



Homes Strategy 2020-2025



Foreword from Cabinet Member

I am very pleased to commend this strategy document to residents in Lancaster district and in particular the members and officers of Lancaster City Council. The document brings together a full overview of the housing achievements of the last strategy with aspirations of the current council administration and the new requirements of our Local Plan and government strategy.

The context in which this strategy has been written has changed hugely since the last document was written. We now take into great account factors that include the effects of flooding, rising air pollution, extremes of weather, and the desire for this district to become carbon neutral by 2030. The Covid-19 lockdown is reflected in the changing need for indoor and outdoor space and for greater attention to housing quality, especially for older people and for those in private rented accommodation. Community links have been hugely strengthened by the lockdown experience and we now see listening to the community voice as a very significant influence in decisions about new homes.

New housing continues to be important in order to meet the undersupply of social and affordable housing. However, this document also recognises the urgent need for retrofitting current homes for thermal efficiency both in social housing stock but also in the high number of privately owned homes with low EPC rating. Workplace skills in this sector are low everywhere and the strategy will support extra jobs, apprenticeships and the skilling of the council workforce in order to reach climate change objectives more quickly and stimulate the local economy.

Providing homes is more than a roof over someone's head and this strategy develops the city council's long standing commitment to support the health and the social benefits of our housing expressed through new extra care schemes, regeneration of private and social housing in areas suffering from anti-social behaviour, community-led schemes and specialist accommodation for vulnerable young people, those with disability, veterans and ex homeless people.

The city council has never stood alone in providing homes for those in need in this district. It has always worked with developers, Registered Providers and other agencies including the county council to provide housing of all types and tenures. We expect these relationships to continue and strengthen through the Local Plan and the Local Plan Review. However the strategy also acknowledges the council's need to provide leadership and excellence in building standards, in retro-fitting and in letting properties for affordable rent so I welcome the discussion of the establishment of a council-owned trading company to allow us to achieve these aims.

Many thanks are owed to our Strategic Housing officer and many in the Housing and Planning teams for the production of this excellent document. It maps a way forward that is exciting and innovative and deserves the widest support.

Councillor Caroline Jackson, Portfolio Holder for Housing

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1

Introduction



- 1.1** Lancaster City Council's Homes Strategy sets out the strategic direction for housing activity in Lancaster district taking account of the identified housing need and supply alongside the quality of new and existing housing stock, by establishing a strategic framework which contributes positively towards the district's growth.
- 1.2** Lancaster City Council's Ambition plan sets out the vision and priorities to allow Lancaster district to thrive as a vibrant regional centre in the north of England and by ensuring it is a great place to live work and visit. The council's objective is to care for and improve the lives of our residents and diverse communities across the district and, in particular to protect those who are the most vulnerable. Whilst being in the midst of the national and global impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, and accepting that the full effects and implications are not yet known, the council must continue to set its priorities and objectives for the district for the next five years, accepting that many of its plans and ambitions are predicated on a number of funding sources being available to bring them into fruition.
- 1.3** In January 2020, the council re-affirmed its priorities: -
- A Sustainable District** achieving net zero carbon by 2030 by implementing a series of measures which include waste management, increasing sustainable energy and decreasing energy consumption, working collaboratively towards an accessible and inclusive low transport system, supporting communities to be resilient to flooding and the wider effects of climate change and increasing biodiversity
- An Inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy** supporting development of new skills and access to employment to reduce inequality within a more environmentally sustainable local economy, increasing more sustainable supply chains and using our land property finance and procurement to benefit local communities.
- Happy and Healthy Communities** supporting wellbeing and ensuring local communities are engaged involved and connected, addressing health and income inequalities, improving mental wellbeing and loneliness, seeking early intervention approaches, developing housing to ensure residents of all incomes are comfortable, warm and can maintain their independence, improving access to cultural and leisure activities as well as access to good quality neighbourhoods, parks, beaches and open space.
- A Co-operative Kind and Responsible Council** listening to communities and treating our residents with respect, working in partnership with local residents communities and partners, delivering excellence through customer focussed services, working to improve service delivery and operations of the council, providing value for money and ensuring the council is financially resilient and sustainable.
- 1.4** This is an exciting period for Lancaster district. The Eden North Project is gaining momentum with initial feasibility funding being provided by Lancaster City Council, Lancashire County Council and Lancaster University, in principle agreement has been secured around site acquisition, extensive consultation has been taking place with local communities and a plan/vision for the project has been established. Lancaster City Council has submitted a bid to the Future High Streets Fund to lever in significant investment funding towards strategic regeneration and infrastructure. The 2020 Budget announcement also confirmed that through a bid made by Lancashire County Council, Lancaster district has been successful in securing Housing Infrastructure Funding to deliver the reconfiguration of Junction 33 of the M6 Motorway.

