

County Durham Housing Strategy

Delivery Plan 2024 – 2025

INTRODUCTION

PRIORITY 1: INCREASE THE DELIVERY OF NEW HOMES, INCLUDING SECURE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO MEET HOUSING NEEDS TOGETHER WITH THE INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRED.

| Ambitions | No. | Actions | Timescale | Lead Partner | Links to other Priorities |
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| Deliver the Council House New Build Programme | 1.1.1 | Conclude the procurement process with the appointment of a main contractor to build council homes. | April 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Delivery Team | TBC |
| | 1.1.2 | Obtain planning permission for Greenwood Avenue and Portland Avenue sites and start on site | October 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Development Team and Delivery Partner | |
| | 1.1.3 | Confirm detailed pipeline for development of phase 1 and phase 2 sites. | June 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Delivery Team | |
| Deliver the Registered Providers affordable homes pipeline | 1.2.1 | Delivery on Seaham Garden Village and Roseberry Comprehensive School | Registered Providers | Registered Providers | |
| Identify additional resources from planning fee income | 1.3.1 | Identify additional resources, including staff, to support the development management function | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Planning Development Team | |

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| Council and partners to work together to feed into the North East Housing Partnership. | 1.4.1 | | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Development Team and Delivery Partner- North East Housing Partnership | |
| Deliver the vision of the County Durham Plan | 1.5.1 | Delivery of market and affordable housing and housing infrastructure in line with County Durham Plan (CDP) policy | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 1.5.2 | Determine timeline for delivery of council owned housing allocations | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team / DCC Corporate Property and Land | |
| Identify sufficient, suitable housing land to support economic growth and provide quality housing for the residents of the county | 1.6.1 | Identification and management of brownfield sites programme. Including bids into NEMCA Brownfield Housing Fund | December 2025 | Durham County Council, Registered Housing Providers and Homes England | |
| Develop a housing delivery pipeline | 1.7.1 | Develop a single housing delivery pipeline to include council and Registered Provider delivery priorities. | July 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Delivery Team / Registered providers | |
| Deliver homes to meet housing needs in rural areas | 1.8.1 | Delivering homes to meet housing needs in rural areas, through the Council House New Build Programme and in partnership with the Rural Working Group | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Delivery Team | |

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| Work with Durham University and developers to deliver allocations in the County Durham Plan | 1.9.1 | Work to bring forward the six allocations in the County Durham Plan identified for Purpose Built Student Accommodation | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Delivery Team- Durham University | |
| Deliver community led housing | 1.10.1 | Delivering community led housing schemes in line with the Towns and Villages Programme Investment Plan | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Delivery Team | |
| Work with NEMCA regarding empty homes | 1.11.1 | Once NEMCA devolved powers established investigate local/regional approach towards empty homes action and enforcement powers (EDMOs) | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Delivery Team- NEMCA | |

PRIORITY 2: ENSURE THAT EVERYONE HAS ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE, SAFE AND SECURE HOUSING THAT SUPPORT HEALTH AND WELLBEING.

| Ambitions | No. | Actions | Timescale | Lead Partner | Links to other Priorities |
|--|-------|--|----------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Review the current allocations and lettings policy | 2.1.1 | Review existing Partnership agreement | March 2025 | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |
| | 2.1.2 | Review four areas of the policy in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the housing register • Homelessness prevention • Medical assessment • Applicants with no housing need | March 2025 | DCC – Housing Delivery Team | |
| Deliver the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) | 2.2.2 | Work with all non-commissioned supported housing providers to ensure they are meeting minimum property and support standards | March 2025 | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |
| | 2.2.3 | Develop a charter for non-commissioned supported housing providers. | September 2025 | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |
| | 2.2.4 | Develop a Quality Assessment Framework for non-commissioned supported housing providers. | September 2024 | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |
| Prepare a temporary accommodation placement strategy | 2.3.1 | Prepare temporary accommodation strategy to highlight how Durham place TA clients within own stock | April 2024 | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |

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| Prepare temporary accommodation placement strategy | 2.4.1 | Prepare temporary accommodation strategy to highlight where Durham place TA clients within own stock | | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |
| Work with health colleagues to understand needs | 2.5.1 | Warm and Healthy Homes campaign offering free boiler repair and service to individuals with health conditions that are exacerbated by the cold | | DCC –Housing Delivery Team- Public Health | |
| Deliver the Housing Poverty Group Actions | 2.6.1 | Identify the affordability gaps and barriers in accessing housing in the social and private rented sector and work across services to implement solutions where possible. | March 2025 | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |
| | 2.6.2 | Respond to the Discretionary Housing Payment Policy review, working with Revenues and Benefits. | March 2025 | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |
| | 2.6.3 | Initiate a housing and employment pilot to assist those cohorts struggling to access affordable housing whilst entering employment. | March 2025 | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |

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| Adopt Housing Needs SPD and IPS First Homes | 2.7.1 | Undertake consultation on second stage of Housing Needs SPD and IPS for First Homes. Consider representations and update document accordingly. Progress document to adoption (via delegated powers, cabinet tbc) | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Development Team | |
| Work with the University to develop student hub that highlights council services | 2.8.1 | Information Advice and Guidance stands at freshers weeks. | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing – Durham University | |
| | 2.8.2 | Promote council services through communications systems in family hubs/GPs regarding housing information | | DCC- Housing Delivery Team | |

PRIORITY 3: ENSURE HIGH QUALITY, ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES AND EFFECTIVE LANDLORD SERVICES.

| Ambitions | No. | Actions | Timescale | Lead Partner | Links to other Priorities |
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| Explore need for additional licensing in Durham City | 3.1.1 | Consult with Durham University, Durham Student Union, Durham City Council to gain understanding of issues and extent of any problems. | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 3.1.2 | Consider commissioning external consultants as per last assessment of additional licensing need (BRE used in 2012) | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| Prevent fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions in domestic households. | 3.2.1 | Complete the Home Upgrade Grant scheme to retrofit private properties that are off the gas grid. | Spring 2025 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 3.3.1 | Assist residents regarding eligibility checks for central heating grants through ECO4 including; Verifying household eligibility for ECO Flex route including low income and medical criteria on behalf of OFGEM. | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |

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| | 3.4.1 | Co-ordinated programme of Energy efficiency advice across the Combined Authority and specifically in County Durham | April 2024 onwards | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| Prepare guidance on keeping homes free from damp and mould | 3.5.1 | Issue new guidance for landlords and tenants in line with the new expectations from government on damp and mould action, in line with the new ombudsman code of guidance. | July 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| Registered Providers to ensure compliance with the Safety and Quality Standard (Consumer standards 1 April 2024) | 3.6.1 | Registered providers will have an accurate, up to date evidenced understanding of their stock quality that reliably informs their provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for tenants. | | Registered Providers | |
| | 3.6.2 | Registered providers must ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in section five of the Government's Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard unless exempted by the regulator. | | Registered Providers | |
| | 3.6.3 | When acting as landlords, registered providers must take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of tenants in their homes and associated communal areas. | | Registered Providers | |

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| | 3.6.4 | Registered providers must provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which they are responsible | | Registered Providers | |
| | 3.6.5 | Registered providers must assist tenants seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services | | Registered Providers | |
| Property inspections | 3.7.1 | Undertake a programme of formal inspections of empty homes that will target the worst properties contributing to community blight. | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 3.7.2 | Implement an inspection regime that targets occupied properties with lower EPCs as strong correlation to poor standards (RSL and private) | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 3.7.3 | Continue reactive and proactive inspections of privately rented properties in both SL and non-SL areas | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 3.7.4 | Carry out inspections of all properties belonging to landlords signed up to the voluntary accreditation scheme – The Durham Rental Standard | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |

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| Respond to the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 consultation | 3.8.1 | Prepare a response to the Government Consultation on the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 | March 2025 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| Prepare guidance on preparing for Ofsted inspections relating to supported housing particularly for children and young people | 3.9.1 | | | | |

