



Denbighshire County Council

Denbighshire's Housing Strategy

Draft Action Plan

Denbighshire's Housing Strategy: Draft Action Plan

Introduction

The Housing Strategy is the amalgamation of all of our actions concerned with housing and housing related support. As a result the implementation of the Strategy will be undertaken by several different departments, in many instances working with partner organisations.

The relevant actions will be included in each service business plans as appropriate and will be monitored by the relevant Lead Members and Heads of Service. The overall lead on the Housing Strategy is the Lead Member for Housing. The Housing Strategy is based around 5 key themes:

1. More homes to meet local need and demand
2. Creating a supply of affordable homes
3. Safe and healthy homes
4. Homes and support for vulnerable people
5. Housing's role in delivering sustainable communities

The Action Plan sets out the key actions required to deliver the desired outcomes for each key Theme. For each Action we have identified outcomes & benefits, potential resources and partners required to deliver the action, indicative timescales and the Lead Member and Head of Service responsible for ensuring the action is delivered.

The key priority actions for the Council are:

- Establish and implement an affordable housing delivery / investment programme to enable resources to be targeted to priority sites and actions (this will include utilising a wider range funding & delivery mechanisms)
- To ensure additional extra care facilities are provided
- Develop a homelessness strategy (including investigating options for prevention and emergency provision)

Newsletter updates on the delivery of the Housing Strategy: Action Plan will be sent to all Members and the Council's Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Updates on progress will also be provided to the multi-agency Strategic Partnerships Board. The intention is for this Action Plan to be a living document, regularly updated and reviewed.

We will also continue to welcome comments and suggestions to improve the Strategy and enhance delivery over the next five years.

Ref	Action	Priority	Outcomes & benefits	Resource requirements	Identified partners	Indicative timescales	Lead Member/ Head of Service
THEME 1: More homes to meet local need and demand							
1.1	Develop site development briefs for key development sites allocated for housing in the LDP	Medium term	This will ensure that detailed site information and guidance is readily available to potential developers. This will help to speed up the planning process and accelerate delivery of housing on sites allocated in the LDP.	LDP Members Steering Group Officer time	- Strategic Planning & Housing Team -Development Management - Finance & Assets Service - RSLs	Complete work programme by December 2016	Cllr David Smith GB
1.2	Develop appropriate Supplementary Planning Guidance	Medium term	This will ensure that appropriate and clear guidance is readily available to potential developers. This will help to speed up the planning process and contribute to accelerated delivery of housing on sites allocated in the LDP.	LDP Members Steering Group Officer time	- Strategic Planning & Housing Team - Development Management	Complete work programme by December 2016	Cllr David Smith GB
1.3	To develop a housing sites directory to promote sites across Denbighshire to builders/ developers. Survey builders/ developers to identify any barriers to development in Denbighshire	Short term	This will ensure that detailed site information is readily available to RSLs and developers. Accelerate delivery of housing on sites allocated in the LDP and publicise available sites.	Officer time	Strategic Planning & Housing Team Finance & Assets Service	Complete by December 2015	Cllr David Smith GB

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1.4	Update Local Housing Market Assessment incorporating housing need and demand data	Medium term	Housing need and demand data for the County is updated and clarified. This is a statutory requirement and will provide up to date information on Denbighshire's housing market with an analysis of current and future housing needs. This will help to inform policy decisions.	Officer time Statistical information	- Strategic Planning & Housing Team	By April 2018	Cllr David Smith GB
1.5	Review LDP housing allocations and policies as part of LDP Review, with scope to remove any allocations which are not being delivered	Medium term	Contact relevant landowners to advise them of the Council's approach before the review. Accelerate delivery of housing on sites allocated in the LDP and avoidance of land banking.	Officer time Legal advice	- Strategic Planning & Housing Team - Landowners - Developers	LDP Review to start by June 2017	Cllr David Smith GB
1.6	Investigate use of reduced commencement period conditions on planning permissions	Short-term	Accelerate delivery of housing on sites with planning permission and avoidance of landbanking. Lobby WG to change legislation to require completion of development within defined time periods	Officer time Legal advice	- Strategic Planning & Housing Team - Development Management Team - Legal Services	2015	Cllr David Smith GB

