

Draft Housing and Homelessness Strategy

Well-being Impact Assessment Report

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

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| Assessment Number: | 847 |
| Brief description: | 2.1. Ensuring that everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs is a key corporate priority and developing a revised Housing and Homelessness Strategy is critical to address the priority. The Housing and Homelessness Strategy will provide a clear statement of the Council's vision and aims for housing in the County. |
| Date Completed: | Version: 0 |
| Completed by: | |
| Responsible Service: | Planning & Public Protection |
| Localities affected by the proposal: | Whole County, |
| Who will be affected by the proposal? | Households in need of affordable housing; people who are homeless; council departments; housing developers; registered social landlords and private landlords. |
| Was this impact assessment completed as a group? | Yes |

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

★ ★ ★ ☆ (3 out of 4 stars) Actual score : 25 / 30.

Implications of the score

The strategy scores well as it seeks to address an immediate need for housing for people who are homeless and also address the longer term need for quality, affordable housing in our communities. Initiatives to improve the energy efficiency of the existing housing stock and building new stock to high standards will help to reduce fuel poverty. Energy efficiency improvements will help to address the impacts of climate change and assist in decarbonisation and improvements to biodiversity.

The Strategy will encourage partnership working, this could be enhanced with further engagement with housing providers. Linkages with other initiatives and strategies will help to address the causes of homelessness.

Summary of impact

Well-being Goals

A prosperous Denbighshire

A resilient Denbighshire

A healthier Denbighshire

A more equal Denbighshire

A Denbighshire of cohesive communities

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

A globally responsible Denbighshire

Positive

Positive

Positive

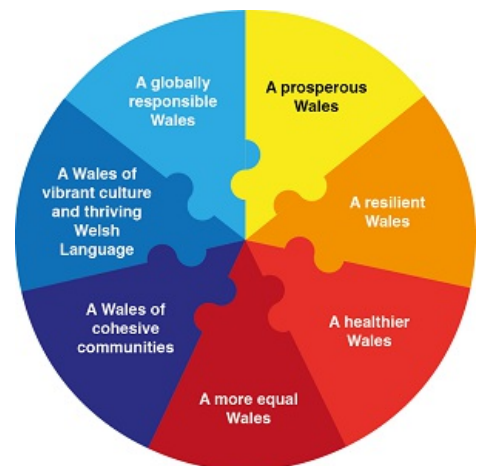
Positive

Positive

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Main conclusions

Having suitable, affordable accommodation is fundamental to peoples' health and well-being. The strategy and associated action plan seek to reduce homelessness and increase the provision of affordable housing. Having secure housing increases employment prospects along with improved access to healthcare, education and other support services. Improving the energy efficiency of existing properties and building new ones to the highest standards of efficiency will reduce fuel poverty and also make a contribution to decarbonisation and improving biodiversity. People with protected characteristics are more likely to benefit from actions arising from the strategy. The strategy promotes inter departmental and inter agency partnership working to maximise benefits.

Evidence to support the Well-being Impact Assessment

We have consulted published research or guides that inform us about the likely impact of the

proposal

We have involved an expert / consulted a group who represent those who may affected by the proposal

We have engaged with people who will be affected by the proposal

THE LIKELY IMPACT ON DENBIGHSHIRE, WALES AND THE WORLD

A prosperous Denbighshire

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| Overall Impact | Positive |
| Justification for impact | The strategy is primarily aimed at tackling homelessness; providing more affordable housing and increasing the quality of the current social housing stock. The economic benefits will be largely positive although they may be limited in scale. Clear linkages to the Supporting People Programme will ensure that maximum benefit is delivered through joined up initiatives. |
| Further actions required | Ensure that the strategy is closely aligned with other strategies and support initiatives to maximise benefits. Ensure local labour agreements and supply chains are used. |

Positive impacts identified:

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| A low carbon society | Upgrades to council and other housing stock will contribute to zero carbon pledge. Decarbonisation of existing stock is a priority. |
| Quality communications, infrastructure and transport | An infrastructure plan is developed alongside the LDP to ensure future development is sustainable and doesn't put undue pressure on existing community resources. The LDP directs new housing to sustainable locations. |
| Economic development | Ensuring that people have quality homes to live in is likely to increase economic activity rates. Having a secure and permanent address can improve employment prospects. Upgrades to the social housing stock will create employment opportunities for local companies and supply chains. Residents may have more money to spend in the community if housing costs are lower. Interdepartmental working is improving the delivery of a wide range of support services. |
| Quality skills for the long term | The strategy links to the Supporting People Programme which aims to support vulnerable and young people. The project aims to increase independence and provides opportunities for skills development and volunteering. Building projects offer apprenticeship opportunities which will benefit local skills levels and employment in the longer term. |
| Quality jobs for the long term | Theme 5 Homes and Support for Vulnerable People links to Supporting People Programme. Increasing skills and providing permanent accommodation will improve long term job prospects. |
| Childcare | Increased demand may assist in the viability of childcare providers. In rural areas may help to sustain childcare businesses and local schools. |

Negative impacts identified:

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| A low carbon society | Amount of Council and housing association stock is limited compared to whole of the housing stock in the county so impact may be small. |
| Quality communications, infrastructure and transport | The strategy will have limited impacts in terms of increasing access to and provision of infrastructure. |
| Economic development | Strategy needs to ensure it works alongside other strategies and initiatives to maximise benefits. |

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| Quality skills for the long term | Funding for the Supporting People programme is being reduced, alternative methods of support may be required. |
| Quality jobs for the long term | Limited direct provision of long term jobs, providing housing is first step but other support needs to be available to ensure benefits are maximised. |
| Childcare | Affordable childcare may not be available and is beyond the scope of this strategy. This may impact negatively on employment opportunities. |

A resilient Denbighshire

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| Overall Impact | Positive |
| Justification for impact | Improvements to the energy efficiency of the existing housing stock and ensuring all new stock is built to high levels of energy efficiency will reduce the running costs of properties and minimise impacts on the natural environment, biodiversity and assist in managing climate change. |
| Further actions required | Ensure that the biodiversity of 'eyesore' sites is fully considered and enhanced as part of any scheme to redevelopment sites. Increase liaison with private sector to encourage improvements to existing housing stock. Emphasise the benefits of decarbonisation and improvements to biodiversity in all publicity around the projects in the strategy. |

Positive impacts identified:

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| Biodiversity and the natural environment | Decarbonising existing homes and ensuring new build homes are extremely energy efficient will help to mitigate the impacts of climate change and the resultant impacts on biodiversity. Bringing empty homes back into use may reduce the requirement for new build homes, some of which may be on green field sites. |
| Biodiversity in the built environment | Decarbonising existing homes and ensuring new build homes are extremely energy efficient will help to mitigate the impacts of climate change and the resultant impacts on biodiversity. |
| Reducing waste, reusing and recycling | Impact on waste services likely to be minimal. |
| Reduced energy/fuel consumption | The strategy targets resources to ensure homes are more energy efficient which will have environmental benefits as well as improving housing quality and targeting fuel poverty. Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards will be implemented and enforced in the private rented sector. DCC new build housing stock to be built to EPC A rating. |
| People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity | The introduction of energy efficient measures into properties may increase awareness of the need to take positive action to mitigate climate change. |
| Flood risk management | This strategy sits alongside the LDP which guides development away from flood risk areas in the County. |

Negative impacts identified:

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| Biodiversity and the natural environment | There will be limited impact within the existing housing stock which makes up the vast majority of the housing supply. Empty properties may have been colonised by species which may be disturbed by bringing the property back into use. |
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| Biodiversity in the built environment | The redevelopment of 'eyesore' sites can result in a loss of biodiversity that has colonised a site whilst it has lain derelict. |
| Reducing waste, reusing and recycling | Minimal impacts |
| Reduced energy/fuel consumption | Increased regulation and welfare reforms may reduce profitability in private rent making energy efficiency measures less viable and may reduce available stock. Current private stock has much scope to be improved but our ability to influence is limited. |
| People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity | There may be some criticism of spending money on decarbonisation and prioritising biodiversity when people remain homeless or with little access to affordable housing. A lack of vision around the long term benefits of improving biodiversity may create negative impressions. |
| Flood risk management | Much of the existing housing stock is in flood risk areas especially in the north of the county. New development will be directed away from these areas but existing stock will remain. |