PRIORITY 4: ENSURE A COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS FOR OLDER AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE, DISABLED PEOPLE AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, INCLUDING SPECIALIST ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT.

| Ambitions | No. | Actions | Timescale | Lead Partner | Links to other Priorities |
|---|-------|---|------------|--|---------------------------|
| Work jointly with commissioning to consider housing for specialist groups including older people, children and young people, homeless and people with Learning Disability and Mental Health | 4.1.1 | Undertake a Needs Led Accommodation Review | March 2025 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Public Health | |
| Ensure effective delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants to enable people to stay in their own homes | 4.2.1 | Prepare report on future DFG delivery. | March 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 4.2.2 | Create an improved assessment tool for disabled facility grants. | June 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| Acquire properties to meet housing needs | 4.3.1 | Deliver a programme of acquisitions of properties to meet housing needs, including the needs of specific groups | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 4.3.2 | Acquire the remaining 25 properties for temporary accommodation (from the 40 originally approved). | July 2024 | DCC- Housing Development Team | |

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| | 4.3.3 | Deliver 10 dispersed SHAP properties. | December 2024 | DCC – Housing Development Team | |
| | 4.3.4 | Develop bids for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 additional TA properties • 20 properties for larger families | July 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| Acquisitions including specialist accommodation | 4.4.1 | Work with Registered Providers to develop a strategic approach in relation to the acquisition of accommodation for specialist groups for example older persons accommodation, care leavers, accommodation for victims of domestic abuse, ex-offenders and homeless. | | DCC - Registered Providers | |

PRIORITY 5: ENSURE HIGH QUALITY PLACEMAKING, CREATING SAFE, ACCESSIBLE, PROSPEROUS AND SUSTAINABLE PLACES TO LIVE.

| Ambitions | No. | Actions | Timescale | Lead Partner | Links to other Priorities |
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| Develop and implement a programme of Targeted delivery plans (TDPs) | 5.1.1 | Explore opportunities for further resources for regeneration projects such as TDPs. | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Development Team | |
| Feed into regional infrastructure Plan | 5.2.1 | Create a strategic funding plan to co-commission affordable housing in the region. | | NEMCA – Housing and Land Steering Group – | |
| Adoption of design code SPD | 5.3.1 | Adoption and implementation of the design code SPD | Summer 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 5.3.2 | Prepare Settlement Character Studies for settlements across the County in support of the Design Code SPD | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| Delivery of Horden Masterplan | 5.4.1 | Continuation of acquisition of 3 rd street in line with the Horden Masterplan | | DCC Housing Development Team | |
| | 5.4.2 | Provide support to owners and occupiers of Third Street as part of the delivery of the Horden Masterplan | | DCC Housing Development Team | |

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| | 5.4.3 | Submit Business Case to NEMCA for Brownfield Housing Fund | May 2024 | DCC – Housing and Delivery Team | |
| Create digitally enabled towns and villages to increase technology uptake, encourage innovation, and improve access to digital services | 5.6.1 | | | | |
| Identify pipeline of estate regeneration | 5.7.1 | Identify a pipeline of opportunities for estate regeneration | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Development Team, Registered Providers | |
| Review of Durham County Council Durham University Memorandum of Understanding | 5.8.1 | Undertake a review of the MoU and explore whether more emphasis on housing and accommodation is required | | | |
| Explore ways to improve engagement with communities, including students and tenants in relations to placemaking and how they access services | 5.9.1 | | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team- Consultation Officers Group | |

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| Consider role of housing regeneration supporting Town Centres | 5.10.1 | Explore opportunities for health on the high street/one public estate interventions | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team- Public Health | |
| Establish a collaborative approach between social housing providers to support local place making | 5.11.1 | Establish a new place-making group which will join-up delivery | 2024 | Livin | |
| | 5.11.2 | Pilot home working initiatives | 2024 | | |
| Reduce digital exclusion of those living in social housing and in rural communities | 5.12.1 | Develop a digital and data collaboration model with social housing providers – connect suppliers, share understanding of needs, improve delivery, and deliver social tariffs, social value | | Digital Durham County Council Social Housing Providers | |