Ref	Action	Priority	Outcomes & benefits	Resource requirements	Identified partners	Indicative timescales	Lead Member/ Head of Service
1.7	Bring forward development on stalled sites through a clear programme of action	Medium – long term	Analysis of reasons for stalled sites & intervention & influence to facilitate development, where possible, through a package of measures such as gap funding, underwriting development.	Officer time	Strategic Planning & Housing Team Economic Development Team Finance & Assets RSLs	Develop programme by June 2016	Cllr David Smith GB
1.8	To develop an Infrastructure Plan for Denbighshire	Medium	Identification of infrastructure issues and requirements to enable housing growth and development	Officer time	Strategic Planning & Housing Team Economic Development Team, Highways, Education Infrastructure providers (incl DCWW, BCUHB, etc)	By June 2016	Cllr David Smith GB
1.9	Update and revise the Council's Empty Homes Delivery Plan and investigate innovative mechanisms for bringing empty homes back	Medium term	Better use of existing housing stock by continuing to target empty homes across the County. There is potential for new initiatives such as purchase	Officer time Funding Legal advice	Finance & Assets Service RSLs Developers	By December 2016	Cllr David Smith GB

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	into use and work with partners to develop new initiatives.						
1.10	Undertake a Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessment Support delivery of appropriate accommodation if a need is identified	Short term	This is a statutory requirement and will provide up to date information on gypsy & traveller accommodation needs in Denbighshire. This will help to inform policy decisions. Work with other N Wales authorities to address any identified needs.	Officer time Financial support for needs assessment Funding for site provision if required	Strategic Planning & Housing Team Finance & Assets Service Welsh Government	By February 2016	Cllr Hugh Irving GB
1.11	Remove the requirement for rural buildings to be converted to affordable housing (after economic use is proved unfeasible), in preference for market housing	Short-medium term	LDP policy change can only be carried out through the formal LDP Review process. Revised Supplementary Planning Guidance & LDP policy on conversion of redundant rural buildings. This will remove a potential source of affordable housing in rural areas but will provide an increased supply of market housing instead.	Officer time	Strategic Planning & Housing Team	Revised SPG adopted by Planning Committee May 2015 LDP Review to start by June 2017	Cllr David Smith GB
1.12	Increase access to training opportunities and employment for local people in the construction / housebuilding sector	Medium term	Development of a protocol for use in Section 106 planning agreements to require access to training opportunities for local people. Encourage RSLs,	Officer time Legal advice	Strategic Planning & Housing Team	June 2016	Cllr David Smith GB

Ref	Action	Priority	Outcomes & benefits	Resource requirements	Identified partners	Indicative timescales	Lead Member/ Head of Service
			developers and other partners to offer apprenticeships, work placements, mentoring/ coaching opportunities to local people.		Economic Development Team Legal services RSLs Other partners		
1.13	Encourage development of good quality intermediate and market rented homes to meet local needs	Medium term	Potential for RSLs/ Council to develop homes for market rent or manage homes developed by others to increase supply of good quality homes in the private rented sector	Officer time Funding Legal advice	Finance & Assets Service RSLs	By December 2016	Cllr David Smith/ Cllr Julian Thompson Hill GB/JG

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THEME 2: Affordable Homes							
2.1	Establish and implement an affordable housing delivery / investment programme to enable resources to be targeted to priority sites and actions	Medium term	<p>A clear programme for delivery of affordable housing which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes a targeted programme for S106 & HRA funds • Maximises use of external funding, including SHG • Identifies suitable sites already in Council ownership and establishes a programme for delivery • Identifies investment opportunities for using capital funding • Identifies opportunities for collaboration on development on other public sector land 	Officer time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic Planning & Housing Team - Finance & Assets Service - RSLs 	By June 2016	Cllr David Smith GB

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			This will contribute to an improved supply of affordable housing of all types and tenures.				
2.2	Widen the range of options on which commuted sums for affordable housing can be spent.	Medium term	Revised commuted sum policy. This will set out how and where the Council will spend the money required from developers for affordable housing. A larger number of smaller amounts are expected to be received in future and a revised policy, with a wider range of options, will maximise the benefit secured and minimise unspent sums being returned to developers.	Officer time	- Strategic Planning & Housing Team - Finance & Assets Service	By December 2016	Cllr David Smith/ Cllr Julian Thompson-Hill GB/JG
2.3	Review public landholdings, both Council and other bodies, working with other public sector agencies, to determine suitability and availability for affordable housing development	Short-term	List of publicly owned sites which may be available for affordable housing development. Influence delivery and make best use of public sector assets to deliver new housing, including affordable and specialised housing.	Officer time	Strategic Planning & Housing Team Finance & Assets Service Other public bodies	March 2016	Cllr Julian Thompson-Hill JG

