

Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

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Introduction



The Strategy is introduced to you by Councillors Tony Thomas in his role as Lead Member for Housing & Communities and Councillor Bobby Feeley in her role as Lead Member for Well-Being and Independence.

The Housing Strategy was adopted on 1 December 2015 and had a lifespan of five years. It set out the Council's vision and aims for housing in the County during this period.

Over the past five years' different issues have taken prominence and the Strategy has been fully revised to take account of Denbighshire's Corporate Plan, climate and ecological change, homelessness and young people's challenges with housing.

To reflect the greater emphasis on addressing homelessness in this revised Strategy it has also been renamed the Housing & Homelessness Strategy and a theme has been dedicated to the main concerns and projects in relation to homelessness.

The Strategy has two visions:

'Everyone is supported with pride to live in homes that meet their needs, within the vibrant and sustainable communities Denbighshire aspires to'

And,

'End Homelessness in Denbighshire'

The aims of Strategy are providing more housing to address the housing needs of Denbighshire residents, ensuring that housing is of good quality, supporting people with their housing issues, addressing homelessness and supporting communities.

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These issues have been divided into six themes:

- Theme 1: More Homes to Meet Local Need and Demand
- Theme 2: Creating a Supply of Affordable Homes
- Theme 3: Ensuring Safe and Healthy Homes Theme 4: Preventing & Ending Homelessness in Denbighshire
- Theme 5: Homes and Support for Vulnerable People
- Theme 6: Promoting and Supporting Communities

The Housing & Homelessness Strategy comprises of:

- The Strategy - which provides the context for the approach and identifies the high level outcomes
- An Action Plan – which will be regularly monitored and updated throughout the lifespan of the Strategy

It is recognised throughout the Strategy that both Housing & Homelessness are the responsibility of a range of departments across the Council. Solutions are often developed with external partners, as well as through the Authority. A partnership approach is embedded into the projects which aim to deliver the Strategy.

The Housing & Homelessness Strategy for Denbighshire has been developed following extensive consultation both within and outside Denbighshire County Council. The Strategy will be closely monitored through the Strategic Housing & Homelessness Monitoring Group and progress updates as required to committee.

Tony Thomas Bobby Feeley

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Executive Summary

Denbighshire's Housing & Homelessness Strategies have been developed around the visions of:

'Everyone is supported with pride to live in homes that meet their needs, within the vibrant and sustainable communities Denbighshire aspires to'

And,

'End Homelessness in Denbighshire'

Denbighshire's Housing & Homelessness Strategies have been blended into one overarching Strategy to reflect the fact that all the issues they seek to address are connected and need to be addressed by sectors across the Council and third sector partners.

To deliver these ambitious visions the overarching Strategy has been devised under six themes, all of which are linked:

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

Increasing the housing supply across Wales is an issue Welsh Government are keen to address and have developed the 'Taking Wales Forward, 2016 – 2021' programme this has the ambitious aim of delivering 20,000 affordable homes

Research indicates that Denbighshire, in line with the rest of Wales has a shortage

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of new build development, affordable homes, homes for older people and homes for vulnerable adults. Denbighshire aims to address this shortfall through a range of measures.

These will include an additional 170 Council homes; 260 affordable homes provided through private developers and Registered Social Landlords; bringing 500 empty properties back into use and providing additional Extra Care housing.

This is reflected in Denbighshire's Corporate Plan 2017- 2022 with the priority of 'Ensuring access to good quality housing' and the target of the development of 1000 more homes across the County during the life of the plan.

Welsh Government commissioned an Independent Affordable Housing Review in 2019. This has made recommendations which will considerably affect the delivery and quality of affordable housing in Wales in coming years. This needs to be incorporated in the new Housing & Homelessness Strategy.

Denbighshire declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and is in the process of drafting a zero carbon action plan. One of the key actions of this plan will be the commitment to upgrade Council building assets, such as Council houses and offices to meet the zero carbon pledge commitment by 2030. The climate emergency is a major influence on Council decisions and will also affect the Council's compliance with the Well-being of Future Generations Act

Theme One: More Homes to Meet Local Need and Demand addresses the issue of low development rates in Denbighshire, and the need for more housing across the County.

To help stimulate the development market we have introduced site development briefs and a housing development prospectus which provides clarity and general information for developers and investors about allocated housing sites.

