

# DCC Homelessness Strategy 2017-2021

## Wellbeing Impact Assessment Report

This report summarises the likely impact of a proposal on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

Assessment Number:	192
Brief description:	The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 requires every Local Authority to carry out a Homelessness Review, and formulate a Strategy based upon that Review. The Act stipulates that every Local Housing Authority must adopt their first Homelessness Strategy by 2018, and develop a new Strategy every four years thereafter.
Date Completed:	Version: 0
Completed by:	
Responsible Service:	Community Support Services
Localities affected by the proposal:	Whole County,

# IMPACT ASSESSMENT SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Before we look in detail at the contribution and impact of the proposal, it is important to consider how the proposal is applying the sustainable development principle. This means that we must act "in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

## Score for the sustainability of the approach

Could some small changes in your thinking produce a better result?



(3 out of 4 stars)

Actual score : 21 / 24.

## Summary of impact

Wellbeing Goals



A prosperous Denbighshire	Positive
A resilient Denbighshire	Positive
A healthier Denbighshire	Positive
A more equal Denbighshire	Positive
A Denbighshire of cohesive communities	Positive
A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Positive
A globally responsible Denbighshire	Positive

## Main conclusions

The Homelessness Strategy has been determined to have a positive impact for all of the 7 Wellbeing Goals, which is perhaps unsurprising, given that its priorities and actions are based on a comprehensive review of homelessness and related services, needs, and demand. The Strategy recognises that housing is not only about bricks and mortar issues and that quality accommodation (and support where needed) contributes to improving health, wellbeing and quality of life. There is also a clear emphasis that this is a partnership document, and therefore that the actions and priorities set out should have a positive impact in pooling knowledge and skills, and providing a holistic response to the needs of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in Denbighshire.

# THE LIKELY IMPACT ON DENBIGHSHIRE, WALES AND THE WORLD

## **A prosperous Denbighshire**

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	This Strategy takes a long-term, holistic view of tackling homelessness and providing quality accommodation and support.

### **Positive consequences identified:**

Temporary accommodation officer and private rented sector officer roles, as set out in the Strategy, support around energy efficiency. Housing Solutions support also contributes to addressing fuel poverty.

There is a focus on providing affordable, sustainable accommodation for people, and areas such as supporting people back into work, i.e. addressing the underlying causes of homelessness. The strategy will also capture future areas of development e.g. social enterprise, DCC work experience pilot. The strategy will consider the implications of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act, including supporting the stability of tenancies, and working alongside landlords to support the provision of quality accommodation. Additionally, one of the key priorities of the strategy is reducing the use of B&B as temporary accommodation - this should have a positive impact in terms of development, tourism.

There is a focus on supporting people back into work. The strategy will also capture future areas of development e.g. social enterprise, DCC work experience pilot. The restructuring of SP and Housing Solutions Management additionally allows for greater efficiency and sustainability.

There is a focus on training and peer support. The Strategy is influenced by the citizen engagement policy; there is also a joint Service User Involvement Officer across Housing Solutions and SP. The strategy will also capture future areas of development e.g. social enterprise, DCC work experience pilot.

The Homelessness Strategy will support the delivery of the DCC Housing Strategy, and puts a focus on working closely with landlords to establish a quality supply of accommodation, making best use of previously developed land and existing buildings.

The Housing Solutions and SP Manager links in closely with the other Tackling Poverty streams (under which are initiatives such as PACE), as well as the Children, Young People, and Families partnership.

### **Unintended negative consequences identified:**

One of the key priorities of the strategy is reducing the use of B&B as temporary accommodation, this may impact negatively on some local businesses.

With the uncertainty of funding, it is made very difficult to plan in the long term, therefore some jobs within Housing Solutions have to be temporary.

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The majority of Housing Solutions/homelessness support provision is based in the North.

### **Mitigating actions:**

Liaise with Facilities, Assets and Housing regarding the possible impacts on B&B's, there may be potential opportunities for regeneration. In relation to shorter-term jobs, HST will be exploring qualifications to promote career progression, including looking at opportunities via Cymrorth Cymru and WLGA. In relation to the majority of Housing Solutions/homelessness support provision being based in the North, online options will be developed, and there will be a drop-in presence in rural community resources, e.g. libraries, as this need is assessed (it should be noted that a service

mapping exercise for the review has identified that the majority of related need is in the North). In terms of maximising the positives under child care (and more broadly, accessing employment), Housing Solutions will work to promote opportunities available via Tackling Poverty Streams amongst service users, e.g. via promotion of DEWIS Cymru and Tackling Poverty info pack resource. This will involve skilling up staff, and embedding into Triage system.