Ref	Action	Priority	Outcomes & benefits	Resource requirements	Identified partners	Indicative timescales	Lead Member/ Head of Service
2.4	To fully investigate utilising a wider range of affordable housing funding & delivery mechanisms, e.g. HRA funding, joint venture, establishing a housing delivery company	Short term	A clear understanding and assessment of potential delivery options to inform the development of the affordable housing delivery programme.	Officer time Legal advice	- Strategic Planning & Housing Team - Finance & Assets Service - RSLs	By June 2016	Cllr David Smith/ Cllr Julian Thompson-Hill GB/JG
2.5	Investigate developing a council protocol for the disposal of Council land and property assets to consider best value	Medium term	Adoption of a protocol to allow for sale of Council land at reduced value would allow for delivery of additional affordable housing on these sites	Officer time Legal advice	- Strategic Planning & Housing Team - Finance & Assets Service	By Dec. 2016	Cllr Julian Thompson-Hill JG
2.6	To develop a marketing policy to promote the affordable housing register or equivalent. Review current process for registration.	Short term	Revised simplified process for registration which is consistent across the region. This should make it easier for people to register. Wider promotion of the register will lead to improved awareness and take up by those in need of affordable housing, with an increase in applicants registered on the affordable housing register.	Officer time Input from RSLs	Strategic Planning & Housing Team RSLs	March 2016	Cllr David Smith GB

Ref	Action	Priority	Outcomes & benefits	Resource requirements	Identified partners	Indicative timescales	Lead Member/ Head of Service
2.7	To develop a publicity policy to ensure successful affordable home schemes are fully promoted	Short term	Promotion of successful schemes. This will help to improve negative public perceptions and improve take up of development.	Officer time	Strategic Planning & Housing Team RSLs	March 2016	Cllr David Smith GB
2.8	Investigate the possibility of establishing one central fund for affordable housing commuted sums.	Short-term	Creation of a central fund for affordable housing commuted sums. If possible, pooling all sums received would enable a more strategic approach to spending commuted sums and assist the Council in building its own affordable homes. It would also ensure effective use of smaller sums collected.	- Officer time - Funding to secure legal (counsel) input??	- Strategic Planning & Housing Team - Finance & Assets Service	March 2016	Cllr David Smith GB
2.9	Develop a standard s106 agreement / clauses for securing affordable housing through planning applications. Ensure that this meets mortgage providers requirements	Short-term	Template s106 legal agreements, or template clauses to be included in SPG and publicised on website. This will reduce the length of time taken to negotiate the terms of s106 agreements prior to	Officer time	Strategic Planning & Housing Team Development Management Team Legal Services	By March 2016	Cllr David Smith GB

Ref	Action	Priority	Outcomes & benefits	Resource requirements	Identified partners	Indicative timescales	Lead Member/ Head of Service
			planning permission being granted.				
2.10	Involvement of the Council's Finance & Assets Service in negotiations on planning applications to deliver affordable housing.	Short-term	Revised planning process to include consultation and negotiation with the Finance & Assets Service where the provision of affordable housing is affecting overall site delivery. Use of Council funds can enable stalled or marginally viable private housing developments to proceed, thus increasing delivery of both affordable and market housing.	- Officer time - HRA / other housing funding??	- Strategic Planning & Housing Team - Development Management Team - Finance & Assets Service	By June 2015	Cllr Julian Thompson - Hill JG/GB
2.11	Test a range of approaches to calculating the value of affordable properties, to ensure this is set at an appropriate level. Consideration should also be given to the particular circumstances of self-build affordable housing.	Short term	Inclusion of any new approach in a revised Supplementary Planning Guidance document. An appropriate value should be genuinely affordable to those in need but not so low as to be economically unviable for developers.	Officer time	Strategic Planning & Housing Team Finance & Assets Service	By March 2016	Cllr David Smith GB
2.12	Review the current approach and thresholds for affordable housing requirements in LDP policies relating to affordable housing. This can only be	Medium term	Revised LDP policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance on affordable housing. This will ensure that the amount of affordable housing being	- Officer time - Funding for viability testing of policy approaches	Strategic Planning & Housing Team Finance & Assets Service	By June 2017	Cllr David Smith GB

Ref	Action	Priority	Outcomes & benefits	Resource requirements	Identified partners	Indicative timescales	Lead Member/ Head of Service
	carried out through the formal LDP Review process.		delivered by private developers is maximised without preventing overall housing delivery. Requirements for rural affordable housing, and the Council's approach, will also be reconsidered to ensure this supports sustainable rural communities.				
2.13	Introduce a mechanism to secure financial contributions for affordable housing following scheme completion, where viability has improved beyond that originally projected ('clawback').	Short-term	Revised Supplementary Planning Guidance on affordable housing. Where housing developments are delivered over a long time period, or the wider economic climate subsequently changes, the resultant scheme may have been able to deliver more affordable housing than agreed at the time of planning permission being granted. Introducing a mechanism to assess development viability after completion will ensure the Council can claim a contribution towards affordable housing, which would previously have been lost.	- Officer time - Funding to secure legal (counsel) input??	- Strategic Planning & Housing Team - Legal Services	By March 2016	Cllr David Smith GB

