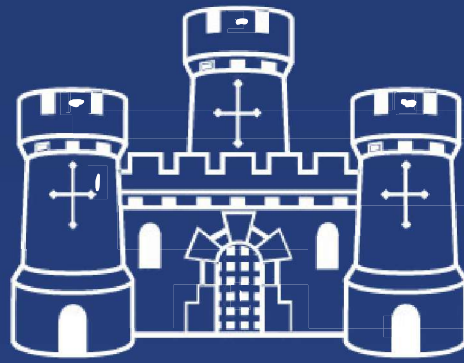




NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL



HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

2026 - 2030

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Foreword

A safe, secure and suitable home is fundamental to a good quality of life. It provides stability for families, supports better health and educational outcomes, enables people to live independently and helps create strong, settled communities.

This Housing and Homelessness Strategy puts the needs of Newcastle-under-Lyme residents first. It sets out a practical approach to improving housing standards, increasing the availability of affordable and accessible homes, preventing homelessness at the earliest possible stage and ensuring that support is available for those who genuinely need it.

We want housing development to meet the needs of local people and strengthen, rather than undermine, the communities in which it takes place. That means protecting the supply of family homes and giving the Council greater local control over the future growth of Houses in Multiple Occupation.

We will also take a firm approach to supported housing. Vulnerable residents, including people facing homelessness, survivors of domestic abuse and those with complex needs, deserve safe accommodation and genuine, effective support. Providers receiving public money must deliver proper standards, positive outcomes for residents and demonstrable value for taxpayers. Poor-quality provision that fails residents or exploits the benefits system must not be tolerated.

Our approach is both compassionate and responsible. We will support those in genuine need, intervene early to prevent homelessness, enforce proper housing standards and ensure that taxpayers' money is spent wisely. By working with residents, registered housing providers, landlords, developers, health and care services and the voluntary sector, we will deliver a housing system that protects vulnerable people, supports aspiration and strengthens communities across our Borough.



Councillor Vanessa Renshaw
Cabinet Member for Housing &
Public Protection

Housing is fundamental to the wellbeing of people, their families and their wider communities. Improving housing standards, options, conditions and neighborhoods 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.

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2026-2030 supports the Council's aims and objectives for the Borough and sets out our strategic housing priorities. The policy details a range of actions we intend 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 residents within the Borough and the United Kingdom is the continuity of economic instability and the cost-of-living crisis post Covid-19 resulting in a reduction of available public funding.

Despite the tough economic conditions, the Council has been working with a wide range of local partners including Registered Housing Providers, developers, private landlords and other organisations, to identify residents' housing needs, maximize the number of affordable homes built across the Borough, and improve the quality and choice of homes for all residents. This partnership approach is key to the future delivery and development of affordable and market housing and will help improve the Borough's housing offer.

Our 3 key priorities are thematic, cross cutting and we acknowledge the correlation between different policy areas and how one will interplay with another. These are:

- Housing and Health
- Housing and Prosperity
- Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

For each priority, we have set out their associated objectives, helping us to visualise what we intend to achieve.

Linkages with Strategy

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



Profile of the Borough

Demographics and Population



- 58,500 households provide for a population of approximately 127,700 (2025 Experian)
- Between the last two censuses 2011 and 2021, the average (median) age of Newcastle-under-Lyme increased by two years, from 41 to 43 years of age.
- The number of people aged 65 to 74 years rose by just under 2,100 (an increase of 17.4%), while the number of residents between 35 and 49 years fell by around 4,100 (16.1% decrease).

Housing



The 2021 Census showed that 38 per cent of households were owned outright – a higher proportion than any other housing tenure. 30 per cent of households owned property with a mortgage, 17 per cent were social renters and 15 per cent were private renters or occupied rent free.

The Government standard method for determining the minimum number of homes needed in an area suggests that at least 347 dwellings per annum are needed in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

The most common housing type in the Borough is that of a semi-detached house. 45 per cent of households live in such a property, with the next most-common types being a detached house with 26 per cent of properties and terraced with 19 per cent. 9 per cent of households live in a purpose-built block of flats or tenement.

The average house price in Newcastle-under-Lyme was £211,000 in August 2024 (provisional), up 8.0% from August 2023. This was higher than the rise in the West Midlands (2.6%) over the same period.

Private rents rose to an average of £724 in September 2024, an annual increase of 7.4% from £674 in September 2023. This was lower than the rise in the West Midlands (8.8%) over the year. The average price paid by first-time buyers was £185,000 in August 2024 (provisional). This was 8.6% higher than the average of £171,000 in August 2023 (revised).