2



Strategic Context

- 2.1** Housing has a critical role in helping the Council achieve its vision and priorities linking directly to the Local Plan by making sure there is a sufficient supply of good quality housing to meet the needs and requirements of our district population. Increasing the supply of affordable housing is fundamental to this, and the council has already developed a range of planning and housing policies that helps us to grow the existing affordable housing portfolio across the district, as well as ensuring that new homes are built to better space standards and can be adapted more easily to meet the changing needs of our diverse communities.
- 2.2** In 2019 the council approved its Capital Strategy which is a key component of the Medium- Term Financial Strategy, supporting and informing the Council's vision and key priorities. It sets out how the council determines its priorities for capital investment alongside a long-term financing plan. There are clear linkages between the Capital Strategy and the Homes Strategy in terms of investment opportunities that could present themselves if the council seeks to implement a programme of housing and regeneration priorities and these will be considered further in Chapter 7 page 31.



National Policy Context

2.3

Since the last Housing Strategy was published in 2012, there have been a series of national policy changes which have directly impacted on housing. The thrust of government policy was initially set out in Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England published in November 2011 whereby the coalition administration sought to increase the supply of housing nationally: -

- A series of incremental reforms to the Planning system - with more to come in later www.rtpi.org.uk/media/5036/priorities-for-planning-reform-in-england.pdf
- Accelerating house building through a number of measures and providing access to loan finance for building and construction projects as well as infrastructure funding.
- Offering incentives for home ownership such as First Buy and Help to Buy and the Right to Buy extension (which was subsequently put on hold).
- Implementing changes affecting the social and affordable housing sector including the continuation of the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme (SOAP).
- Bolstering the private rented sector through Build to Rent finance, providing funding to tackle rogue landlords and the establishment of a new Private Rented Sector Taskforce.
- Offering financial incentives to Local authorities through New Homes Bonus payments for dwelling completions and additional bonuses for affordable housing completions and bringing empty homes back into use.
- Planned measures to the address quality, sustainability and design of new homes, noting no major changes have come to fruition in the intervening period other than mandatory changes to Building Regulations, and a new duty for local authorities to maintain a Self-Build and Custom Build Register and the outcomes of the future homes standard are still awaited.
- The National Design Guide published in 2019 to help shape the delivery of well-designed places and communities that are beautiful successful and sustainable, how this can be achieved in practice and should form an integral part of developing new housing.

2.4

As part of central government austerity measures, a series of welfare reforms have been implemented through the state benefits system which has directly impacted on housing affordability including caps to Housing Benefit payments benchmarked at the Local Housing Allowance rate for private rented sector tenants and the Single Room Rent for single people under the age of 35, targeting under-occupation of the social housing stock through the bedroom tax, changes to other welfare benefits including Council Tax Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance, Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payments, changes to State Pension entitlement, Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans, the implementation of the Benefit Cap, changes to Support for Mortgage Interest payments and the transition towards Universal Credit.

2.5

The impact of the welfare reforms manifested in many households experiencing significant financial hardship coupled with increases in energy costs also giving rise to increased levels of fuel poverty. Furthermore, in the light of cuts to Supporting People funding reducing the low level support services and interventions for households that fall below statutory service thresholds, the cumulative impact upon social housing providers has been to try and bridge that gap in terms of providing the necessary support that enable residents to sustain their accommodation and bolster homeless prevention services.

