

Newcastle-under-Lyme **HOUSING STRATEGY REVIEW**

2020 - 2025



Summary

Newcastle Borough Council Housing Strategy 2020-2025 was approved and published in 2020.

The Housing Strategy sets out a number of key priorities, under three thematic areas:

- Housing, Health and Wellbeing
- Housing and Economic Recovery
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

These priorities were formulated into an action plan, with the Housing Strategy. Appendix 1 of this document provides a progress summary of these action points.

The Borough Council has achieved a number of notable milestones.

- On 1st April 2023, the administration of Disabled Facility Grants changed from being a commissioned service to in-house delivery. In anticipation of this, the Borough Council updated and published the Housing Assistance Policy, setting out the types of assistance to be available.
- In recognition of the current economic climate with rising inflation, increased utility costs, the likelihood of an increase in the number of residents of the Borough experiencing fuel poverty, The Financial Wellbeing & Debt Advice service, commissioned by the Council and delivered by the Citizens Advice Staffordshire North & Stoke on Trent (SNSCAB) was extended for a potential of 3 years.
- The Borough Council presented the First Draft Local Plan setting out the proposed overall housing and employment growth figures for the Borough, the settlement hierarchy and an initial view on the proposed development sites to meet the housing and employment growth targets over a twenty-year plan period (to year 2040).
- The Council's Capital Strategy and Asset Management Strategy was updated. These are key documents evidencing the Council's approach to its use of resources. The proposed Asset Management Strategy 2023-28 sets out the approach to managing the two types of Council assets; the operational and the commercial.
- Last year, has also been a challenging time, figures released by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities show that homelessness has reached a record high. 298,430 households faced homelessness in England in 2022/23, up by 6.8% compared to the previous year. The number of households in temporary accommodation was recorded at 104,510, also the highest on record. This is also reflective within the Borough, with unprecedented demand for our homelessness and rough sleeping service. The Rough Sleeper Services has developed significantly over the last few years in response to the Government strategy, funding options and an increase in complex situations leading to rough sleeping. The Council has been successful in applying for Government funding for 3 years; July 2022 – 31st March 2025, this has allowed the creation of a support pathway of reactive work, preventative interventions and focus on recovery. Four roles and commissioned services are being funded by RSI.
- Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council were successful in receiving funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which is a central pillar of the government's Levelling Up Agenda.

Housing, Health and Wellbeing and Partnerships

<u>No</u>	<u>Task</u>	<u>Notes/Outcomes</u>
A1	to seek to influence local commissioning and provider's plans to ensure they work together for a common purpose	We continue to work closely with Staffordshire Commissioners through the Newcastle Partnership to ensure opportunities for funding local priorities are maximised.
A2	to continue to lead the work of the Newcastle Partnership to identify opportunities for joint working and responding to local needs	RSI funding has allowed a separate hub to be created in conjunction with local partners to provide one stop shop for rough sleepers and those vulnerable in the community. This hub runs 2 mornings per week and is managed by NBC Rough Sleeper and Homeless Team.
A3	to facilitate the availability and encourage the further development of supported accommodation for our residents who have a range of needs, including physical and/or mental health needs, challenging behaviours and homelessness	The number of supported units available for Newcastle Housing Advice placements has increased from 8-12. Funding has been secured through UK SPF to work on future projects to meet these needs
A4	to work in partnership to deliver an efficient and responsive grants service for adaptations	A new Housing Assistance Policy was approved by Cabinet in March 2023. This identifies the mandatory and discretionary grants available to support disabled facilities. This service was brought in house in April 2023 from being a commissioned service and work is ongoing to develop the service. Since this service returned in house, the council have procured partnership working with OT services, DPS services for contractors, and are near completion of securing a pool of suitably qualified architects to work in partnership to deliver an efficient grants process. We continue to strive to procure local services for local adaptations that are both cost effective and meet the needs of the disabled applicant.
A5	to seek external funding opportunities for the ongoing development of additional supported accommodation with local providers, particularly for those customers with complex needs	Six single units with full time support have been secured by Aspire through the Rough Sleeper Accommodation programme.
A6	to encourage local specialist providers to provide supported accommodation that meets the needs of borough residents, using intelligence we have from the housing advice and housing register functions	A Supported Accommodation Project has been commenced to look at providers, standards and gaps.
A7	to contribute to the delivery of the actions in the health and wellbeing strategy	Report on Homelessness Arrangements presented to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Meeting.
A8	to improve housing standards and the energy efficiency of the housing stock	We continue to respond to all tenant complaints about conditions, requiring and analysing the Energy Performance certificate in all cases.
A9	to target the worst performing landlords with the poorest quality housing	Pro-active inspections undertaken on a risk assessed basis including responsiveness of the landlord to provide safety certification. We use the EPC database and exemptions register to target poor performing properties for energy.
A10	to support responsible landlords and work with them to become professional and grow their business	We continue to offer advice to landlords on compliance with legislation during inspections.
A11	to continue to commit to the Landlord Accreditation Scheme: North Staffordshire	Unfortunately the scheme which was run in partnership can no longer be supported.