For homes bought with a mortgage, the average house price was £218,000 in August 2024 (provisional). This was 8.2% higher than the average of £201,000 in August 2023 (revised).

Socio-Economic Context

There are 80 Lower-layer Super Output Areas in the Borough, each containing an average (mean) of 1,540 residents. Ten of these LSOAs are in the 20 per cent most deprived in England and Wales, according to the 2025 Indices of Multiple Deprivation. Two LSOAs, one predominantly in Cross Heath ward and one predominantly in Knutton are in the 10 per cent most deprived.

In the 2021 Census, 80.1 per cent of residents described their health as being either very good or good. 13.9 per cent said it was fair, with the remaining 5.9 per cent saying it was either bad or very bad. In the recent census, 20.1 per cent of people said that they were disabled according to the Equalities Act.

As of December 2024, an estimated 2.9 per cent of eligible adults aged 16-64 were claiming unemployment benefits. This rate is very slightly higher than for Staffordshire but lower than for Great Britain as a whole. In mid-2022, 81.1 per cent of residents aged 16-64 were economically active, a higher rate than for the West Midlands region and the country. According to the 2021 census the Borough's residents who were employed at the time of the 2021 census, 61 per cent worked for an average of between 31 and 48 hours per week. The 2024 Office for National Statistics (ONS) Business Register and Employment Survey found that, in 2024, 68.1 per cent of Borough residents' jobs were full-time, with 31.9 per cent part-time. The proportion of full-time jobs is higher in the West Midlands (69 per cent) and Great Britain (69.2 per cent).

Social Housing Register

In September 2025, there were 1,724 households on the Council's housing register.

- 51% were in need of a one bedroom property
- 26% were in need two bed property
- 18% were in need of a three bed property
- 5% were in need of a four bed property

ONS median house price to median gross annual workplace-based earnings ratio was 5.45
ONS lower quartile house price to lower quartile gross annual workplace-based earnings ratio was 6.15