2.6

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 intended to provide a new statutory framework for the delivery of starter homes. The Act defined starter homes as new homes costing up to £250,000 (£450,000 in London), to be available at a minimum 20% discount on market value to eligible first-time buyers. The legislation included provisions to introduce a general duty on planning authorities in England to promote the supply of starter homes, and a specific duty to require a minimum number or proportion of starter homes on certain residential development sites. To prepare the way for increasing capacity for low cost home ownership products, under the leadership of David Cameron, the government also withdrew grant funding to support the development of social/affordable rented homes this has directly impacted on the number of affordable housing completions achieved in Lancaster district, with affordable housing completions reducing year on year since 2017/18 and only 41 achieved in 2019/20.

2.7

Under Theresa May's administration, the government reinstated affordable homes grant to support rented tenure and also re-introduced grant to support social rented units for areas which were deemed to be in the greatest need. The methodology used to measure need meant that relatively few local authorities in the North West would benefit from this change in policy including Lancaster.

2.8

Since then the Government have moved away from Starter Homes and is now consulting on First Homes. The First Homes model seeks to provide a more flexible form of low-cost home ownership where local authorities may be able to set the level of discount appropriate for their area. The model also seeks to provide a discount in-perpetuity, rather than the initial 5-7 year period that was initially suggested in the Starter Homes product.

2.9

Whilst the council recognises that the First Homes product could provide a more suitable form of intermediate affordable housing to meet the local need, its success will be dependent upon how much flexibility local authorities can lever to ensure that the right level and mix of affordable housing can still be achieved in the years to come.

2.10

Overcoming Challenges with Opportunities – Whilst drawing attention to a range of national policy drivers and challenges that have directly affected the need and demand for affordable housing, this has also given rise to Local Authorities thinking differently about how they can directly affect and contribute towards the supply of new housing after a long period of inactivity. This has come about through the setting up of Local Authority Housing Companies. The 2011 Localism Act gives councils the powers to establish their own private companies, enabling them to borrow money more cheaply and avoid government-imposed restrictions. Many councils are using these freedoms as a vehicle to support and deliver housing amongst other things, aligning to their own local needs and priorities and using this as a means of increasing the supply of affordable housing. Furthermore, in 2017 the government relaxed the strict controls of the Housing Revenue Account (the ring fenced account in which housing rents are managed) and abolished the borrowing cap which again provides a further opportunity for the council to allow borrowing to increase the portfolio of housing held and managed within the Housing Revenue Account.

2.11

These new freedoms could provide the catalyst to allow Lancaster City Council, for the first time in many years, to commence a programme of house building in Lancaster district, making a strong contribution to the overall and quality of housing to meet a local need, and positively contributing to climate change. The council's ambitions are set out in detail in Section 7 of this Strategy.

3

Local Context



Lancaster District Population

- Lancaster has a population of 142,500 people. The district has a higher percentage of working age people than the regional or national averages, with 63.3% of people, compared to 62.5% across the North West, and 62.9% nationally.
- The presence of two universities in the city reflect the larger than average rates of people aged 15-24 but the district is also a popular place for older people to retire with higher than average people aged 65 and over (1.9% more than the regional average).
- Unemployment at 4.5% is broadly in line with the regional (4.4%) and national averages (4.3%)
- Lancaster has a higher white population than the Lancashire average, with 95.6 of the population compared to a county average of 92%.
- Lancaster has the 29th highest population of Gypsy/Irish traveller people of any district in the country (326 in total), with 331 people identifying within this ethnicity, considerably higher than any other authority in Lancashire.
- At the 2011 census the average household size in the district was 2.2 people, slightly below the County average of 2.3 people.
- The district has a negative natural growth rate i.e. there are more deaths than births, however, in recent years this has fluctuated.

