

HOUSING STRATEGY 2020- 2025 UPDATE

Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

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Background

The Tamworth Housing Strategy 2020-2025, is not statutory requirement, however it affords the Council a clear direction of travel and priorities for all areas of housing activity and is vital for number of reasons.

These reasons include:

- informing our role in increasing housing supply**
- place shaping**
- promoting the role of housing in the creation of safe, thriving and sustainable communities**
- supporting economic growth.**

Strategy agreed at Cabinet in October 2020

The Strategy is the overarching aspiration and includes actions contained within other corporate strategies including:

- **The Local Plan**
- **Future High Streets Project**
- **Climate change policy**
- **Housing Allocations Policy**
- **Housing Acquisitions Policy**
- **Affordable Rents Policy**
- **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy**
- **Private Sector Enforcement Policy**
- **Community Safety Plan**

Priorities Identified

- 1. Enable the provision of sufficient new homes to meet the needs of the existing population and those attracted to the area for work; ensuring a range of provision to reflect both need and aspiration**
- 2. Make best use of existing housing and related assets**
- 3. Ensure housing plays a key role in delivering Tamworth's response to climate change**
- 4. Ensure that everyone who lives or works in Tamworth has access to appropriate housing**

PRIORITY 1

Enable the provision of sufficient new homes to meet the needs of the existing population and those attracted to the area for work; ensuring a range of provision to reflect both need and aspiration

- Joint working in place to consider and ensure new developments are discussed to in line with Local Plan
- Allocation of affordable housing on new sites is in line with policy and that there is a variety of options for rental and shared ownership (10% of new sites must be affordable)
- Variety of options available for aspirational home owners
- Housing Solutions teams fully engaged in ensuring that persons on housing register have nominations rights to new developments
- Future High Street plans in progress
- Council able to purchase properties for rent within Acquisitions policy to meet needs

PRIORITY 2

Make best use of existing housing and related assets

- Tamworth HEAT service (provided by Beat the Cold) re-commissioned for a further 3 years from 2021
- Help is available to all residents in Tamworth to make homes as energy efficient as possible. This can range from practical, independent advice, to financial assistance in the form of grants or loans. An energy efficient home is a warmer home which is also cheaper to heat and will improve health and wellbeing.
- Tackling Empty Homes – within Partnership business plans for 2023/24
- Licensing of Homes of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) ongoing where necessary
- Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy in place enabling support for tenants in the private rented accommodation
 - Works in Default for filthy and verminous private property
 - Improvement notices to landlord for damp and mould allowing vulnerable tenant to remain in property
 - Prohibition notices issued to landlords where properties can not be rented out.

Priority 3

Ensure housing plays a key role in delivering Tamworth's response to climate change

- Council's target of becoming net-zero carbon for its activities by 2050 with an aspiration to achieve 2030 should the council be financially able to do so.
- Project underway to identify Private Landlords who are not compliant with Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) Regulations 2015 - ensuring private rented properties have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) an energy rating of `E` or above. (£20,000 grant received)
- Delivery of 23 insulation projects in Wilnecote and Belgrave through the Local Authority Deal funding
- Warm Homes activities including new gas installations
- Housing Revenue Account business plan – planned investment in Decent Homes Plus standards to include EPC of C+ by 2028

Priority 4

Ensure everyone who lives or works in Tamworth has access to appropriate housing that promotes wellbeing

Provide appropriate information on housing options and choices

- Tamworth Advice Centre contract awarded 2021 -2025 to Mid Mercia CAB
- Debt and tenancy sustainment advice in place
- Housing options advice available through Housing Solutions team
- Tamworth Housing Allocations Policy updated 2021
- Local lettings plan in place for new developments (Tinkers Green and Kerria) ensuring access to affordable rents for key workers
- Range of housing options available on new developments:-
 - Nominations rights for persons on Housing Register
 - Options for shared ownership
- Right to Buy schemes in place

Priority 4

Ensure everyone who lives or works in Tamworth has access to appropriate housing that promotes wellbeing

Reduce homelessness, its causes and consequences

- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 and action plan in place
- Homelessness Prevention grant funding to sustain tenancies either social or in the private sector
- Support for vulnerable young people to access appropriate accommodation
- Review of temporary accommodation completed and in place through Housing Solutions team
- Rough sleeping project continues with Heart of Tamworth (Homeless Prevention Grant funding) including mental health support
- Night shelter provision planned for Winter 2022
- Partnership working in line with Community Safety plan – referrals to appropriate agencies
- Practical support for persons facing fuel poverty via TAC and Community Together CIC

Priority 4

Ensure everyone who lives or works in Tamworth has access to appropriate housing that promotes wellbeing

Increase tenancy sustainment rates, particularly in the private rented sector

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Midlands Foundation Partnership Trust project to maintain tenancies of residents with mental health concerns who are known to service (commences September 2022)

- Tenancy support and advice for persons acquiring first property
- Advice available through Tamworth Advice Centre and Private Sector Team
- All homeless people have personal housing plan in place
- Domestic abuse provision in place
- Support for private tenants with illegal eviction notices and advice for landlords.

Priority 4

Ensure everyone who lives or works in Tamworth has access to appropriate housing that promotes wellbeing

Ensure appropriate advice and funding is available to support older people to live independently in appropriate accommodation

- Tamworth Borough Council operate successful sheltered housing schemes for those wishing to live independently
Age reduction to 50 years for access to sheltered to sustain independent living for those with long term needs
- Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) available through Millbrook Healthcare/Staffs County Council Adult socialcare
- Disabled Facilities Adaptation grants – Council tenants additional funding to sustain independent living
- Tamworth retained Dementia Friendly Community status – working with AGE UK, Dementia UK and Home Instead to deliver advice, guidance and support for people living with dementia and their carers

Future Proposed Actions

- Update to the Empty Homes Strategy to increase housing provision
- Older Persons Housing Needs Strategy – seeking to understand development needs older people in our communities in conjunction with Staffordshire County Council, other Registered Providers and Integrated Care Board
- Determine criteria for First Homes new homes purchase for Tamworth residents
- Develop existing relationships with the Voluntary Sector to commission wrap around support to maintain healthier communities and sustain independent living
- Develop an approach to the emerging needs of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in line with Government policies