

# Flintshire Housing Strategy & Action Plan



2019 - 2024

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# Foreword

We are pleased to present our Housing Strategy and Action Plan for 2019-2024, which sets out our ambition to provide affordable housing and support across Flintshire, for our residents. Whilst the Council faces significant challenges with reducing resources, delivering 'more for less', we are nonetheless committed to the principle that a good quality home is at the heart of individual and community wellbeing, and we will continue to enable the provision of appropriate and affordable homes, particularly for those in the greatest need.

Our Housing Strategy sets out how we intend to achieve this through working collaboratively with our strategic partners in an intelligent and innovative way to deliver our ambition. As a result of the activity outlined in our previous Housing Strategy we collectively delivered over 400 new affordable homes for rent and ownership. The new Strategy details our key priorities and actions for delivery going forward as well as acknowledging our progress to date.

We look forward to working collectively to deliver our vision of providing the right type of quality homes and most appropriate support to meet the housing needs of our residents.

Cllr Dave Hughes  
Cabinet Member for Housing

Neal Cockerton  
Chief Officer for Housing and Assets

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Achievements to date

Flintshire County Council and its' partners are proud of what has been achieved collaboratively over the last 5 years including the delivery of 418 additional affordable homes. Below sets out some of the headline outcomes achieved during the period of the previous housing strategy 'A quality home for everyone' (2012 – 2017):

- 138 new social and affordable rent properties delivered through the Council's Strategic Housing And Regeneration Programme (SHARP) as well as 146 new social rented properties delivered through the Social Housing Grant programme by our partner Housing Associations
- 134 Shared Equity homes built for applicants on the Affordable Housing Register
- The 214 Maisonettes in Flint Town Centre have been demolished as part of the Flint Town Centre Regeneration project and created 92 new affordable homes through SHARP.
- The Council's Capital Programme has worked towards achieving WHQS for the Council's stock with 6,700 WHQS compliant kitchens delivered and 6,500 WHQS compliant bathrooms delivered and aims to be complete by 2020.
- Established a common approach to housing access through the North Wales Access to Housing Group's Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) project.
- Established a housing company, namely North East Wales Homes, to increase the accommodation available for local people.

\*Delivered between 2011/12 and 2017/18 and includes provision from Flintshire County Council, the Housing Associations and private sector.

## 1.2 The 2019-2024 housing strategy

Going forward the housing strategy for 2019-2024 builds on previous achievements whilst taking into account the range of challenges we face including the reduction in resources, as well as the opportunities such as the Growth Deal. Importantly however, the Council knows that it can only achieve its strategic aims and priorities set out in this strategy by working in partnership and by combining resources.

We have identified three strategic priorities for the next 5 years, which we believe will provide the right framework for delivering homes, supporting people and promoting sustainability of place. These are:

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location;

Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home; and

Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of our homes.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.3 Principles framing the strategy

The Housing Strategy priorities align with those set out in our Regional Homelessness Strategy and the Local Action Plan, as well as the Regional and Local Commissioning Plans for Supporting People. These strategic documents have been developed in conjunction of each other to ensure all the delivery is complimentary and the delivery principles are shared, including:

- The prevention of homelessness;
- That suitable accommodation is and will be available for people who are, or may become homeless;
- That satisfactory support is available for people who are, or may become homeless.

In addition the seven goals set out in the Well-being for Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 has informed the development of the strategy, by ensuring that we consider how we work better with people, communities and other organisations, as well as looking at how we prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach in delivery of the strategy.

**A prosperous Wales** - An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

**A resilient Wales** - A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).

**A healthier Wales** - A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

**A more equal Wales** - A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

**A Wales of cohesive communities** - Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

**A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language** - A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

**A globally responsible Wales** - A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

The umbrella term 'affordable housing' includes:

- Social rented for people who are in greatest housing need and have low incomes;
- Affordable / Intermediate rent is less than market rent but higher than social rent and is for people who employed but on lower incomes and are unable to afford open market rents;
- Affordable ownership incorporates a range of products including shared equity, shared ownership and low cost home ownership. It provides an opportunity for people to purchase on the open market at a reduced value, enabling people to access the housing market.

Social rented housing can be accessed through the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) managed by Flintshire County Council; and

Affordable / Intermediate rent or affordable ownership can be accessed through the affordable housing register Tai Teg.

## 2. Housing in Flintshire: The Key Facts

### PLACE

- There are 67,090 dwellings in Flintshire (Council Tax data 2017) of which 73% are houses; 17% are bungalows; 8% are flats; and 2% are other types of properties (park homes/caravans etc).
- 73% of all Flintshire housing stock is owner occupied with 16% being affordable housing and 11% private rented properties
- 32% of all social housing is for over 55s or sheltered housing
- 41% of social rented properties are 3 bed houses and 5% are one bed properties
- There were 584 social housing lettings in 2016/17, with a current average wait time of 338 days for a 1 bed home
- There are around 350 houses of multiple occupation in Flintshire, equivalent to 0.4% of all the housing stock
- 11% of households rent in the private sector compared with 15% across Wales
- The lower quartile rent in the private sector has risen from £494 in 2010 to £550 in 2017
- The average lower quartile rent in the private sector for a 1 bed flat is £395 per month and the local housing allowance is £353 per month
- An additional 84 affordable homes were built in 2016/17 and 249 in 2017/18
- 49 new affordable homes were delivered through the planning system (16/17)
- There are around 500 empty homes which have been reported to Flintshire County Council
- The median house price has risen from £141,500 in 2007 to £155,450 in 2017 and the income required to be affordable is £39,973 (the median household income in Flintshire is £26,989)
- The affordability ratio of lower quartile household incomes to lower quartile house price is 6.24, higher than the Welsh average of 5.78
- 71% of households living in affordable housing have an income of less than £300 gross each week
- 11.2% of the working age population is in receipt of welfare benefits

