

County Durham Housing Strategy

Delivery Plan 2024 - 2025

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

Outcomes	No.	Actions	Timescale	Lead	Links to other Priorities
Enough affordable houses are delivered to meet housing need across the county in both rural and urban areas	1.1.1	Conclude the procurement process with the appointment of a main contractor to build council homes	April 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)-	P2
	1.1.2	Obtain planning permission for Greenwood Avenue and Portland Avenue sites and start on site	October 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P2
	1.1.3	Confirm detailed pipeline for development of phase 1 and phase 2 sites	June 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P2
	1.1.4	Deliver homes to meet housing needs in rural areas, through the Council House New Build Programme and in partnership with the Rural Working Group	March 2025	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	
Speed up the determination of planning applications	1.2.1	Identify additional resources, including staff, to support the development management function	December 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC) - Planning Manager (DCC)	
Enough houses are delivered to meet housing need across the county in both	1.3.1	Deliver market and affordable housing and housing infrastructure in line with County Durham Plan (CDP) policy	December 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P2, P5

rural and urban areas	1.3.2	Determine a timeline for delivery of council owned housing allocations	December 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC) - Asset Strategy & Property Manager (DCC)	
Sufficient, suitable housing land is available to support economic growth and provide quality housing for the residents of the county	1.4.1	Identify and manage a brownfield sites programme. Including bids into NECA Brownfield Housing Fund	December 2025	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC) - Chief Executives of Registered Providers - Homes England	P2, P5
A housing delivery pipeline exists to more effectively access funding opportunities	1.5.1	Develop a single housing delivery pipeline to include council and Registered Provider delivery priorities.	July 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC) - Chief Executives of Registered Providers	P2, P%
	1.5.2	Integrate the pipeline of estate regeneration identified by the North East Housing Partnership and the council's delivery pipeline	July 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC) - Chief Executives of Registered Providers	P5
	1.5.3	Deliver the Registered Providers affordable homes pipeline to meet needs including Seaham Garden Village and Roseberry Comprehensive School	March 2025	Chief Executives of Registered Providers	P2, P3, P5
	1.5.4	Regenerate Western Estate to deliver high quality and affordable homes	March 2025	Chief Executives of Registered Providers	

Enough suitable accommodation is available to meet the needs of students	1.6.1	Work with Durham University and developers to bring forward the allocations in the County Durham Plan identified for Purpose Built Student Accommodation	Summer 2025	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC) - Durham University	P2, P3
Communities are able to deliver their own housing	1.7.1	Deliver community led housing schemes in line with the Towns and Villages Programme Investment Plan	December 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	
Empty properties are being brought back into use to support regeneration and meet needs	1.8.1	Once NECA's devolved powers are established, investigate the local/regional approach to empty properties action and enforcement powers (EDMOs)	December 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC) - NECA	P3
	1.8.2	Develop an Empty Properties Strategy	December 2024	Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager (DCC)	
Online mapping is being used to assist with housing delivery and regeneration	1.9.1	Develop an online mapping tool to assist with housing delivery and regeneration	September 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	

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

Outcomes	No.	Actions	Timescale	Lead	Links to other Priorities
Review the current allocations and lettings policy to ensure they meet the needs of customers	2.1.1	Review the existing partnership agreement	March 2025	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	
	2.1.2	Review four areas of the lettings 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	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P1, P4
Deliver the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) to ensure providers are fit for purpose	2.2.1	Work with all non-commissioned supported housing providers to ensure they are meeting minimum property and support standards	March 2025	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P4
	2.2.2	Develop a charter for non-commissioned supported housing providers	September 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	
	2.2.3	Develop a Quality Assessment Framework for non-commissioned supported housing providers	September 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	

Prepare a temporary accommodation placement strategy to provide suitable accommodation for those in need and reduce costs	2.3.1	Prepare temporary accommodation strategy to highlight how Durham place TA clients within own stock	April 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P4
Deliver home improvements to those with health conditions that are exacerbated by the cold	2.4.1	Promote the Warm and Healthy Homes campaign which offers free boiler repair and service to individuals with health conditions that are exacerbated by the cold	March 2025	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC) - Public Health	P3
Deliver the relevant actions of the Poverty Action Steering Group to help reduce poverty	2.5.1	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	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P3
	2.5.2	Respond to the Discretionary Housing Payment Policy review, working with Revenues and Benefits	March 2025	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	
	2.5.3	Initiate a housing and employment pilot to assist those cohorts struggling to access affordable housing whilst entering employment	March 2025	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P5