A12	to use our stock modelling and other available intelligence to target properties for a pro-active programme of inspections and use our statutory powers to ensure they comply with legal duties	Pro-active activities are undertaken in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation inspections and poor energy performance.
A13	to use the full range of tools and powers available to us to return empty homes to use	Compulsory Purchase action commenced on a long term empty property which ultimately prompted a long term absent owner to take responsibility and sell the property.
A14	to continue to work with Beat the Cold to support households out of fuel poverty	Ongoing support for the vital work of Beat the Cold
A15	to continue to work with Staffordshire Warmer Homes' scheme to bid for funding and deliver energy efficient projects focusing on external wall insulation, loft insulation, air source heat pumps and Solar PV	5,941 -Total ECO measures installed up to end June 2023

Housing and Economic Recovery

No	Task	Notes
B1	to ensure that housing needs are properly assessed and quantified by updating the local evidence base, including the strategic housing market assessment (SHMA) and the gypsy and traveller accommodation assessment (GTAA)	An application was made for funding from the Travellers Site Fund to improve provisions for gypsy and travellers as per the GTAA but due to overwhelming national applications the council were not awarded funding at this stage. The council will re-apply when DLUHC release more funding.
B2	to develop and enhance policies to further improve housing standards in the borough, including design, accessibility, security and environmental performance, taking account of developing national guidelines and published evidence	<p>On 13 January 2021, Cabinet resolved to produce a new Local Plan covering the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme. This plan includes the spatial strategy for development, strategic and detailed local planning policies and site allocations. The Local Plan will be divided into three key stages which will be subjected to public consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues and Strategic Options (stage complete) The Local Plan set out the proposed vision, objectives and key options for the spatial strategy. It also set out the intended detailed policies that the plan would seek to provide. The consultation took place from Monday 1 November until Monday 24 January 2022. • First Draft Plan (stage complete) The second stage of the Local Plan set out a preferred spatial strategy, site allocations and detailed policies to guide future development. It was informed by evidence documents, joint working under the Duty to Cooperate and responses received to the first Issues and Strategic Options document. The consultation on the First Draft Local Plan took place between the 19 June and the 14 August 2023. • Final Plan (publication draft) The final Plan is the conclusion of all earlier stages of plan production, evidence and responses to the two consultations undertaken to date. This Plan is anticipated to be consulted on in the third quarter of 2024 and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate later the same calendar year. Following these key milestones the Local Plan is
B3	to adopt a new a local plan which has a strong planning framework which embodies the principles of sustainability affordability and integration	
B4	to adopt a local plan with an affordable housing policy to meet the identified need	

		<p>subject to Independent Examination by the Planning Inspectorate but the time schedules for this review cannot be determined. We anticipate the Examination will be concluded in year 2025, in order for the Council to adopt the Local Plan.</p> <p>A range of evidence is required to inform the content of policies and proposals in the Local Plan. Some evidence is produced in-house by the Council and a number of documents are produced by specialist external consultants on behalf of the Authority. The Council's planning policy team continually work on developing the evidence base at the same time as the Local Plan document. Policies in the Local Plan will make clear which evidence has been used to inform the wording of the policy. The full evidence library will also be subject to independent scrutiny once the Local Plan has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination.</p>
B5	to continue to work collaboratively with partner organisations, registered providers and Homes England to maximise new affordable housing supply and deliver a real, long term increase in the size of the social housing sector	Table 1008C: Total additional affordable dwellings provided by local authority area - Total Completions for NUL for the period 2020/2023 have been 263 units; 183 social rented, 53 affordable rented and 27 shared ownership.
B6	to continue to implement the asset management strategy	
B7	seek to work jointly with registered providers to deliver housing on our land via a commercial arrangement	<p>Knutton project-additional land acquired with buildings demolished in order for all sites be redeveloped for both residential and industrial purposes. This involves disposing of land to Staffordshire County Council to extend its enterprise centre, the building of a new village hall which will remain in the Borough Council's ownership and the disposal of the remainder of the land for residential development.</p> <p>Former Keele Golf Course-As per the previous Asset Management Strategy's, the former Keele Golf Course site is again listed for possible disposal. The site is currently classified as Green Belt land. Prior to any Council build out and/or sale to third party developers, this classification will need to be changed to allow for any residential development. The proposal is for 900 homes but until the Green Belt classification is amended or not, no such development or sale can be considered.</p> <p>Land Adjacent to Keele Cemetery There are plans to install a solar energy installation on Council owned land that is adjacent to Keele Cemetery, this project is in the planning stage and further details will be provided in a report to the October Cabinet meeting.</p>
B8	to use the Town Deal and future High Street funding to work alongside private investment to unlock key sites both at the gateways to the town centre and in the town centre core	<p>Newcastle Town Deal</p> <p>The former Zanzibar nightclub (Aspire Housing owned) has been demolished. It is intended to be replaced with residential development, along with approximately 6 small enterprise units which the Council will own and manage.</p>