## 2. Housing in Flintshire: The Key Facts

### PEOPLE

- There are around 1,400 households in housing need registered for social housing, with around a third being under the age of 35 years
- 55% of all social housing applicants require a 1 bed property
- On the affordable housing register there are 188 households registered for affordable rent and 153 for affordable ownership (October 2018)
- 228 additional affordable homes are required each year to meet demand
- There is an identified need for a transit site for the Gypsy and Traveller community
- At the end of June 2018 there were 67 people in emergency or temporary accommodation
- There is a shortfall of temporary and supported accommodation for those groups identified as priority in the Homelessness Strategy: young people; prison leavers; rough sleepers; and those with complex and multiple needs.
- Almost a quarter of all households in Flintshire are pensioner households
- It is projected by 2021 over one fifth of the population will be over 65 years old
- 19.5% of the Flintshire population has a limiting long term illness
- There are 55 people on the Specialist Housing Register requiring a wheelchair accessible property and 13 households in need of larger homes (2018)
- The majority of single households are in the social housing sector, with a shortfall of smaller homes being developed through the open market
- There is a shortfall in support for people with mental health issues and with complex need

## 2. Housing in Flintshire: The Key Facts

### QUALITY

- 10.1% of occupied dwellings in the private sector across Flintshire contain a household which is in fuel poverty
- 1.6% of private dwellings do not have central heating
- A quarter of private rented dwellings fail the decent homes standards
- 30% of excess cold hazards can be remedied with an intervention that savings to the NHS will offset within one year
- The tenures with the highest percentage of dissatisfaction with the state of repair of their property is in the Council housing stock and private rented stock (2014)
- The Council and Welsh Government are investing £50m in the Welsh Quality Housing Standards addressing the levels of disrepair in the Council housing stock (due for completion in 2020)

# 3. Where housing fits: the bigger picture

## 3.1 National strategic context Housing Act (Wales) 2014

The housing act, this aims to improve the supply, quality and standards of housing in Wales. The key elements are:

- The introduction of a compulsory registration and licensing scheme for private sector landlords and letting agents, which will be delivered by Rent Smart Wales.
- A reform of homelessness law, placing a stronger duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness and allowing them to use suitable accommodation in the private sector. Authorities must also review their homelessness services and have a homelessness strategy in place by 2018.
- A duty on local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers where a need has been identified.
- Empowering local authorities to charge more than the standard rate of council tax on long-term empty properties and certain types of second homes.
- Assistance for the provision of housing by Co-operative Housing Associations.

## Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act is the new law for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support. The act recognises the concept of “social value” which aims to quantify the importance and “value” of positive changes to a person’s well-being.

The Act changes the way people’s needs are assessed and the way services are delivered with people having more of a say in the care and support they receive. It also requires Councils to promote the services provided by social enterprises, co-operatives, and third sector organisations.

Local authorities and health boards must jointly carry out an assessment of the population to find out the care and support needs in an area. We have used the North Wales Assessment to inform our evidence base.

## Welfare Reform Act 2012

As a result of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and further Central Government announcements relating to the welfare and benefits system, households in Flintshire are experiencing significant changes to their finances and entitlements. These include:

- From April 2013, a limit on the amount of housing benefit working age tenants in social housing can claim, now covering the size of property that they are judged to need, (known as the ‘bedroom tax’). Similar conditions have been in place in the private sector since 2008.
- From April 2013 the single-room rate entitlement which previously applied to persons aged under 25 was extended to people aged 35 and under.

The Welfare Reform Act introduced Universal Credit which is to replace six of the main means-tested benefits and tax credits, including housing benefit.

## Welsh Government Housing Pathway for ex Armed Forces personnel

In support of the UK Government’s Armed Forces Covenant, the Welsh Government has developed a Package of Support for the Armed Forces, veterans and their families in Wales. This package includes support for people in areas such as healthcare; education; and housing including priority status in the Homebuy scheme, Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) for disabled ex-servicemen, Physical Adaptation Grants (PAGs) and priority need status under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

# 3. Where housing fits: the bigger picture

## Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016

This Act aims to make it simpler to rent a home and protect tenants' rights. In general, the Act replaces all current tenancies and licences with just two types of occupation contract; secure or standard. At present it is anticipated that all new and existing tenancy agreements will need to be re-issued. The Act also creates new rights for victims of domestic abuse, for people in shared houses and for tenants needing repairs to be carried out.

## Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Act 2018

The number of homes lost through the Right to Buy across Wales is equivalent to 45% of the total social housing stock as it was in 1981. This has resulted in longer waiting times for people in housing need, many of whom are vulnerable, to access a home they can afford.