Adopt the Housing Needs SPD and Interim Planning Statement for First Homes to increase the delivery of housing	2.6.1	Update the SPD following consultation and progress to adoption	September 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P1
Work with Durham University to encourage students to access council services	2.7.1	Provide information, advice and guidance stands at freshers' weeks	October 2024	Safer Places Manager (DCC)	P1, P3, P5
	2.7.2	Signpost council services available to students through the council's and Durham University's websites	October 2024	Safer Places Manager (DCC) - Durham University	P1, P3, P5
	2.7.3	Promote council services through communications systems in family hubs/GPs regarding housing information	October 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manger (DCC) - Public Health	P4

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

Outcomes	No.	Actions	Timescale	Lead	Links to other Priorities
Explore the need for additional licensing in Durham City	3.1.1	Consult with Durham University, Durham Student Union, Durham City Parish Council to gain an understanding of issues	October 2024	Business Compliance Manager (DCC)	
	3.1.2	Consider commissioning external consultants as per last assessment of additional licensing need (BRE used in 2012)	December 2024	Business Compliance Manager (DCC)	
Prevent fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions in domestic households to ensure warm and safe houses	3.2.1	Complete the Home Upgrade Grant scheme to retrofit private properties that are off the gas grid	March 2025	Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager (DCC)	P2
	3.2.2	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	March 2025	Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager (DCC)	P2
	3.2.3	Co-ordinated programme of Energy efficiency advice across the Combined Authority and specifically in County Durham	July 2024	Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager (DCC)	

Prepare guidance on keeping houses free from damp and mould to ensure warm and safe houses	3.3.1	Issue new guidance for landlords and tenants in line with the new expectations from government on damp and mould action and in line with the new ombudsman code of guidance	July 2024	Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager (DCC)	
Ensure compliance with the Safety and Quality Standard (Consumer standards 1 April 2024) to ensure houses are warm, safe and fit for residents	3.4.1	Registered Providers to ensure 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	March 2025	Chief Executives of Registered Providers	
	3.4.2	Registered Providers to 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	March 2025	Chief Executives of Registered Providers	
	3.4.3	When acting as landlords, Registered Providers to take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of tenants in their homes and associated communal areas	March 2025	Chief Executives of Registered Providers	
	3.4.4	Registered Providers to provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which they are responsible	March 2025	Chief Executives of Registered Providers	

	3.4.5	Registered Providers to assist tenants seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services	March 2025	Chief Executives of Registered Providers	P4
Implement property inspections to ensure houses are warm, safe and fit for residents	3.5.1	Undertake a programme of formal inspections of empty properties that will target the worst properties contributing to community blight	December 2024	Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager (DCC)	
	3.5.2	Implement an inspection regime that targets occupied properties with lower EPCs	December 2024	Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager (DCC)	
	3.5.3	Continue reactive and proactive inspections of privately rented properties in both Selective Licensing and non-Selective Licensing areas	December 2024	Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager (DCC)	
	3.5.4	Carry out inspections of all properties belonging to landlords signed up to the voluntary accreditation scheme - The Durham Rental Standard	December 2024	Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager (DCC)	
Respond to the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 consultation to ensure the views of County Durham are considered	3.6.1	Prepare a response to the Government Consultation on the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023	July 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P2

Ensure estate and letting agents comply with their responsibilities to protect tenants	3.7.1	Carry out a desktop exercise for Estate and Letting Agents within County Durham to gauge compliance with Tenant Fees, Client Money Protection and Redress Scheme publication requirements	September 2024	Safer Places Manager (DCC)	
	3.7.2	Visit and take appropriate action against any Estate and Letting Agents where the desktop exercise has identified a level of non-compliance with Tenant Fees, Client Money Protection and Redress Scheme requirements	March 2025	Safer Places Manager (DCC)	