Economy, employment prospects and skills

- The district is the 125th most deprived out of 326 in England 2015 IMD, however, this has declined from 133rd in 2010.
- Average gross full-time wages of residents in the district are £512.3 (£26,640 per annum), lower than both the regional (£514.5 per week) and national levels (£552.7 per week)
- GCSE attainment is similar to that of the County average, in 2015/16 'Attainment 8' measures for the average score in Lancaster district was 50.0. This was ahead of the average of 49.7 for the Lancashire County Council area.
- There are estimated to be around 17,000 higher education students in the district.
- Approximately 35.9% of the district's population are qualified to NVQ level 4 (degree level), compared to 34.5% for the North West and 38.6% nationally.
- Out of work claimants are higher within the district at 3.0% of residents aged 16-64 compared to 2.8% for the North West and 2.2% for Great Britain.

Health and wellbeing

- There are a higher proportion of people living in fuel poverty (13.0% of the population) than the national average (11.1%) broadly in line with the County average of 12.9%. 2016 figures.
- There is a difference of 10.5 years for males and 7.0 years for females in life expectancy between the most deprived areas and the least deprived areas. This compares to a rate of 9.9 for males and 8.2 for females for the Lancashire 12 area (excluding Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen).
- Under 75 mortality rates are worse than the national average, with 368.5 per 100,000 aged under 75 compared to 333.8 nationally. This compares to 365.2 for Lancashire 12.
- Physical activity rates are higher than the national average, with 74.3% of adults aged 19+ participating in physical activity compared to the national average of 66.0%. This compares to 65.3% for Lancashire 12.
- Under 18 conceptions (21.1 per 1,000 females aged 15-17) are higher than the national average of 18.8 per 1,000. This compares to 22.4 for Lancashire 12.
- Infant mortality is lower than the national average, with a rate of 2.7 per 1,000 birth rate compared to 3.9. This compares to 4.5 per 1,000 for Lancashire 12.
- Excess winter deaths are better than the national average 16.9% (excess winter deaths compared to average non winter deaths). This compares to 18.1% for Lancashire 12.

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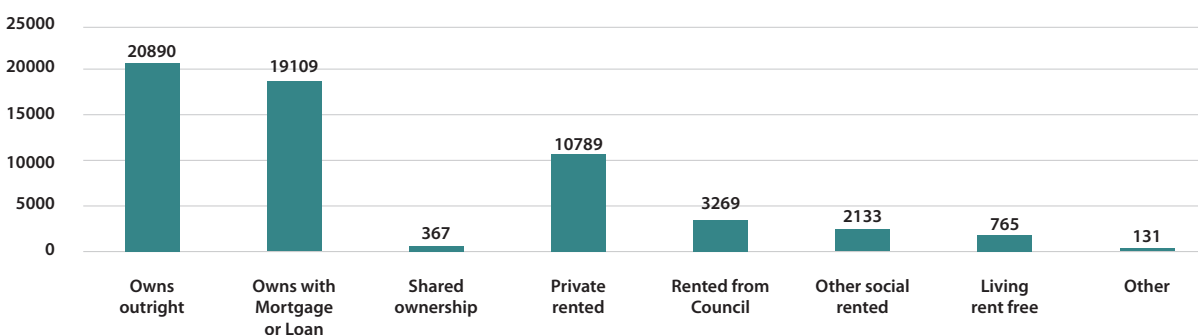
The Lancaster Housing Market