This Act aims to encourage the development of new housing stock and protect recent investment. The Right to Buy and Right to Acquire will end on the 24 March 2018 for 'new homes' which have not been let as social housing for the six months prior to this date. For existing social housing stock, final abolition will take place on 26 January 2019. However as the Right to Buy in Flintshire had been suspended tenants have not been able to purchase their council property since February 2017.

### Additional legislative considerations include:

- The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2015 (Council's statutory requirement)
- Equalities Act (Wales) 2010
- Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (Wales) Regulations 2014
- Code of Guidance to Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness, 2016

## 3.2 Regional strategic context

### North Wales Population Assessment

The North Wales Population Assessment is a review of the care and support needs of the population in North Wales, including the support needs of carers. It was produced by the six North Wales Councils and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) supported by Public Health Wales, to meet the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 (the act).

Some of the key housing related findings for Flintshire include:

- Maintaining the local council care home provision and exploring the development of intermediate care hub focused on preventative and early intervention work.
- An increase (based on projected need from demographic changes) of a further 178 care home placements by 2020.
- Continue to explore and develop housing options to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities in partnership with other organisations.
- Local councils should consider the needs of veterans, as a vulnerable group, in their corporate planning and corporate priority setting.
- Housing Associations and third sector support providers who have experience of delivering services to particular vulnerable groups will have an important role in assisting the efforts of statutory organisations. There will be a continuing need to provide support services that complement the statutory sector, as we anticipate a steady increase in population up to 2020.
- Address the gaps in service / support including:
  - Lack of single person accommodation
  - Limited hostel provision
  - Shortage of specialist provision for individuals with ongoing medical conditions
  - Gaps in support services

# 3. Where housing fits: the bigger picture

## North Wales Economic Growth Deal

The six North Wales Local Authorities are working collaboratively on a Growth Deal, with housing as one of the strategic priorities. The proposal is to establish a regional Housing Enabler project that would accelerate the rate of house building and provide support for Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) developers across North Wales. The proposed scheme provides support for SME house builders currently experiencing barriers to entering the market; increase the number of housing completions; provide more affordable housing; and increase the number of construction jobs. Outcomes from the project would include 250 affordable housing as part of 1,000 housing programme delivery.

## Regional Homelessness Strategy and Local Action Plan

The 6 Local Authorities across North Wales have worked collaboratively to develop a Regional Homelessness Strategy and locally each Local Authority has a Local Action Plan, and will be in place by the end of 2018 as set out in the Housing Act (Wales) 2014. The strategy is aligned with the housing strategy with the primary objective of ‘reducing homelessness across North Wales’. The Homelessness strategy has 3 themes and priorities (set out below) and the Local Action Plan identifies key actions to address them.

People	Homes	Services
Youth homelessness; prison leavers; rough sleepers; and people with complex needs.	Improved access to accommodation (supply); temporary accommodation; alternative delivery models; and housing first.	Prevention / intervention; mitigation of welfare reform; health and social care; and communication.

A Regional Homelessness Delivery group has been established to implement the regional strategy and action plan. The group consists of the Housing Strategy leads from the 6 Local Authorities. Where necessary there will be sub-groups to focus on the different priority areas and come up with a range of actions at a regional level and make recommendations to local areas in order to address the issues.

The Regional Homelessness Strategy will link into the new Housing Support Grant regional structures, ensuring a joined up and effective mechanism for delivery and monitoring of outcomes.

# 3. Where housing fits: the bigger picture

## North Wales Supporting People Regional Strategic Plan 2017-2020

The Supporting People Programme is a Welsh Government funded programme that provides housing related support to vulnerable groups, supporting them to maximise, maintain and sustain their independence. The strategy is overseen by the Regional Collaborative Committee (RCC). The regional priority areas identified in the strategy are: domestic abuse; people leaving prison; mental health; learning disabilities; and rough sleepers.

### 3.3 Local strategic context

#### The Council Plan (2017 – 2023) Strategic Priorities

Flintshire County Council has identified housing as a key strategic priority as set out in the Council Plan for 2017 - 2023, ensuring its residents have access to:

- Appropriate and affordable homes, through ensuring the supply of affordable and quality council housing of all tenures; and
- Modern, efficient and adapted homes, through ensuring the supply of affordable and quality housing of all tenures.

The Council's aim is to:

- Prevent homelessness
- Meet the diverse housing and accommodation needs of the local population
- Develop more opportunities for people to access affordable rent and low cost home ownership
- Build the maximum number of Council houses possible as part of the housing supply solution
- Meet the Welsh Government target for all social housing to be brought up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS).

#### Flintshire Local Development Plan (LDP) 2015-2030

Flintshire is in the process of preparing its LDP and has produced its Preferred Strategy Consultation Document, which sets out the growth ambition for the County and its strategic policy for meeting housing needs through the planning system. The Preferred Strategy identifies a requirement for 7,645 new houses during the plan period, 2015 – 2030 with a percentage of affordable homes of different tenures to meet the local demand as set out in Flintshire's Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) 2019.

#### Housing Support Grant

In April 2019 Welsh Government are introducing the Housing Support Grant which incorporates Supporting People Grant, the Homelessness Prevention Grant and the Rent Smart Wales legislation grant. These will be managed in a coordinated way, with the aim of reducing duplication in delivery whilst maximising the impact.