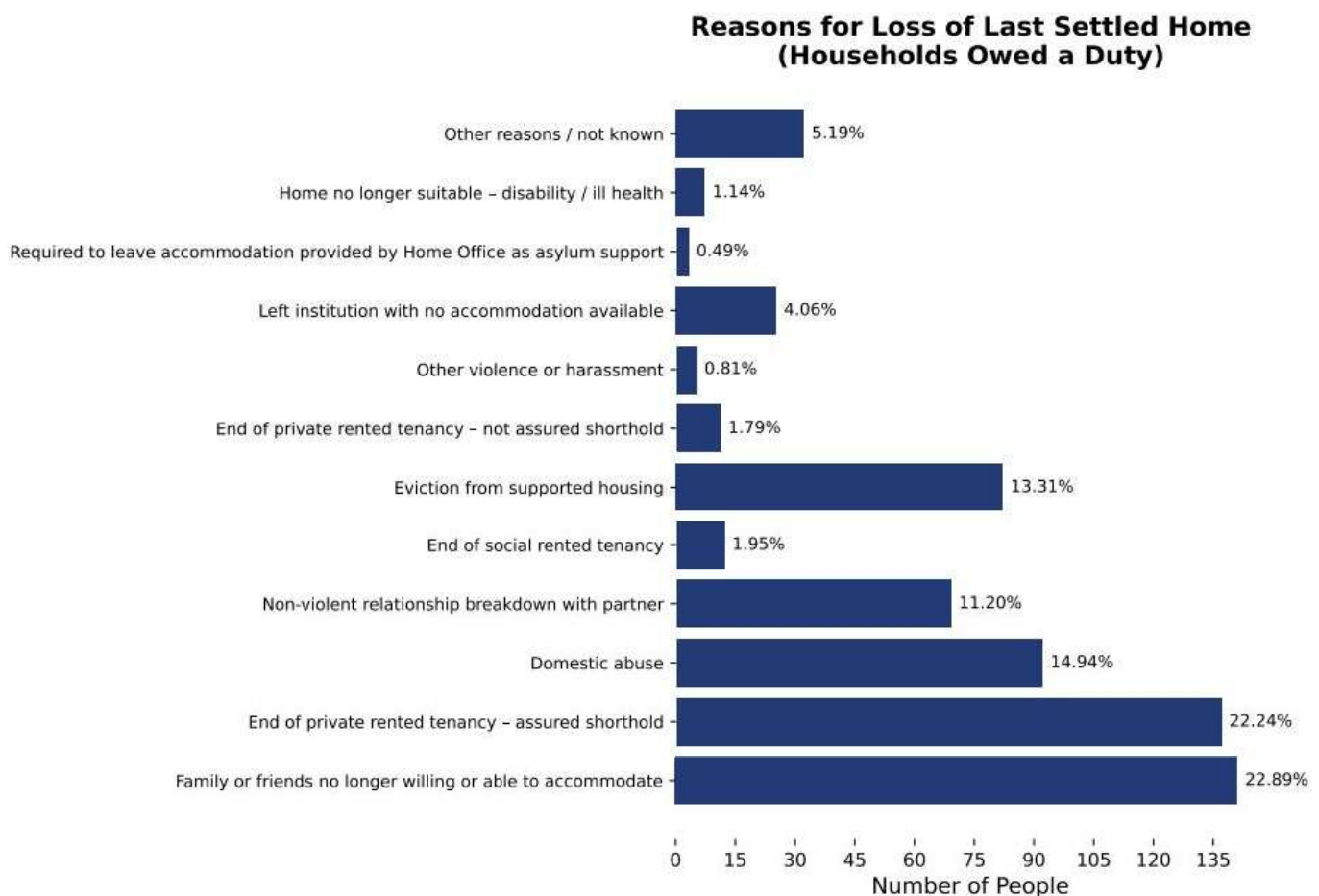
Statutory Homelessness

There are legal duties on local authorities in England to take 'reasonable steps' to help eligible applicants:

- avoid homelessness if they are threatened with homelessness. This is commonly referred to as the 'prevention' duty.
- secure suitable accommodation if they are homeless. This is commonly referred to as the 'relief' duty.

In 2022/2023, 491 households were assessed under statutory homelessness, of which 487 were deemed as owed a duty. In 2023/2024, 632 households were assessed and 616 owed a duty. This represents a 27.2 % increase.

Of the 616 households assessed as owed a duty; 196 were owed a prevention duty (31.8 %) and 420 households (68.2%) were owed a relief duty.



Priority: Housing and Health

Key objectives:

- *To foster strategic joined up thinking and policy setting on health and housing*
- *To continuously improve housing standards and energy efficiency in the housing stock*

Housing is a key determinant of health. The quality and suitability of the living environment is crucial in preventing the onset of ill-health, supporting recovery, and slowing the deterioration of certain conditions.

Despite this, nearly eight million people live in a home that does not pass the government's definition of basic decency: 15% of homes (Centre for Ageing Better, 2023; DLUHC, 2023).

Unsafe homes and their associated health conditions translate into an avoidable burden on public services, with an estimated cost to the NHS of £1.1 billion per year (BRE, 2023), £1.1 billion in formal/paid social care costs, and a further £3.5 billion in unpaid care costs (Brimblecombe et al, 2024)

In recognition of the importance of this, the Council commits to several strategic objectives.

Strategic Partnership and Collaborative Working

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 a range of organisations such as:

- Social care, health (including mental health and drug and alcohol services)
- Advice agencies
- Money advice
- Voluntary and community sector groups
- Police and other emergency services
- Domestic abuse services
- Registered Providers

As the local authority operates in a two-tier local authority structure, responsibilities are shared with the County Council. There has been longstanding acknowledgment and recognition that a collaborative approach between the County and the local authority is essential to progress the housing and health agenda. The County Council has adopted Staffordshire Housing with Care Strategy 2024-2029, with an action plan centered on collaboration, specifically with Disabled Facilities Grants and Supported Housing. We will seek to engage and contribute to this partnership approach with Staffordshire County Council.

Supported Exempt Accommodation

Supported Exempt Accommodation (SEA) is housing where vulnerable adults are supported to live independently. It normally provides accommodation for: people who are homeless, people recently released from prison, survivors of domestic abuse, people with substance dependencies, people with mental health issues and refugees. This form of housing was considered to be somewhat unregulated and The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act was enacted in 2023 to introduce national supported housing standards. These will provide minimum standards for both the property and the care or support provided in supported accommodation.

Consultation on the implementation of the Act has proposed a licensing scheme for the Supported Housing and reformation to the Housing Benefits System. Under the Act, the Council will need to outline local need and supply of accommodation, carry out a review of the supported exempt accommodation in the district, and in the light of that review, publish a supported housing strategy, for the provision of supported exempt accommodation within the Borough. The Council acknowledges that rising Housing Benefit expenditure now reflects growing pressure on the housing system. These costs principally arise from Supported Housing and Temporary Accommodation provision. The Council intends to focus and reform these areas so that achieves appropriate provision and value for money, working alongside partners such as Aspire Housing.

The Council has established an internal working group, led by senior leadership, to focus on supported housing. Its purpose is to develop a sector that provides genuine support, delivers positive outcomes for residents, meets identified local needs, and offers value for public money.