The Strategic Housing Market Assessment II

- 4.1** Lancaster City Council commissioned Arc4 to understand a District Wide Housing Needs Survey in 2017, which formed the basis of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Part II). Planning Policy Guidance requires that housing needs be assessed in relation to the relevant Housing Market Area and to define the geographical area which is most appropriate. The study took account of housing prices, household migration, search and travel to work patterns and boundaries. The study concluded that Lancaster's Housing Market Area exhibits a degree of distinctiveness measuring median price changes between 2000-2016 and a higher growth compared with other neighbouring authorities and across the region. Post Brexit, it is not yet clear how household and international migration patterns will change across the UK. However, previous studies have consistently identified Lancaster as a self-contained housing market area with over 85% of residents living and working in the district with notable links with South Lakeland, Wyre and Preston in relation to migration and travel to workflows.
- 4.2** Data from the Assessment identified that there was a total of 64,231 dwellings in the district with 60,735 households. Council Tax data from March 2020 indicates that the number of residential dwellings has now increased to 65,695 across Lancaster district.
- 4.3** Three-bedroom homes are the most common in the district representing 39.5% of properties, only 11.2% are one bedroom and 4.3% five or more bedrooms. Larger properties are generally found more in the rural areas whilst smaller properties are found more in the urban parts of the district.
- 4.4** According to the English Housing Survey there is a greater proportion of older properties in the district, with 47.5% being built before 1944, as opposed to 36.9% nationally.

Tenure Split in Lancaster district



- 4.5

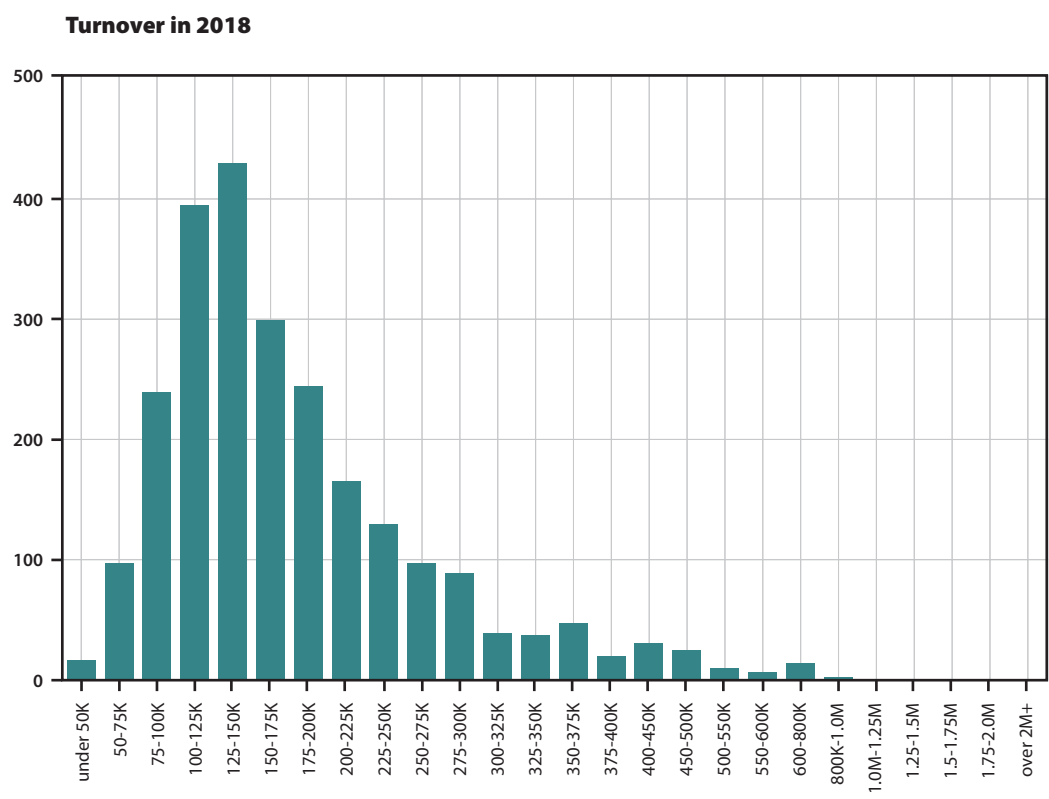
The mix and type of housing by tenure varies greatly across Lancaster district. Around 20% of owner-occupied properties are detached with only 6% being apartments and maisonettes and by contrast in the private rented sector 9% are detached and some 32% are apartments and maisonettes.
- 4.6