# 4. The challenges we face

## 4. The challenges we face

### 4.1 A lack of the right type of homes

- A significant number of households in need of social rented homes, outstripping the projected provision of new homes being provided.
- An increasing number of people registering on Tai Teg website to access affordable rented homes or affordable ownership properties.
- There is a mismatch between the type of existing social housing available compared to what is actually needed, resulting in long waiting times on the housing register and an increase in 'hard to let' properties. This includes a lack of single persons accommodation and specialist housing such as adapted properties or large properties for families.
- There are approximately 500 empty properties across Flintshire but there is limited resources to address the problem or incentivise owners to bring them back into use.
- There has been a reduction in available properties in the Private Rented Sector (PRS) for the Local Authority to access for homeless people as a result of tax changes, the implementation of Universal Credit and resulting risk of rent arrears, as well as the introduction of Rent Smart Wales.
- There is a lack of good quality, small (i.e. 4 bedroom maximum) shared housing for single people who are unable to afford their own home or need temporary accommodation.
- There is a lack of specialist supported housing for people who have complex needs including drug / alcohol recovery, mental health issues or other support needs.
- Increasingly unaffordable rents in the private sector.

### 4.2 Increasing demands

- An aging demographic with people with multiple and complex issues increasing demand on support services and types of housing including adaptations. There are limited resources to meet these demands and the level of resources available can depend on the tenure.
- Increase for the demand for, and subsequent cost of, emergency and temporary accommodation. The quality of the temporary accommodation can also be poor and the management demands can be high if the temporary accommodation is of multiple occupation.
- With the introduction of Universal Credit there has been an increase in rent arrears across the social rented sector and an increase in demand for intervention measures to support tenants to sustain their tenancies and keep evictions within the social housing sector from having a significant impact on levels of homelessness.
- Notable levels of fuel poverty across Flintshire which is a risk if fuel costs increase.
- A need to improve the housing standards in the private sector to reduce wider costs to the public purse.

# 5. Where we want to be

## 5.1 Our vision

The vision for the Housing Strategy is:

To work in partnership with key stakeholders to inform and deliver the right type of quality housing and the most appropriate support to meet the housing needs of our population.

## 5.2 Our priorities

### Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

We have a significant demand for social rented properties through the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) and for affordable rented and ownership on the TAI TEG register. To meet these demands we need to consider a range of solutions including building new homes; improving access to the private rented sector; better use of existing stock; or through strategic acquisitions. Importantly we need to ensure we are providing the right type of homes to meet peoples' needs in the right location.

#### 1.1 To increase the supply of all types and tenures of affordable housing through new build developments by:

- Influencing the Welsh Government Social Housing Grant programme, managed by the Local Authority, to ensure maximum investment to meet the right type of new build social housing across Flintshire.
- Developing a forward development plan for the Council's new build programme post 2021 - Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP).
- Maximising investment for development through North East Wales Homes.
- Maximising the provision of affordable housing on market led sites through negotiations with developers on S106 requirements.
- Exploring innovation across the Construction sector to increase supply whilst reducing development costs.
- Meeting the annual shortfall of 228 affordable homes, of which 137 social or affordable rent and 91 affordable ownership (e.g. shared equity).

#### 1.2 To increase the supply through better use of existing social housing stock by:

- Reviewing the Council's housing stock and our partner Housing Association stock to establish whether there is scope to utilise stock in a more effective way to meet local housing needs.
- Developing an Accessible Housing register, identifying all properties which have an adaptation.

#### 1.3 To increase the supply by bringing empty homes back into use through:

- Developing policies which identify options for securing empty properties and bringing them back into use.
- Reducing the number of empty properties identified through the Council Tax system, working collaboratively with key partners to establish a priority list of target properties and focus resources on addressing them, particularly those which are long term empty or that attract complaints.
- The provision of financial support to bring empty properties back into use by utilising existing funding available including through the social housing grant.

# 5. Where we want to be

## **1.4 To increase the supply through the private rented sector (PRS) by:**

- Ensuring a dedicated PRS team / Officer is available in the Council to co-ordinate and promote the PRS in order to increase availability.
- Developing a dedicated PRS action plan with the aim of delivering an effective service for landlords and tenants across Flintshire.
- Delivering a bespoke landlord offer and working with the Landlord Forum to develop innovative approaches to addressing the challenges faced by landlords and tenants.

## **1.5 To provide the right type of homes to meet the increased demand for single person accommodation and larger properties for families through:**

- The Housing Strategy team informing the Housing Associations and Council's new build programmes of specific housing demands in the area of development for incorporation into schemes.
- Developing innovative approaches to the delivery and management of properties to future proof and ensure sustainability of the properties.
- Considering the use of strategic acquisitions where resources are available.

## **1.6 To provide the right type of homes to improve the offer and scope of specialist housing provision through:**

- Developing an overarching framework for providing the most cost effective and equitable delivery of specialist housing between the Council and its partners, whilst meeting the needs of our communities.
- Using the information gathered through the specialist housing register ensure we provide housing which meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- Working with partners in health and social services develop housing provision for people with complex health needs.
- Providing the right type of housing to meet the needs older people now and in the future.

## **1.7 To provide the right type of accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller community through:**

- Ensuring the need for residential pitches are met in Flintshire working with the community.
- The provision of a transit site within the County.
- Ensuring ongoing effective management of the Council owned site at Riverside.