We are currently developing a Replacement Local Development Plan which will include land allocations for housing development up to 2033. The new development will lead to a boost in the supply of affordable homes which is addressed in the next theme.

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Theme Two: Creating a Supply of Affordable Homes, through this theme we investigate the issue of the limited supply of affordable homes in the county and what initiatives we can take to increase it. Research shows there is a clear need for affordable housing in the county, with 57% of first time buyers and new households being unable to afford to purchase a 2 bedroom house on the open market.¹ Decreasing and stagnant incomes in the county, are a contributing factor to the slow housing market, and underline the importance for more affordable housing to be created.

We have established an affordable housing delivery and investment programme for Denbighshire. This has been developed through the Housing Revenue Account thirty-year business plan and also by taking advantage of other funding sources such as the Innovative Housing Programme of funding and Housing and Health Funding. Working with a range of development partners, both other social landlords and the private sector, and access for Local Authorities to Social Housing Grant from 2021/22 will also open up another stream of funding to develop more affordable housing.

Theme Three: Ensuring Safe & Healthy Homes, examines the issue of improving and maintaining the standards of both public and privately owned accommodation, to ensure that residents live in a well maintained and safe home.

Denbighshire has undertaken a large programme of renewals and major works to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standards and will through the work of the Major Repairs Programme, continue to improve. There are also pilot schemes being implemented on renewable energy measures, which will be rolled out to the rest of the housing stock, where possible. The decarbonisation of social housing stock has been made a priority by Welsh Government and needs to be factored and financially accounted for in any housing management plans going forward.

¹ Denbighshire Local Housing Market Assessment July 2019

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Denbighshire has also been instrumental in implementing the Landlord Registration Scheme, which will also help to address poor quality housing standards in the private rented sector.

Theme Four: Preventing & Ending Homelessness in Denbighshire there is a need to review the emergency accommodation options for families affected by homelessness. Presently there is a reliance on the private rented sector to provide this accommodation, but the quality, suitability and location varies considerably.

Alternative options to provide this accommodation. This will ensure that people, who are experiencing very difficult situations, are able to access good quality emergency accommodation whilst receiving the most appropriate advice and support.

Theme Five: Homes and Support for Vulnerable People, the information available showing the demographics of Denbighshire, reveals there is a considerable need for increased housing options, for the rising older people sector in the county and also for vulnerable adults.

We have committed to providing a further three Extra Care Facilities, working with partners which will address the changing needs of residents. We have also reviewed the existing housing accommodation options; which has ensured that accommodation choices, such as Supported Independent Living schemes have a range of support options, suitable for varying needs.

Theme six: Promoting and Supporting Communities Denbighshire aims to be a place where people aspire to live. To achieve this vision, we need to create vibrant and sustainable communities. By redeveloping neighbourhoods and addressing 'eyesore' sites and empty homes, we can give our residents an environment they can be proud of.

We can also help Council residents improve their communities by helping set up neighbourhood groups and activities, to address issues and create community cohesion. For this to be truly sustainable they will need to be people led rather than organisation led.

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Housing and Homelessness related issues are dealt with by various different departments across the Council and Third Sector organisations across the county. The Housing & Homelessness Strategy draws together all the issues and work required to address them, in a more strategic way, maximising resources and outcomes for Denbighshire's residents.

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Vision

Housing is one of the five Corporate Priorities for Denbighshire and is reflected across several departmental business plans.

The vision for the Housing Strategy for Denbighshire was developed through a consultation exercise facilitated by Glyndŵr University in June 2013 with housing partners, third sector organisations and the public. This Vision was reviewed and supported by Councillors at a workshop in January 2020. The Homelessness Strategy vision was developed following a comprehensive review of homelessness across Denbighshire in 2016

The visions are supported through the six themes of the Housing & Homelessness Strategy and the Action Plan to ensure that the County's aspirations are fulfilled.

Monitoring & Governance

The new Housing & Homelessness Strategy will be monitored primarily by the Strategic Housing & Homelessness Group - a Lead Member and Officer Group which meets bi-monthly and enables a more strategic/corporate approach to Homelessness and Housing across the County.

The operational responsibilities for delivering a range of housing issues contained within the Strategy are delivered via the relevant Services, for example, Local Authority Social Housing is developed and maintained by Finance & Property Services and managed by Customers & Communities. Addressing Homelessness is delivered and managed by Community Support Services.

