



Housing Strategy 2021 – 2025

Introduction

Housing is fundamental to the wellbeing of people, their families and their wider communities. Improving housing standards, options, conditions and neighbourhoods within the Borough is essential for enhancing economic growth, tackling vulnerabilities, improving outcomes for our children including their educational attainment, health and wellbeing, and community cohesion.

Our Housing Strategy sets out our strategic housing priorities and details a range of actions the Council intends to take in partnership with relevant partners and stakeholders to support residents to access good quality, suitable and affordable housing while preventing homelessness and rough sleeping.

We recognise that the most dominant issues currently facing the Borough and the United Kingdom are the challenges of Covid 19. It has brought to fore housing affordability, rough sleeping and homelessness. This housing strategy has attempted to capture the more permanent impacts of Covid 19, which are likely to require a strategic response.

Our housing priorities are thematic, cross cutting and we acknowledge the correlation between different policies areas and how one will interplay with another. These are:

Housing, Health and Wellbeing and Partnerships

Housing and Economic Recovery

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Early consultation has been undertaken with partners and stakeholders, to get a 'sense-check'. A steer from them about the themes and the priorities, before, drafting a detailed strategy, to ensure that the strategy addresses the most pertinent issues and not those that were 'perceived' to be important.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Strategies

The Housing Strategy exists alongside a range of interconnected plans, policies and strategies. We aim to strengthen this relationship through this strategy and associated activities.



Demographics

In 2019 the population of Newcastle-under-Lyme was 129,441 people. This was an increase of 4 % (5,337) since 2012. Of the 129,441 people in Newcastle-under-Lyme, 18.1% (23,481) were children aged under 18, 61.2 % (79,198) were adults aged 18 to 64 and 20.7% (26,762) are aged 65 and over; 2.8% (3,562) of the resident population are 85 and over.

The population has a lower proportion of people aged under five and under 16 compared to England. There are more people aged 16-64 and 65 and over in Newcastle-under-Lyme compared to average.

The overall population of Newcastle-under-Lyme is projected to increase between 2017 and 2027 by 5% with a significant growth in people aged 65 and over (15%) and aged 85 and over (27%). The rate of increase in the number of older people in Newcastle-under-Lyme is faster than the England average and equates to 900 additional residents aged 85 and over by 2027. The dependency ratio for older people in Newcastle-under-Lyme is 32 older people for every 100 people of working age which is higher than England.

Housing Stock

There are 56,479 dwellings in the Borough (Council Tax Base Form 2020), of which approximately 70% are owner-occupied, 11% private rented and 19% social rented.

In 2016 the Housing Stock Condition Survey reviewed the levels of stock condition in the Borough. The survey estimated that 7,276 private sector dwellings exhibited Category 1 hazards. Furthermore 9.5% (4,156) of private sector dwellings and 12.7% (730) of private

rented dwellings are estimated to have low levels of energy efficiency with Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating below band E.

In 2020, 727 have been classed as empty properties, of these 461 have been empty for more than six months.

In 2019, 8,873 units of general needs housing were managed by RSL within the Borough, 876 units of housing for older people and 124 units of supported housing.

Housing Need

A minimum local housing need, of 355 per annum has been identified for the Borough for the following size of properties: 1 bed 13%, 2 beds 31%, 3 beds 43%, and 4 beds 13% and the types of properties; House, 73%, Bungalow 13%, and Flat 15%

The estimated net need for affordable housing (rented housing) is estimated at a 28 households per annum.

It is estimated that 34% of households within the Borough are unable to afford a market rented property and 22% are unable to purchase from the open market.

Homelessness

In 2019-2020, the overall data for prevention and relief duties that were accepted were 456, broken down into Prevent – 260 and Relief – 196.

The majority of those accepted as homeless fell within the age group of 25 – 44 year olds.

The causes of homelessness in the Borough reflect the national picture of parental / relatives / friends no longer willing / able to accommodate.

According to the annual figures, 2019-2020; domestic abuse continues to be the biggest cause of homelessness.

Local Economy

The average house price within the Borough, in January 2020, was £159,059. The average (mean) monthly private rent within the Borough was £590.00 (October 2019-2020).

When compared to 2016, both have increased. The average house price; a £22,769 increase, 16.7% increase and the monthly rents an increase of £47.00; an 8.7% increase.

The Gross Weekly pay for full time workers, who are residing within the Borough is £535.10. This is lower than the West Midlands region and UK.