# 5. Where we want to be

## **Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home**

Housing related support aims to prevent the problems that can cause vulnerable people to become homeless. The principle of housing related support is to support a person to access, maintain and manage accommodation by assisting in developing or maintaining the necessary skills and confidence to live as independently as possible.

### **2.1 To reduce homelessness through prevention by:**

- Working across the region with Local Authority partners to deliver the regional homelessness strategy and local action plan.
- Working with all relevant partners in Flintshire to prevent homelessness and support people to sustain their tenancies.

### **2.2 To reduce the demand for temporary accommodation by:**

- Ensuring suitable accommodation is provided to meet the needs of homeless people / families.
- Increasing the supply of suitable move on accommodation, particularly for people with support needs.

### **2.3 To provide the right type of support for the most vulnerable people with complex needs through:**

- Strategic commissioning of support services which will be responsive to the full range of support needs.
- Working with all partners and other teams in the Council to ensure availability and quality of support.

### **2.4 To provide a range of financial and social support through:**

- Ensuring a range of financial products to support people to access and remain in their home.
- Developing a range of innovative support to address key barriers in accessing and remain in their home.

### **2.5 To provide support for older people to either remain in their own home or move to more suitable accommodation by:**

- Reviewing the Single Access Register To Housing (SARTH) and understand the housing needs of older people.
- Developing a wider understanding of housing requirements for older people and developing innovative solutions.

# 5. Where we want to be

## Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of homes

Improving the quality of existing housing stock and developing innovative, energy efficient new stock is an important objective to contribute to the decarbonisation by 2020 target set by the Welsh Government and the Council's aim to address fuel poverty.

### 3.1 Maximising energy efficiency standards and delivery methods through:

Co-ordinate the provision of funding to improve private sector energy efficiency.

- Increase the number of properties connected to the mains gas network through gas infill programmes.
- Retro fit energy efficiency measures for social housing stock.

### 3.2 Improving the quality and standard of accommodation in the private sector through:

- The 'Healthy Homes and Healthy People 2025' project bringing together a voluntary group of concerned people and organisations working with a shared purpose of ending avoidable health inequality in North Wales.
- Proactively working with Landlords and Tenants to improve knowledge and compliance with legislation

### 3.3 Completion of the WHQS programme by 2020 across all social housing stock in Flintshire.

### 3.4 Adopt a collaborative approach to plan for the increase in demand for adaptations in properties to allow residents to remain in their home by:

- Setting appropriate strategic objectives for adaptations that focus on wellbeing and independence for delivery by all partners.
- Improving the intelligence on the demand for adaptations and using it to establish resource implications.
- Linking the systems for managing and delivering adaptations.

### 3.5 Improve the standard of new build properties built by the Council and Housing Associations by:

- Evaluating and delivering the Flintshire House Standard.
- Promoting the Welsh Government's Design Quality Requirements (DQR).
- Delivering different construction methods to improve energy efficiency.

### 3.6 Address fuel poverty across Flintshire housing by:

- Improve standards in the private sector (outside of PRS and energy), as part of the Council's statutory duty.
- Offer WG-funded loan products to reduce the incidence of Category 1 hazards in owner-occupied properties.
- Implement housing renewal programmes to improve the quality of the private sector housing stock as funding resources allow.

# 6. Delivering our strategy

## 6.1 Governance

The Housing Strategy will be overseen by Flintshire's Strategic Housing Partnership which consists of the Chief Executives of our partner Housing Associations, as well as representatives from the Council including the Lead Member for Housing and the Chief Officer for Housing and Assets.

## 6.2 Monitoring and review

Flintshire's Housing Strategy team will be responsible for monitoring the progress of the plan against the actions set out in the action plan. The action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure relevant actions are included to ensure the vision and priorities are met. There will be an annual report detailing quantitative progress against outputs and a qualitative report of progress against outcomes.

## 6.3 Resources

The actions within the plan will be met through existing funding resources including for example social housing grant, flexible funding grant and ICF etc. The strategy aims to provide a framework for the different funding sources.

# 7. Making it happen: the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above. Well-being for Future Generation Goal: To contribute to becoming a more equal Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

## Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Output	Timescale	Lead organisation/s
To meet the annual shortfall of 238 affordable housing as identified in the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) 2019 by delivering the following tenures: (i) To increase the number of new social rent properties (RSL or Council) by 86 per annum (ii) To increase the number of intermediate rent properties (NEW Homes or RSLs) by 57 per annum (iii) To increase the number of intermediate ownership properties (through s106 provision or RSLs) by 95 per annum	Annual	Flintshire County Council and RSL Partners
Deliver 5% (10) new build properties per annum to meet demand specialist provision	Annual	Flintshire County Council and RSL Partners
Deliver 20 major adaptations on existing properties per annum (all tenures)	Annual	Flintshire County Council and RSL Partners
Increase the percentage of one bedroom social rented properties by 20% (16) per year of all new build social rented properties	Annual	Flintshire County Council and RSL Partners
Reduce the number of empty properties by 10% (50) over the lifetime of the strategy	March 2025	Flintshire County Council