B9	to encourage the development of residential units in sustainable locations within the town centres, which will provide doorstep access to retail, leisure and services, supporting the healthy economy of the town and adding to its footfall	<p>Ryecroft-site of former Civic Offices and the former Sainsburys supermarket and car park. Planning permission has been approved to develop a new multi-storey car park (Castle car park) on the western third of the site. This is being partially funded by the Future High Street's fund. The plans for the middle part of the site include the possible provision of a new hotel. Options are currently being considered for the remainder of the site.</p> <p>York Place Shopping Centre- acquired early 2022 to facilitate the delivery of the Future High Street Fund regeneration proposals and improvements to the town centre. There are only two commercial tenants remaining in the Centre that are due to relocate elsewhere in the Town in the near future. It is proposed to redevelop the site with a mixed use development which will include a small public square in the centre.</p> <p>Midway Car Park Upon completion of the Castle car park on the Ryecroft site, the Midway Car Park will become surplus to requirements and therefore alternative uses will need to be considered. The proposal is to redevelop the site with a contribution from the town deal monies.</p>
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Homelessness and rough sleeping

No	Task	Notes
C1	to ensure that a range of homelessness prevention tools are developed for use by the Newcastle Housing Advice (NHA) service	NHA support through negotiating with landlords and developing solutions where rent arrears may lead to homelessness. Last year, 303 cases of private sector advice was given by the NHA
C2	to establish appropriate data sharing protocols, in order to allow for greater communication about cases to assist individuals and the wider community	One Staffordshire protocol adopted and local data sharing agreements for all forums.
C3	contribute to the work of the borough's Vulnerability (Harm Reduction) Hub and multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC)	Enshrined into activities to work in partnership through multi agency hub.
C4	to seek continual improvements to services for our customers, including development of digital accessibility	There is now a designated computer in the library at Castle House whereby anyone presenting as homeless or in need of emergency temporary accommodation can access the online services, with support from staff if needed.
C5	to explore how the private rented sector can contribute to meeting housing need	Not progressed at this stage as the cost of living concerns has impacted on it.
C6	to actively seek funding opportunities to maintain the rough sleeper co-ordinator and navigator roles	Rough sleeper funding has successfully been acquired until 2025 which has provided 6 additional roles. NBC team leader is actively seeking further funding post 2025 to keep current projects and roles secure but will always seek additional funding.
C7	to continue to monitor and identify our local needs and be able to feed these into future strategic plans	Statistics on homelessness and rough sleeping collated and reported monthly for intelligence and also to inform future plans.
C8	to work closely with DLUHC colleagues to develop more innovative solutions and housing options for our residents with complex needs	Regular liaison with Government Rough Sleeper Advisor

No	Task	Notes
C9	to work with other commissioners to influence the development of joined up services for customers who are homeless and who have complex needs	Joint working undertaken with Stoke-on-Trent City Council , Staffordshire Public Health Commissioners and health care providers
C10	to provide appropriate housing pathways off the streets for those who are sleeping rough in our Borough	The rough sleeper activities have a clear pathway of verification, support to identify accommodation, support to thrive in the accommodation, support for healthcare, emotional and physical wellbeing, support to move on and develop into educations, training etc.
C11	deliver the objectives highlighted in the homelessness strategy action plan	Ongoing-The Homelessness Strategy and its associated action plan has been updated with actions achieved.
C12	to continue to work with our registered provider partners to ensure that the joint housing allocation policy and housing register are working well to ensure households with a housing need gain appropriate access to available social housing stock	Joint Housing Allocations policy reviewed early 2023, changes proposed to Cabinet and consulted.
C13	contribute to the work of the North Staffordshire lettings forum to encourage good practice and opportunities for joint working with registered providers in the borough	The Forum continues to meet with good attendance from RP's and Local Authorities. Best Practice continues to be identified and inform working practices.
C14	to continue to work with registered providers to increase the supply of social housing in the borough	Internal Temporary Accommodation Group established to focus on opportunities including increasing the supply of social housing.
C15	to continue to monitor the use and the costs of temporary accommodation	Internal Temporary Accommodation Group established to focus on opportunities including increasing the supply of social housing. This has identified a number of good practices.
C16	to implement the objectives of the temporary accommodation policy, to ensure that household have access to suitable emergency and/or temporary accommodation for an appropriate duration	Supported units in the borough have increased from 8 to 12. Non supported units increased from 4 to 5 including a three bed property to support families in temporary accommodation.
C17	to create appropriate temporary accommodation pathways for homeless individuals with complex needs to encourage continued engagement	Ongoing activities to increase the supported and no supported temporary accommodation units and the rough sleeper accommodation programme units.
C18	seek to minimise the use of temporary accommodation by preventing and reducing homelessness where possible	Internal project in 2023 to allow the work of NHA to focus on prevention.
C19	to identify opportunities that bridge the gap between temporary accommodation and longer-term housing opportunities	The activities to increase supported accommodation focus on this as the supported element helps with move on options into a secure tenancy.