30% of employee jobs within the Borough are within the Wholesale / Retail Industry (20%) and Storage and Transport (10%)

Council Plan

The Council Plan 2018 – 22 sets out a vision of good local services, a prosperous borough, and safe and welcoming places for all. There are four priorities to deliver the outcomes.

Local Services that Work for Local People

- This underpins everything we do. Our aim is to be a council that listens to its local residents and communities by being responsive to their needs, and to work with them to deliver first class services.

Growing our People and Places

- We aim to build a strong and sustainable economy to ensure opportunities and support are available to everyone to improve their lives.

A Healthy, Active and Safe Borough

- We will ensure everyone enjoys a safe environment, and access to a wide range of facilities and activities to support residents and visitors to improve their health and quality of life

A Town Centre for all

- Creating two vibrant town centres in Newcastle and Kidsgrove where everyone can live, work, shop, study and spend their leisure time.

Our key priorities for the Housing Strategy 2021-24 contribute to achieving this overarching vision.

Our priorities

Priority 1 – Housing, Health and Wellbeing and Partnerships

Objective 1 – to integrate the housing, health and wellbeing agendas

There is recognition that a range of complex and inter-linked challenges that impact on the quality of life of people cannot be effectively tackled by any one partner alone and more can be achieved by working together.

We work in partnership with other organisations such as social care, health (including mental health and drug and alcohol services); advice agencies; money advice; voluntary and community sector groups; the Police and other emergency services; and domestic abuse services. In Staffordshire, the Health and Social Care sectors are undergoing transformation to ensure people are provided with better integrated care and support. The need for good quality housing forms a central part of this transformation.

In 2018, Staffordshire County Council approved a five-year 'Whole-Life Disability Strategy', which sets out the principles and actions that will underpin the way it works with families, communities, local authorities, health and care providers and partners to meet the requirements of people with physical or learning disabilities, autism, and sensory impairments, recognising the need for people to be 'independent and equal in society and have choice and control in their own lives'.

We will:

- Seek to influence local commissioning and provider's plans to ensure they work together for a common purpose.
- Continue to lead the work of the Newcastle Partnership to identify opportunities for joint working and responding to local needs.
- Facilitate the availability and encourage the further development of supported accommodation for our residents who have a range of needs, including physical and/or mental health needs, challenging behaviours and homelessness.
- Work in partnership to deliver an efficient and responsive grants service for adaptations.
- Seek external funding opportunities for the ongoing development of additional supported accommodation with local providers, particularly for those customers with complex needs.
- Encourage local specialist providers to provide supported accommodation that meets the needs of Borough residents, using intelligence we have from the housing advice and housing register functions.
- Contribute to the delivery of the actions in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Objective 2 – to improve housing standards and energy efficiency in the housing stock

Housing Standards

We respond to approximately 600 service requests each year from residents and partners seeking help with housing related matters across the privately rented and owner occupied sectors.

We run a well-regarded Landlord accreditation scheme is a partnership between Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council and provides a means for dialogue between the council and engaged and conscientious landlords.

It aims to improve the physical and management standards in the private rented sector by providing encouragement, support and incentives to members. There are over 450 members of the scheme, around 200 of these own and let over 700 properties within the Borough.

We have licenced 193 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in the Borough providing housing for up to 1197 residents forming 1127 households. A large proportion of these are students households, however, HMOs also provide essential affordable housing for some of the most vulnerable residents.

We work in close partnership with local lettings agencies, Staffordshire Fire Authority, Keele University to improve standards.

We will:

- Target the worst performing landlords with the poorest quality housing.
- Support responsible landlords and work with them to become professional and grow their business.
- Continue to commit to the Landlord Accreditation Scheme: North Staffordshire.
- Use our stock modelling and other available intelligence to target properties for a pro-active programme of inspections and use our statutory powers to ensure they comply with legal duties.

Empty homes

There are many complex reasons why a home may be left empty, we seek to take actions on a case on case basis including measures to encourage and persuade owners to bring their properties up to a good standard and let them to tenants:

We will:

- Use the full range of tools and powers available to us to return empty homes to use.

Energy Efficiency

We promote the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), a programme to deliver energy efficiency measures to cut fuel bills and reduce carbon emissions. To date 4025 ECO measures have been installed within the Borough, of these 1777 have been directed to those deemed to be vulnerable and in fuel poverty.

We work with Beat the Cold, a local charity (funding by the National lottery, North Staffs Clinical Commissioning Group, and Western Power).

