



Special Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date Monday 27 January 2020
Time 1.00 pm
Venue Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham

Business

Part A

**Items during which the Press and Public are welcome to attend.
Members of the Public can ask questions with the Chairman's
agreement.**

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Substitute Members
3. Declarations of Interest, if any
4. Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties, if any
5. Engagement with Social Housing Providers operating in County Durham - Overview: (Pages 3 - 24)
 - (i) Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources and the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services.
 - (ii) Presentation by Strategic Manager for Housing, Regeneration and Local Services.
6. Housing and Homeless Strategies and Delivery - Progress: (Pages 25 - 92)
 - (i) Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources and the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services.
 - (ii) Presentation by the Policy Team Leader and Housing Managers, Regeneration and Local Services.

7. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

Helen Lynch
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
17 January 2020

To: **The Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

Councillor M Clarke (Chair)
Councillor R Manchester (Vice-Chair)

Councillors E Adam, J Atkinson, A Batey, R Crute, S Dunn, D Hall, T Henderson, J Higgins, P Howell, S Iveson, L Maddison, J Maitland, R Ormerod, E Scott, P Sexton, W Stelling, T Tucker, M Wilkes and M Wilson

Co-opted Members:

Mr G Binney and Mrs R Morris

**Economy and Enterprise Overview and
Scrutiny Committee**

27 January 2020



**Engagement with social housing
providers operating across County
Durham**

**Joint report of John Hewitt, Corporate Director of Resources and
Ian Thompson, Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local
Services**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The report provides members with background information on the various means by which Durham County Council engages with the Social Housing providers in the county prior to a presentation by Lynn Hall, Strategic Manager for Housing, Regeneration and Local Services.

Executive summary

- 2 The Economy and Enterprise OSC considers a number of housing issues including:
 - The Housing Strategy
 - The Homelessness Strategy
 - Housing Solutions including Durham Key Options scheme
 - Selective Licensing Scheme proposals
 - Chapter Homes
 - Private rented housing sector including empty home projects and the landlord accreditation scheme
 - Housing regeneration and renewal

- 3 The committee's work programme for 2019 -20 identifies a number of housing related issues to be considered by the committee including detail of:
- The development of both the Housing and Homelessness Strategies
 - The development and progress of the selective licensing scheme for County Durham
 - Various projects undertaken with the private rented housing sector in County Durham
- 4 Whilst considering various housing issues the committee has asked for detail of how DCC currently engages with social housing providers in the county. It was therefore thought timely that arrangements be made for the Strategic Manager for Housing to attend the meeting on the 27 January 2020 to deliver a presentation focusing on:
- County Durham Housing Forum
 - Durham Key Options
 - Specific Projects

A copy of the presentation is attached as Appendix 2.

Recommendations

- 5 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment upon the information provided in the report and during the presentation.

Background

- 6 The Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee includes in its work programme on an annual basis a number of housing related issues. During 2018/19 when considering various housing matters members have asked as to how DCC currently engages with social housing providers in the county. Arrangements have therefore been made for an overview of the various engagement mechanisms to be provided to the committee.
- 7 Durham County Council has a number of housing functions which fall within the responsibility of Councillor Kevin Shaw, the Executive Member for Strategic Housing and Assets. These functions are:
 - Understanding housing need and the production of the Housing Strategy
 - Enabling the delivery of the Housing Strategy
 - Strategic Fuel Poverty / Energy Efficiency
 - Coordination of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme - Durham Key Options
 - Delivery of the poverty agenda via the Council's Poverty Action Plan
 - Housing Regeneration activity
 - Statutory Homelessness, a duty to find accommodation for those clients who meet the legal requirements
 - Prevention of Homelessness
 - Gypsy Roma Traveller Site Management
 - Private Sector Housing
 - Home Improvement Agency including home loans and the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants which is a statutory function.
- 8 There are currently 31 Social Housing Providers operating in County Durham which equates to 20% of the housing stock in Durham
- 9 There is regular engagement with four Housing Providers (Believe, Karbon, Livin and North Star which cover almost 18% of the Housing Stock. Other housing providers are involved in a number of partnerships and meetings and invited to contribute to any consultation.

- 10 There are currently three main ways DCC will engage with the larger social housing providers:
- The Durham Housing Forum
 - The Durham Key Options Board
 - Delivery of specific projects

The Durham Housing Forum

- 11 The Role of the Durham Housing Forum is to act as the strategic partnership within County Durham for the consideration of housing and related policy issues; to oversee and enable the delivery of the housing strategy and to assist with the development of more sustainable communities and to support the well-being of County Durham.
- 12 The members will provide a strategic policy advice function in relation to strategic housing and neighbourhood issues to:
- Provide a means to secure consultation with partners and other stakeholders including Area Action Partnerships and local communities to help determine appropriate policy positions that promote the best interests of County Durham in respect to housing and related policy issues.
 - Contribute towards the development of sustainable community strategies in Durham and its localities; assist with the development and implementation of the County Durham Plan and take a role in monitoring key housing related performance
 - Work in partnership with each other (and in conjunction with AAPs) towards achieving and improving key local outcomes including:
 - Contributing towards the development of local areas which are safe
 - Contribute to strengthening the local economy through investment, procurement and worklessness initiatives
 - Ensuring that tenants are healthy and safe
 - Ensuring that open spaces and the natural environment is accessible and well managed and can provide attractive places in which people want to live and bring up their families
 - Support raising standards of existing housing stock
 - Support plans to regenerate existing areas showing signs of decline

- Contribute towards ensuring climate change issues are addressed
- Ensure housing needs are identified and met
- Ensure vulnerable client groups are well supported and adequately housed.
- Undertake an advocacy and advisory role in promoting and discussing housing and neighbourhood issues of importance to County Durham with other organisations and stakeholders operating at regional and national levels.