Community Support Services have led on the production of the original Homelessness Strategy and associated Action Plan.

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Homelessness however is a corporate issue best addressed through effective partnership working across all relevant DCC Services and partner organisations.

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy provides the strategic framework for addressing homelessness, and will be the vehicle for agreeing homelessness priorities and monitoring progress against them. This will enable better integration and provide more corporate ownership to the work on homelessness

The Strategic Housing & Homelessness Group will monitor and review progress on the delivery of identified actions through the action plan with regular progress reports to Scrutiny and other committees as necessary.



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Local Context

Population and Households

95.3k	2018 Mid-year population estimates for Denbighshire
42,608	2026 Mid-year estimate of Denbighshire households
1954	Forecasted increase in households 2015 ² - 2026
£27,395	Median household income in Denbighshire in 2019
£2092	Decrease in median income since 2007/08
21%	Population in Denbighshire aged 65 and over
24%	Population of Denbighshire with an activity limiting illness or disability
51% from	327 households threatened with homelessness 2019-20 (Up 111 previous year)
12%	Areas ³ of Denbighshire classed as being in the top 10 of the worst deprived areas in Wales (WIMD 2019)

² Earlier Housing Strategy spanned period 2015- 2020

³ Lower Super Output Areas as defined by Office of National Statistics

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Housing Market

196	New properties completed 2018/19 up 15 on 2017/18.
57%	New households cannot afford a 2-bedroom open market house in Denbighshire.
371	Affordable homes provided 2015 – 2020
69%	Households in Denbighshire who own their own homes outright or with a mortgage.
6.4k	Households renting in the private rented sector
5.2k	Households in Denbighshire renting from Registered Social Landlords & the Council in 2011

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Theme one: More homes to meet local need and demand

Outcomes

1. An increased supply of new homes of all types and tenures to meet the needs and demands of households and communities in Denbighshire as defined by the two-yearly Local Housing Market Assessment
2. Better use of the housing stock by continuing to target empty homes across the County
3. Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs are identified and addressed

Background

1.1. This theme aims to address how to deliver more homes to meet local need and demand. Housing need is largely identified through the statutory Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA). This must be carried out every two years as mandated by The Housing (Wales) Act 2014. This enables the strategic planning of housing development and supply across the County.

Increasing the supply of homes includes all types of accommodation:

- Open market housing and low cost home ownership schemes
- Private, intermediate and social rented accommodation
- Gypsy and Traveller pitches

1.2. All these types of accommodation are supported by government initiatives and targets to help stimulate their supply and ensure good quality housing standards.

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Issues & Challenges

- A two-yearly completed Local Housing Market Assessment is a statutory requirement
- 64.5% of the households in Denbighshire are single or couple households with no dependents
- Population profile of older people is increasing; currently 21% of Denbighshire's residents are aged 65 or over
- Decrease in number of new build dwellings since 2007
- Low levels of planning applications for residential development
- Delivering the allocated housing sites within the Local Development Plan
- Decrease in the volume of house sales in the County since 2007 and static house prices
- Promoting Welsh language and culture
- Impact of coronavirus Covid-19
- 780 residential empty properties in Denbighshire (based on April 2018 Council Tax records)
- Difficulty in engaging owners to bring empty homes back into use
- Complexity of legislation and the risk of additional costs to the Council
- The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 makes it mandatory for all Councils to carry out an assessment of Gypsy & Traveller accommodation needs and take action on the findings.
- We have regular unauthorised encampments although generally small, indicating there is some need
- We have no authorised sites in the County.

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Measures to achieve these outcomes include:

- The Replacement Local Development Plan is currently being progressed, which will provide clarity for developers on the types and volume of house building required across Denbighshire.
- A review of the current development sites in the Local Development Plan has been undertaken, with a particular emphasis on viability and deliverability
- Developing an Infrastructure plan to ensure future development is sustainable and doesn't put undue pressure on existing community resources and organisation
- The statutory requirement for a Local Housing Market Assessment is reviewed and updated every two years, ensuring that projected housing need demands remain informed.
- The Empty Homes Delivery Plan has been adopted and has a project board meeting regularly to ensure progress.
- Developments designed for Older People such as the Extra Care facility in Denbigh are underway, whilst the extension for the existing facility at Ruthin will be progressed shortly.
- A new Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment has been commissioned in accordance with statutory legislation.

