

Denbighshire County Council

Housing & Homelessness Strategy

Action Plan January 2022

Strategic Planning & Housing

Introduction

The Housing & Homelessness Strategy and accompanying Action Plan were adopted by the Council in December 2020 and are an amalgamation of all of our actions concerned with housing, homelessness and housing related support. As a result, the implementation of the Strategy is being undertaken by several different departments, in many instances working with partner organisations.

The relevant actions have been included in each service business plan as appropriate and are monitored by the relevant Lead Members and Heads of Service through the Housing & Homelessness Strategy Delivery Group, jointly chaired by Lead Member Cllr Tony Thomas and Cllr Bobby Feeley. The Housing & Homelessness Strategy is based around 6 key themes, and the Action Plan is structured around these themes, setting out the key actions required to deliver the desired outcomes for each key theme:

1. More homes to meet local need and demand
2. Creating a supply of affordable homes
3. Ensuring safe and healthy homes
4. Preventing & ending homelessness in Denbighshire
5. Homes and support for vulnerable people
6. Promoting and supporting communities

	Major issues - action stalled or will not meet targets
	Minor Issues - some slippage but actions taken to address
	No issues - action on track
	Action now complete or part of Business As Usual work

Theme Title	Reference	Action	Justification / Context	Update	RAG Status	Completion Date	Lead Member / Head of Service
More homes to meet local need & demand	1.01	Review LDP housing allocations and policies as part of statutory LDP Review	Current LDP covers the period up to 2021, a review of policies and land use for the County is a statutory requirement.	We are working to progress background technical evidence for Denbighshire's Replacement LDP, but the Covid-19 crisis has impacted decision- making, public engagement and fieldwork. The Delivery Agreement will be revised once we have clarity on the timing of completion of essential evidence (Nov 2021)		Dec-23	Mark Young Emlyn Jones
More homes to meet local need & demand	1.02	To develop an Infrastructure Plan for Denbighshire	Identification of infrastructure issues and requirements to inform policies and land allocations to enable housing growth and development.	Infrastructure Plan will be further developed as part of the work on the replacement LDP and site assessments. A continuous review process required for this. (Nov 2021)		Dec-23	Mark Young Emlyn Jones
More homes to meet local need & demand	1.03	Update Local Housing Market Assessment incorporating housing need and demand data.	Current assessment was completed in 2019. Statutory requirement to provide an updated assessment every 2 years	Development of new LHMA for 2021 awaiting finalised guidance from WG on evidence and modelling required together with document presentation. (Nov 2021)		Jun-22	Tony Thomas Emlyn Jones
More homes to meet local need & demand	1.04	Undertake a Gypsy & Traveller accommodation needs assessment and take action on its findings.	Housing (Wales) Act 2014 requires an updated Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment to be carried out every 4 years and for any needs identified to be addressed.	New G & T Assessment is being undertaken as part of the background evidence for the LDP. Project Board established to lead on this work. A series of Task and Finish Group meetings were undertaken and Communities Scrutiny authorised starting the GTAA in July 2021. Consultants Opinion Research Services have been commissioned to undertake the GTAA on behalf of DCC. A wide ranging publicity plan has been undertaken including online surveys to County Councils, City, Town and		Dec-22	Mark Young Emlyn Jones

				Community Councils, press releases, social media and work with GT advocacy services. The draft report will be reported to members in November/ December 2021. (Nov 2021). Draft assessment approved by Cabinet & submitted to Welsh Government (Jan 2022)			
More homes to meet local need & demand	1.05	Implement the Empty Homes Delivery Plan	Better use of existing housing stock by continuing to target empty homes across the County.	Empty Homes matching service was launched in October 2020. A publicity plan is pushing the scheme and currently 15 applicants are signed up. Signposting to the DCC leasing scheme is utilised whenever feasible. This pilot scheme will be reviewed. (Nov 2021) Promote Houses to Homes loan scheme Housing Renewals Strategy under review (Nov 2021)		Dec-26	Mark Young Emlyn Jones
Creating a supply of affordable homes	2.01	Review of Local Development Plan policies such as affordable housing in rural areas and commuted sums	To ensure that affordable housing requirements are balanced against viability of site delivery and the amount of affordable housing being delivered by private developers is maximised without impacting overall housing delivery. Requirements for rural affordable housing, and the Council's approach, will also be reconsidered to ensure this supports sustainable rural communities.	This will form part of the Replacement LDP evidence and methodology. Updated development viability assessment will be essential to inform our approach in the Replacement LDP and this will be undertaken once we have more clarity about the economic impact of the Covid19 pandemic. Work will include testing a range of methods for calculating financial contributions towards affordable housing, with the aim of reducing the number of calculations currently used. We will also test a range of approaches to calculating the value of affordable properties, to ensure this is set at an appropriate level. (Nov 2021)		Dec-23	Mark Young Emlyn Jones

