

<b>Report to</b>	<b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b>
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	<b>Councillor Rhys Thomas</b>
<b>Head of Service</b>	<b>Emlyn Jones/Liz Grieve/Ann LLOYD</b>
<b>Report author</b>	<b>Jane Abbott, Senior Officer – Strategic Planning &amp; Housing</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Denbighshire’s Housing &amp; Homelessness Strategy Action Plan</b>

## **1. What is the report about?**

- 1.1. To examine the progress made to date in delivering the revised Strategy and Action Plan approved by County Council in December 2020 (the report to also include data and analysis on the current impact, along with potential future impact, on the Homelessness Service of the introduction of the private rented sector 6-month tenancy termination notice period)

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

- 2.1. To provide information regarding the progression of the Housing & Homelessness Strategy and associated action plan.

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

That the Committee:

- 3.1 confirms that it has read, understood the progress of the Housing & Homelessness Strategy; and
- 3.2 if appropriate determines how it wishes to monitor the Action Plan’s delivery in future.

## 4. Report details

4.1. Denbighshire's Housing & Homelessness Strategy sets out the Council's vision and aims for housing in the County for the period 2021-2026. It is an important corporate document for the Council and provides the framework for all Council housing and homelessness related functions (private & public). The Strategy is set within the framework of the Corporate Plan as detailed in 5.1 and sits alongside the Local Development Plan (LDP). The Strategy identifies 6 "Themes" which are priority areas for action to be targeted:

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

4.2. Delivery of the Action Plan is overseen by the Corporate Plan Housing Board, which is chaired by Councillor Rhys Thomas in his role as Lead Member for Housing & Communities. Membership of the Group comprises those Lead Members with responsibility for an area of housing or homelessness within their portfolios, relevant Heads of Service, and the Strategic Planning & Housing Manager.

4.3. The Action Plan for the Strategy currently comprises of 42 actions. The Strategy is a live document and additional actions are added as appropriate when projects are completed, and new ones identified as contributing to the theme.

4.4. 20 actions are now completed and incorporated as 'business as usual' within the relevant service, 15 actions are on track and 7 actions have experienced some challenges, however this is being actively managed, and they are still progressing and are on target to be completed through the life of the Strategy. There are no red actions.

4.5. Actions are reviewed prior to each meeting with the action plan made available to all members of the group prior to the quarterly meeting, to ensure there is time to monitor progress of the Strategy and challenge as appropriate.

**Key areas of progress since April 2023 include:**

- 154 affordable housing dwellings brought forward in Denbighshire in 2022/23, of these 83 dwellings were new build properties.
- 256 new build dwellings (all types, affordable and market dwellings) were completed in 2022/23
- The Council owned new build Passivhaus apartments on Caradoc Road, Prestatyn have been completed.
- Since the HMO Additional Licencing scheme was introduced in December 2020, 134 licences have been issued – 32 of which are new dwellings to the licensing scheme.
- 56 Empty Homeowners have contacted the Council asking for more information on services we can assist with to bring their empty homes back into use following a mailshot in July 2023
- My Home Denbighshire, a collaboration project between Clwyd Alyn, Shelter Cymru and DCC, which supports citizens at threat of homelessness is now up and running and has had 167 referrals so far. The project aims to support people early on and so prevent the need to access emergency and temporary accommodation and the associated statutory services.
- Targeted support regarding mental health and substance misuse can now be provided following the full recruitment of the multi-disciplinary team providing homelessness support.
- 83 homes in Denbighshire (January – May) have been improved through ECO4 funding with solar PV panels, air heat source pumps, insulation etc.
- Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) has now been brought back in-house and incorporated into homelessness services.

4.6. The change in regulations surrounding the eviction notice process because of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act was implemented on 1st December 2022. The table below illustrates the homelessness households who have been given a duty to assist from DCC and the reason for homelessness was the reason of loss of rent or tied accommodation. Included in the table is also those who have been evicted due to rent arrears.

Year	Loss of rented or tied accommodation	Of which rent arrears in private sector dwellings
2021/22	157	2
2022/23	218	3
2023/24 (to 12/9/2023)	40	3

4.7. It can be seen from the data that there was a large increase in households presenting to DCC, due to the loss of their rented accommodation. My Home Denbighshire was also launched in in the last quarter of 2022 and has assisted households with early intervention services. From April to June 2023 53.49% of referrals made to My Home Denbighshire have been from those within the

Private Rented Sector, seeking help with an aim to prevent individuals from accessing statutory services or temporary accommodation.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?**

- 5.1. The Housing & Homelessness Strategy is one of the main vehicles for delivering the Council's theme of 'A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs'. The Strategy also contributes to the priorities of 'A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire, A better connected Denbighshire, A greener Denbighshire, and A fairer, safe, and more equal Denbighshire'.
- 5.2. Through the Strategy's theme of 'Ensuring safe & healthy homes' there are initiatives which make a positive contribution to the Council's aim of the Council becoming Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive by 2030.
- 5.3. These include the ECO4 scheme (action 3.08) which improves energy efficiency in homes which have been identified as having poor energy measures and the programme of decarbonising Council homes (action 3.02)

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

- 6.1. The costs of the projects are closely monitored. All costs will be kept within budget – ours and those of our partners.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

- 7.1. The annual report does not require a Well-being Impact Assessment because it provides a retrospective evaluation of performance, and the publication of the report has no potential impact on future generations. However, Well-being Impact Assessments was undertaken of the Strategy at the time of its adoption.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

- 8.1. A range of mechanisms are in place to monitor progress, including regular reports to the Corporate Plan Housing Board and reports as and when required by Scrutiny.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

9.1 Although the strategy does involve spend and significant investment in some instances, these are currently being delivered within existing approved budgets and resources. Further investment decisions will need to take account of the worsening financial outlook for local authorities.

## **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

10.1 Ensuring that people are supported to live in homes that meet their needs is a key priority for the Council. A range of mechanisms are in place to monitor progress, including regular reports to the Corporate Plan Housing Board and as and when required by Scrutiny.

## **11. Power to make the decision**

11.1. Local Government Act 2000, Housing Act 1985 (S8), Housing Act 2004 (S8), Local Government Act 2003 (S87), Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

11.2. The Committee's powers in relation to this matter are set out in Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Sections 7.3 and 7.4.2 of the Council's Constitution.