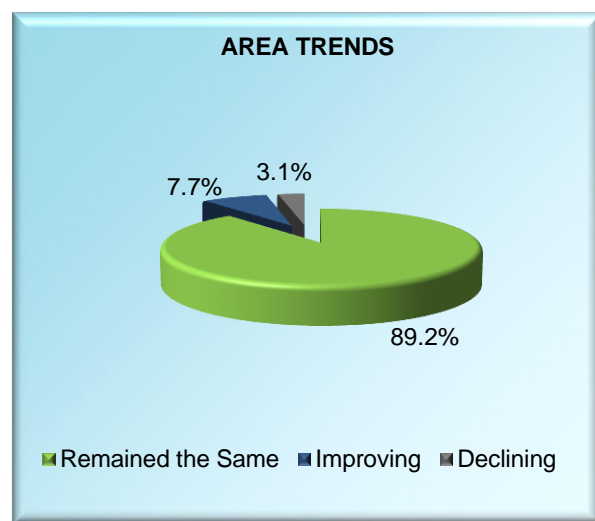
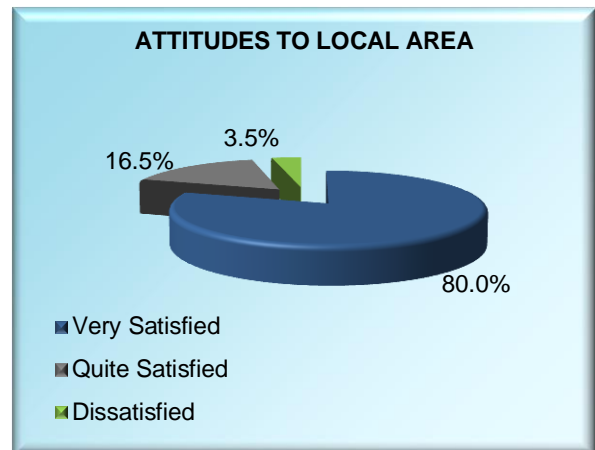
7.1 Housing satisfaction levels are good. 85,143 households (84.1%) are very satisfied with their current accommodation, 13,980 households (13.8%) are quite satisfied. Only, 2,105 households (2.1%) expressed direct dissatisfaction with their home.





7.2 Dissatisfaction with current housing is above average in the private-rented sector, in pre-1919 housing, and for households resident in converted flats and terraced houses. While the majority of households living in non-Decent homes remain satisfied with their accommodation, levels of dissatisfaction are higher than for households living in Decent Homes. Geographically, highest rates of housing dissatisfaction are recorded for households living in the Linacre and Derby Committee Area.

7.3 Household satisfaction with their local areas is also high. 80,979 households (80.0%) are very satisfied with where they live; 16,746 households (16.5%) are quite satisfied. 3,503 households are dissatisfied with the area in which they live (3.5%). The majority of households (90,264 households – 89.2%) regard their local area as largely unchanging over the last 5 years; 3,154 households (3.1%) perceive their area as improving while 7,811 households (7.7%) perceive a decline in their local area. Household perceptions of recent area decline are higher in the Crosby and St. Oswald, Netherton and Orrell Committee areas. Levels of current area dissatisfaction are also higher in St. Oswald, Netherton and Orrell but also in the Linacre and Derby Committee area.



7.4 Households were prompted to comment on a range of issues which might represent problems within their areas. Key issues emerging as important include anti-social behaviour, crime and area abuse including dog fouling, litter and fly-tipping.



8.0 KEY FINDINGS - STRATEGY DIRECTIONS

8.1 The 2013 survey provides a comprehensive base of housing and household information to review the effectiveness of existing housing strategies and to determine future strategy directions. Key directions identified include:

- *Continued intervention in the private-rented sector including mandatory HMO licensing and enforcement where appropriate, and landlord encouragement for home improvement particularly energy efficiency.*
- *Continued support for economically vulnerable households in non-Decent homes across all tenure sectors.*
- *Encouragement of owner-occupied home improvement through increased awareness of condition issues and possible use of loan support should resources become available.*
- *Exploitation of energy funding streams including Green Deal and ECO funding within a comprehensive fuel poverty strategy.*
- *More detailed examination of health service partnerships for housing intervention using survey information on house condition and household health.*