### Priority 1.1 To increase the supply of all types and tenures of affordable housing through new build developments

Action	Task
The RSL Welsh Government Social Housing Grant programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing development capacity in Flintshire through zoning additional Housing Associations.</li> <li>Ensuring maximum number of properties delivered using the available funding.</li> <li>Ensuring a robust reserve list of schemes.</li> <li>Ensuring the type and tenure meets local housing needs, primarily social rent properties, informed by the Council's Housing Strategy Team.</li> </ul>
The Council's new build programme: SHARP/ HRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting the HRA Business Plan's ambition to deliver 50 new social rent homes per annum up to 2030 in order to meet the demand of the social housing register.</li> <li>Ensuring the delivery of new builds adds value through addressing the pressures for certain housing types by basing development plans on intelligence.</li> <li>Utilising Welsh Government's Affordable Housing Grant to support delivery.</li> <li>Securing a lift in the borrowing cap to enable additional financial resources to meet the Council's delivery ambitions.</li> <li>Developing a forward delivery plan for the SHARP once 500 new homes target achieved.</li> </ul>

# 7. Making it happen: the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above. Well-being for Future Generation Goal: To contribute to becoming a more equal Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

## Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 1.1 To increase the supply of all types and tenures of affordable housing through new build developments	
Action	Task
NEW Homes investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the delivery of affordable rented properties through SHARP for NEW Homes.</li> <li>• Ensuring NEW Homes maximises its ability to invest in the delivery of affordable rented properties through using their existing assets.</li> </ul>
Maximising the provision of affordable housing on market led sites through S106 requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring the new LDP affordable housing planning policy requirements maximises appropriate on-site provision.</li> <li>• Supporting and encourage our delivery partners to utilise private finance and Rent to Own grant to acquire units from developers for affordable rent and rent to own / shared ownership, in addition to the planning requirement.</li> <li>• Working with developers to ensure delivery of affordable ownership models, such as shared equity, where there is demand.</li> </ul>
Exploring innovation and social value across the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with partners to use off site manufacturing / Modern Methods of Manufacturing</li> <li>• Explore opportunities through the regional growth deal partnership</li> <li>• Considering investing in designs for multi-generational / flexible homes</li> <li>• Increasing the use of social value in service planning and procurement in order to maximise opportunities to support vulnerable residents.</li> </ul>

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**Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location**

Priority 1.2 To increase the supply through better use of existing social housing stock	
Action	Task
The Council's housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertaking a review of the stock and tenancies to determine where there is under occupation or where there is capacity to realign the use of the stock</li> <li>• Reviewing the existing use of stock to assess best use</li> <li>• Developing an incentive scheme to encourage movement in the stock where it can be proven to meet a need from the housing register and address under occupation / overcrowding.</li> </ul>
Partner Housing Association stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review existing use of stock to assess best use in line with strategic priorities</li> </ul>
Accessible Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an Accessible Housing Register for all social housing stock to enable better use of adapted stock</li> <li>• Assess the register to identify where there are homes with adaptations that could be utilised.</li> <li>• Engage with Housing Occupational Health and Social Services as early as possible on all developments to ensure all accessible needs are met.</li> </ul>

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## Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 1.3 To increase the supply by bringing empty homes back into use	
Action	Task
Developing relevant policies to maximise legal powers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a policy for Flintshire to maximise legal powers including the potential to compulsory purchase or take ownership on a temporary basis.</li> <li>• Explore potential resources with Welsh Government for compulsory purchase orders</li> <li>• Developing an initiative, in partnership with our Housing Associations, to bring back empty properties into use to meet specific needs such as for larger families.</li> </ul>
Reducing empty properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working closely with partner Housing Associations and the Council Tax Team to identify those properties which are long term empty and are causing issues to the local community.</li> </ul>
The provision of financial support to bring empty properties back into use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting 'Houses to Homes' loans, which aims to bring empty properties back into use through providing affordable loans up to £25k in the private sector.</li> </ul>

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## Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 1.4 To increase the supply through the private rented sector (PRS)	
Action	Task
A dedicated PRS team / Officer in the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realign existing staffing resources and expertise to develop an improved PRS offer across Flintshire.</li> </ul>
Develop a PRS action plan ensuring an effective service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertaking a review of the affordability of the sector and explore ways to address them through incentives or interventions if required.</li> <li>• Working with Environmental Health team to improve standards within the sector.</li> </ul>
The delivery of a bespoke landlord offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consulting with private sector landlords through the Landlord Forum to establish a better understanding of the barriers and what the critical success factors would be to provide a successful offer.</li> <li>• Providing a range of offers for Landlords to incentivise their engagement and commitment to the Council including the BOND.</li> <li>• Ensuring the offer is flexible as well as robust and cost effective.</li> </ul>

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## Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

### Priority 1.5 To provide the right type of homes to meet the increased demand for single person accommodation and larger properties for families

Action	Task
The RSL's and Council's new build programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requiring higher numbers of single person accommodation and larger properties as part of all new build developments.</li> <li>• Continuous assessment of priorities and regular updates</li> </ul>
Developing innovative approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing best practice elsewhere and identifying a range of options that could meet our emerging demands for single person and larger units in a cost effective way.</li> <li>• Identifying innovative delivery models which can provide smaller units which are flexible and can be altered to meet changes in demand in the future.</li> <li>• Considering the appropriat-eness of different delivery methods such as self build/custom build and co-operative approaches to meet the need.</li> </ul>
Strategic acquisitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing a strategic acquisition fund for properties which would meet a very specific need and for small numbers of properties.</li> <li>• Requesting partner Housing Associations to utilise social housing grant to acquire individual properties where there is a specific need which is either urgent or cannot be met through current stock.</li> </ul>