Durham Key Options

- 13 Following a successful pilot with East Durham Homes (2009), Durham Key Options choice based lettings scheme was established in 2009. This merged the previous district council lettings policies into the same, countywide lettings scheme to make social housing more accessible and create greater choice for applicants.
- 14 The scheme has continued to grow and develop - delivering a high standard to customers, with all partners of the scheme following one policy for assessments of housing need and allocations. Those housing partners letting 100% of their stock via DKO are:
 - believe housing
 - Karbon Homes
 - Livin
 - North Star
- 15 A number of other housing providers advertise and let a % of their stock via the scheme under nomination arrangements.
- 16 To date, Durham Key Options has seen over 42,000 lettings across all Registered Providers advertising through the scheme. There are currently approximately 14000 applicants registered for housing and on average 1200 registrations received each month.
- 17 A Board meet bi monthly to oversee the work of the scheme and a steering group meet regularly to ensure the scheme is running smoothly and report to the Board.

- 18 In 2018-2019, the DKO partnership has:
- Improved marketing of the DKO scheme via its website
 - Changed the DKO logo and colour scheme
 - Introduced matching of *first* bidders to properties, via the new Available Immediately Homes module.
- 19 Further potential actions remain for DKO for completion in 2019-20:
- Amend the back-office system to allow greater analysis of applicant's area of preferences and match them to void properties (without the need for bidding)
 - Investigating qualification for those with ASB/rent arrears and/or vulnerable groups/those in poverty;
 - Implementing a pre-tenancy course and/or offering greater assistance across the partnership;
 - Reviewing procedures and raising awareness at the end of a tenancy (where future qualification to DKO may be impacted);
 - Review whether disqualifying transfers in the first 12 months of tenancy should be extended to 24 months.

All actions have a completion target of 2020, with the aim of:

- Improving customer service
- Increasing accessibility to social housing
- Improving support and tenancy sustainment
- Creating greater awareness of the brand and benefits of Durham Key Options
- Reducing void costs for partners

Specific Projects

- 20 As part of the enabling role to deliver the housing and homelessness strategies, DCC work with housing providers on specific projects, for example a new start model providing support and accommodation for clients previously excluded from DKO. The strategic manager for housing will provide additional detail as part of the presentation.

Conclusions

- 21 Members are asked to note the content of the report and the delivery of a presentation.

Background papers

- Housing Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Terms of Reference for the Durham Housing Forum
- Durham Key Options annual report

Other useful documents

- None

Contact: Lynn Hall

Tel: 03000 265728

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable

Finance

Not applicable

Consultation

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Climate Change

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Staffing

Not applicable

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

Not applicable

Procurement

Not applicable

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Engagement with Social Housing Providers

Lynn Hall
Strategic Manager for Housing

27th January 2020

Altogether better



Content

- Background
- Durham Housing Forum
- Durham Key Options Board
- Specific projects

Altogether better



Background

- 31 Social Housing Providers in County Durham
- Covering 20% of the housing stock in Durham
- Main Housing Providers:
 - Believe
 - Karbon
 - livin
 - DAMHA
 - Home Housing
 - Accent Housing
 - Bernicia
 - North Star

Altogether better



Background

- Currently 3 main formal engagements:
- Durham Housing Forum
- Durham Key Options
- Specific Projects

Altogether better



Housing Forum

Role of the forum:

- To act as the strategic partnership within County Durham for the consideration of housing and related policy issues; to oversee and enable the delivery of the housing strategy and to assist with the development of more sustainable communities and to support the well being of County Durham.

Membership:

- Partnership comprises of representatives of the following organisations:
 - County Durham Strategic Housing Authority, public health, commissioning and planning
 - Social Housing providers operating in the County
 - Homes England
 - Cabinet member for Housing

Altogether better



Housing Forum

- Functions of the Durham Housing Forum
 - Provide a **strategic policy advice** function in relation to strategic housing and neighbourhood issues to
 - Themed meetings
 - Task and finish groups set up as required
- One to One meetings
 - From April 2020 between Strategic Housing Manager and housing Providers
 - 6 month meeting with Head of service

Altogether better



DKO: The Partnership

- Durham Key Options (DKO) consists of DCC and 4 other full partners (Karbon, Livin, believe and North Star)
- 13 Registered Provider's provide 50% of true voids (including Home, DAMHA and Bernicia)
- DKO provides housing options including low-cost or shared ownership, Homebuy and tailored advice, along with access to Registered Provider and private landlord properties.

Altogether better



What is working well?

- Void turnover at lowest point as a partnership since 2012
- Any day cycles – 5 bidding cycles starting Monday to Friday (decreasing maximum wait for shortlist from 13 days to just 7 days for high demand, 1 day for low)
- Website is a ‘one stop shop’ for social, PRS, homelessness, and affordable homeownership.
- Applications to DKO have remained constant (13,000+ each year) and have increased further this year – people want social housing.
- Nominations from the 13 other RPs have increased over the last 10 years, with most nominating 70-80% of their homes or more – DKO works well for the majority and over 80% of those put forward by DCC are accepted.

Altogether better



What needs to be improved?

- Large numbers of 3 bed homes and not enough demand
- Matching stock to applicants remains an issue – affordability rules now mean singles/couples only have the option for 1 bed homes
- Social landlords limited in terms of incentives unlike PRS.
- Customer engagement (1 in 10 do not respond to offers).
- Processing systems with partners – restructures and staff turnover can lead to delays with forms and customers ‘move on’ (differing priorities amongst partners can lead to difficulties finding consistency countywide).

Altogether better



Priorities agreed by DKO board

- Raise awareness of what DKO is and the service it provides
- Use evidence to confirm areas of lower demand for social housing and analyse, determine cause and seek to scope and implement interventions with registered providers.
- Review the customer journey
- Review the allocations policy in relation to affordability for social housing in County Durham
- Implement the design and functionality of the mobile site

Altogether better



Specific projects : example

- Conversation began in Housing Support Group
- Reduce bed blocking in supported accommodation sector
- Housing Solutions “have the people”
- believe “have the houses”
- Support package provided as well as a rent guarantee – limiting risk to tenant as well as provider

Altogether better



Specific projects: New Start

- To provide social housing and access to Durham Key Options for those who would ordinarily be excluded due to an historic tenancy breach.
- Partnership between believe housing and Housing Solutions and will look to reduce “bed blocking” in supported accommodation.
- Aligns with Housing and Homelessness strategies for County Durham: prevent homelessness, increase the supply of accommodation and provide the provision support as well as addressing empty properties within the County.