Ref	Action	Priority	Outcomes & benefits	Resource requirements	Identified partners	Indicative timescales	Lead Member/ Head of Service
2.14	To establish a development fund through selling assets where there is little or no housing need	Medium term	This would enable acquisition of land and investment in those areas with identified housing needs. This would form part of the Affordable Housing Delivery Programme.	Officer time Legal & financial advice	- Strategic Planning & Housing Team - Finance & Assets Service	By Dec. 2016	Cllr Julian Thompson-Hill JG
2.15	To identify a wider range of development partners to assist in increasing the supply of affordable housing	Medium term	This could include both public and private sector partners and would contribute to achieving the affordable housing delivery programme.	Officer time Legal & financial advice	- Strategic Planning & Housing Team - RSLs	By June 2016	Cllr David Smith GB
2.16	To develop a business plan to ensure more Council homes are provided	Medium term	Contribution to an improved supply of affordable housing in the County. Development by the Council could deliver a mix of tenures, however further investigation is required.	Officer time Legal & financial advice	- Strategic Planning & Housing Team Finance & Assets Service RSLs	By March 2016	Cllr Barbara Smith JG
2.17	Test a range of methods for calculating financial contributions towards affordable housing, with the aim of reducing the number of calculations currently used.	Medium term	Potential to simplify the calculations for commuted sums for affordable housing, whilst ensuring that contributions are maximised without jeopardising development viability.	Officer time	Strategic Planning & Housing Team Finance & Assets Service	June 2017	Cllr David Smith GB

Ref	Action	Priority	Outcomes & benefits	Resource requirements	Identified partners	Indicative timescales	Lead Member/ Head of Service
THEME 3: Safe and Healthy homes							
3.1	To ensure Council and Housing Association accommodation is brought up to and maintained at the Welsh Housing Quality Standard	Medium term	Welsh Government require that all social housing meets WHQS by 2020.	Investment in WHQS	RSLs	By December 2017	CLlr Barbara Smith JG
3.2	To improve the standard of houses in multiple occupation & to enforce mandatory and additional licencing schemes in houses in multiple occupation	Medium	House in multiple occupation have some of the worst living conditions in Denbighshire. This approach will target the worst of these to ensure they are improved	Officer time	Public Protection Private landlords	Improve more than 300 private high risk dwellings by December 2017. License 60 additional HMOs by December 2017	CLlr David Smith/ Graham Boase
3.3	Implement Landlord Licensing Scheme, including a comprehensive database of all private land lords	Medium term	New legislation is introducing the requirement for all private landlords to register with Denbighshire County Council The scheme is being administered by Cardiff City Council.	TBC	Public protection Private landlords	By October 2016	CLlr David Smith/ Graham Boase

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3.4	To develop a private rented sector action plan & toolkit	Short	The private rented sector is the growth tenure in Denbighshire. Engaging and developing the relationship with private landlords is crucial	Officer time	Housing options, Enforcement, Strategic Planning and housing	By June 2016	Cllr David Smith/ Graham Boase
3.5	To develop an Energy Conservation delivery plan and establish a database to prioritise those in fuel poverty	Medium term	Will focus on targeting action at the properties with the worst energy efficiency. To work with households to move them out of fuel poverty – Welsh Government funding secured	Officer time	Welsh Government Welsh European funding office Bangor Univ.	Delivery Plan Plan & data base by August 2016.	Cllr David Smith/ Graham Boase
3.6	To establish the relevant data for caravan parks and develop a regulatory procedure for holiday caravans		Many people are living in caravans which do not have planning permission for permanent residency. Some caravans provide poor housing conditions and this will help to improve standards and ensure that people are not living in unsuitable accommodation.	Planning and public protection	Business improvement and modernisation Development Management, caravan park owners/ Managers Public protection	By April 2016	Cllr David Smith Alan Smith/ Graham Boase

