



# County Durham Housing Strategy: Targeted Delivery Plan

## Thickley

March 2021



# Targeted Delivery Plan: Thickley

## Context

The County Durham Housing Strategy sets out that the Council will seek to improve the quality of the existing housing stock and the wider residential environment. The Strategy notes that the Council will develop localised and Targeted Delivery Plans (TDP) to outline activities to support the creation and maintenance of mixed and balanced communities.

This TDP has been developed by Durham County Council with input from Livin, who own and manage approximately 380 homes in the area.

## Location

Thickley is an area in the eastern part of Shildon in South Durham. This TDP relates to Thickley as defined on the map on page 8. This boundary is based on the Lower Super Output Area, however in practice, actions will not be limited at this boundary if there is a rationale to extend interventions to adjacent sites and nearby streets.

## What are we trying to achieve in Thickley?

Thickley experiences a relatively high proportion of empty homes, this is indicative of low demand in the area. There is an opportunity through the TDPs to undertake a range of measures to focus on addressing the empty homes to reduce the proportion of empty properties in locality and to improve the living environment for existing and future residents.

Thickley is associated with higher than average levels of unemployment and lower than average incomes. This will impact on residents in a number of ways, but in a housing context, Income deprivation impacts on the affordability of living, including acquiring or continuing to live in suitable housing products and other costs of living. The Council and its partners will coordinate a number of measures to address poverty in a housing context and support tenancy sustainment. This will be of benefit to the health and wellbeing of residents in the most need in County Durham.



continued overleaf . . .

# Targeted Delivery Plan: Thickley

## What will be the outcome for Thickley?

Delivering the TDP will have a positive impact on the housing market and the wider sense of place for Thickley. By reducing the proportion of long term empty homes and improving the appearance of wider environment, the TDP will stem issues associated with low demand. Improvements in the street scene will be complementary to the reduction in empty homes having an overall improvement in the appearance of the area and would result in an improved living environment for residents.

Focused interventions with the intention of addressing poverty, will have a direct benefit for the residents of the area supporting tenancy sustainment and improving financial and health wellbeing.

## Past and ongoing interventions

The Council and its partners have undertaken a series of interventions in this area including:

- Energy Company Obligation boiler and insulation grants for low income and fuel poor households.
- Warm and Healthy Homes project with GP surgeries to provide warmer homes for patients with a cold related illness.

- Managing Money Better service providing energy bill saving and fuel debt advice and support.
- Warm Homes Fund providing grants for first time central heating measures.
- Green Homes Grant Fund targeting fuel poor homes for insulation retrofit and renewable heating installations.
- In December 2017 Livin commenced a regeneration programme for the Jubilee Fields Estate.
- The Livin Plan A interventions have included:
  - Supporting Jubilee Fields Community Centre to develop their management committee and volunteers, employed a community facilities manager.
  - Working with residents groups to start environmental improvements to estate.
  - Asset management programme.
  - Supporting sustainable tenancies, providing quality homes, enabling strong communities & maintaining strong finance.
  - Livin Futures, Financial wellbeing and Livin well target zone.
  - Livin Futures to deliver and employability programme on the Estate.
  - Managing Money Better energy saving advice programme on estate.
  - Support Shildon Alive to deliver foodbank access and Credit Union support.

## Evidence base

The Council has developed an evidence base to identify which communities would benefit from intervention to maintain and improve the existing housing stock and the wider housing environment and to inform the actions in those areas.

In addition, the Housing Strategy notes that the Council will ensure that housing is provided specifically to meet the needs of the older people within our communities. It is recognised that the population of County Durham is already ageing and over the next few decades, there will be a 'demographic shift' with the number (and proportion) of older people increasing. This TDP therefore contains an action to identify opportunities to deliver accommodation for older people.



# Targeted Delivery Plan: Thickley

## Evidence and monitoring

The Council will continue to develop and monitor evidence to understand issues associated with balance and potential decline across the county. In identifying areas to be the subject of a TDP, the Council has considered a range of issues. Thickley features as one of the poorest performing 10% in the County in respect of long term empty homes and is relatively poor across a range of other issues.

Issue	Context	Thickley
Long-term empty homes	Long term empty homes are those which have been empty for 6 months or more. The county average is 1.7% of stock as long term empties (2018).	4.5% of stock are long term empties (2018).
Employment IMD 2019	The Employment Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market.	Within County Durham Thickley is ranked 35th out of 324 LSOAs with 1 being the most deprived.
Income deprivation IMD 2019	The Income Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income.	Within County Durham Thickley is ranked 46th out of 324 LSOAs with 1 being the most deprived.
Income deprivation affecting children IMD 2019	The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.	Within County Durham Thickley is ranked 38th out of 324 LSOAs with 1 being the most deprived.
Demographics and housing stock profile	In County Durham, 20.6% of the population is aged 65 and over. County Durham has a relatively low proportion of bungalows (13.7%) compared to other housing stock. This highest proportion of housing stock in terraced at 36.9%. (MHCLG 2017).	Within Thickley 19.1% of the population are aged 65 and over. 13.3% of the housing stock are bungalows and 55.6% are terraced.

Living as part of its work to develop a community regeneration action plan has made use of desk top research, community engagement and stakeholder feedback to identify the Jubilee Field Estates key issues and challenges. Alongside considering indicators such as those set out above, the following challenges were identified:

- Support for vulnerable residents;
- Selective Licencing;
- Improving health and wellbeing;
- Providing safer neighbourhoods;
- Financial inclusion and wellbeing;
- Community buildings – community cohesion and activity;
- School Holiday support; and
- Open space and environmental sustainability.