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## Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 1.6 To provide the right type of homes to improve the offer and scope of specialist housing provision	
Action	Task
An overarching / strategic framework for determining the most cost effective delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing the options for delivery i.e. adaptations; acquisition or new build and develop a universal assessment mechanism to determine the most cost effective delivery option within an equality framework.</li> <li>• Reviewing and mapping resources available to meet the increasing demand for adaptations.</li> <li>• Exploring a partnership approach to funding and delivery including Council Housing / DFG teams, HAs Housing teams, Supporting People, Social Services, Occupational Health, Health and ICF partnership.</li> <li>• Lobbying Welsh Government to simplify funding for adaptations across all delivery partners.</li> </ul>
Meeting the housing needs of people with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to deliver as a partnership to meet the needs of people on the specialist housing register.</li> <li>• Maximising the use of adaptations to help sustain tenancies and reduce increased pressure on the housing register.</li> <li>• Considering potential strategic acquisitions to meet the needs of particular complex cases.</li> <li>• Ensuring adapted properties are included on all Housing Association new build developments to meet the needs of the specialist register.</li> <li>• Exploring the delivery of adapted properties on market led schemes.</li> </ul>

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## Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 1.6 To provide the right type of homes to improve the offer and scope of specialist housing provision	
Action	Task
Meeting the needs of people with complex health needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a proactive relationship with the Health sector to improve communication with Housing Strategy around housing needs of those in their care.</li> <li>• Delivering affordable transitional accommodation to reduce delayed transfer of care – Glan y Morfa – through securing funding and undertaking the necessary works.</li> <li>• Working with the Homeless Prevention team to inform provision and identify best practice</li> </ul>
Providing the right type of housing to meet the needs older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the housing needs of the older people.</li> <li>• Exploring alternative and innovative housing models for older people such as intergenerational properties or co-operative models, which help to keep older people active and healthier for longer.</li> <li>• Providing specialist provision such as extra care and supported housing for those older people with care needs including dementia.</li> <li>• Reviewing existing specific older persons social housing stock to ensure they can sustain tenancies.</li> <li>• Exploring potential to include age-friendly properties as part of new build market developments.</li> </ul>

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## Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 1.7 To provide the right type of accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller community	
Action	Task
Meet the need for residential pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing the number of pitches in line with Flintshire's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) through market led schemes and the refurbishment of the Council owned site.</li> </ul>
Provision of a transit site within the County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying and assessing potential sites to deliver a transit site in Flintshire.</li> <li>Applying for planning permission for transit site and secure Welsh Government grant to deliver provision.</li> </ul>
Management of the Council owned site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review different management models for the Council owned site.</li> <li>Redesigning and delivering the refurbishment of the site to provide modern pitches.</li> <li>Developing an allocation policy for the site.</li> </ul>

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## Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home

Output	Timescale	Lead organisation/s
Deliver the actions identified in the Flintshire Homelessness Local Action Plan	March 2024	Flintshire County Council
Develop a Youth Homeless 'hub'	March 2024	Flintshire County Council
Reduce the number of people in temporary accommodation by 50% (33) over the period of the plan	March 2024	Flintshire County Council and RSL Partners
Deliver a transit site for the Gypsy and Traveller Community	March 2022	Flintshire County Council
Deliver one Extra Care during the period of the Strategy	March 2024	Flintshire County Council and RSL Partners

Priority 2.1 To reduce homelessness through prevention	
Action	Task
Work across the region with partners to prevent homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working across the region to develop a cross Local Authority Regional Homelessness Strategy, pulling together resources to deliver shared interventions where appropriate and cost effective.</li> <li>Developing a better understanding of the causes of homelessness to inform the development of the right interventions through collective, regional intelligence gathering.</li> </ul>
Work with partners in Flintshire to prevent homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Local Action Plan for homelessness to ensure local issues are addressed.</li> <li>Develop preventative measures by providing tenancy support and crisis management to enable the people to sustain their tenancies.</li> </ul>

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## Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home

Priority 2.2 To reduce the demand for temporary accommodation	
Action	Task
Provide suitable accommodation to meet the needs of homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop different models of delivery such as Housing First.</li> <li>• Develop a 'hub' to provide a range of services for the homeless including emergency beds and support services.</li> <li>• Working closely with Housing Strategy and development partners to inform the delivery of flexible and suitable accommodation.</li> </ul>
Increase availability of move on accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a review of the existing stock and explore options for increasing supply of move on accommodation.</li> <li>• Ensure commissioning priorities incorporate the necessary support required to sustain tenancies.</li> </ul>

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## Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home

Priority 2.3 To provide the right type of support for the most vulnerable people	
Action	Task
Strategic commissioning of support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the Local Commissioning Plan incorporating the Regional Homelessness Strategy priorities to ensure a joined up approach.</li> <li>• Support the work of the Regional Collaborative Committee.</li> <li>• Commission support for priority groups: Youth homeless; Prison Leavers; Rough Sleepers; and Complex Needs.</li> </ul>
Working with partners and other teams in the Council to ensure available support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with key stakeholders e.g. health to provide support packages at an early stage through joint protocols.</li> <li>• Working with Social Services and health colleagues to ensure supported living.</li> <li>• Working with strategic delivery partners to ensure capacity and scale of support is available to avoid unacceptable delays in provision for the individual.</li> </ul>