## A resilient Denbighshire

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	The Strategy focuses on the importance of partnerships with agencies such as DCC Enforcement, other Housing colleagues, and Citizens Advice.

### Positive consequences identified:

Temporary accommodation officer and private rented sector officer roles, as set out in the Strategy, support around energy efficiency. Housing Solutions support also contributes to addressing fuel poverty, including via linking with Citizens Advice Denbighshire.

Housing Solutions will be working closely with DCC Enforcement to ensure that accommodation is safe and of a good standard.

Housing Solutions will prioritize online promotion (rather than leaflets etc.) wherever possible. The Strategy itself will be available online.

The Strategy will support and work alongside DCC's other corporate priorities, and as such, Housing Solutions staff are committed to agile working.

Housing Solutions will be working closely with DCC Enforcement to ensure that accommodation is safe and of a good standard. Housing Solutions would also be key in responding to any flood crisis, supporting/accommodating displaced households.

### Unintended negative consequences identified:

### Mitigating actions:

## A healthier Denbighshire

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	The Strategy recognises that housing is not only about bricks and mortar issues; that quality accommodation (and support where needed) contributes to improving health, wellbeing and quality of life.

### Positive consequences identified:

The Strategy recognises that investing in housing is not only about bricks and mortar issues - besides improving people's homes, it brings benefits for people too, contributing to improving their health, wellbeing and quality of life. A key aim of the Strategy is tackling the underlying causes of homelessness - this includes ensuring that people are able to access the support they might need around their health and wellbeing. A key aim of the strategy is to end rough sleeping - the health implications of rough sleeping are well established, including higher levels of mortality, chronic illnesses and mental health issues. Housing Solutions will also continue to work closely with DCC Enforcement, to ensure that accommodation is safe and of a good standard. The Strategy will also support the 2025 movement, established to end avoidable health inequalities in North Wales. In the context of the above, a key aim of the Strategy is holistic assessment and planning. Housing Solutions link closely with Supporting People to ensure that people are able to access the support

they need - this will include supporting access to good quality, healthy food, by supporting around menu planning, cooking well on a budget etc. Another key aim of the Strategy is reducing the use of B&B as temporary accommodation; this will mean that more people will have access to better cooking facilities.

As above, a key aim of the Strategy is holistic assessment and planning. Housing Solutions link closely with Supporting People to ensure that people are able to access the support they need. This support would also include supporting participation in leisure activities, both from the point of view of physical health, and community involvement.

As above, a key aim of the Strategy is holistic assessment and planning. Housing Solutions link closely with Supporting People and other key partners to ensure that people are able to access the support they need. This support would include that around people's emotional and mental wellbeing, be it via accessing the Community Mental Health Team, or supporting access of activities to improve mental health and wellbeing. A key aim of the strategy is to end rough sleeping - the health implications of rough sleeping are well established, including higher levels of mortality, chronic illnesses and mental health issues.

In carrying out holistic assessments, Housing Solutions will ensure that people are supported to access the healthcare they might need. The Strategy includes Housing Solutions seeking to strengthen the partnership with BCUHB.

### **Unintended negative consequences identified:**

### **Mitigating actions:**

## **A more equal Denbighshire**

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	Housing Solutions' fundamental aim of tackling homelessness is underpinned by a holistic look at the causes and effects of homelessness, it therefore naturally focuses on tackling inequalities and poverty. One of the key objectives of the Strategy is to ensure Denbighshire's responses to homelessness promote customer choice, equality of opportunity, reduce social exclusion and contribute to community cohesion.

### **Positive consequences identified:**

The Strategy recognises that investing in housing is not only about bricks and mortar issues - besides improving people's homes, it brings benefits for people too, contributing to improving their health, wellbeing and quality of life. All temporary accommodation is accessible to people with disabilities, and this will remain the case. The Strategy will also support the 2025 movement, established to end avoidable health inequalities in North Wales. The Strategy will additionally support Denbighshire's Equality Plan.

Increasing the supply of suitable temporary accommodation (and reducing the use of B&B's) will have a positive impact on pregnant women - although Housing Solutions currently do try to avoid placing pregnant women in B&B, this may occasionally occur, if demand for other temporary accommodation outstrips supply. All temporary accommodation is currently accessible to people with disabilities, and this will remain the case. The Strategy will also support the 2025 movement, established to end avoidable health inequalities in North Wales. The Strategy will additionally support Denbighshire's Equality Plan.

Housing Solutions links very closely with Supporting People (now sitting under one manager), and are key contributors to the Tackling Poverty Agenda. Housing Solutions and Supporting People contribute to the Tackling Poverty leads group, and the operational and strategic groups. The Strategy sets out Housing Solutions focus on tackling poverty, including areas such as accessing money advice.