Creating a supply of affordable homes	2.02	Review the current approach and thresholds for affordable housing requirements in LDP policies	To ensure that affordable housing requirements are balanced against viability of site delivery and the amount of affordable housing being delivered by private developers is maximised without impacting overall housing delivery. Requirements for rural affordable housing, and the Council's approach, will also be reconsidered to ensure this supports sustainable rural communities.	This will form part of the Replacement LDP evidence and methodology. Updated development viability assessment will be essential to inform our approach in the Replacement LDP and this will be undertaken once we have more clarity about the economic impact of the Covid19 pandemic. (Nov 2021)		Dec-23	Mark Young Emlyn Jones
Creating a supply of affordable homes	2.03	Promotion of Tai Teg affordable housing register	Tai Teg is the Affordable Housing Register for Denbighshire, ensuring promotion will enable applicants to find suitable accommodation and the list is used in planning application responses as an indication of demand.	Planning a series of strategic Press Releases to actively promote the Tai Teg register to promote all types of schemes available Homebuy, Rent to Own, Intermediate Rental & Shared Equity. Currently devising a Tai Teg web page on the DCC website, also looking into targeting employers with Tai Teg information (Nov 2021)		Dec-26	Tony Thomas Emlyn Jones
Creating a supply of affordable homes	2.04	Publicise successful affordable housing schemes with relevant partners	Promotion will enable applicants to find suitable accommodation and the list is used in planning application responses as an indication of demand	Strategic promotion of affordable housing schemes both before and after development to maximise applicants and success stories (Nov 2021)		Dec-26	Tony Thomas Emlyn Jones
Creating a supply of affordable homes	2.05	Develop & adopt a Council Housing Asset Strategy	Develop an Asset Strategy which includes a development & maintenance programme to include the carbon zero aspirations of the Council	Draft document agreed. Final document to be progressed through the democratic process. (Feb 2021). Strategy to be presented to SLT & Cabinet Briefing Oct - Nov. (Sept 2021). FWP of SLT oversubscribed. Scheduled for presentation Jan 2022 (Nov 2021)		Dec-21	Tony Thomas Steve Gadd

Creating a supply of affordable homes	2.06	Review existing housing portfolio with emphasis on providing suitable accommodation to the future older person demographic of Denbighshire	The purpose of this review is to inform the future type of Council Housing needed in Denbighshire	There is on-going review existing DCC stock portfolio including non-housing assets to assess viability for repurposing and suitability to meet the future older person demographic in Denbighshire. A number of projects are underway to ensure assets are used effectively into the future (Nov 2021)		Apr-21	Tony Thomas Steve Gadd
Creating a supply of affordable homes	2.07	Practical completion of first new homes through Housing Development Programme	Corporate Priority of 170 homes by April 2022	Work started on site at Tan Y Sgubor in Denbigh and Bodnant in Prestatyn. Planning applications approved for Llys Anwyl , Granite & Next in Rhyl, the former library site in Prestatyn. Tenders received for The Dell apartments in Prestatyn. (Jun 2021) Procurement process started for the appointment of contractors for the conversion of Llys Anwyl in Rhyl and the redevelopment of the former library site in Prestatyn. (Sept 2021)		Apr -22	Tony Thomas Steve Gadd
Ensuring safe & healthy homes	3.01	To ensure Council accommodation is maintained to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard	Funding has been given to DCC towards achieving these standards which have to be achieved by December 2020 and maintained after this date	WHQS has been achieved in Denbighshire, stock is now being maintained. Programme of works developed to ensure the standard is maintained. Covid has impacted on the delivery of internal refurbishment (kitchens & bathrooms) which will have an impact on maintaining the standard until measures are eased. External works have been prioritised 20/21 & 21/22 to ensure overall compliance can be restored. WG are producing revised WHQS criteria which may impact on compliance in the longer term. (Sept 2021). Revised WHQS standards awaited. Capital		Dec-26	Tony Thomas Steve Gadd