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## Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home

Priority 2.4 To provide a range of financial and social support	
Action	Task
Ensuring a range of financial products to support people to access and remain in their home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and develop affordable ownership products including Shared Equity; Homebuy and Rent to Own.</li> <li>• Promote private rent support through the BOND.</li> <li>• Develop access to affordable starter furnishing packages.</li> <li>• Provide financial management advice and access to financial products with the aim of reducing the risk of rent arrears / eviction.</li> </ul>
Develop a range of innovative support to address key barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore a range of initiatives, based on best practice, which will provide cost benefits in the medium term to the public finances. For example a furniture rental social enterprise.</li> </ul>

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## Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home

Priority 2.5 To provide support for older people to either remain in their own home or move to more suitable accommodation	
Action	Task
Review the SARTH to understand the housing needs of older people in social housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a plan with our Housing Association partners to address the needs of older people on SARTH.</li> <li>• Develop an understanding of demand for adaptations to enable future planning of resources.</li> <li>• Links with Social Services; Residential Care homes; Extra Care and supported housing to scope out move on options.</li> </ul>
Develop an understanding of the wider housing requirements for older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with interest groups to identify key issues, barriers and potential opportunities for the an action plan.</li> <li>• Review tenancy support and the potential of incentives to encourage downsizing where appropriate.</li> </ul>

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## Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of homes

Output	Timescale	Lead organisation/s
Reduce the number of households in the private sector in Flintshire who are in fuel poverty from 10.1% to 8% during the period of the strategy	March 2024	Flintshire County Council
Complete the Welsh Housing Quality Standard programme by 100%	March 2021	Flintshire County Council and RSL Partners

Priority 3.1 Maximising energy efficiency standards and deliver	
Action	Task
Deliver private sector renewal energy loans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximise the use of the loan products aimed at owner occupiers to bring properties up to a good standard by making them energy efficient and removing hazards.</li> </ul>
Gas infill programme for social housing properties that are off-gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Wales and West Utilities to extend the gas network to bring more convenient and cost-effective heating to residents across all tenures.</li> </ul>
Retro fit of energy efficiency measures for vulnerable residents in all tenures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure external funding from all suitable sources to implement measures to reduce fuel poverty.</li> <li>Co-ordinate funding and support providers to ensure a joined up service for residents that maximises the resources available to them.</li> </ul>
Deliver the Warm Homes Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council has secured £3m to tackle fuel poverty in Flintshire by improving efficiency through for example: fitting new heating systems or accessing the gas network.</li> </ul>
Arbed for wales programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A spatially targeted WG programme focusing on windows and doors and external wall insulation, to address fuel poverty in the private sector.</li> </ul>

Priority 3.2 Improving the quality and standard of accommodation in the private sector	
Action	Task
Healthy Homes and Healthy People – 2025 project bringing together a voluntary group of concerned people and organisations working with a shared purpose of ending avoidable health inequality in North Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage different teams to think more broadly when undertaking their daily roles to improve the homes of people in the private sector.</li> </ul>
Rent Smart Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Landlords to promote Rent Smart Wales and improve the standards of the private rented stock.</li> </ul>

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## Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of homes

Priority 3.3 Completing the WHQS programme by 2020 across all social housing stock	
Action	Task
The Council stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete environmental improvements by 2020 and identify funding to undertake the external works.</li> </ul>
Housing Association partners' stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete environmental improvements by 2020</li> </ul>

Priority 3.4 Adopt a collaborative approach to preparing for the increase in demand for adaptations in properties to allow residents to remain in their home	
Action	Task
Set appropriate strategic objectives for adaptations that focus on wellbeing and independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a partnership which incorporates all partners with funding for adaptations including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The Council's HRA budget</li> <li>(ii) Private sector Disabilities Funding Grant;</li> <li>(iii) Care and Repair, ENABLE for minor and major adaptations for those in the private sector;</li> <li>(iv) Housing Associations can access Physical Adaptation Grants for existing tenants.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Improve the intelligence on the demand for adaptations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pull together a range of data from all partners to establish a better understanding of future demand.</li> </ul>
Link the systems for managing and delivering adaptations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboratively develop adapted housing policies for all partners as part of the Specialist Housing Group.</li> <li>• Review service standards for adaptations in line with Welsh Government.</li> <li>• Consider how the EHRC toolkit can be utilised in Flintshire.</li> </ul>

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## Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of homes

Priority 3.5 Improve the standard of new build properties built by the Council and Housing Associations	
Action	Task
Utilising the Flintshire House Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continually review and evaluate the standards to ensure they are relevant and contribute to the wider energy efficiency agenda.</li> <li>Consider introducing further requirements such as solar panels / PVs, electric car charging points.</li> </ul>
Welsh Government's Design Quality Requirements (DQR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a consistent standard of quality of internal layout is achieved across a range of standard house types that are as flexible as possible to cater for most residents needs.</li> </ul>
Deliver different construction methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver new builds using sustainable materials including timber frame / SIPs, and improve SAP ratings as part of SHARP.</li> <li>Develop procurement opportunities through collaboration with Housing Association partners to deliver new construction methods.</li> <li>Develop using off site manufacturing to reduce waste and quicker construction methods.</li> </ul>