Housing Conditions

According to English Housing Survey: local authority housing stock condition modelling, 2020, there are approx. 7,000 properties that are non-decent and approx. 5,000 dwellings with a Category 1 hazard in our Borough. We assess housing conditions under the Housing and Health Rating System. The key principle of the system is to consider the health and safety of the people living in these properties in relation to 29 hazards. These include damp and mould, excess cold, fire, falls, and electrical hazards. In the last 12 months we have inspected 84 properties. We have identified 98 Category 1 hazards and Category 2 hazards, which were subsequently rectified.

The Government has committed to reforming the Private Rented Sector, making it fair, secure and fit for purpose. The Council will have a new legislative framework, of raising awareness and enforcing, to ensure that the private rented sector works well within the Borough and provides a stable form of accommodation.

Under the Housing Act 2004 , local authorities must keep the housing conditions in their area under review. Our Council will use various data sets, both of a primary and a secondary nature to keep housing conditions under review.

During 2023 there was a Housing Task Finish Group looking at housing conditions throughout the Borough including social housing. The concluding report of the group recommended a stock condition survey be included into the next Housing Strategy Action Plan.



Houses in Multiple Occupation

In the private rented sector, a property may have three or more people from two or more households and share a facility such as a kitchen or bathroom. These are known as Houses in Multiple Occupation and are often an affordable form of housing and student accommodation but do have an inherent higher risk related to fire safety, poor standards and inadequate amenity provision. Properties that are Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) consisting of five or more persons living in two or more separate households are subject to greater legal requirements and mandatory licensing; set out in the Housing Act 2004 and The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006.

The Council has 200+ mandatory licensed HMOs, most of which serve as student accommodation for Keele University. These are subject to conditions to ensure that HMOs are of the appropriate standard and fit for purpose given the number of households or persons in occupation, address anti-social behaviour, prevent overcrowding and are free from housing defects.

The Council recognises that Houses in Multiple Occupation can meet some housing needs, including accommodation for students, younger residents and single-person households. The Council also recognises the separate importance of specialist and supported accommodation, including women's refuges, where these meet an identified local need and are properly managed.

However, the Council is clear that uncontrolled growth or excessive concentrations of HMOs can have a damaging impact on local areas. This can include the loss of family housing, changes to tenure balance, pressure on parking, waste and local services, reduced residential amenity, and wider impacts on neighbourhood sustainability and community cohesion.

Under current planning legislation, certain changes of use from a dwellinghouse to a small HMO, accommodating between three and six unrelated occupants, can take place under permitted development rights without the need for a planning application. This means such changes can occur without the Council being able to properly assess their cumulative impact on the surrounding area.

The Council therefore intends to introduce a Borough-wide Article 4 Direction to remove these permitted development rights for future changes of use from dwellinghouses to small HMOs. This will ensure that proposals for new HMOs are brought within the planning process, giving the Council greater local control and enabling it to consider relevant factors including housing need, local housing supply, community balance, residential amenity, parking, waste management and the wider impact on neighbourhoods.

This approach is not intended to impose a blanket ban on HMOs. Rather, it is intended to ensure that future HMO development is properly managed, evidence-led and consistent with maintaining balanced and sustainable communities. Any Article 4 Direction would apply prospectively and would not affect existing lawful HMOs. Its purpose is to guide future development and ensure decisions are made with proper regard to both housing need and the long-term interests of local communities.

Housing Strategy Disabled Facilities Grants

A suitable home can help disabled people of all ages build and sustain their independence and maintain connections in their community. Many homes are however poorly designed for older age or changes in care and support needs. Adaptations can therefore be vital in supporting older and disabled individuals, along with their caregivers, to live independently, confidently and safely in their own homes. They can minimise the impact of a disabling environment, promote independence and personal resilience, improve overall well-being and reduce the amount of formal care and support a person may need.



Disabled Facilities Grant funding is paid to local authorities through the Better Care Fund in recognition of the importance of ensuring adaptations are part of an integrated approach to housing, health and social care locally. The Disabled Facilities Grant service returned to being an in-house service in April 2023. Since then we have been working to enhance the service, reduce enquiry to completion times and develop relationships with local contractors. In that time we have facilitated over 300 adaptations an investment of nearly £3 million. Delivering stairlifts, ramps, through floor lifts, ground floor living and level access showers to enable independence, dignity and safety at home.

Registered Providers such as Aspire Housing are key partners working with tenants with disabilities and we seek to work collaboratively to find suitable accommodation where it is an alternative option to adapting homes. There are 172 households on the housing register who are waiting for an adapted property, of which 18 are waiting for a wheelchair accessible home. Registered providers also make a contribution to funding adaptations, delivering minor adaptations to their tenants and contributing to major adaptations. Through the life of this strategy we will also be looking at ways to work with Registered Providers to adapt properties prior to re-letting to reduce the disruption of major works and to consider options for a decant property to support major works.