Headline Actions for Theme One

1. Review existing Local Development Plan policies and land allocations to progress a Replacement Local Development Plan to adoption
2. Produce an Infrastructure Plan for Denbighshire and address infrastructure issues
3. Maintain and update a two-yearly Local Housing Market Assessment
4. Undertake an up to date Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment and take action on its findings.
5. Implement the Empty Homes Delivery Plan

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Theme Two: Creating a Supply of Affordable Homes

Outcomes

1. Improved supply of affordable housing of all types and tenures across the County
2. Working with partners to maximise affordable housing development
3. An increase in applicants on the Affordable Housing Register

Background

2.1. This theme aims to examine the issues surrounding Affordable Housing and the affordability of the housing market for local residents. Affordable Housing is defined by Denbighshire County Council⁴ as housing provided to those who cannot afford general open market housing and is retained as affordable for first and subsequent occupiers.

2.2. Affordable Housing should meet the needs of eligible households, include availability at low enough cost for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.⁵

2.3. Affordable Housing can be divided into three types of housing tenure:

- Social Rented Housing - Affordable Housing for rent which is provided by Local Authorities and Housing Associations with rent being set in accordance with Welsh Government's benchmark rents. This is usually the cheapest available rented housing and has the biggest demand.
- Intermediate Rental Housing – whereby rents are above those of social rented housing but normally no higher than 80% of an open market rent of a comparable property. This kind of housing can be provided by private developers and Social Landlords.

⁴ DCC Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance 2014

⁵ Welsh Government Planning Technical Advice Note 2 (TAN 2) – Glossary definition

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- Low Cost Affordable Home Ownership - normally Shared Equity schemes, where a proportion of the property is bought by an eligible applicant and a proportion of the equity is retained on behalf of the Local Authority by a Housing Association

2.4. An Independent Affordable Housing Review conducted by Welsh Government in 2018 made 48 recommendations to facilitate affordable housing delivery in Wales. These related to the implementation of improvements in the following eight areas:

1. Housing Need
2. Housing Quality Standards
3. Modern Methods of Construction
4. Rent Policy
5. Local Authorities as Enablers and Builders
6. Public Sector Land
7. Financing Affordable Housing
8. Dowry and Major Repairs

Issues & Challenges

- Personal income levels have recovered slowly since the credit crunch with many areas still experiencing severe deprivation notably areas in Rhyl and Denbigh
- Significant gap between affordable housing need and supply
- Affordable Housing provision through planning obligation is 10%
- Housing in hamlets and open countryside has to meet affordable housing criteria
- Financial Challenges being faced by the Council and partners
- Low turnover of Council/Housing Association stock
- Welfare Reform changes combined with a changing population profile necessitating a need to build smaller properties.
- Affordable Housing Review implementation
- Lack of financial certainty for Council & Housing Association partners

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- Uncertainty surrounding the Social Housing Grant Programme which is the main funding source for affordable housing
- Increasing costs for building
- Negative perception of affordable housing
- Lack of awareness of different affordable housing schemes
- Complexity of application process

Measures to achieve these outcomes include:

- Ensuring that full strategic support is given to Housing Associations applying for different affordable housing funding streams, provided by Welsh Government in addition to Social Housing Grant such as Innovative Housing Fund and Land for Housing
- Negotiating with developers on affordable housing provision, which has meant in some cases additional units to those required under planning obligations have been provided
- New affordable housing commuted sums policy developed and adopted
- Review of Council land holdings
- Buying back former council properties sold under 'Right to Buy' legislation
- Joint ventures with developers and other social landlords are explored on a site by site basis
- Tai Teg Affordable Housing Register has been reviewed and re-launched, with more effective marketing and promotion to raise awareness

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Headline Actions for Theme Two

1. Review of Local Development Plan policies such as affordable housing in rural areas and commuted sums
2. Review the current approach and thresholds for affordable housing requirements in LDP policies
3. Active promotion of the Tai Teg affordable housing register to increase applications, as more applicants will evidence need and demand to developers
4. Publicise successful affordable housing schemes
5. Develop a Council Housing Asset Strategy, which includes a house building and maintenance programme, alongside a carbon zero plan for existing properties.
6. Review existing housing portfolio with emphasis on providing suitable accommodation to the future older person demographic of Denbighshire
7. Practical completion of first new homes through Housing Development Programme



