

Draft Denbighshire Operational Plan - ongoing actions 2012/13 - August 2012

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	ACTION	PROJECT UPDATE	TARGET	COMPLETION	RESOURCE & PARTNERS
<p><b>1. AFFORDABLE HOUSING, SUSTAINABILITY AND WELSH CULTURE</b></p> <p>To increase the supply of affordable accommodation throughout the County in accordance with housing need.</p> <p>Working with local communities to preserve the Welsh Culture and ensure developments are sustainable.</p>	<p>1. To negotiate an element of affordable housing on all new sites.</p>	<p>The council has a policy to seek in the order of 30% affordable housing on all new housing planning applications. The first property to be built as part of the council's affordable housing policy was completed on 10th May 2006.</p> <p>Since 2004, 506 affordable homes have been produced (Mar. 2012). In the current financial year, 28 units have been completed to date (Oct. 2012).</p>	<p>To develop 50 affordable housing units by Mar. 2013</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>Denbighshire County Council (Housing Services, Planning, Legal Services, Social Services, Supporting People, Private Sector Renewal, Equalities Officer),</p>
	<p>2. Review Denbighshire County Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).</p> <p><b>(AMENDED ACTION)</b></p>	<p>The council in conjunction with other key partners have undertaken two Local Housing Market Assessments (LHMAs) and a Housing Need update with Glyndwr University. These assessments will help inform the review of DCC's affordable housing SPG, the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) and the Local Development Plan (LDP).</p> <p>The target date for reviewing the SPG has been delayed from Dec. 2011 to coincide with the development of the Local Development Plan (LDP). The LDP has been to public examination and is currently out to consultation on additional housing sites, pending a decision from the Inspector in late 2012.</p>	<p>Adopt a new affordable housing SPG by Jun. 2013.</p>	<p>On target.</p>	<p>County Councillors, Town/Community Councils, Denbighshire Strategic Housing Partnership, Registered Social Landlords, Private Developers and Builders, Welsh Government, North Wales Strategic Regeneration Area,</p>

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	<p>3. Review the existing housing land allocation within the county as part of the LDP (which will replace the current Unitary Development Plan).</p> <p><b>(AMENDED ACTION)</b></p>	<p>Affordable housing requirements across the county are being considered as part of the LDP process. The Pre-deposit LDP was published for public consultation in June 2008 and the Deposit LDP was published in Autumn 2009.</p> <p>Public examination hearings have taken place in Feb. and May 2012 on the council's proposals. Further hearings are planned for late 2012. The target date for adopting the LDP has been amended to allow for additional consultation.</p>	<p>Adopt the LDP by Jun. 2013.</p>	<p>On target.</p>	<p>Private landlords, Community Groups, Residents/Tenants, Voluntary Agencies, Welsh Language Board, Snowdonia National Park, Menter Iaith,</p>

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<p><b>2. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING CONDITION</b></p> <p>To improve the quality of private sector housing across Denbighshire.</p> <p>To improve the energy efficiency of private sector housing and eliminate fuel poverty.</p> <p>To ensure that a wide range of housing options are available to people within the private sector.</p>	<p>1. To increase the range of loans options available across the County to home owners.</p>	<p>DCC's Private Sector Housing team has been moving from offering grant to loan assistance for local private landlords and owner occupiers. These loans would be available for owners to undertake a wide range of repairs.</p> <p>Denbighshire, Gwynedd and Flintshire are working collaboratively upon a scheme that would cover all three counties. The scheme will be fully operational by October 2012.</p>	<p>3 loans by Mar. 2013.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>Private Landlords and Denbighshire Landlords Forum,</p> <p>Owner occupiers,</p> <p>DCC (Private Sector Renewal, Housing Services, Social Services, Supporting People),</p>
	<p>2. To improve housing quality within Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs)</p>	<p>It is estimated that almost a quarter of all residential units in Rhyl West are flat conversions, many of which require significant works to meet modern building standards. DCC have launched a project to tackle upto 25 units within HMOs through grant aiding measures such as soundproofing, fire protection, security and energy efficiency.</p>	<p>Improve 25 units of accommodation within HMOs by Mar. 2013.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>Care &amp; Repair,</p> <p>Home Energy Efficiency Scheme,</p> <p>National Energy Action Wales</p> <p>Utility companies,</p> <p>North Wales Strategic Regeneration Area,</p> <p>North Wales Police,</p>

