

Council July 2024

- 2.5 The government has set a national target for 300,000 new houses to be built each year to tackle the acute shortage of housing across the country. To help meet this target it has also introduced a new, larger, £11.5bn Affordable Homes Programme between 2021-2026 to deliver 180,000 affordable new properties. The government identifies the provision of affordable housing as key to ending the housing crisis, tackle homelessness and provide aspiring homeowners with a step onto the housing ladder.
- 2.6 The government has recently passed new legislation and has published white papers and reports that will impact the housing market. The Housing Strategy will be delivered in the context of the following:
- **Social Housing Act 2023** – forms a new era of regulation for the social housing sector and will enact the reforms outlines in the Social Housing White Paper, which are aimed at improving the regulation of social housing, strengthening tenants’ rights, and ensuring better quality and safer homes for residents. This will be done through stronger powers for the Regulator of Social Housing to carry out inspections, additional Housing Ombudsman powers to publish landlord best practice, ‘Awaab’s Law’ which sets strict time limits for social landlords to address hazards such as damp and mould, new qualification requirements for registered providers.
 - **Renters Reform Bill** – introduced to Parliament in May 2023 but halted from passing into law by the calling of the general election. It planned to abolish Section 21 ‘no fault’ evictions (following reforms to the court system) which would have empowered renters to challenge poor landlords without fear of losing their home. A number of other proposals were included such as making it illegal for landlords and agents to have blanket bans on renting properties to people who receive benefits or have children, a new national landlord register, provisions for landlords to regain possession in some prescribed circumstances

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- 2.5 The previous Conservative government set a national target for 300,000 new houses to be built each year to tackle the acute shortage of housing across the country. The new Labour Government have similarly set an ambitious target of 1.5 million more homes by the end of the parliament.
- 2.6 The previous government had recently passed new legislation and has published white papers and reports that will impact the housing market the new government have identified a number of pieces of legislation in their first King’s Speech that will have an impact on housing. The Housing Strategy will therefore be delivered in the context of the following:
- **Social Housing Act 2023** – passed by the previous Government, it will enact the reforms outlines in the Social Housing White Paper, which are aimed at improving the regulation of social housing, strengthening tenants’ rights, and ensuring better quality and safer homes for residents. This will be done through stronger powers for the Regulator of Social Housing to carry out inspections, additional Housing Ombudsman powers to publish landlord best practice, ‘Awaab’s Law’ which sets strict time limits for social landlords to address hazards such as damp and mould and new qualification requirements for registered providers.
 - **Renters Rights Bill/Renters Reform Bill** – the Renters Reform Bill was introduced to Parliament in May 2023 but halted from passing into law by the calling of the general election. It planned, amongst other things, to abolish Section 21 ‘no fault’ evictions (following reforms to the court system) which would have empowered renters to challenge poor landlords without fear of losing their home. Following the General Election the King’s Speech announced that the new Labour Government would be bringing forward the Renters’ Rights Bill, which was subsequently published in September 2024. Although the

and a requirement for all landlords to join a new Ombudsman scheme and a Decent Homes standard. The Conservative Government placed a great deal of importance on this Bill and it is possible that its proposals may return under a new Government.

- **Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill** – sets out a policy regime to tackle geographical disparities across the UK based on the government setting medium term missions, with a 2030 timeframe, to boost productivity and living standards, spread opportunities and improve opportunities, restore a sense of community and local pride and belonging and empower local leaders and communities. Housing is a key component of this. The Levelling Up paper seeks to work with places in a more joined up way to tackle housing and regeneration issues.
- **Homes England Strategic Plan 2023-2028** – has been developed collaboratively with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The strategy sets out how Homes England will play its part in delivering the government’s Levelling up and housing agendas. Its mission is to “drive regeneration and housing delivery to create high-quality houses and thriving places. This will support greater social justice, the levelling up of communities across England and the creation of places people are proud to call home”. The strategy has five interconnected objectives to deliver on the mission: create vibrant and successful places, build a housing and regeneration sector that works for everyone, enable sustainable houses and places, promote creation of high-quality houses in well-designed places, facilitate the creation of homes people need.

2.7 Homes England pledge to use the strategy to work closely with local authorities, registered providers, government departments and the private sector as partners to deliver change, and intervene directly, exercising the use of their statutory powers to champion both national and local interests.

Renters’ Rights Bill is very similar to the Renters (Reform) Bill, there are some significant differences, although the abolition of Section 21 remains.