				works progressing to maintain current standard. (Nov 2021)			
Ensuring safe & healthy homes	3.02	Decarbonisation of social housing stock by 2030	Climate & Ecological Change Strategy commitment	Programmes of work have been developed and implemented to tackle decarbonisation to meet WG targets and Corporate target of zero carbon emissions by 2030. IES systems are being installed to inform the next phase of physical works. However, meeting the decarbonisation targets will be subject to allocation of grant funding. (Sept 2021). 2020/21 schemes complete. Additional WG funding secured for further improvements to 50 houses in Rhyl and installation of further IES. Additional funding applied for with decision anticipated Jan 2022. (Nov 2021)		Dec-30	Tony Thomas Steve Gadd
Ensuring safe & healthy homes	3.03	Develop and adopt a new Housing Revenue Account borrowing strategy	Changes in how the Housing Revenue Account can be leveraged need to be taken into account in the 30-year business plan	Devise and adopt a new HRA borrowing Strategy to take into account changes in permitted borrowing levels and capping – 30 year business plan. Research undertaken and proposals are being developed (June 2021)		Sept-21	Tony Thomas Steve Gadd
Ensuring safe & healthy homes	3.04	Support Rent Smart Wales	Set up by Welsh Government to comply with the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 with regards to Landlord licensing	Promote Rent Smart Wales and ensure new and existing landlords have undertaken the training and are licensed through the scheme. Very few properties are not registered any properties inspected for Homelessness Prevention are checked and there is a section on the HMO application form to ensure compliance, so procedures are in place to		Dec-26	Tony Thomas Emlyn Jones

				gather information and compliance from new landlords (Nov 2021)			
Ensuring safe & healthy homes	3.05	Work directly with landlords to Improve standards in the Private Rented Sector	Improve communication & engagement with landlords to improve standards in the Private Rented Sector	EPC & Rent Smart Wales data used to inform best locations for targeted work. Increase awareness of energy schemes such as NEST & Arbed. This action was impacted by the need to divert resources due to the pandemic but we are now beginning to move back to business as usual functions but have backlog of work to catch up on. Arbed have their own work plan to target areas of need and access to Rent Smart Wales data. The Landlord Forum has been put on hold for 12 months as the pandemic has meant we could not run them as usual, however previous feedback about moving the venue for the forum around the County and putting it on at different times was well received. (Nov 2021)		Dec-26	Tony Thomas Emlyn Jones
Ensuring safe & healthy homes	3.06	Implement & enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in the private rented sector	Statutory requirement under Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Sector) England & Wales Act 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Develop a fines policy & procedure · Implement enforcement of applicable fines for serial non- compliance and non-engagement of MEES This has now been completed and implementation is part of business as usual (June 2021)		Apr-21	Tony Thomas Emlyn Jones
Ensuring safe & healthy homes	3.07	Implement Additional Licensing for HMO's scheme now extended	Raise standards of properties & their management.	Additional Licensing of HMO's scheme in force in Rhyl recently extended to include Prestatyn, Denbigh & Llangollen. Inspections for new property applications have now restarted (Nov 2021)		Dec-26	Tony Thomas Emlyn Jones

		to Prestatyn, Denbigh & Llangollen					
Ensuring safe & healthy homes	3.08	Target financial resources to ensure housing will be more energy efficient helping the environment and improving housing quality	To improve energy efficiency in housing and reduce fuel poverty	Rent Smart & EPC data has now been reviewed and DCC is now working with Arbed to develop schemes in East Rhyl & Dyserth (Nov 2021)		Dec-26	Tony Thomas Emlyn Jones
Ensuring safe & healthy homes	3.09	Unauthorised residential occupation of holiday caravans will be reduced	Many people are living in caravans which do not have planning permission for permanent residency. Some caravans provide poor housing conditions and this will ensure that people are not living in unsuitable accommodation.	There is evidence of people living permanently in substandard holiday caravans in the County, highlighted even more during the pandemic. Not only is this unsuitable accommodation for many of these people but the permanent residential accommodation is unauthorised. A multi-department approach to dealing with the issue is being planned but has been delayed due to Covid restrictions and reallocation of resources. This has been identified as a large project requiring a strategic/corporate approach needing additional resources. (Nov 2021)		Dec-26	Tony Thomas Emlyn Jones
Preventing & ending Homelessness in Denbighshire	4.01	Develop easily accessible information and advice for prevention of homelessness	Easily accessible information enables citizens to make informed choices regarding their housing situation.	Website information has been updated, social media campaign is planned (June 2021). Public Protection are attending in a 'partnership' role. i.e. there may be some issues in HMO's that crop up that Public Protection need to or can deal with (Nov 2022)		Apr-21	Bobby Feeley Ann Lloyd

