

Report to	Communities Scrutiny
Date of meeting	6 February 2025
Lead Member / Officer	Councillor Rhys Thomas, Lead member for Housing & Communities.
Heads of Service	Emlyn Jones/Liz Grieve/Ann Lloyd
Report author	Jane Abbott, Senior Officer - Strategy Planning and Housing
Title	Denbighshire's Housing & Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

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 enable Members to examine the delivery of the Housing & Homelessness Strategy to date and provide feedback regarding the progress.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. That the Committee confirms that it has examined the progress of the Strategy and provided relevant feedback regarding delivery of the action plan.

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 & Homelessness Board, which is chaired by Cllr 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. 24 actions are now completed and incorporated as ‘business as usual’ within the relevant service, 13 actions are on track and 5 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 2023/2024 include:

- 155 affordable housing dwellings brought forward in Denbighshire in 2023/24, of these 123 dwellings were new build properties.
- Since the start of the Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021¹, a total of 781 affordable dwellings have been brought forward

¹ Reporting year 2020-21

- New 'over 50's' Council developments have completed at Llys Llen, Prestatyn and Llys Elizabeth, Rhyl and by targeting under occupying tenants for these new apartments 23 general need family social properties were released for new tenants.
- Since the HMO Additional Licencing scheme was introduced in December 2020, 191 licences have been issued – 54 of which are new dwellings to the licensing scheme.
- My Home Denbighshire, an early intervention collaboration project between Clwyd Alyn, Shelter Cymru and DCC, targeting citizens 'upstream' has been operational for 2 years. The service has supported 491 citizens at threat of homelessness aiming to reduce the number of people entering Statutory Services as appropriate accommodation solutions are found.
- 102 homes in Denbighshire (January 2024 – November 2024) have been improved with solar PV panels and 13 homes have had air heat source pumps, insulation and ventilation works through ECO4 funding.

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	226	3
2024/25 (to date)	83	6

- 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. In Quarter 1 2024/25, the data collected illustrates that 81.71% 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 having to access statutory services or temporary accommodation.
- 4.8. In conclusion the Housing & Homelessness Strategy continues to be delivered by the various departments of the Council and is on course to be completed by December 2026.

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' and 'A greener 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 Not required.

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.