Altogether better



Eligibility criteria

- 18 years +
- Leaving supported accommodation (or floating support)
- “Bed blocking”
- Able to evidence the work that they have undertaken in order to change behaviour
- In need of some low-level support in order to sustain a tenancy
- 5 – 6 properties initially
- Pilot 1 year

Altogether better



Outcomes

- Financial independence: help with benefits, setting up utility bills and rent payments, budgeting skills
- Social and economic inclusion
- Access to social housing
- Manage tenancy and secure a “soft landing”
- Support with accessing local services
- Personal safety (where leaving refuge for example)
- Access education, employment and training

Altogether better



Economy and Enterprise**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

27 January 2020

Housing and Homelessness strategies and delivery

Joint report of John Hewitt, Corporate Director of Resources and Ian Thompson, Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the housing and homelessness strategies and the delivery of projects and services. This will be delivered by a range of housing managers.

Executive Summary

- 2 Members will recall that the committee has received regular updates on the development of DCC's Housing and Homelessness Strategies.
- 3 This report will provide an overview of the Housing and Homelessness Strategies, the partnership structure and information from various housing managers responsible for delivery.

Recommendations

- 4 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment upon the information provided in the report and during the presentation.
- 5 The Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee includes a further update on the development of DCC's Housing and Homelessness Strategies and the delivery of regeneration and empty homes projects by Housing Solutions in its 2020/21 work programme.

Background

- 6 The Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee have previously received progress reports and presentations on the Housing and Homelessness Strategies with the last update provided to members at the meeting on 10 January 2019. The comments made by members was subsequently fed into the consultation on the strategy. When considering at the June 2019 meeting the future work programme for the committee it was agreed by members that the committee would receive a further progress update on the development of the strategy.
- 7 In addition, the committee has also received detail of work undertaken by DCC and partners in relation to housing regeneration and empty home projects working with the private sector.
- 8 A range of managers will deliver a presentation on:
- Housing Strategy
 - Homelessness Strategy
 - Housing Board and partnerships
 - Housing Solutions: performance and;
 - Service area delivery

A copy of the presentation is attached as appendix 2.

Housing and Homelessness Strategy

Housing Strategy

- 9 The County Durham Housing Strategy has been developed to consider housing issues across County Durham. The Housing Strategy will be delivered in partnership through the Housing Forum and in discussion with the county's residents, the private sector and other agencies as appropriate. It provides a strategic framework to inform the actions and investment of the council and its partners and includes a high-level Action Plan.
- 10 The Housing Strategy has been developed to ensure Durham County Council is well positioned to maximise future opportunities for funding support. In this context, the Housing Strategy provides the evidence to identify issues within a housing context and a clear approach to address these issues.

- 11 The Housing Strategy considers housing related issues in County Durham and sets out the council's current and future actions and interventions to address these issues. The Strategy contains a series of 'key messages' which serve to articulate the council's and its partners housing delivery priorities and approach to housing issues. First and foremost, the Housing Strategy seeks to put people first and to focus on the housing needs of the residents of County Durham. It is this principle which guides the content of the Strategy. The Housing Strategy 'key messages' can be summarised as follows:
- (a) Delivering homes to meet the needs of older people within our communities and supporting people to live independently for as long as possible;
 - (b) Raising standards across the private rented sector through seeking greater licencing powers in order to tackle poor landlords, as well as continuous engagement with landlords and the extension of the Accredited Landlord Scheme for responsible landlords;
 - (c) Working with those communities most affected by long term empty properties. This will include working with property owners and landlords with the aim of bringing empty properties back into use wherever possible;
 - (d) Maximising the delivery of affordable homes, both by securing developer contributions as part of new housing development and through close partnership working with Registered Providers and Homes England;
 - (e) Improving the quality of the county's housing stock and wider housing environment;
 - (f) Working with partners to provide help and support to all Forces personnel, reservists, veterans and their families in trying to secure a home.
 - (g) Ensuring appropriate infrastructure is provided to accommodate for the impact of housing development on communities, including ensuring sufficient education and healthcare facilities are provided to meet community needs;
 - (h) Ensuring new housing is of a high quality design to meet the needs of our families and delivering the right homes in the right places to support sustainable communities;
 - (i) Supporting rural communities by enabling sufficient housing to meet local needs;

- (j) Introducing a strategic approach to prevent homelessness and increasing the supply of accommodation for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and working in partnership with other stakeholders to provide support to those with complex needs;
 - (k) Maximise the opportunities available to address fuel poverty through combining advice schemes and heating improvements and targeting interventions at those most in need.
- 12 The Housing Strategy is supported by a strategic level Action Plan. Each outcome in the Strategy is associated with a series of actions to support the delivery of the Strategy. The identified actions are to be delivered in partnership through the Housing Forum and related delivery groups. To ensure the actions remain up to date the Action Plan will be subject to an annual review. Through this process, should it be recommended that the Action Plan is updated, including to reflect progress in delivering actions or to identify new actions, then any amendments to the Action Plan will be approved under delegated powers in consultation with the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and Assets.
- 13 Following Cabinet approval on the 16th January 2019, the Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy was subject to consultation from the 25th January to the 8th March 2019.
- 14 Following the consultation, comments made and main points from the workshops and other discussions have informed the updated version of the Housing and Homelessness Strategies.
- 15 The strategy was adopted by Cabinet in July 2019.

Homelessness Strategy

- 16 Under the Homelessness Act 2002, all housing authorities must have in place a Homelessness Strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their area. The Homelessness Act 2002 determines that the life of a strategy should be no more than five years and the action plan should be reviewed annually. The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018 resulted in a revised Code of Guidance, this led to the Homelessness Review in 2018, the development of this revised strategy and how best to satisfy the new duties set out in the Act around service delivery. The purpose of this strategy is to set out the strategic approach, key priorities and actions to work towards preventing homelessness across County Durham over the next three years.