Priority: Housing and Prosperity

Key objectives:

- *To develop a housing market that is vibrant and economically prosperous, which will meet the needs of our residents*
- *To facilitate the development of a range of affordable housing, that meets identified housing*

An increase in the housing supply i.e. building more homes, will increase prosperity through growth.

Housing makes up significant proportions of households' spending and investment, as it typically absorbs 20-25% of household incomes. It is the largest asset held by households and the largest component of household debt.

Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are strongly encouraged by the Government to prepare a 'Local Plan'. This sets out planning policies for their area, including an assessment of how much new housing will be needed to accommodate growth.

Our Council has an Emerging Local Plan for the period 2020-2040 which has been submitted to the Secretary of State. An examination hearing took place between 19 May and 26 June 2025. The council is now awaiting a report from the Inspector.

This emerging Local Plan sets out the vision and objectives for the Borough up to 2040. It proposes the amount of housing and employment growth needed in the Borough alongside allocations to meet the development requirements.



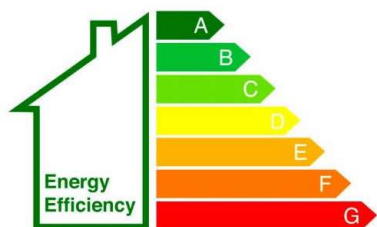
A key objective of the Plan related to Housing is to *“provide a mix of housing types which are attractive to people who want to live and work in the Borough and to provide aspirational housing, which is well designed, safe, secure, and adaptable.”*

It also includes a number of planning policies to help with decision taking, including on matters including affordable housing and housing standards.

The emerging policy aims to deliver affordable housing as a proportion of residential development from market housing developments to address local needs. It sets a framework for seeking and negotiating affordable housing.

"Energy Efficiency, Affordable Warmth and Housing Quality"

In 2022, the residential sector accounted for 17 per cent of all UK carbon emissions. National Energy Action has also estimated that in July 2024, 5.6 million UK households were in fuel poverty. The government has a target that all fuel-poor homes should be at least band C by 2028 and an aspiration for as many as possible homes across the country to be at least band C by 2035.



There are a wide range of different schemes to help improve the energy efficiency of homes. Most of these are targeted at lower income households living in less energy efficient properties. Some schemes are taxpayer funded, others are delivered by energy suppliers and funded through a levy on energy bills; e.g. The Energy Company Obligation (ECO), ECO+/Great British Insulation Scheme and Green Homes Grant: Local Authority Delivery.

The Council has actively participated within these schemes, in collaboration with neighbouring local authorities and the County Council, under the Staffordshire Warmer Homes.

The Warm Homes: Local Grant is a new grant which will start in 2025 and will provide energy performance upgrades and low carbon heating to low-income households via local authorities. It has been allocated £500 million over three years as part of the Autumn Budget 2024 settlement. The Council also works in partnership with a local charity Beat the Cold. This is a telephone advice services providing energy efficiency and mitigation of fuel poverty aimed at the most vulnerable residents within the Borough.

With energy prices expected to remain significantly above pre-pandemic levels until at least 2029, fuel poverty will continue to be a key concern for the Council. The Council will therefore maintain an active role in delivering and supporting energy efficiency and cost-reduction initiatives aimed at lowering household energy bills.

The Council's position is that decarbonisation will not be pursued as the sole or primary objective of energy efficiency interventions. Instead, schemes involving low-carbon technologies will be assessed primarily based on the benefits they deliver to residents, including affordability, practicality, and value for public money. Where these criteria are met, and where there is a clear benefit to residents, the Council will actively consider participation in and engagement with such schemes. Decarbonisation may be an additional outcome of these interventions, but it is not, in itself, the principal determining factor in decision-making.

Through participation in relevant schemes and partnerships, the Council will seek to improve the energy performance and overall quality of housing stock, while providing targeted support to residents most affected by rising costs. This approach will help mitigate the impacts of ongoing cost of living pressures and contribute to improved health, wellbeing, and housing sustainability across the Borough.

The emerging policies will also aim to ensure that new housing development is delivered at appropriate densities, makes efficient use of land, and provides for a mix of homes (according to size, type and tenure) that meets local needs over the plan period, meeting the needs of older people and those who require specialist housing.

This emerging policy seeks to prescribe housing standards in new developments to ensure that the internal space of housing is delivered to the Nationally Described Space Standard.