A healthier Denbighshire

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| Overall Impact | Positive |
| Justification for impact | Having a secure, permanent address opens up a host of other opportunities such as improved access to healthcare, education and leisure. Reducing fuel poverty may enable people to have better diets and participate in more leisure activities. All this will have a positive effect on both physical and mental health and well-being. |
| Further actions required | Ensuring that we continue to work closely with other departments and organisations such as health care providers will improve delivery of the strategy. |

Positive impacts identified:

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| A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being | A key theme in the strategy is ensuring safe and healthy homes. All properties built by DCC conform to Lifetime Homes standards which supports people with disabilities and older people to remain in their homes. |
| Access to good quality, healthy food | Having a permanent residence will increase access to cooking facilities for people which may improve diet and access to healthier food. Increased allotment provision will enable healthier diets. |
| People's emotional and mental well-being | Having adequate shelter is a basic human need. The strategy aims to address homelessness, increase the supply of affordable housing and improve the quality and energy efficiency of the existing council housing stock. Having a fixed address and adequate shelter is a major factor in peoples' emotional health and mental well-being. Promotes social inclusion and sense of community. Reduction in sense of fear of crime in neighbourhoods. Encouraging people to remain independent in their own homes can maintain sense of community and have positive impacts on Welsh language. |
| Access to healthcare | Having a secure home is likely to increase peoples' ability and inclination to access health care. Stable relationships can be built with primary healthcare services. |

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| Participation in leisure opportunities | The provision of affordable housing and increased energy efficiency of properties may free up money to participate in leisure activities. Having permanent accommodation may increase participation rates as families feel committed to an area. Peer pressure and increased school attendance for children may increase activity levels. |
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Negative impacts identified:

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| A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being | More challenging to secure adaptations in the private rented sector. Need to make adaptations may reduce amount of available private rented stock. |
| Access to good quality, healthy food | Will still be difficult decisions to make around affordability of quality and healthy food for people on low incomes. |
| People's emotional and mental well-being | In rural areas, remaining in the home but with poor access to services can lead to social isolation. |
| Access to healthcare | Lack of access to some healthcare such as NHS dental not improved by this strategy. Some people who lead chaotic lives can struggle to access healthcare on a consistent basis and have complex needs wider than just housing. |
| Participation in leisure opportunities | In rural areas, lack of access to transport may be a barrier to participation in terms of physical accessibility and cost. |

A more equal Denbighshire

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| Overall Impact | Positive |
| Justification for impact | Strategy focusses on people who have protected characteristics and making positive provision for their needs. Properties can be purchased to meet the needs of specific households where stock is not available. |
| Further actions required | Ensure strategy focusses on those areas and households in greatest need. |

Positive impacts identified:

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| Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation | The needs of those with protected characteristics, such as age; disability and poverty are addressed in the strategy and action plan. People with protected characteristics are more likely to suffer homelessness and be denied access to private housing. This strategy seeks to prioritise people with protected characteristics and ensure that they have access to secure, quality housing at an affordable price. |
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| People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage | People with protected characteristics are more likely to suffer homelessness and be denied access to private housing. This strategy seeks to prioritise people with protected characteristics and ensure that they have access to secure, quality housing at an affordable price. Private sector can be reluctant to provide adaptations to properties to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics. This strategy seeks to encourage wider provision. |
| Areas with poor economic, health or educational outcomes | People with protected characteristics are often found in higher numbers in areas of economic deprivation. These are areas that often have poorer quality housing and higher numbers of people that are homeless. The strategy actively seeks to address needs in these areas. |
| People in poverty | The Housing and Homelessness Strategy specifically targets people in poverty and seeks to improve their access to quality housing. |

Negative impacts identified:

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| Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation | The strategy focusses on age and disability and may not address all people with protected characteristics equally. Resources must be focussed on those in greatest need. |
| People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage | Availability of adapted stock is low and the needs of people with disabilities are often not addressed. Stock needs to be more flexible to meet a variety of needs. |
| Areas with poor economic, health or educational outcomes | Strategy covers the whole county rather than specifically focussing on areas of higher deprivation. Some focus on Rhyl in terms of additional licencing requirements. |
| People in poverty | Strategy doesn't address economic activity directly and the cost of permanent housing may remain beyond the means of some people. |