Preventing & ending Homelessness in Denbighshire	4.02	Develop an early intervention and prevention service, involving a wide range of partners to support households at risk of homelessness	Housing Act (Wales) 2014 requires Local Authorities to prevent homelessness and ensure access to services to support households at risk of homelessness	Building on best practice to procure early intervention services that provide robust support to households at risk of homelessness e.g. debt advice, Mediation, support to Landlords, etc. Work is ongoing to develop a pilot project and also start a procurement exercise (June 2021)		Dec-22	Bobby Feeley Ann Lloyd
Preventing & ending Homelessness in Denbighshire	4.03	Develop a homelessness hub with access to wrap-around services through multi-disciplinary interventions for those experiencing homelessness	Welsh Government Phase 3 Plan to end homelessness	Recruit a multi-disciplinary team to provide wrap-around services to those households experiencing homelessness. To identify and develop an appropriate hub with emergency accommodation on site in which to deliver the multi-disciplinary support. The recruitment of a multi-disciplinary team is likely to start during quarter 1 of 21/22. The hub will be developed and hopefully operational by end of qtr. 3, 21/22 (June 2021) All but 1 of the posts have now been filled and work is ongoing with BCUHB to recruit the final post which is a Substance Misuse/Mental Health Professional (Sept 2021)		Dec-22	Bobby Feeley Ann Lloyd
Preventing & ending Homelessness in Denbighshire	4.04	Establish in-house emergency accommodation facilities for homeless citizens	Welsh Government Phase 3 Plan to end homelessness	Architects have been developing Employer's Requirements for a Design & Build conversion of the former care home acquired to provide temporary accommodation in Brighton Road in Rhyl. (Sep 2021)		Dec-26	Bobby Feeley Ann Lloyd
Preventing & ending Homelessness	4.05	Develop a rapid rehousing model for citizens affected by	Welsh Government Phase 3 Plan to end homelessness	Increase the amount of available accommodation by working with private landlords as well as social landlords to increase housing accommodation options		Dec-26	Bobby Feeley Ann Lloyd

in Denbighshire		homelessness with appropriate support		including the Private Rented Sector Leasing Project with Conwy County Council (June 2021)			
Preventing & ending Homelessness in Denbighshire	4.06	Review services provided internally & externally through Housing Support Grant (HSG) to ensure a range of support is available	Welsh Government Phase 3 Plan to end homelessness	Review support services provided through HSG to ensure that different levels of support are available for a variety of different needs. Work has started on this, but will be phased over next 12 months (Nov 2021)		June-22	Bobby Feeley Ann Lloyd
Preventing & ending Homelessness in Denbighshire	4.07	Deliver workshops to secondary school aged children on homelessness and available support	To identify children at risk of homelessness at an early stage and ensure that support and guidance is available.	To deliver accredited & non-accredited workshops to young people within schools, colleges & youth centre .Work on these will commence when Covid-19 restrictions allow (June 2021)		Mar-26	Bobby Feeley Ann Lloyd
Preventing & ending Homelessness in Denbighshire	4.08	Identify young people at risk of homelessness through training professionals working in their environment	To identify children at risk of homelessness at an early stage, through a range of environments, referring them for applicable support	Offer bespoke youth work interventions to young people who are referred to the service through schools, colleges, self or from other professional bodies/organisations (Police etc.) Work on these will commence when Covid-19 restrictions allow (June 2021)		Mar-26	Bobby Feeley Ann Lloyd
Preventing & ending Homelessness in Denbighshire	4.09	Extend the Housing First project	Welsh Government Phase 3 Plan to end homelessness	To develop a plan on integrating Housing First into the Homelessness Support Pathway following the withdrawal of Welsh Government Trailblazer funding. Alternative funding has been secured for 2021/22 (Feb 2021). Further guidance is being sought from Welsh Government regarding how they		Mar-22	Bobby Feeley Ann Lloyd

				envisage Housing First being integrated into the new vision for Homelessness Support (Nov 2021)			
Preventing & ending Homelessness in Denbighshire	4.10	Development of the Youth Service digital youth work to promote and engage young people in the issue of Youth Homelessness in Denbighshire.	Develop a greater understanding of homelessness, so that young people know when they can access support	Project developed and delivered across of range of school settings and community projects. Digital resources developed and provided to schools, partners and youth work support staff, with a range of online tools and activities available for young people and parents. New targeted promotional materials with up to date and relevant information of support and support services available, created by Targeted Intervention team, with information and resource packs delivered to young people and families across the County (Sept 2021)		Mar-22	Tony Thomas Liz Grieve
Preventing & ending Homelessness in Denbighshire	4.11	Provide good quality, well managed temporary accommodation solutions during the homelessness assessment process	Homelessness applicants need good quality well-managed accommodation, for their well-being and health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Rented Sector pilot project is being embarked on with Conwy Council, which will provide temporary accommodation solutions. Work with Community Housing and RSLs to increase the number of properties they provide to the Homelessness Prevention Team, across the County. Although numbers are still small we are engaging with landlords and going through the sign up process (June 2021)		Dec-26	Bobby Feeley Ann Lloyd
Preventing & ending Homelessness in Denbighshire	4.12	To provide bespoke youth work support to young people engaging with other DCC departments and partners.	To identify young people at risk of homelessness at an early stage and ensure that support and guidance is available.	Bespoke youth work delivered one to one and small groups digitally and face to face including delivery of 6 accredited courses in partnership with Schools and Children's Services. Building Resilience course delivered to year groups 9 10 and 11 across the County engaging 23 young people achieving a Level One Accreditation aimed at reducing the risk		Mar-22	Tony Thomas Liz Grieve