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	<p>3. To fully revise the Empty Homes Strategy for the County.</p> <p><b>(AMENDED ACTION)</b></p>	<p>In April 2009 the council adopted its joint empty homes strategy, in conjunction with North Wales Housing Association, to tackle some of the 800 long term empty properties (over 6 months) that have been identified across the county. The council is working with a range of stakeholders to implement a range of measures including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- targeting empty homes across Denbighshire and undertaking option appraisals to bring properties back into use</li> <li>- annual survey of empty home properties</li> <li>- offering Empty Homes Grants to owners of eligible properties in return for 5 year letting agreements with the council</li> <li>- working with regional partners and Welsh Government to bring empty properties back into use under the "houses to homes" initiative</li> <li>- to continue to work with Construction Skills Wales to provide training opportunities for apprentices</li> </ul>	<p>To fully revise the Empty Homes Strategy by Jan. 2012.</p> <p>To bring 6 empty homes back into use for affordable housing by Mar. 2013.</p>	<p>On target.</p> <p>On target.</p>	

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	<p>4. To support the housing investment projects of the Strategic Regeneration Area (SRA).</p>	<p>Established in 2008 a key aim of the North Wales Strategic Regeneration Area programme is to improve poor housing conditions, with particular emphasis upon West Rhyl. Actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An assessment of the needs of those living in the demolition zone has been undertaken and acquisitions are currently progressing in conjunction with Welsh Government</li> <li>- A Relocation Officer is working to assist tenants/owners to relocate their homes for those contained in the planned demolition area</li> <li>- Supplementary Planning Guidance for Rhyl West is being developed to encourage higher levels of homeownership</li> <li>- A £16 million project has been launched to demolish single occupancy units within a designated area of Rhyl West and develop new family housing as well as community green space.</li> </ul>	<p>To assist all tenants affected by phase 1 of the RGF plan by Jun. 2013.</p> <p>To develop a specific SPG for Rhyl West by Jun. 2013.</p> <p>Develop new family housing and a communal green space by Jul. 2015.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>	

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<b>3. HOMELESSNESS</b>  To prevent homelessness and provide a wide range of accommodation for homeless persons when homelessness is unavoidable.	1. Develop specialist support schemes to enable vulnerable households to live independently.  <b>(AMENDED ACTION)</b>	In partnership with Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd, develop a housing scheme for young people within the South of the county where housing opportunities are less well developed. The scheme will comprise of six rented units, with ongoing support funded through the council's Supporting People Grant programme. The scheme will link into a new Youth Enterprise Centre, that will develop training and employment facilities for young people.  An unsuccessful planning application in Rhyl was made to develop a scheme for people with mental health issues in 2008. The council and its partners are currently exploring other options.	Launch young persons housing scheme by Mar. 2013.  Launch Youth Enterprise Centre by Mar. 2014.  Review options available to develop a mental health project by Mar. 2014.	Ongoing.  Ongoing.  Ongoing.	Service Users,  Community Drug & Alcohol Service,  Working Links,  Crime & Disorder Partnership,  Denbighshire Homelessness Forum,  Private landlords and Denbighshire Landlords Forum,
	2. To minimise the number of housing repossessions within the County.  <b>(AMENDED ACTION)</b>	The all Wales Mortgage Rescue scheme funded by WAG ceased in April 2011. Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd are self funding a Mortgage Rescue scheme within Denbighshire. This will allow some homeowners who meet the criteria to remain in their homes as tenants to avoid becoming homeless.  Mortgage Rescue cases are often very complex and in some cases households cannot be assist as debt levels are too high. Many cases only required advice rather than direct intervention.	2 mortgage rescue cases by Mar. 2013.	Ongoing.	DCC (Housing Services, Social Services, Supporting People),  Homeless persons,  Nightshelter.

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	<p>3. To assist those most affected by the new housing/welfare benefits changes.</p> <p><b>(AMENDED ACTION)</b></p>	<p>Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham councils have developed a joint project to assist households most affected by the new housing and welfare benefit reforms.</p> <p>The project will target vulnerable households and personally advise those at most risk of becoming homeless by working with private landlords to enable households to sustain their tenancies or find a suitable alternative.</p>	<p>Secure funding for 2013-15 by Mar. 2013.</p> <p>To contact all single tenants under 35 adversely affected by housing benefit changes by Mar. 2013.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>	
	<p>4. To ensure enhanced housing options are widely available.</p>	<p>Homelessness Services has and continues to refocus services towards people exploring housing option and preventing homelessness applications whenever possible. We are working with key partners including local Housing Associations, Private Landlords and advice agencies such as Shelter and the Citizen's Advice Bureau.</p> <p>The Housing options website (<a href="http://www.denbighshirehousing.co.uk">www.denbighshirehousing.co.uk</a>) will be updated regularly and promoted widely as a portal for accessing up to date information, including private landlord vacancies.</p>	<p>To provide housing options advice to 1500 households by Mar. 2013.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	
	<p>5. To undertake a survey of gypsy traveller accommodation needs.</p> <p><b>(AMENDED ACTION)</b></p>	<p>The NW Wales LHMA group is working with Bangor University to develop a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment group (GTAA) on a pan North Wales basis - Denbighshire, Flintshire, Conwy, Gwynedd and Anglesey Local Authorities are partners.</p> <p>The project was due to report by Mar. 2009 but has faced significant delays due to a range of project staffing issues. A report will be presented to DCC Corporate Executive Team in September 2012, making recommendations for future action.</p> <p>The council also undertake a bi-annual count of gypsies and travellers within the county.</p>	<p>Finalise GTAA by Dec. 2012.</p>	<p>Significant delays - ongoing.</p>	