Figure 1: Clwyd Alyn scheme in Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd ©Clwyd Alyn

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Theme Three: Ensuring Safe and Healthy Homes

Outcomes

1. Council and Housing Association accommodation is maintained to Welsh Housing Quality Standards
2. Decarbonisation of social housing stock
3. All DCC houses to be 'C' rated on the EPC by 2022
4. Improved standards in the Private Rented Sector
5. Accommodation will be of good quality and will be adaptable to residents' needs
6. Targeted financial resources to ensure homes are more energy efficient helping the environment, improving housing quality and targeting fuel poverty
7. Unauthorised residential occupation of holiday caravans will be reduced
8. Implement & enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in the private rented sector and address fuel poverty

Background

3.1. This theme aims to address the provision of safe and healthy homes in Denbighshire. This needs to be tackled across all types of accommodation; affordable housing, private rented accommodation and owner occupied homes including mobile home sites.

Issues & Challenges

- Maintenance of homes to the recommended standards
- Establishing a baseline of required works
- Financing & maintenance of work
- Challenges in developing good relationships with landlords
- Establishing an accurate database of landlords in the County
- Poor quality multi-occupation dwellings

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- Improving the quality of private rented sector stock
- Response to the changing demographic of the County (smaller household size, disabilities and increasing older person profile)
- Large scale regeneration projects such as Rhyl West End
- Capital grant schemes reducing
- Need to introduce more innovative loan schemes
- Publicity of available resources
- Challenges with securing funding to support projects
- No dedicated capital budget
- The reduction of fuel poverty requires funding for energy efficiency measures
- Occupation of holiday caravans as permanent homes
- Some are longstanding and/or include unsuitable accommodation
- Pressure on local public services as they are not being funded through local taxation
- Need to establish a baseline of all the properties affected
- Fuel poverty measures and eligibility for schemes and funding constantly changing
- Enforcement measures and process needs to be adopted
- All DCC houses to be 'C' rated on the EPC by 2022

Measures to achieve these outcomes include:

- Solar panels have been fitted to some social landlord properties as part of the upgrade to Welsh Housing Quality Standards
- Successful bids to Welsh Government for developing social housing properties using renewable energy measures
- Efforts are underway to ensure all DCC housing stock is EPC energy rated 'C' by 2022
- All new DCC stock is being built to EPC energy rated 'A'
- Regular Landlord Forum events are held throughout the County

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- Regeneration of the West End of Rhyl has reduced residential density in the area and improved living standards
- A Housing Renewal area has been designated in South West/East Rhyl which allows access to Welsh Government money to upgrade the domestic properties
- Group Repair schemes have been carried out in South West/East Rhyl and Denbigh
- A monitoring process for unauthorised residential occupation of caravans has been set up
- Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) are enforced by DCC

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Headline Actions for Theme Three

1. Welsh Housing Quality Standards are maintained
2. Decarbonisation of social housing stock
3. Develop and adopt a new Housing Revenue Account borrowing strategy
4. Rent Smart Wales landlord licensing scheme is supported
5. Work directly with landlords to improve standards in the Private Rented Sector
6. Implement & enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in the private rented sector
7. Implement additional Licensing for HMO's scheme now extended to Prestatyn, Denbigh & Llangollen
8. Target financial resources to ensure housing will be more energy efficient helping the environment and improving housing quality
9. Unauthorised residential occupation of holiday caravans will be reduced



Figure 2: Private property improved through Enforcement action

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Theme Four: Preventing & Ending Homelessness in Denbighshire

Outcomes

1. Independent advice accessible at an early stage to help prevent homelessness
2. Households at risk of homelessness are engaged through partner agencies to prevent and relieve homelessness
3. Young people at risk of becoming homeless identified and engaged
4. Regional self- assessment tool to assist with homelessness options
5. Suitable accommodation options are available to prevent homelessness
6. Those that are declared homeless are provided with appropriate emergency and temporary accommodation
7. Those that are declared homeless are assisted in finding suitable long term accommodation
8. To end entrenched rough sleeping in Denbighshire

Background

- 4.1. In this theme we concentrate on the homelessness services that are available and what changes need to be taken in light of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015, Housing Act (Wales) 2014 and the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016.
- 4.2. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 has placed more emphasis on prevention of homelessness duties for local authorities, to achieve this we need to work in greater partnership with private landlords to source affordable, sustainable accommodation for vulnerable people.
- 4.3. The Act also makes it a statutory requirement for Councils to review the homelessness situation in their area and develop and implement a Homelessness Strategy to address the identified issues by 2018, which is reviewed every four years from 2018 onwards.