- 17 A review of homelessness between 2015 – 2018 informed the Homelessness Strategy. It was found that approximately 4000 households presented as homeless or threatened with homelessness
- 18 The homelessness strategy includes three overall aims and an action plan for each aim. Some examples of actions are listed below:
- i. ***Aim one: To prevent homelessness through early intervention***
 - a) Ensure the provision of advice is available.
 - b) A range of prevention tools are available to offer people.
 - ii. ***Aim Two: To increase access to and the supply of accommodation for those who homeless or threatened with homelessness***
 - a) Increase the existing supply of accommodation.
 - b) Develop a proposal for a buy to lease scheme.
 - iii. ***Aim Three: To provide a range of support services to reduce the risk of households becoming homeless***
 - a) Ensure monitoring systems are in place to understand need.
 - b) Work in partnership with agencies to access support services.

Housing Solutions overview and headline statistics

- 19 Housing Solutions provides advice on a range of housing issues, from landlord disputes to homelessness. The service:
- Assists with improving properties, empty properties and housing management standards;
 - Helps clients to access a home, and;
 - Enables clients to stay at home and live independently.
- 20 To help meet these overall aims Housing Solutions is split into a number of teams who have differing focus areas:
- Homelessness
 - Gypsy, Roma and Traveller

- Home Improvement Agency
- Housing Advice Line
- Housing Regeneration
- Private Sector Housing
- Special Projects
- Strategic Support Team

21 In 2018/19 there were:

- over **12000** contacts made to the service
- **1913** properties were improved, adapted or brought back into use
- **186** properties were brought back into use
- **1007** helped to stay at home, and;
- **1036** helped to find alternative accommodation.

Service area delivery

22 An update will be provided to members regarding the delivery of the Housing and Homelessness strategies as well as an overview of service areas responsible.

23 A presentation from Housing Managers will concentrate on:

- Homelessness advice and assistance
- Housing Regeneration, Empty Homes and Home Improvement Agency, and;
- Special projects: Rough Sleeper Initiative and Local Lettings Agency

Conclusion

24 Following consideration of the report and presentation members of the committee will be aware of: the Housing and Homelessness strategies, the services and support provided by Housing Solutions; the headline homelessness statistics, the preventative approach, housing regeneration and empty homes projects/initiatives in the county.

- 25 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny will continue to monitor the progress of the Housing and Homelessness Strategies and the work of the Housing Solutions Service in addressing homelessness in the county together with housing regeneration and empty homes initiatives. It is suggested that a further progress report is included in the committee's work programme for 2020/21.

Background papers:

Housing Strategy

Homelessness Strategy

Homelessness Reduction Act: One year on

Contact: Marie Smith 03000 264724

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Compliance with legislation

Finance

Not applicable

Consultation

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Climate Change

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Staffing

Not applicable

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

Not applicable

Procurement

Not applicable

**Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

27th January 2020

Housing Update

Altogether better



Content

- Housing strategy: Graeme Smith
- Homelessness strategy: Marie Smith
- Housing Board and partnerships: Marie Smith
- Housing Solutions performance: Marie Smith
- Service area delivery: Laura Williams, Marion Rucker, Alan Hunter

Altogether better



Housing Strategy

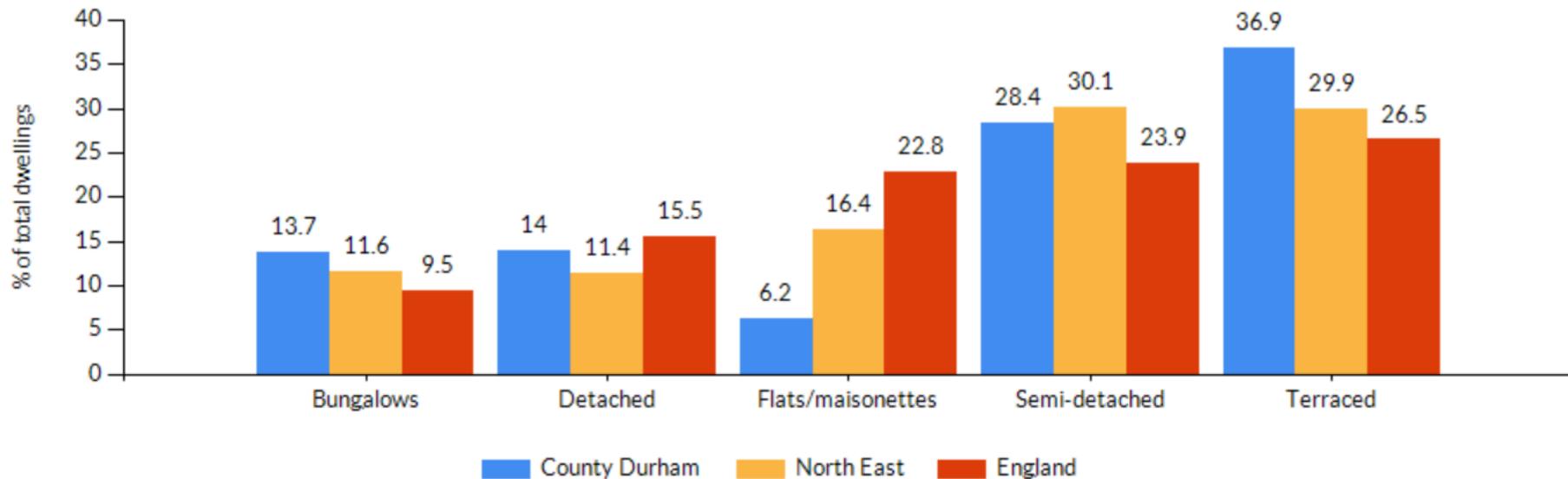
Objectives	Themes
To provide housing advice and assistance for older and vulnerable people	Care and support for older people
	Poverty
	Homelessness
Improve access to housing	DKO accessibility
	Increasing housing options and offer
Delivery of more homes to meet housing need and demand	Older persons
	High quality affordable homes
	High quality new homes
	Infrastructure
Maintain and improve standards across County Durham's housing stock and wider housing environment	Raise standards in the private rented sector
	Address empty homes
	Support and maintain communities
	Improve energy efficiency

Altogether better



County Durham Housing Market (1)