We are part of Staffordshire Warmer Homes; run by Staffordshire County Council, in partnership with local councils. The scheme has developed a number of major projects for the installation of energy efficiency measures and low carbon technologies in Staffordshire. We are working with Staffordshire Warmer Homes to bid for and deliver Local Authority Delivery (LAD) funded schemes.

We have declared a Climate Emergency and made a commitment to Carbon Neutrality, in line with the Government's target by 2050, and reducing the emissions from homes within the Borough will be integral in achieving this target.

We will:

- Continue to work with Beat the Cold to support households out of fuel poverty.
- Continue to work with the Staffordshire Warmer Homes scheme to bid for funding and deliver energy efficient projects focusing on external Wall Insulation, Loft insulation, air source heat pumps and Solar PV.

Priority 2 - Housing and Economic Recovery

Objective 1 - To develop a housing market that is vibrant and economically prosperous, which will meet the needs of our residents.

Newcastle-under-Lyme's five-year Housing Land Supply Statement (2020-2025)) forecasts a requirement for 2364 houses up to 2025 (473 per annum).

We are developing a new Local Plan that will set a housing requirement taking into consideration an up-to-date objective assessment of housing need for the Borough's, and constraints to development. The Local Development Scheme has been published on our website (www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/all-services/planning/planning-policy) which presents a timetable for the new Local Plan. A submission to the Secretary of State has been planned for winter 2023.

We provide a professional development management approach including pre-application advice and support. It works to attract funding for, and facilitates the delivery of, essential infrastructure to enable new development to take place and co-ordinates with Homes England to fund affordable housing with commuted sums via the planning process. We promote high development standards/quality in new builds through the planning process.

We will

- Ensure that housing needs are properly assessed and quantified by updating the local evidence base, including the Housing Needs Assessment and the Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA).
- Develop and enhance policies to further improve housing standards in the borough, including design, accessibility, security and environmental performance, taking account of developing national guidelines and published evidence.
- Adopt a new a Local Plan which has a strong planning framework which embodies the principles of sustainability affordability and integration.

Objective 2: To facilitate the development of a range of affordable housing, that meets identified housing

There are households within the Borough whose housing need cannot be met by the market; i.e. they are unable to afford to either buy or rent from the private market.

We work with Homes England to support bids for grant funding by providers to deliver new affordable homes. This has been both through the main bidding round of their Shared Ownership and Affordable Housing Programme (SOAHP), and subsequent 'Continuing Market Engagement' (CME) or 'thematic' bidding rounds.

We seek early engagement with housing associations to support their development programmes and help ensure that their proposals will most effectively meet local needs. We implement our current affordable housing planning policy, whereby major developments are expected to provide 25% affordable housing on site, and this being apportioned as 15% social rented and 10% shared ownership.

We will

- Adopt a Local Plan; with an affordable housing policy to meet the identified need.
- Continue to work collaboratively with partner organisations; Registered Providers and Homes England to maximise new affordable housing supply and deliver a real, long term increase in the size of the social housing sector.

Objective 3 - To take on the direct role of developing housing, specifically on Council's own land

We have an Assets Management Strategy 2019-2022. This has identified landholdings in the ownership of the Council, which have been approved for disposal. Certain sites will be disposed of by way of a sale and the local authority will take a land receipts, other sites, we will have greater involvement in.

We will:

- Continue to implement the Asset Management Strategy
- Seek to work jointly with registered providers to deliver housing on Council land via a commercial arrangement.

Objective 4: To contribute to the economic regeneration of the high street by incorporating mixed use developments within the town centres.

We have Town Deal proposals for both Newcastle-under-Lyme and Kidsgrove. The Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Investment Plan states that" the area contains a significant amount of housing stock which is no longer fit-for-purpose, including at key town centre sites, while several areas are subject to significant market failure as signified through their inclusion in the Housing Market Renewal Initiative. Moreover, the ageing population in Newcastle-

under-Lyme – with the number of residents aged 65+ expected to increase by 14.7% over the next decade– suggests future demand for older person’s accommodation will increase over time. As such, there is scope for the regeneration and redevelopment of assets and residential areas to improve the breadth and quality of the residential offer and overall quality of life within Newcastle-under-Lyme.”

We will

- Use the Town Deal and Future High Street Funding to work alongside private investment to unlock key sites both at the gateways to the town centre and in the town centre core.
- Encourage the development of residential units in sustainable locations within the Town Centres, which will provide doorstep access to retail, leisure and services, supporting the healthy economy of the town and adding to its footfall.

Priority 3 – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Objective 1 – To provide early intervention and partnership working to prevent homelessness.