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- 4.4. Households presenting as homeless has increased in Denbighshire primarily as a result of implementing the provisions of the Housing Act.
- 4.5. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented volume of homelessness presentations and need for accommodation since March 2020.
- 4.6. In response to the Covid-19 crisis Welsh Government has provided funding available to address homelessness. The funding has been available in phases, initially to ensure that people with no home, could safely self-isolate and follow the public health guidance over hygiene and social distancing and have a safe space in which to live.
- 4.7. In August 2020 Welsh Government announced Phase two of its response to the pandemic with an extra £40m made available, to ensure that citizens are provided with safe, secure homes and no one returns to homelessness.
- 4.8. This funding stream is focussed more on finding long term solutions, such as building accommodation and transforming services to enable permanent housing solutions can be found.

Issues & Challenges

- Making advice available in a variety of formats so it is accessible to all
- Encouraging people to access advice when first threatened with homelessness
- Sourcing suitable premises and partner agencies
- Hard to reach group
- Often sofa surf and make up a substantial proportion of hidden homeless
- Consistency of working practices across County borders
- Sourcing suitable accommodation which meets general and specialised housing needs
- Additional duties placed on local authorities through the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, regarding homeless prevention measures
- Accessing pet friendly accommodation
- Challenge of finding suitable accommodation suitable for large families and single young persons

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- Low income levels particularly in the North of the County
- Increase in personal debt levels
- Lack of confidence in Councils and third party organisations
- Lack of suitable available accommodation

Measures to achieve these outcomes include:

- Updating the Corporate website with clear information & signposting for services
- Developing a self-assessment tool to assist people with advice and options
- Piloting moving advice teams into more community based environments
- Funding a post within CAB to help with relevant advice whilst accessing additional services such as debt support and benefit advice
- Engaging a support worker specifically for homeless LGBTQ+ young people
- Rolling out workshops in schools addressing raising awareness around homelessness and available support
- Support workers working with partners to identify & assist young people at risk of homelessness
- Mediation to save tenancies and prevent homelessness wherever possible
- Six months' rent paid in advance for private tenancies to secure accommodation and prevent homelessness
- Scoping work is underway to develop DCC solutions for emergency and temporary accommodation rather than relying on the private sector
- Housing First initiative set up jointly with Conwy CC

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Headline Actions for Theme Four

1. Develop easily accessible information and advice for prevention of homelessness
2. Develop an early intervention and prevention service, involving a wide range of partners to support households at risk of homelessness
3. Develop a homelessness hub with access to wrap-around services through multi-disciplinary interventions for those experiencing homelessness
4. Establish in-house emergency accommodation facilities for homeless citizens
5. Develop a rapid rehousing model for citizens affected by homelessness with appropriate support
6. Review services provided internally & externally through Housing Support Grant (HSG) to ensure a range of support is available
7. Deliver workshops to secondary school aged children on homelessness and available support
8. Identify young people at risk through training of professionals working in their environment
9. Extend Housing First Project
10. Development of the Youth Service digital youth work to promote and engage young people in the issue of Youth Homelessness in Denbighshire.



Figure 3: HWB Youth Homelessness Accommodation & Training Centre, Denbigh

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Theme Five: Homes & Support for Vulnerable People

Outcomes

1. A range of housing choices for older people
2. A range of housing choices and support placements for vulnerable and young people
3. Vulnerable people are assisted to lead independent lives in appropriate accommodation to meet their needs

Background

- 5.1. This theme aims to address the issues surrounding vulnerable people, their housing choices and what is needed and offered in housing related support, through the provision of the Supporting People programme.
- 5.2. Vulnerable people can be supported to maintain their accommodation through the Supporting People programme which provides housing related support services to people over the age of 16. Reductions in Supporting People funding have meant that many services have been remodelled to achieve cost savings and target support more effectively, although the range of services available to vulnerable people has been maintained. Supporting People have also been exploring opportunities to deliver cheaper models of low level group support, such as delivering life skills and volunteering courses.