### **Unintended negative consequences identified:**

## Mitigating actions:

As a consequence of completing the Wellbeing Impact Assessment, tackling poverty has been added as a specific emphasis in delivering the overall vision - 'to end homelessness'.

## A Denbighshire of cohesive communities

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	Access to safe and suitable accommodation, as well as resilience & empowerment, are 2 of the key strands of the approach to achieving the Strategy's vision - to end homelessness.

## Positive consequences identified:

Safeguarding is a primary consideration Housing Solutions will continue to work closely with DCC Enforcement, to ensure that accommodation is safe and of a good standard. Housing Solutions also work closely with Criminal Justice, including the Police and Probation service, to ensure a joined up and holistic approach to managing ASB and offending behaviour, ensuring that any placement or offer of accommodation is appropriate, considering the safety of the individual and wider community. As part of this, Housing Solutions will work with the criminal justice system to ensure that the Prisoner Pathway works much more effectively, resulting in a more coordinated approach and better support for people leaving custody.

The Strategy is influenced by the citizen engagement policy; there is also a joint Service User Involvement Officer across Housing Solutions and SP. The strategy will also capture future areas of development e.g. social enterprise, DCC work experience pilot. Housing Solutions will also be developing resources, including advice factsheets, to empower individuals to resolve their own housing issues.

One of the key priorities of the strategy is reducing the use of B&B as temporary accommodation - this should have a positive impact in terms of development, tourism. The Strategy will also support the Denbighshire Housing Strategy and Development Plan.

## Unintended negative consequences identified:

Placements of some higher risk citizens may have negative impacts on neighbours and communities, if e.g. there is ongoing ASB.

One of the key priorities of the strategy is reducing the use of B&B as temporary accommodation, this may impact negatively on some local businesses, which could have the potential to lead to some deterioration.

## Mitigating actions:

Liaise with Community Housing regarding the possible impacts on B&B's, there may be potential opportunities for regeneration. Housing Solutions will work in close partnership with Criminal Justice, Enforcement, support agencies and landlords to ensure that issues such as ASB are addressed in a coordinated way; protocols to be further developed, as outlined in the Strategy, will support this.

## A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	There is nothing specifically set out in the Strategy around the Welsh language; however, Housing Solutions will continue to deliver against the Welsh Language standards in implementing all of the plans set out in the Strategy.

### **Positive consequences identified:**

Housing Solutions have a fluent Welsh speaker in the team, and have adopted the 'active offer' and Denbighshire Welsh Language Standards. The Strategy, as well as all public information, will be available in both Welsh and English.

As above, Housing Solutions have a fluent Welsh speaker in the team, and have adopted the 'active offer' and Denbighshire Welsh Language Standards.

The Strategy will support the Denbighshire Housing Strategy and Development Plan. Supporting People have also provided opportunities for people to access activities in the community via the Personal Budget project(s).

### **Unintended negative consequences identified:**

Not all staff are able to speak fluent Welsh. There could therefore be a high level of demand for the one Welsh speaking staff member.

### **Mitigating actions:**

Ensure that all staff are aware of policies, and encourage staff to take up training.

## **A globally responsible Denbighshire**

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	Ending homelessness, the fundamental aim of the Strategy, naturally sits within the maintenance of human rights - everyone has a fundamental human right to housing, which ensures access to a safe, secure, habitable, and affordable home with freedom from forced eviction. Ending homelessness and the focus on prevention means that the burden on other statutory services (e.g. criminal justice) will be reduced.

### **Positive consequences identified:**

Housing Solutions ensure that all landlords worked with are registered with Rent Smart Wales, which ensures that people are trained in their rights and responsibilities when renting out a property to tenants. Housing Solutions also work closely with DCC Enforcement, to ensure that properties are safe and of a good standard. Any Housing Solutions decision will also be made in compliance with legislation and case law.

Partnership working is fundamental to the Strategy, and the focus on prevention means that the burden on other statutory services (e.g. criminal justice) will be reduced.

### **Unintended negative consequences identified:**

Reducing the use of B&B's as temporary accommodation could have a negative impact on some local businesses. Additionally, local connection, as stipulated in the Act, means that we may sometimes have to reconnect people to another area - this could result in increased pressure on services in those areas.

### **Mitigating actions:**

Liaise with Community Housing regarding the possible impacts on B&B's, there may be potential opportunities for regeneration. Re. reconnection, we will ensure that a coordinated approach is taken; that we liaise with services in areas in question, and offer support where practicable. In this, we will be guided by Homeless Link's Reconnection Toolkit. We will also be considering regional

commissioning where appropriate.