The Optional Building Regulations 2016 (Part M4) set out accessibility standards for dwellings. These are: the Part M4(2) Standard (accessible and adaptable homes) requirement which is met when a new dwelling provides reasonable provision for most people to access the dwelling and includes features that make it suitable for a range of potential occupants, including older people, individuals with reduced mobility and some wheelchair users; and the Part M4(3) Standard (wheelchair user dwelling) requirement which is achieved when a new dwelling provides reasonable provisions for a wheelchair user to live in the dwelling and have the ability to use any outdoor space, parking and communal facilities.



Newcastle Town Deal has received £23.6m to deliver transformational projects in the Newcastle Town Deal area.

The objective of the Fund is to drive the economic regeneration of towns to deliver long term economic and productivity growth through urban regeneration, planning and land use: ensuring towns are thriving places for people to live and work, including by: increasing density in town centres; strengthening local economic assets including local cultural assets; site acquisition, remediation, preparation, regeneration; and making full use of planning tools to bring strategic direction and change.

The Town Deal investment area contains a significant amount of housing stock which is no longer fit-for-purpose, including at key town centre sites, while several areas, such as Cross Heath and Knutton, are subject to significant market failure as signified through their inclusion in the Housing Market Renewal Initiative.



The Town Investment Plan has delivered:

Investment in key gateway sites – The re-occupation of key derelict gateway sites to provide housing will help to transform the Town Deal Investment area. Town Deal Investment will unlock development at the former Zanzibar nightclub site, which will be repurposed toward young professionals accommodation with small industrial units for start-up businesses and ‘move-up’ accommodation for incubator/innovation focused businesses also delivered on site. It will also demolish the Midway multi story carpark to make way for 126 homes for key workers and young professionals, as well as an element of extra care accommodation.

Putting the heart back into Knutton village – a program of investment to enable the development of key strategic housing sites within the Knutton masterplan, bringing forward 282 new houses, 25% of which would be socially rented; improved business accommodation through the replacement and repurposing of 2 wings (8,000sqft) of Knutton Business Centre and investing in modern community facilities to create a stronger village core through a new Village Hall, Village Green and play area.

Cross St Chesterton – Investment to progress the delivery of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)-supported Cross St Chesterton Masterplan, led by Aspire Housing enabling the demolition of 74 houses that are no longer fit for purpose to enable delivery of 125 high quality, mixed tenure housing options for the local community.

In the medium to longer term priorities, the Council will focus on opportunities and channel investment more widely to regenerate communities that have lacked investment, in particular other former mining communities that were subject to the Housing Market Renewal Initiative.

Priorities to include:

- Aspire's Estate Regeneration Plan for Chesterton (further phases);
- Knutton Masterplan (further phases);
- Aspire Housing's wider housing provision strategy; and
- Masterplan development and delivery in other areas of relative disadvantage e.g. Silverdale and Cross Heath



We will 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.

The Housing Needs Assessment (HNA, 2024) identifies an annual need for 278 affordable homes throughout the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme over the plan period to 2040.

The Government has indicated that it wants the delivery of social rented homes to rise and intends to inject more funds into the Social and Affordable Homes Programme (SAHP) as well as promised greater stability in rent policy. These would be elements of 'a long-term housing strategy' which aims to 'deliver the biggest increase in affordable housing in a generation'.



We will implement our Planning Policy requirements of ensuring that major and large developments have an appropriate level of affordable housing

We will work with Homes England to support bids for grant funding by providers to deliver new affordable homes. We will also work with providers to deliver affordable housing that has been secured via Section 106, planning obligations.

We seek early engagement with providers to support their development programmes and help ensure that their proposals will most effectively meet local needs.

Priority: Homelessness & Rough Sleeping

Key objectives:

- *To provide early intervention and partnership working to prevent homelessness*
- *To support those who are faced with homelessness issues, specifically, those rough sleeping*
- *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*

Early intervention and partnership working to prevent homelessness

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA 2017), placed statutory duties, on local authorities to “prevent” and “relieve” homelessness. The UK homelessness charity Crisis has estimated that the upfront costs of preventing homelessness are 14 times lower than the cost of providing support over 12 months once a household experiences homelessness. The Council has adopted an ethos of homelessness prevention into its working practices.

The Council has worked with a range of partners, to foster a shared duty across all public services, from education and health care to social care and employment support for the prevention of homelessness. However, despite our best efforts, homelessness, in all aspects, has increased and there has been a greater use of temporary accommodation as interim housing. The effect of which is that Local Authority spending on homelessness services has increased significantly in real terms.