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5.3. The Supporting People programme supports projects such as:

- Domestic Abuse Services
- Mental Health Services
- Young people with support needs
- Substance misuse
- Learning disabilities
- Vulnerable older people
- Families with support needs
- Chronic illnesses

Issues & Challenges

- There is now more emphasis on people retaining independence by remaining in their own home
- Older people require a greater range of housing options to meet their varied needs
- Supply shortage of Community Living Schemes
- Reactive housing options rather than proactive
- Financial insecurity for supporting organisations and partners
- Need for varied work and care placements for vulnerable adults of all ages
- Welfare Reform challenges such as 'Bedroom Tax' and the roll out of Universal Credit
- Increase in personal debt levels

Measures to achieve these outcomes include:

- Market shaping statement to influence the market provision of care home services within the County
- Additional Extra Care facilities being developed in Denbigh, Ruthin and options for elsewhere in the County being investigated
- Falls prevention and wrap around service
- Hub and Spoke support models are being implemented wherever possible

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- Suitable work placements for vulnerable adults are continually sought
- Supporting People programme is regularly reviewed to ensure services provided are still relevant and best value for money
- Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit has provided training to front line staff to try and combat the threat of loan sharks
- Financial Inclusion training has been embedded into support roles
- Discretionary Housing Payments applications are completed with vulnerable people where necessary to maximise their income
- 178 accommodation placements are paid for in a range of projects which provide support and assistance for vulnerable people
- Community based initiatives such as time banking and small scale social enterprise are encouraged to facilitate community cohesion
- Move-on panel established for people leaving supported accommodation and being considered for a social housing tenancy

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Headline Actions for Theme Five

1. Three Extra Care facilities in development or completed by 2022
2. Investigate more 'own front door' schemes for vulnerable people



Figure 4: Awel Y Dyffryn, Denbigh Extra Care units under construction

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Theme Six: Promoting & Supporting Communities

Outcomes

1. Neighbourhood based activities help people remain safe and independent
2. Sustainable communities are maintained through innovative 'eyesore' site projects
3. Council housing estates are regenerated to help create and sustain desirable neighbourhoods
4. Community initiatives are supported and maintained with partner organisations
5. Creating affordable and sustainable communities

Background

6.1. The aim of this theme is to consider and examine promoting and supporting sustainable local communities. We will be working with housing and third sector partners to develop communities where people want to live and work and have a sense of ownership by the people who live there.

6.2. Community engagement through neighbourhood based activities is an integral part of revitalising or regenerating an area. When successful it can bring communities together and create a sense of belonging and ownership of an area, which in turn develops more neighbourly communities and reduces anti-social behaviour.

Issues & Challenges

- Retaining the motivation of residents
- Contacting and involving hard to reach groups such as young people
- Neighbourhood disputes between residents
- Residents taking ownership of projects in their area
- Viability of sustainable schemes
- Challenges in engaging owners of empty dwellings to enable a solution to be found
- Capacity and ability of residents to participate

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- Achieving commitment from residents and sustaining the projects without external involvement
- Prioritisation of areas to be developed
- Capacity and ability of residents to participate
- Achieving commitment and sustaining the projects
- Lack of affordable accommodation
- Challenging tenants disrupting community cohesion

Measures to achieve these outcomes include:

- Community Garden/Allotment schemes
- Nature for Health events including trips to places such as Brenig Reservoir and activities like basket weaving, stargazing and bushcraft sessions
- Multi-department tackling of 'Eyesore sites' forms part of the Empty Homes Delivery Plan
- Reviewing the Council estate green space areas to establish what facilities are wanted and needed in the area
- Environmental improvements planned alongside tenants
- West Rhyl Neighbourhood Management Partnership set up to provide a co-ordinated approach to any issues in the area as they develop
- Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) ensures that applications for social housing are dealt with in a consistent manner across the County and meet the housing need of the area
- SARTH also triages applications and provides support and advice to assist people with their housing options
- A review of Denbighshire housing stock is due to take place, to see if the accommodation still meets housing need or should be refocussed and possibly even redeveloped.

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Headline Actions for Theme Six

1. Implement Tenant Engagement strategy
2. Review of SARTH
3. Develop a 5 year rent policy
4. Work with police, registered social landlords & other partners on focused neighbourhood management in West Rhyl