- **242,160** dwellings in County Durham.
- % of total dwellings by type in County Durham (2017):



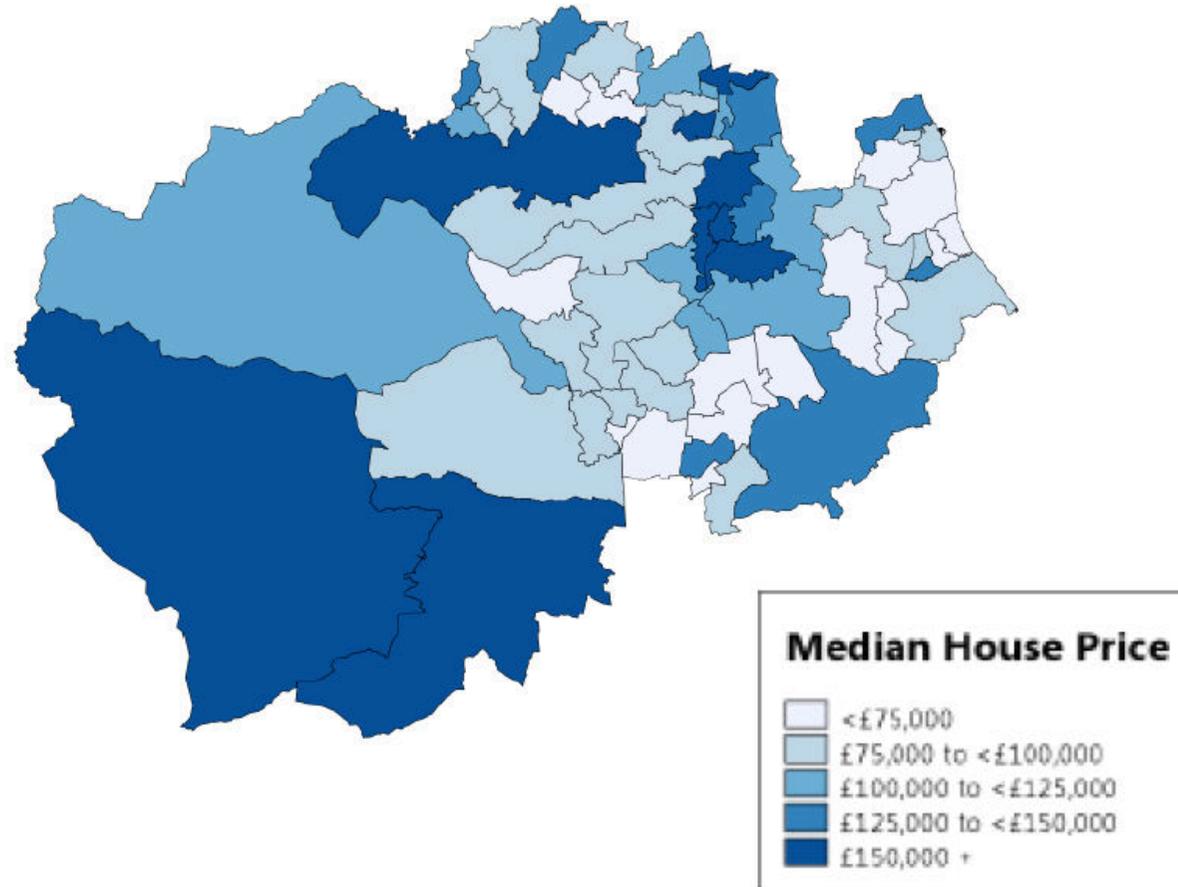
Source: MHCLG

Altogether better



County Durham Housing Market (2)

- House prices in County Durham consistently slightly lower than prices for the North East.
- Median House Prices by Ward (Land Registry Jan – Dec 15)



The County Durham Housing Strategy

- Subject to consultation Jan – March 2019.
- Adopted on 10th July 2019.
- Developed to consider housing issues across County Durham.



- Provides a framework to inform the actions and investment of the council and its partners.
- Developed to ensure the council is well positioned to maximise future opportunities for funding support.