We recognise that we need to be much more ambitious about providing early help and intervention to prevent people becoming homeless, but also provide better support after the immediate crisis of homelessness has been resolved, to ensure that people can sustain their housing and avoid repeat homelessness.

We will;

- Ensure that a range of homelessness prevention tools are developed and refined for use by the Newcastle Housing Advice (NHA) service.
- Establish appropriate Data Sharing Protocols, in order to allow for greater communication about cases to assist individuals and the wider community.
- Contribute to the work of the Borough’s Vulnerability (Harm Reduction) Hub and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).
- Seek continual improvements to services for our customers, including development of digital accessibility.
- Explore how the private rented sector can contribute to meeting housing need.

Objective 2 - To support those who are faced with homelessness issues; specifically those rough sleeping.

We jointly commission our Rough Sleeper’s Outreach service with Stoke-on-Trent City Council, to help rough sleepers move off the streets with a view of securing accommodation and access to other services.

We have Rough Sleeper Coordinator to ensure rough sleeping issues are understood more widely and to work with all areas to collectively deliver a joined up approach on the aspirations to reduce rough sleeping. Additionally we have a Rough Sleeper Navigator to engage directly with and case manage, those rough sleeping and with complex needs to ensure that they are supported into treatment services and pathways to accommodation.

We work with a number of support services who provide their own outreach service within the Borough and also hold drop in sessions and participate in multi-agency meeting to develop targeted actions and solutions for individual rough sleepers.

We will:

- Actively seek funding opportunities to maintain the Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator and Navigator roles.
- Continue to monitor and identify our local needs, and be able to feed these into future strategic plans.
- Work closely with MHCLG colleagues to develop more innovative solutions and housing options for our residents with complex needs.
- Seek external funding opportunities to assist in the development of additional tools to assist with rough sleeping and to encourage engagement with specialist support services.
- Work with other commissioners to influence the development of joined up services for customers who are homeless and who have complex needs e.g. specialist healthcare worker.
- Provide appropriate housing pathways off the streets for those who are sleeping rough in our Borough.
- Deliver the objectives highlighted in the Homelessness Strategy action plan.

Objective 3 - To operate a housing allocation system; both registration and allocation which will allow those in housing need to be able to access appropriate social housing.

In collaboration with Aspire Housing, we have created a Joint Housing Register and implemented an on line system for the allocation of social housing, which is via a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system, allowing those on the housing register to bid for properties.

The Council has a range of Nominations agreements with a number of Registered Providers with social housing stock in the Borough, in order to ensure that available social housing is used in the most effective manner to meet housing needs and to ensure that homeless households are accessing the most appropriate housing stock available.

We will:

- Continue to work with our Registered Provider partners to ensure that the Joint Housing Allocation Policy and Housing Register are working well to ensure households with a housing need gain appropriate access to available social housing stock.
- Contribute to the work of the North Staffordshire Lettings Forum to encourage good practice and opportunities for joint working with Registered Providers in the Borough.
- Continue to work with Registered Providers to encourage an increase in the supply of social housing in the Borough.

Objective 4 - To minimise the use of temporary accommodation as a long-term objective, and to create more emergency and temporary accommodation options (which are cost effective with the appropriate support)

We have created a Temporary Accommodation Policy setting out the Borough's approach to the use of temporary accommodation, to ensure that it is suitable, cost-effective and meets local needs. We continue to explore and develop the procurement of temporary accommodation options to provide support for homeless singles and families and individuals presenting with more complex needs, including Rough Sleepers.

We will:

- Continue to monitor the use and the costs of temporary accommodation.
- Implement the objectives of the Temporary Accommodation Policy, to ensure that households have access to suitable emergency and / or temporary accommodation for an appropriate duration.

- Create appropriate temporary accommodation pathways for homeless individuals with complex needs to encourage continued engagement.
- Seek to minimise the use of temporary accommodation by preventing and reducing homelessness where practically possible.

Delivery and Action Plan

The following table collates the objectives identified through the strategy. In order for them to be translated into specific actions they will be incorporated into Service Area Annual Service Plans. This allows for detailed planning including any challenges being faced, financial details, equality assessments and risk assessments, targets, timescales and responsibility. An annual report on activities and outcomes from the Housing Strategy will be published on our website.