This increase is not unique to the Borough but is consistent with a national trend. Structural factors such as an increase in the level of private rents, rising evictions and a lack of affordable social housing has been behind this significant increase. The Council will continue to prevent homelessness, developing personalised housing plans for those that are likely to experience homelessness. We have embedded an early homelessness prevention ethos, with resources dedicated to devising creative ways and schemes in preventing homelessness ranging from negotiations and engagement with private landlords, to managing rent arrears. We have developed a pre-eviction process with several housing providers to ensure that if homeless is to take place than it does not present as a crisis but as a managed process.

Temporary Accommodation Policy.

We have created a temporary accommodation policy setting out our 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. The Government has committed to reforming the Private Rented Sector, making it fair, secure and fit for purpose.



Renters' Rights Act

The Renters' Rights Act has been enacted and will significantly transform the private rented sector. By creating a more stable and secure environment for tenants, it is expected to reduce homelessness presentations. The Council will operate within this new legislative framework to enhance awareness, ensure effective enforcement, and support a well-functioning private rented sector across the Borough. This approach will help to provide a more reliable and sustainable form of accommodation for residents.

Supporting those facing homelessness and rough sleeping

Rough sleeping is the most visible and damaging form of homelessness and can have significant physical and mental health impacts. In recent decades, successive governments have tried to reduce or end rough sleeping altogether.

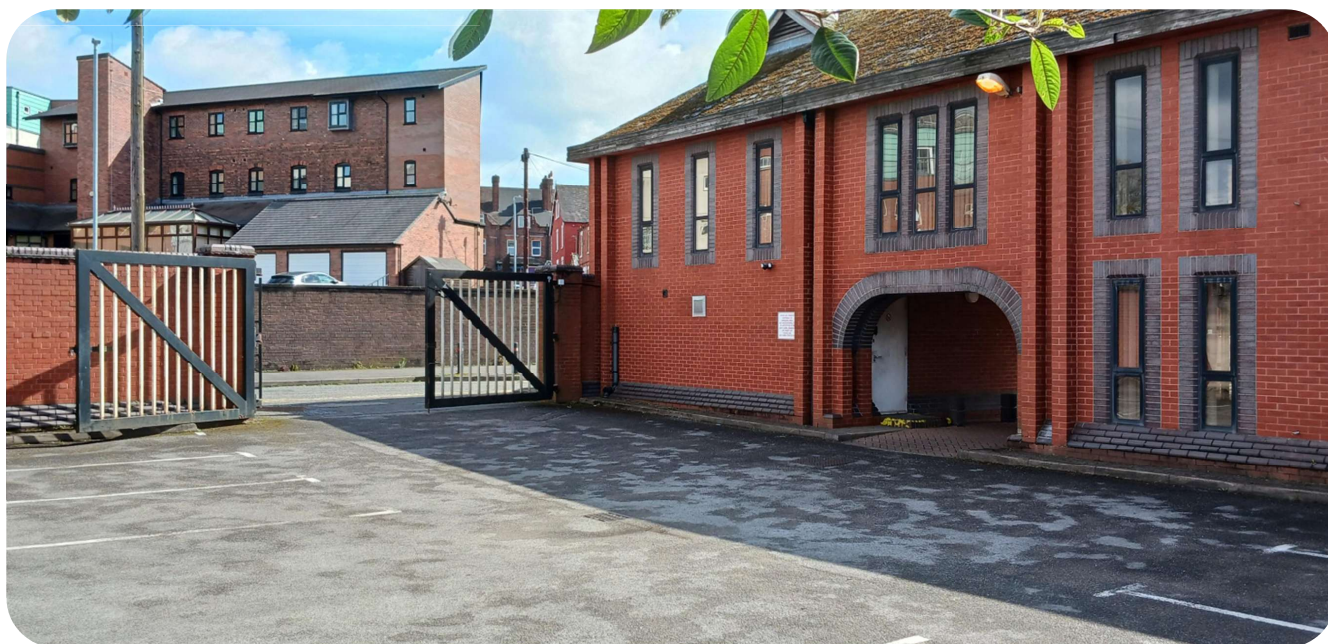
Local Authorities have statutory homelessness duties set out in part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 ('the 1996 act') Those who do and those who are at risk of rough sleeping often have multiple, complex needs, involve co-occurring mental health challenges and alcohol and/or drug misuse. In recognition of this, the Council has embedded a collaborative, partnership approach towards addressing rough sleeping; the establishment of a multi-agency hub to bring together services and to strengthen the prevention and recovery pathway.

The Hub offers; information and advice; signposting to accommodation, services; wellbeing and recovery including specialist health roles and various other partners.

This approach was recognised by LGA Peer Review Assessment describing the multi-agency Vulnerability Hub as "sector leading and a great example of the strong partnership work delivering impressive outcomes" and where "partners all have the same passion to make the difference and with no hierarchy - with everyone's contribution being equally valued."