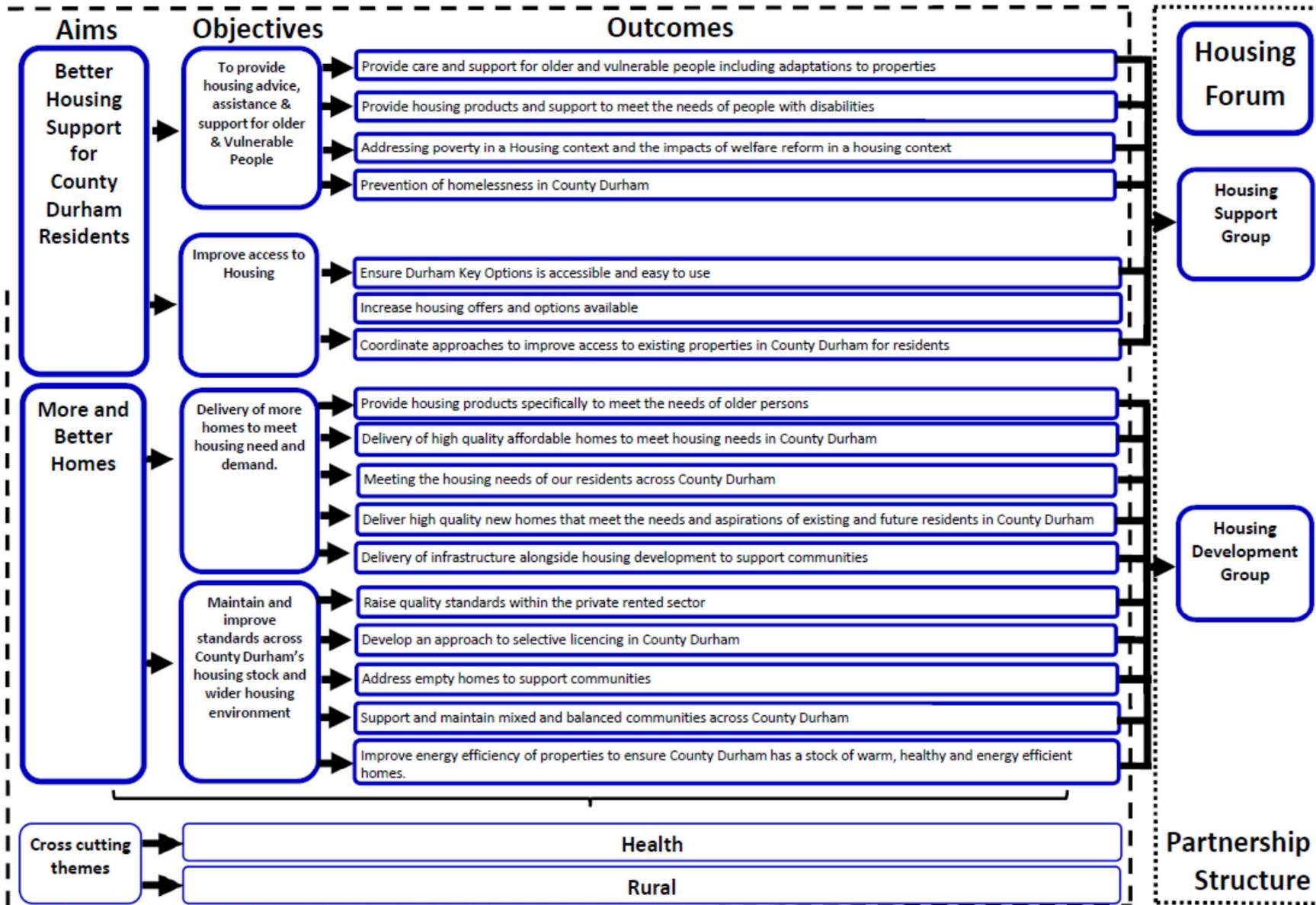
Altogether better



Housing Strategy Key Messages

- Key messages include:
 - *The Housing Strategy seeks to **put people first**.*
 - *The council will continue to focus on **raising standards in the private rented sector**.*
 - *The Housing Strategy will deliver homes for our communities, and specifically plan to **meet the needs of our older people** and to support people to live independently for as long as possible:*
 - *The council will **work within those communities most effected by long term empty properties**. This will include working with property owners and landlords with the aim of bringing empty homes back into use where possible.*
 - *The **delivery of affordable housing will be maximised** both, by securing developer contributions as part of new housing development but also through close partnership working with Registered Providers and Homes England.*

Housing Strategy Scope



Delivering the Housing Strategy

- The Housing Strategy is supported by a strategic action plan
- The Action Plan sets out actions in line with each outcome up to 2025
- Actions are to be delivered in partnership
- The Action Plan is to be subject to annual review

Altogether better



Homelessness strategy

- Requirement of the Homelessness Act 2002
- Homeless Reduction Act of 2017 required us to review current and future levels of homelessness and the activities in place to assist people
- Durham always had a strong focus on homelessness and its prevention
- Strategy to address homelessness now also part of the overall Housing Strategy

Altogether better



Homelessness strategy

- Approved by Cabinet in July following consultation
- Statistics from 2015 – 2018 informed the Homelessness Review and Strategy
- Clients in the county seek housing advice mainly due to financial difficulty
- Main reason for homelessness – loss of private rented accommodation
- Main client group requiring advice in Durham is single people - 60% of people

Altogether better



Homelessness strategy

- Approx. 4500 presentations homeless or threatened with homelessness
- Clients in the county seek housing advice mainly due to financial difficulty
- Main reason for homelessness – loss of private rented accommodation
- Main client group requiring advice in Durham is single people - 60% of people

Altogether better



Homelessness strategy

- **7279** presented as homeless, threatened with homelessness or in need of housing advice between 2018 -19
- Main reason for homelessness: End of Private Rented AST (including rent arrears)
- Majority being single person households
- **2349** threatened with homelessness within 56 days
- **840** homeless
- **4090** advice and intervention cases

Altogether better



Homelessness strategy

PREVENT homelessness
through early intervention

Increase access to and
SUPPLY of
accommodation for those
who are homeless or
threatened with
homelessness

Provide a range of
SUPPORT services to
reduce the risk of
households becoming
homeless

Altogether better

Prevention of homelessness

- Duty to refer now introduced, regional portal developed
- Local Commitment to Refer developed and introduced, work on rent arrears protocol started as part of CtR
- Partnership working with Crisis on a tenancy sustainment model and training

Altogether better



Supply of accommodation

- Working with Housing Providers in partnership as part of Rapid Rehousing Pathway
- Local Lettings Agency
- New Start model – pilot with believe housing

Altogether better



Provision of support

- Reviewed support offer (especially intensive intervention)
- Appointment of Tenancy Sustainment Officers
- Rough Sleeper Initiative funding and appointment of specialist roles
- Rapid Rehousing Pathway funding Somewhere Safe to Stay

Altogether better



Housing Board/Partnerships

- Internal and external partnerships to deliver objectives
- Internally a Housing Board meets regularly:

Service area	Examples of remits
Regeneration and Development	Working with RPs and Homes England
Spatial Policy	Strategy development and building of homes
Housing Solutions	Private Rented Sector, Homelessness and Regeneration plans

Altogether better



Housing Solutions

Provides advice on a range of housing issues, from landlord disputes to homelessness

- ✓ Assist with improving properties, empty properties and housing management standards
- ✓ Help clients to access a home
- ✓ Enable clients to stay at home and live independently

Altogether better





Altogether better



Housing Solutions: headline statistics

12264 contacts
to the service

1913 properties
improved,
adapted or
brought back
into use

186 empty
homes brought
back into use

1007
households
helped to stay
at home

1036
households
helped to find
alternative
accommodation

Altogether better

Laura Williams Housing Manager

Prevent Homelessness through early Intervention

- Homelessness Prevention and early intervention
- Delivery of the statutory requirements under the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA)
- Joint Protocol for 16 & 17 Year Olds
- Project BETA and Support for Offenders
- Welfare Reform

Provide a range of support services

- Intensive Support for individuals with complex needs such as those with substance misuse or mental health issues or those with an offending history
- Housing Options - Floating and low level tenancy support/advice to secure and maintain accommodation

Altogether better

Homelessness Reduction Act

Prevention

- Duty To Prevent - To work with people who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days to help prevent them from becoming homeless.