# Targeted Delivery Plan: Thickley

## Action Plan

The TDP action plans bring together actions from across the Council's range of functions and Partners to address the issues identified in the evidence base. In TDPs the actions are identified as having the following timescales:

- Mainstream activity/core offer: These are Council or Partner activities that are undertaken routinely, but opportunities will be sought to focus these within the TDP area to bring an intensive approach to addressing issues.
- Short term: New actions which will be undertaken within 2 years. Some of these actions will be delivered in a substantially shorter timeframe, depending on their nature.
- Medium term: New actions to be undertaken within 5 years
- Longer term: New actions to be undertaken over a period longer than 5 years, in recognition of the scale of the intervention.

The Action Plan notes the status of individual actions, to note some of these will be undertaken as ongoing actions, others will be associated with existing funding streams however others will require funding. The Council and its partners will make use of the TDPs to support applications for funding.

## Support and maintain mixed and balanced communities across County Durham

Ref	What	Lead (and Partners)	Timescale / Notes
A1	Selective licencing Area Designation based on deprivation.	DCC Selective Licencing team.	Mainstream Activity. DCC Designation and application submitted.
A2	Monitor, update and develop evidence at a localised level to understand stock condition, demand and supply and associated issues.	DCC Empty Homes team.	Mainstream activity.
A3	Work with DCC Community Action Team to programme regular targeted interventions to address environmental issues.	DCC Environmental Health team.	Mainstream activity. Programme for 2021 in discussion.
A4	Continuous liaison with private landlords.	DCC Private Landlords team.	Mainstream activity.
A5	In line with Cabinet's September 2020 decision to agree to begin a Council house building programme of up to 500 homes over the period 2021-26 opportunities will be explored for homes across the county, including this TDP area.	DCC Housing Development team.	Long term. Project to progress in line with Cabinet approval.
A6	Promote County Durham Lettings Agency and leasehold scheme	DCC County Durham Lettings Agency team.	Mainstream activity.
A7	Facilitating new housing development including the opportunity for the delivery of homes to meet the needs of older people.	DCC Planning and Housing Development and Regeneration team.	Mainstream activity.

# Targeted Delivery Plan: Thickley

## Support and maintain mixed and balanced communities across County Durham (continued)

Ref	What	Lead (and Partners)	Timescale / Notes
A8	Regeneration of housing to address demand and need from community.	Livin.	Core offer (Neighbourhood Standard).
A9	Estate Management.	Livin.	Core offer (Neighbourhood Standard).
A10	Jubilee Field Estate Community Regeneration Action Plan. Plan A intervention (£15K allocated from Community Regeneration Budget 2020/21).	Livin.	Long term.
A11	Supporting Jubilee Fields Community Centre to develop their management committee and volunteers, employed a community facilities manager.	Livin.	Plan A intervention. Ongoing.
A12	Working with residents groups to start environmental improvements to estate.	Livin.	Plan A intervention. Ongoing.
A13	Asset management programme.	Livin.	Plan A intervention. Ongoing.

## Addressing and the impacts of welfare reform in a housing context

Ref	What	Lead (and Partners)	Timescale / Notes
B1	Work with landlords to enable greater understanding of the impact of poverty.	DCC Housing Regeneration team, Head of Transformation and Partnerships and Childrens Services.	Mainstream activity.
B2	Housing and Tenancy Support, including ASB, tenancy sustainment and housing management.	Livin.	Core offer (Neighbourhood Standard).
B3	Supporting sustainable tenancies, providing quality homes, enabling strong communities & maintaining strong finance.	Livin.	Plan A intervention. Long term.
B4	Livin Futures, Financial wellbeing and Livin well target zone.	Livin.	Plan A intervention. Ongoing.
B5	Livin Futures to deliver and employability programme on the Estate.	Livin.	Plan A intervention. Ongoing.
B6	Managing £ Better energy saving advice programme on estate.	Livin.	Plan A intervention. Ongoing.
B7	Support Shildon Alive to deliver foodbank access and Credit Union support.	Livin.	Plan A intervention. Ongoing.

# Targeted Delivery Plan: Thickley

## Address empty homes to support communities

Ref	What	Lead (and Partners)	Timescale / Notes
C1	Working with property owners to help them sell or rent properties (via Durham Key Options).	DCC Empty Homes team.	Mainstream activity.
C2	Financial assistance loans and grants to potential purchasers and empty home owners of long term empty properties.	DCC Empty Homes team.	Mainstream activity.

## Provide care and support for older and vulnerable people

Ref	What	Lead (and Partners)	Timescale / Notes
D1	Consider requirement for support packages to meet needs in County Durham.	DCC Housing Solutions, DCC Commissioning, Registered Housing providers.	Short/Medium term.
D2	Continue to widen wrap around support to support vulnerable people to achieve and sustain tenancies.	DCC Housing Solutions, DCC Commissioning, Registered Housing providers.	Short/Medium term.
D3	Encourage uptake of Disabled Facilities Grants in order to enable individuals to remain in their home.	DCC Housing Solutions.	Mainstream activity.
D4	Use of common rooms and facilities for community groups and older people (Note: currently suspended currently due to Covid-19).	Livin.	Core offer (Neighbourhood Standard). Note Covid-19 restriction.



# Targeted Delivery Plan: Thickley map of evidence and interventions

## Context

The map below confirms the boundary of the Thickley Lower Super Output Area.

This map is based on the built up area of the Thickley Lower Super Output Area, however in practice, actions will not be limited at the boundary if there is a rationale to extend interventions to adjacent sites and nearby streets.





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