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

Outcomes	No.	Actions	Timescale	Lead	Links to other Priorities
Assess the housing needs of specialist groups including older people, children and young people, homeless and people with Learning Disability and Mental Health to ensure their needs are being met	4.1.1	Undertake a Needs Led Accommodation Review	March 2025	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC) - Public Health	P3
Deliver the Disabled Facilities Grants to enable people to stay in their own houses	4.2.1	Prepare a report on future DFG delivery	July 2024	Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager (DCC)	P2
	4.2.2	Create an improved assessment tool for disabled facility grants	June 2024	Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager (DCC)	
Acquire properties to meet housing needs, including those	4.3.1	Acquire the remaining properties to deliver temporary accommodation (from the 40 originally approved)	December 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P2

requiring temporary accommodation	4.3.2	Deliver the Single Homeless Accommodation Programme (SHAP) including central and dispersed properties	December 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P1, P2
	4.3.3	Develop bids for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 additional TA properties • 20 properties for larger families 	December 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P1, P2
	4.3.4	Work with Registered Providers to develop a strategic approach 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	December 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC) - Chief Executives of Registered Providers	P3
Ensure adequate accommodation arrangements are in place, including sufficient temporary accommodation, to avoid refugees with a positive asylum decision from becoming homeless	4.4.1	Work with the Home Office and the North East Migration Partnership to influence the County's allocation within the regional plan for dispersal accommodation	July 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P2
	4.4.2	Undertake a review of the likely demand on temporary accommodation	October 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC) - Housing Access & Independent Living Manager	P2

	4.4.3	Undertake a review of the future demand on temporary accommodation and operational measures available to prevent homelessness within the cohort	October 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P2
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PRIORITY 5: ENSURE HIGH QUALITY PLACEMAKING, CREATING SAFE, ACCESSIBLE, PROSPEROUS AND SUSTAINABLE PLACES TO LIVE

Outcomes	No.	Actions	Timescale	Lead	Links to other Priorities
Develop and implement a programme of Targeted delivery plans (TDPs) to support housing regeneration	5.1.1	Explore opportunities for further resources for regeneration projects such as TDPs.	March 2025	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC) - Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager (DCC)	
Feed into the Regional Infrastructure Plan to ensure it reflects the infrastructure needs to support housing in the North East, including County Durham	5.2.1	Support the NECA Housing and Land Steering Group to contribute to the Regional Infrastructure Plan	December 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P1, P2
Adopt the Design Code SPD to improve the quality of new housing	5.3.1	Update the SPD following consultation and progress to adoption	July 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	
	5.3.2	Prepare Settlement Character Studies for settlements across the County in support of the Design Code SPD with 50 completed	March 2025	Planning Manager (DCC)	

Deliver Horden Masterplan to regenerate the numbered streets in Horden	5.4.1	Acquire properties on Third Street in line with the Horden Masterplan, with the aim of 100% properties acquired through negotiation	March 2025	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P1, P2, P3, P5
	5.4.2	Provide support to owners and occupiers of Third Street to enable the delivery of the Horden Masterplan	March 2025	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P2
	5.4.3	Submit a business case to NECA to apply for Brownfield Housing funding to deliver Phase 2 of the Horden Masterplan	July 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	P1
	5.4.4	Secure a development partner to help deliver future phases of the Horden Masterplan	December 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC)	
Review the Memorandum of Understanding between Durham County Council and Durham University to increase the emphasis on housing issues	5.5.1	Undertake a review of the MoU and explore whether more emphasis on housing and accommodation is required	March 2025	Managing Director Business Durham (DCC)	P1, P2, P3

Explore ways to improve engagement with communities, including students and tenants in relation to placemaking and how they access services	5.6.1	Explore ways to improve engagement with communities, including students and tenants in relations to placemaking and how they access services	October 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC) - Consultation and Engagement Manager (DCC)	P2
Explore opportunities for housing regeneration to support Town Centres to improve their vitality and viability	5.7.1	Explore opportunities for health on the high street/one public estate interventions	December 2024	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC) - Economic Development Manager (DCC) - Public Health	P2
	5.7.2	Explore opportunities for new housing in town centres through the Towns and Villages Programme	March 2025	Strategy and Delivery Manager (DCC) - Economic Development Manager (DCC)	
Enable collaboration between social housing providers to support local place making	5.8.1	Establish a new place-making group which will join-up delivery	Summer 2024	Chief Executives of Registered providers	P2, P3
Reduce digital exclusion of those living in social housing and in rural communities	5.9.1	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	March 2025	Strategic Manager (Digital Engagement) (DCC) - Chief Executives of Registered Providers	P1, P2