Relief

- Duty to Relieve - To help people who are homeless to secure accommodation
- Interim duty to accommodate – Ensure that accommodation is available if we have reason to believe the applicant may be homeless, Eligible and have a priority need

Homeless

- The 'Main Housing Duty' – Where Prevention/Relief is unsuccessful and the applicant is unintentionally homeless, eligible for assistance and has a priority need for accommodation, we have a duty to secure accommodation.

Altogether better

Presentations 18/19

Assessment	Total cases	% of total
Threat of Homelessness	2349	32%
Homeless	840	12%
Advice/Intervention	4090	56%
TOTAL	7279	

Altogether better

Homeless Applications

Assessment	Total cases	% of total	prevented/relieved
Threat of	2349	32%	45%
Homeless	840	12%	34%

Altogether better



- Durham County Council Housing Solutions Team were in the top five of all Local Authorities for the prevention of homelessness in the 1st three quarters of 2019

Altogether better



Local emerging themes..

- Complex needs
- Risk of harm/homelessness
- SAB is considering via a task and finish group to explore support for these individuals
- Further research to review the emerging trends and identify gaps
- Dialogue between strategic leads for adults and housing
- Includes improved working with hospitals

Altogether better



A Region Working Together 2019/20

Rough Sleeper Initiative

£700 000 North East bid (11 LAs)

Rapid Rehousing Pathway

£628 420 for North East bid (10 LAs)

£253 538 Durham Local Lettings Agency

£1 581 958 government funding for region

Altogether better

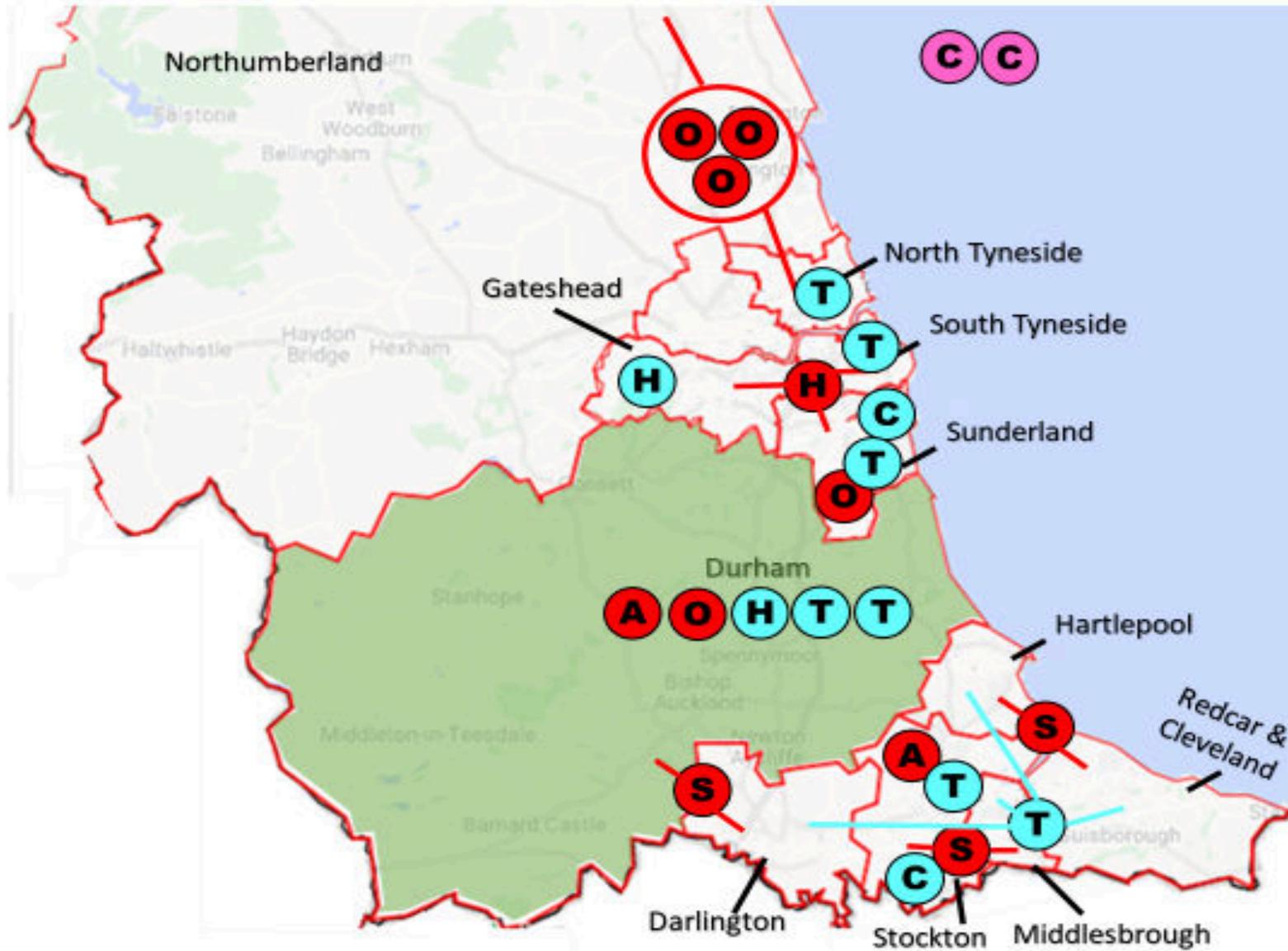


Figures

- Annual Count 2018, 58 rough sleepers in region (Durham 12)
- July – December 2019 identified 699 rough sleeper incidents (Durham 108) new, returners & entrenched

Altogether better





Altogether better



Durham

- Regional Coordinator
- Outreach Worker
- Substance Misuse Work
- Prison Accommodation Officer
- Somewhere Safe to Stay hub
- 2 Tenancy Sustainment Officers

Altogether better



2020/2021

- Submitted regional bid for £1 700 000
- Continue existing work, 1 addition intervention per LA area & £10 000 personalisation pot per LA
- Awaiting announcement

Altogether better



Cold Weather Fund

- £44 000 from MHCLG Oct 19 – Mar 20
- Rough Sleeper Navigator plus personalisation pot & housing fund
- 32 rough sleepers housed in November/December

Altogether better



Local Lettings Agency

- NE Reconnections Procedure
- Building on current provision
- Media campaign
- Training & events – bringing front line staff together

Altogether better



Local Lettings Agency

“A Local Lettings Agency (LLA) is a scheme that secure access to decent, affordable private rental accommodation for households in need and on low incomes who would previously have been unlikely to access social housing.”