Severe Weather Emergency Protocols (SWEP) are aimed at preventing harm or death among individuals sleeping rough during severe weather by providing emergency support and accommodation. The Council has adopted SWEPs in collaboration with several partners ranging from local authorities and voluntary organisations.

In the colder months (from November to March) when the temperature is forecast to drop to zero degrees (or below), Brighter Futures Rough Sleepers Team (RST) outreach service in conjunction with the Newcastle Rough Sleeper Team, will identify those rough sleeping who require accommodation.



In line with Government Strategy, the Council has an aspiration to significantly reduce rough sleeping in the Borough. We have embarked on an ambitious approach to achieve this. The Shared Prosperity Fund Board have approved capital and revenue funding to develop a innovative Homeless Hub for Newcastle-under-Lyme; Navigation House, which will serve several functions.

This will support homeless individuals who are some of the most disadvantaged in society and the furthest from accessing mainstream services. It will provide safe, secure emergency accommodation; a unit of 12 beds and 24/7 supported accommodation. It will also provide a conducive environment where an array of agencies; (Department for Works and Pension, Citizens Advice Bureau, rough sleeping services, housing providers, probation, adult social care, homeless healthcare, drug and alcohol services, etc) will be available to support individuals without the need for an appointment.

In addition to this, we will continue to work alongside our partner Aspire Housing who provide an array of initiatives to reduce rough sleeping and support households facing homelessness.

Housing need and accessing appropriate social housing

Affordable housing is key in preventing homelessness and alleviating it. Affordable rented and social rented properties are owned and managed by Registered Providers (RP), which are let below local market rents. The activities of RPs are overseen by the Regulator of Social Housing. Affordable housing can also meet a specific need, such as specialist housing for vulnerable, older or disabled people, known as “supported housing”.

In collaboration with Aspire Housing, who is the largest RP within the Borough, we have created a joint housing register and implemented an online system for the allocation of social housing, a choice-based lettings (CBL) system, allowing those on the housing register to bid for properties.

We have a range of nominations agreements with several registered providers with social housing stock in the Borough, 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 understand that increasing the supply of affordable housing is important in helping us to address homelessness.

The Council recognises that increasing the supply of affordable housing remains essential to meeting local housing demand and reducing homelessness pressures. Alongside supply, ensuring the efficient use and allocation of existing stock is fundamental to achieving the best possible outcomes for residents.

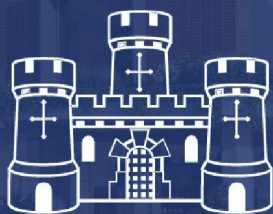




	Actions
Housing and Health	1. To work collaboratively with organisations to improve health through housing, in particularly with Staffordshire County Council
	2. To identify actual projects related to Housing and Health that bring about tangible outcomes i.e. Damp and Mould, Joint Commissioning of Supported Accommodation
	3. To improve Housing Conditions through the utilisation of the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme, which will be both reactive, responding to complaints, and proactive, instigating inspections where appropriate
	4. To stay informed on the requirements of the Renters Rights Act and ensure readiness for its implementation.
	5. To reform the Supported Housing Accommodation Sector, in line with directives of Government, which is to ensure appropriate service provision and value for monies
	6. To work in collaboration with Staffordshire County Council to deliver the Warm Homes Local Grants
	7. To work with Beat the Cold and other organisation to provide an energy advice service that mitigates fuel poverty
	8. To provide efficient, timely adaptations, without compromising on quality to ensure we provide the best service for our applicants
	9. To identify Contractors from the local area who are able to provide adaptations to a high standard supporting the council's local plan and local economy
	10. To enhance the partnership working relationships with registered housing providers and private landlords to embed the introduction of Landlord Applications for Disabled Facilities Grants
	11. To submit a business case for capital funding to complete a borough-wide stock condition survey



	Actions
<i>Housing and Prosperity</i>	1. To embed and implement the Housing Policies in the Local Plan, once it has been adopted, which will bring about open market housing and affordable housing via planning gain 2. To deliver the projects that have been set out within the Town Deals scheme 3. To develop specific projects that would achieve the medium to long term vision of regeneration of communities that have lacked investment, in particular other former mining communities that were subject to the Housing Market Renewal Initiative 4. To work with Registered Providers, with a view of facilitating affordable and accessible housing via grant funding
<i>Homelessness and Rough Sleeping</i>	1. To work with Homes England to bring about Affordable Housing within the Borough 2. To create a step-down housing pathway from Navigation House 3. To work collaboratively with our partners to focus on preventing rough sleeping and homelessness 4. To continue our partnership working to coordinate efforts and resources



NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL



HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

2026-2030