- Key additions include:
 - Ban on encouraging or inviting rental bidding, or accepting higher rent;
 - Requirement for advertising to state proposed rent;
 - Remedying hazards (Awaab’s Law); and
 - Additional offences for Rent Repayment Orders.
- Key omissions include:
- No minimum 6 month tenancy;
- No new Mandatory Ground 8A for serious repeated rent arrears; and
- No Lord Chancellor’s assessment before implementation of s21 abolition.
- **Levelling Up and Regeneration Act** – enacted in 2023 and sets out a policy regime to tackle geographical disparities across the UK based on the government setting medium term missions, with a 2030 timeframe, to boost productivity and living standards, spread opportunities and improve opportunities, restore a sense of community and local pride and belonging and empower local leaders and communities. Housing is a key component of the provisions of the Act which aims to deliver a more joined up way to tackle housing and regeneration issues.
- **Homes England Strategic Plan 2023-2028** – was developed jointly by Homes England and the previous Conservative Government. The strategy set out how Homes England will play its part in delivering the previous government’s levelling up and housing agendas. Its mission was to “drive regeneration and housing delivery to create high-quality houses and thriving places. This will support greater social

	<p>justice, the levelling up of communities across England and the creation of places people are proud to call home”. The strategy has five interconnected objectives to deliver on the mission: create vibrant and successful places, build a housing and regeneration sector that works for everyone, enable sustainable houses and places, promote creation of high-quality houses in well-designed places, facilitate the creation of homes people need.</p> <p>2.7 In July 2024 the new Labour Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework for consultation. The changes proposed seek to deliver the Government’s wider objectives primarily relating to increasing housing delivery and achieving economic growth including by giving all councils in England new, mandatory housing targets. The Government will also be making further announcement relating to investment in social and affordable housing, right to buy and decent homes.</p> <p>2.8 We will monitor all of the announcements and legislation of the new Government and reflect them in the actions of the Delivery Plan as part of its regular updates.</p>
<p>3.6. On 28 December 2022 the Government announced a devolution deal with the seven councils across the North East, including Durham.</p>	<p>3.6. On 28 December 2022 the previous Government announced a devolution deal with the seven councils across the North East, including Durham.</p>
<p>5.8. Delivering affordable housing by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering 500 council houses as part of the Council Housing Delivery Programme. This includes both new build schemes and a programme of targeted acquisitions. The original intention was to deliver these 500 houses by 2026, however, the impact of covid 19 and wider economic conditions including inflationary pressures and rising interest rates have presented delivery challenges for the programme. As a result, we are intending to roll the programme forward commencing from the approval of the cabinet report in July 2023 with a six-year delivery plan. 	<p>5.8 Delivering affordable housing by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering 500 new build council houses and associated infrastructure as part of the Council House Delivery Programme. The new build properties will be complemented by a programme of targeted acquisitions. • The original intention was to deliver these 500 houses by 2026, however, the impact of covid 19 and wider economic conditions including inflationary pressures and rising interest rates have presented delivery challenges for the programme. As a result, we are rolling the programme forward commencing from the

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting registered providers to continue to play a significant role in the delivery of affordable housing products in County Durham through their investment plans. 	<p>approval of the cabinet report in July 2023 with a six-year delivery plan to 2029. In reality, if building council houses proves a viable proposition, it is likely that the programme will extend beyond 2029 and the number of new houses built will exceed 500.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting registered providers to continue to play a significant role in the delivery of affordable housing products in County Durham through their investment plans.
	<p>5.35. Well managed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) form an important part of the private rented sector, often providing cheaper accommodation for people whose housing options are limited. Whilst larger HMOs require planning approval, smaller ones (those with fewer than six occupants) are classed as permitted development and therefore, do not require the Council's approval. Evidence from Council tax records and HMO Licences show that most HMOs in the County are located in Durham City and are primarily occupied by students however, HMOs are beginning to appear elsewhere in the County. Most HMOs are well managed however, some can cause issues for neighbouring residents and local communities. In those cases, the council can use its licensing and other powers to ensure landlords are meeting their obligations relating to the management of the property and the wellbeing of their tenants. The County Durham Plan also includes a policy to manage the proliferation of HMOs to maintain mixed and balances communities. This is complemented by a number of Article 4 Directions which require landlords proposing smaller HMOs to apply for planning permission.</p>
	<p>5.44. In preparation for the next iteration of the County Durham Plan we will assess the effectiveness of the approach to HMOs set out in the current Plan, and will undertake a county wide public engagement exercise, to inform a future review and inform residents of what actions are available to local authorities to manage the numbers of HMOs in specific localities. We will therefore also explore the</p>

	<p>availability of evidence relating to the location of HMOs and the potential need for further Article 4 Directions relating to smaller HMOs outside of Durham City.</p>
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