Altogether better



Why?

- To house those with complex needs that are excluded from the Housing Register
- To provide fast housing under prevention duties
- To provide rapid rehousing to rough sleepers

Altogether better



Provision

- Leasehold via private landlords
- Scope with social providers
- Manage DCC asset/buy to lease properties
- Long term purchase

Altogether better



LLA will:

- Provides housing to those who struggle to rent for various reasons, however they must engage with appropriate support
- Housing Management Officers provide support to tenants
- Properties via private landlords on leasehold scheme
- Regular allocations board to allocate properties to medium/high support tenants via MEAM approach

Altogether better



Private Rented Sector 2020/21

- Private Rented Sector Policy
- One council approach to rogue landlords
- Dial b4 you Serve
- New legislation

Altogether better



Housing Regeneration

The Housing Regeneration team is responsible for delivering neighbourhood, environmental and housing improvement schemes across the county, this includes:

- The co-ordination of investment in housing regeneration areas from Registered Providers, landlords, government departments, housing developers, and other funding sources;
- Estate regeneration and master planning role with key partners;
- Facilitation of community / steering groups in key areas;
- Developing bids and acquiring external funding to deliver innovative solutions to housing problems. This includes schemes such as funding from the European Structural Investment Fund for Sustainable Urban Drainage solutions, and the European Regional Development Fund for Solid Wall Insulation and other energy solutions;
- Co-ordination of fuel poverty grants from the energy companies for boiler replacements and insulation measures; and
- Co-ordination of the Managing Money Better service to help reduce domestic energy bills.

Altogether better



Key achievements

- £2.5M of DCC and ERDF funding levered to improve 220 fuel poor homes with innovative external wall insulation;
- In Partnership with Bernicia Homes facilitation of the continued regeneration of Dean Bank, Ferryhill;
- Enabling bungalow development in Chilton in partnership with Esh and Livin;
- Consultation and master planning activity in Horden;
- Delivery of several Group Repair schemes, most recently in Dawdon and Easington Colliery;
- Delivery of the Managing Money Better service; 629 households assisted saving total of £182,000 off energy bills, Warm Homes Discount and fuel debt write off in 2019.
- Energy Efficiency; 942 households assisted using £1.27m of ECO funding for new boilers and insulation measures
- Warm Homes Campaign received a regional and national award;
- Successful bid for £600k from Homes England for Purchase and Repair Initiative.

Altogether better



Wembley Phase 3 Group Repair Scheme - Before



Altogether better

Wembley Phase 3 Group Repair Scheme - After



Altogether better



Dawdon Phase 10 Group Repair Scheme - Before



Front - Pre Work



Altogether better

Dawdon Phase 10 Group Repair Scheme- After



Altogether better

Wheatley Hill - Regeneration



Altogether better

North Durham Housing Regeneration Projects

Craghead – RTPI Regional Regeneration Award Winner 2013
NHIC Award winner 2010

Before



After



- Solid wall insulation
- Brick effect render
- Windows
- Doors
- Roofs
- Solar panels
- Environmental Improvements
- Boundary Walls

Altogether better



Southmoor, Stanley – Housing and environmental improvements

Masterplanning : Sustainable Urban Drainage, Heritage and Energy Efficiency improvements



Altogether better

SWI project - Gordon Lane, Ramshaw



MMB project — Lynne Grange won the NEA's National Heat Hero Award for assisting fuel poor households



Altogether better



The Home Improvement Agency (HIA):

- Provides advice, guidance and practical assistance to vulnerable people to help them remain in their own home for as long as they wish to do so.

Types of work include:

- Ramps – access to and from property's;
- Level Access Showers;
- Stair Lifts – access between levels;
- Through Floor Lifts – access between levels;
- Internal alterations;
- Extensions – ground floor living; and,
- Property improvement.

Altogether better



Performance

2017-18

- Completed 579 DFG's with a spend of £3.7m
- Completed 10 Home Improvement Loans

2018-19

- Completed 557 DFG's with a spend of £3.75m
- Completed 13 Home Improvement Loans

Altogether better



Case Study

Before



Altogether better

Case Study

After



Altogether better

Empty Homes Team

- Bring empty properties back into use;
- Investigate and identify owners;
- Provide financial assistance— move in grants and interest free loans;
- Advise, negotiate with and support owners; and
- Use enforcement powers (as a last resort)

Altogether better



Key Achievements

- Achieved annual targets since 2014;
- 169 properties brought back into use this financial year to date
- Assisted in recovery of council tax debt through partnership work with council tax team;
- Provided financial assistance;
- Undertaken successful interventions with several problematic empty homes;
- Accommodated request from Shadow Secretary of State for Housing to visit; and,
- Delivered the “Empty Homes Road Show”
- Empty properties protocol developed

Altogether better



14 Station Road West, Trimdon Station



9 Rose Terrace, Waterhouses



Ongoing Projects

- Deliver and monitor the countywide Warm Homes Campaign
- Co-ordination of fuel poverty grants from the energy companies for boiler replacements and insulation measures
- Co-ordination of Managing Money Better service to help reduce domestic energy bills
- Buy and Lease accommodation project
- Horden masterplan
- Easington Colliery school
- Locational delivery plans
- Chilton regeneration
- Dean Bank regeneration
- Facilitation of steering groups
- Empty homes work
- HIA ongoing assistance, advice and DFGs

Altogether better



Questions or comments?

Altogether better