				of homelessness. New post developed in partnership with Homelessness Prevention Services, Children Services and the Youth Services to support further development of homelessness provision, targeted work with young people who are homeless providing support, Independent living skills .and youth work intervention (Sept 2021)			
Homes & support for vulnerable people	5.01	Three Extra Care facilities in development or completed by 2022	Corporate Priority for current Corporate Plan	Awel Y Dyffryn, Denbigh – expected handover to GC April 2021. Sept/Oct 2021 Planning approved for Llys Awelon extension, Ruthin – tender process due to commence (June 2021) Options for hub & spoke facility in Corwen being explored – feasibility study being prepared (June 2021)		Dec-26	Bobby Feeley Ann Lloyd
Homes & support for vulnerable people	5.02	Investigate more ‘own front door’ schemes for vulnerable people	Over 100 vulnerable adults in Denbighshire would benefit from the enablement and support which comes from living in these schemes	Working with social landlords to include specialist units on new developments and adapt existing dwellings. 4 units coming forward on Plas Deva development in Meliden (June 2021). Properties will be ready for occupation Feb/March 2022 (Nov 2021)		Dec-26	Bobby Feeley Ann Lloyd
Homes & support for vulnerable people	5.03	Investigate funding options including the SHG/ICF for the Corwen Extra Care Scheme	Corporate priority of increasing Extra Care in Denbighshire	Sian Lloyd Price is working up the scheme to get it ready to bid for SHG funding if appropriate and available (Nov 2021)		Mar-23	Ann Lloyd Bobby Feeley
Promoting & supporting communities	6.01	Implement Tenant Engagement Strategy	It is vital for Denbighshire Housing to work closely with our tenants and households so we understand their needs and aspirations. Feedback and co-production will influence our community investment, service	The Bi-annual survey of all Denbighshire Housing households has been completed. Detailed analysis is underway. The feedback will be reviewed and will help inform next steps and input into the development of an engagement plan for 2021/22. (June 2021). An action plan to respond to the survey is now in		Dec-26	Tony Thomas Liz Grieve

			development and plans. This is particularly vital due to the impact of Covid-19 on our communities.	place which includes actions to increase engagement. This has been shared with the Tenants Federation. Support has been put in place to support tenants' groups to resume their activity post Covid. (Aug 2021)			
Promoting & supporting communities	6.02	Review SARTH	The regional Allocations Policy has been in operation since 2017 in Denbighshire. It is vital to ensure that the policy remains fit for purpose and the regional partners have agreed to review the policy.	The regional group are monitoring developments since Covid-19 and the potential need for a new approach to the Allocations Policy. An additional review has been commissioned to assess the strength of the council's current approach to providing effective housing options advice and coordination of services to support the prevention of homelessness (June 2021). Further updates are expected from WG regarding Allocations Policy in light of their Rapid Rehousing proposal. The SARTH review findings did not suggest any major structural changes however there are actions which will be discussed with all SARTH partners in Q3 (Aug 2021)		Mar-22	Tony Thomas Liz Grieve
Promoting & supporting communities	6.03	Develop a 5 year rent policy	In 2020, Welsh Government introduced a 5 year Rent Policy which gives certainty for the HRA but also adds additional requirements to ensure the Council considers affordability and value for money when applying the annual rent increase for council homes.	The Cabinet decision on the Rent Increase in 2021 included assessments of Value for Money, Efficiencies and Affordability as part of the annual Council Housing stock business plan and rent increase process. (June 2021)		Apr-21	Tony Thomas Liz Grieve
Promoting & supporting communities	6.04	Work with police, registered social landlords &	Complementing the extensive regeneration work which has been carried out in the area with the removal poor quality	Multi agency/service group being relaunched in Oct 2017, new terms of reference and chaired by Emlyn Jones (June 2021)		Dec-26	Tony Thomas Emlyn Jones

		other partners on focused neighbourhood management in West Rhyl	accommodation by supporting the community.				
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