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Theme 4: Supporting independence and preventing homelessness							
4.1	To ensure additional extra care facilities are provided in Denbighshire	Medium term	More housing options are needed for older people. Denbighshire and public/private partners are examining a range of ways forward	Extra Care manager Head of Community Support Services Housing Associations Procurement Legal services	Community Support Services Property services Housing Associations Strategic Planning and Housing, procurement and Legal services	2 schemes to be in development by December 2017	Cllr Bobby Feeley Phil Gilroy
4.2	Review supported independent living provision and demand	Medium term	The appropriateness of some existing schemes given their age and location is in need of review. viability of redeveloping sheltered housing schemes owned by the Council	Community Support	Housing associations Community Support	By June 2017	Cllr Bobby Feeley Phil Gilroy
4.3	To investigate developing a social lettings agency	Short term	Social lettings agencies are non-profit organisations which can provide a more affordable route to accessing the private rented sector	Housing options Licensing team	Homelessness Planning & Public protection Private landlords	By June 2016	Cllr Hugh Irving Phil Gilroy

Ref	Action	Priority	Outcomes & benefits	Resource requirements	Identified partners	Indicative timescales	Lead Member/ Head of Service
Theme 4: Supporting independence and preventing homelessness							
4.4	To investigate options for providing direct emergency homelessness provision in the County	High	Will clarify the options for this project and ensure good quality accommodation for homeless people. Potential costs savings	Homelessness Environmental health Housing association	Homelessness Housing management Planning and Public Protection	By December 2017	Cllr Hugh Irving Phil Gilroy
4.5	To develop a pre-move programme for vulnerable people to maximise successful placements	Awaiting further information	Awaiting further information	Awaiting further information	Social Services Housing management Housing Associations	Awaiting further information	Cllr Bobby Feeley Phil Gilroy
4.6	To implement the single access route to housing	Medium	The project will provide a single waiting list and better housing option advice to ensure applicants are realistic about the housing options available to them.	Operational staff in allocations and housing options	Housing options and housing management	By December 2016	Cllr Barbara Smith Jamie Groves
4.7	To develop a homelessness strategy	High	Welsh government have introduced legislation requiring the development this strategy	Homelessness/ housing options	Homelessness/ housing options	By December 2018	Cllr Hugh Irving Phil Gilroy
4.8	To work closer with the private rented sector to increase access to appropriate properties	Awaiting further information	A Specific officer is/has being employed to work with private landlords and enforcement to bring forward quality properties	Awaiting further information	Awaiting further information	Awaiting further information	Cllr David Smith/Phil Gilroy

Ref	Action	Priority	Outcomes & benefits	Resource requirements	Identified partners	Indicative timescales	Lead Member/ Head of Service
Theme 5: Sustainable communities							
5.1	To develop a Neighbourhood Engagement Strategy	Awaiting further information	Awaiting further information	Awaiting further information	Awaiting further information	Awaiting further information	CLlr Barbara Smith/Jamie Groves
5.2	To bring key eyesore sites and empty properties back into use across the county	Medium	The need/demand for housing is high across Denbighshire. Empty homes/sites are a wasted resource and require tailor made approach to bring them back into use	Officer time Legal advice	Empty Homes Officer Conservation Strategic Planning and Housing Housing Associations	Bring back 10 of the top 20 eyesore sites into use by December 2017	CLlr David Smith/ Graham Boase
5.3	Develop an Asset Management Strategy	Awaiting further information	This will prioritise areas of Council housing to be regenerated and funding from the Housing Revenue Account.	Awaiting further information	Awaiting further information	Awaiting further information	Awaiting further information

5.4	Review resident Inclusion Strategy	TBC	Improvements to the approach to engaging Council tenants in decision making	TBC	Finance, Assets and Housing	TBC	Cllr Barbara Smith/ Jamie Groves
5.5	To bring forward key strategic sites across the County	High	Housing and economic development are intrinsically linked. Specific teams are working to bring forward sites	Officer time	Council assets Economic Development Strategic Planning and Housing Developers	TBC	Cllr David Smith /Rebecca Maxwell
5.6	To develop an apprenticeship scheme for Council Housing	Short term	Maintaining the Council stock now it has reached Welsh Housing Quality Standard is crucial. Many of the current workforce are over 50 and these are needed in terms of developing younger people	Officer time	Finance, Assets and Housing	Appoint 3 apprentices by June 2016	Cllr Barbara Smith/ Jamie Groves
5.7	To bring forward new housing opportunities in Rhyl West	Medium	The demolition of houses has allowed the creation of green space in Rhyl West. West Rhyl Cooperative, North Wales Housing and Pennaf are bringing forward properties in Abbey Street and Gronant Street. These properties are orientated towards families.	Officer time WG funding	Cooperative West Rhyl Community land Trust North Wales Housing Pennaf Welsh Government Strategic Planning and Housing	31 homes by February 2017	Rebecca Maxwell