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<p><b>4.</b></p> <p><b>SOCIAL HOUSING</b></p> <p>To improve the quality of social housing throughout Denbighshire and develop services that are responsive to customers' needs.</p> <p>To make the best use of existing social rented housing stock by reducing levels of under occupation and overcrowding.</p>	<p>1. To ensure that all Council and RSL housing within the county is brought up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) by 2012.</p>	<p>DCC is one of the few Welsh Local Authorities that are close to meeting WHQS. A £42 million improvement programme began in April 2005 through Prudential Borrowing and a wide ranging programme of refurbishment works is currently being undertaken.</p> <p>Denbighshire is one of only two Local Authorities in North Wales close to meeting WHQS.</p>	<p>Denbighshire Council Council to achieve WHQS by Dec. 2013.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>Council/RSL Tenants, County Councillors, Denbighshire County Council (Social Services, Housing Services), Consultants, Welsh Government, Registered Social Landlords, North Wales Local Authorities, Local colleges,</p>
	<p>2. To develop a common housing register and allocation scheme for North East Wales.</p> <p><b>(NEW ACTION)</b></p>	<p>SARTH (Single Access Route to Housing) is an innovative, collaborative partnership project between all the major social landlords in north east Wales. The partners are Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham Councils, Cartrefi Conwy, Clwyd Alyn Housing association, Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd, North Wales Housing, Wales and West Housing and Glyndwr University. The overall aim of SARTH is to provide a common access route to a range of affordable housing options which is transparent, legal, efficient and accessible to all sections of the community. A specific Project Manager was appointed in Jan. 2012 to take the project forward.</p> <p>A successful feasibility study was commissioned by the Denbighshire and Conwy Strategic Partnership in August 2011 and completed by Glyndwr University in August 2011. Phase 2 of the project commenced in September 2012 and is currently focusing on developing a Common Allocations Framework, accessible housing register and Housing Options advice.</p>	<p>To undertake a public consultation on the Common Allocations Framework by Dec. 2012.</p> <p>To develop a pilot authority scheme by Dec. 2013.</p>	<p>On target.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>	



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	3. To develop a fuel brokerage scheme.  <b>(NEW ACTION)</b>	Significant increases in energy prices in recent years has meant that many households are facing fuel poverty especially vulnerable tenants. The project will investigate brokering a discounted deal with energy suppliers for bulk purchase of energy. Initially the project will focus on assisting the most vulnerable in Council/Housing Association accommodation and in Houses in Multiple Occupations within Denbighshire and Conwy.  There is significant interest in this highly innovative pilot project from North Wales and rest of the Wales.	Report to DCC Corporate Executive Team by Dec. 2012.	Ongoing.	
	4. To explore the possibility of joint mapping service in Denbigh.  <b>(NEW ACTION)</b>	A pilot project is examining ways of joint working to improve the use of stock in Denbigh. Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) funds has been successfully obtained to undertake a complete review of land use in Upper Denbigh. A steering group meets regularly and a range of workstream sub-groups are examining a range of issues:  - Development opportunities including empty properties  - Tenancy issues - under/over occupation within stock  - Background data analysis for Denbigh - stock type, adaptations, income, etc.  - Maintenance	To recruit KTP graduate by Dec. 2012.	Ongoing.	
	5. To review the effectiveness of Homeswapper.	Homeswapper is a national web based system which Council and Housing Association tenants can use to match up potential exchanges. This scheme encourages mobility and around 250 DCC tenants are currently registered on it.  The cost of Homeswapper has markedly increased since 2007 and therefore a review of the use of Homeswapper is needed to evaluate it in terms of value for money.	Review the use of Homeswapper by Oct. 2012.	On target.	

 Project running to schedule/no major barriers

 Project subject to minor time slippage/minor barriers

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	Project subject to major time slippage/critical barriers that may cause project to fail				