Housing Strategy Action Plan 2021-2025

Priority	Objectives	Actions
Housing, Health and Wellbeing and Partnerships	To integrate the housing and health and wellbeing agendas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To seek to influence local commissioning and provider's plans to ensure they work together for a common purpose. To continue to lead the work of the Newcastle Partnership to identify opportunities for joint working and responding to local needs. To facilitate the availability and encourage the further development of supported accommodation for our residents who have a range of needs, including physical and/or mental health needs, challenging behaviours and homelessness. To work in partnership to deliver an efficient and responsive grants service for adaptations. To seek external funding opportunities for the ongoing development of additional supported accommodation with local providers, particularly for those customers with complex needs. To encourage local specialist providers to provide supported accommodation that meets the needs of Borough residents, using intelligence we have from the housing advice and housing register functions. To contribute to the delivery of the actions in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy
	To improve housing standards and the energy efficiency of the housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To target the worst performing landlords with the poorest quality housing. To support responsible landlords and work with them to become professional and grow their business. To continue to commit to the Landlord Accreditation Scheme: North Staffordshire. To use our stock modelling and other available intelligence to target properties for a pro-active programme of inspections and use our statutory powers to ensure they comply with legal duties. To use the full range of tools and powers available to us to return empty homes to use. To continue to work with Beat the Cold to support households out of fuel poverty. To continue to work with the Staffordshire Warmer Homes scheme to bid for funding and deliver energy efficient projects focusing on external Wall Insulation, Loft insulation, air source heat pumps and Solar PV.

Housing and Economic Recovery	To develop a housing market that is vibrant and economically prosperous, which will meet the needs of our residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that housing needs are properly assessed and quantified by updating the local evidence base, including the Housing Needs Assessment and the Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). To develop and enhance policies to further improve housing standards in the borough, including design, accessibility, security and environmental performance, taking account of developing national guidelines and published evidence. To adopt a new a Local Plan which has a strong planning framework which embodies the principles of sustainability affordability and integration.
	To facilitate the development of a range of affordable housing, that meets identified housing needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To adopt a Local Plan; with an affordable housing policy to meet the identified need. To continue to work collaboratively with partner organisations; Registered Providers and Homes England to maximise new affordable housing supply and deliver a real, long term increase in the size of the social housing sector.
	To take on the direct role of developing housing, specifically on Council's own land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to implement the Asset Management Strategy To seek to work jointly with Aspire Housing to deliver housing on Council land via a commercial arrangement
	To contribute to the economic regeneration of the high street by incorporating mixed use developments within the town centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To use the Town Deal and Future High Street Funding to work alongside private investment to unlock key sites both at the gateways to the town centre and in the town centre core. To encourage the development of residential units in sustainable locations within the Town Centres, which will provide doorstep access to retail, leisure and services, supporting the healthy economy of the town and adding to its
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping	To provide early intervention and partnership working to prevent homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that a range of homelessness prevention tools are developed for use by the Newcastle Housing Advice (NHA) service. To establish appropriate Data Sharing Protocols, in order to allow for greater communication about cases to assist individuals and the wider community. Contribute to the work of the Borough's Vulnerability (Harm Reduction) Hub and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). To seek continual improvements to services for our customers, including development of digital accessibility. To explore how the private rented sector can contribute to meeting housing need.
	To support those who are faced with homelessness issues;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To actively seek funding opportunities to maintain the Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator and Navigator roles. To continue to monitor and identify our local needs, and be able to feed these into future strategic plans. To work closely with MHCLG colleagues to develop more innovative solutions and housing options for our residents with complex needs.

	specifically those rough sleeping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work with other commissioners to influence the development of joined up services for customers who are homeless and who have complex needs. • To provide appropriate housing pathways off the streets for those who are sleeping rough in our Borough. • Deliver the objectives highlighted in the Homelessness Strategy action plan.
	To operate a housing allocation system; both registration and allocation which will allow those in housing need to be able to access appropriate social housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to work with our registered provider partners to ensure that the Joint Housing Allocation Policy and Housing Register are working well to ensure households with a housing need gain appropriate access to available social housing stock. • Contribute to the work of the North Staffordshire Lettings Forum to encourage good practice and opportunities for joint working with Registered Providers in the Borough. • To continue to work with registered providers to increase the supply of social housing in the Borough.
	To create more emergency and temporary accommodation options, which are cost effective with the appropriate support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to monitor the use and the costs of temporary accommodation. • To implement the objectives of the Temporary Accommodation Policy, to ensure that household have access to suitable emergency and / or temporary accommodation for an appropriate duration. • To create appropriate temporary accommodation pathways for homeless individuals with complex needs to encourage continued engagement • Seek to minimise the use of temporary accommodation by preventing and reducing homelessness where possible. • To identify opportunities that bridge the gap between temporary accommodation and longer-term housing opportunities