A Denbighshire of cohesive communities

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| Overall Impact | Positive |
| Justification for impact | Providing housing for people who are homeless has the double benefit of bringing people into communities and also removing some of the triggers for fear of crime in areas. Improved access to healthcare and increased participation in community activities are hugely beneficial to people. |
| Further actions required | Need to increase awareness of the benefits of providing adapted properties with private sector landlords. In rural areas need to ensure that complimentary services are in place to reduce the likelihood of social isolation. |

Positive impacts identified:

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| Safe communities and individuals | By reducing homelessness people living on the streets will have a safe place to stay. Perceptions around fear of crime will also be reduced for communities. A reduction in potentially harmful behaviours may also be achieved. |
| Community participation and resilience | Increased and enhanced engagement with communities provides opportunities to build resilience. The strategy promotes social inclusion and the seeks to achieve an increased sense of belonging in communities. |
| The attractiveness of the area | The empty homes strategy will address 'eye sore' sites. |
| Connected communities | Increased focus on working closely with tenants by council and RSLs. Service delivery improvements. |
| Rural resilience | Strategy looks to provide appropriate housing in rural areas to sustain local community cohesion. |

Negative impacts identified:

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| Safe communities and individuals | Enabling people to remain in their own homes in rural areas may lead to increased social isolation in a limited number of cases. |
| Community participation and resilience | Enforcement of increased standards may alienate some private sector landlords and reduce availability of accommodation. |
| The attractiveness of the area | Enforcement of higher standards may lead to some landlords abandoning properties which in turn become eyesore sites. |
| Connected communities | Enabling people to remain in their own homes particularly in rural areas may lead to increased social isolation and poor access to services in a limited number of cases. |
| Rural resilience | Enabling people to remain in their own homes in rural areas may lead to increased social isolation and poor access to services in a limited number of cases. Opportunities to address housing needs in rural areas are far more limited as fewer development sites are available and costs are higher due to smaller scale nature. |

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

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| Overall Impact | Positive |
| Justification for impact | The provision of adequate, affordable and adapted housing will enable local people to remain in their home communities whenever possible. This will help to maintain the use of the Welsh language particularly in more rural communities. Where people who are homeless are integrated into a community there may be increased opportunity to take part in and learn about cultural events. |
| Further actions required | The strategy does not discriminate in the provision of, and access to, housing on the basis of language. Opportunities to increase levels of affordable housing in sustainable locations in rural areas should be explored wherever possible to help to support language and culture. |

Positive impacts identified:

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| People using Welsh | People may be able to remain within their local area which may have a positive impact on use of the Welsh language. Local schools and childcare that operates through the medium of Welsh may also be further supported. |
| Promoting the Welsh language | Sustainable rural development will help to support the Welsh language. Council and RSLs have Welsh language standards and contractors will need to abide by Welsh language requirements. Many partners use Welsh as the main language of business. |
| Culture and heritage | Enabling local people to stay in the area may increase participation in cultural activities and the sense of Hiraeth. |

Negative impacts identified:

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| People using Welsh | The majority of the existing and future housing stock is in more urban areas. Lack of appropriate accommodation in rural areas may force people to move to towns depleting the number of Welsh speakers in an area. |
| Promoting the Welsh language | |
| Culture and heritage | |

A globally responsible Denbighshire

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| Overall Impact | Positive |
| Justification for impact | The strategy will seek to maximise opportunities for local labour agreements and supply chains. Affordable housing is primarily provided by local organisations which provide employment and training for local people. The provision of better housing will enable other services to create and build better relationships with clients to achieve overall benefits. |
| Further actions required | Increasing partnership working with the private sector could enable increased awareness of the benefits of using local supply chains and labour. |

Positive impacts identified:

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| Local, national, international supply chains | The strategy supports work with local housing providers which utilise local supply chains and labour. DCC own build projects include opportunities for local labour and skills agreements. Housing is allocated to local people in need. Reducing housing costs will enable households to spend money on other goods and services locally. |
| Human rights | The Council and all partner organisations have policies in place that seek to protect human rights. Statutory licencing for private landlords enables monitoring and enforcement of standards and can highlight areas where any abuses need correcting. |
| Broader service provision in the local area or the region | Having stable, permanent accommodation will enable other organisations such as the health board and social services to better engage with service users. |

Negative impacts identified:

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| Local, national, international supply chains | |
| Human rights | The impacts of the welfare reforms may reduce the amount of private sector rental accommodation available. |
| Broader service provision in the local area or the region | |