Of the total residential dwellings across the district, 69% are houses, 15% are apartments and maisonettes, 14% are bungalows and less than 2% are caravans or park homes. In relation to size, 11% of the existing dwelling stock have one bedroom/bedsit, 30% have two bedrooms, 40% have three bedrooms and 19% have four bedrooms.
- 4.7

The Council is a stock retaining authority, represented by 5.6% of dwellings being local authority owned, lower than the national rate of 6.7% but higher than the County average of 2.2%.
- 4.8

There are 858 long term empty homes (March 2020) in the district which represents less than 2% of dwelling stock. The number of second homes in Lancaster district is 593.

Graph of residential property sales in 2018



Note:
The chart shows the number if residential sales in the area by price band using data from HM Land Registry.

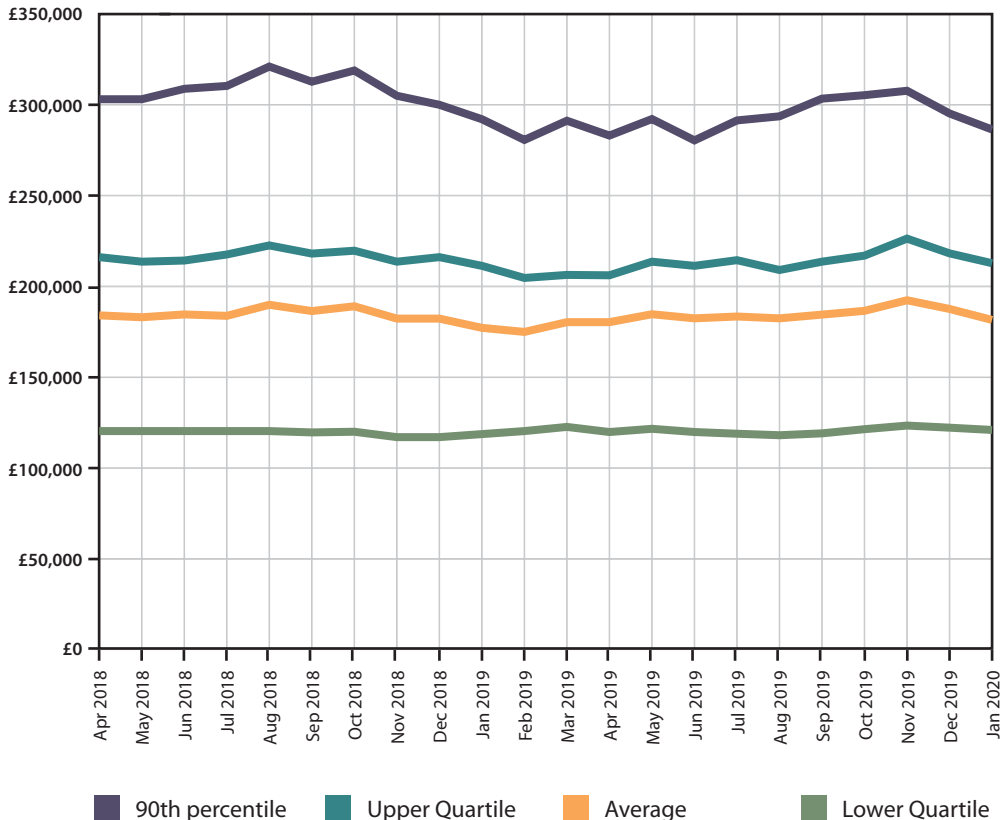
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Key Facts – Property Prices (based on sales and valuations over period Jan-March 2020)

- The average house price in the Lancaster District is £196,200 compared to a regional average of £208,800. Average house prices are 6 times higher than average single income in Lancaster
- The number of bedrooms is a key determinant of price, current average prices in the district by bedroom count and property type are as follows:
 - 1 bedroom flat - £90,300
 - 2 bedroom flat - £118,600
 - 2 bedroom house - £144,200
 - 3 bedroom house - £178,000
 - 4 bedroom house - £268,600

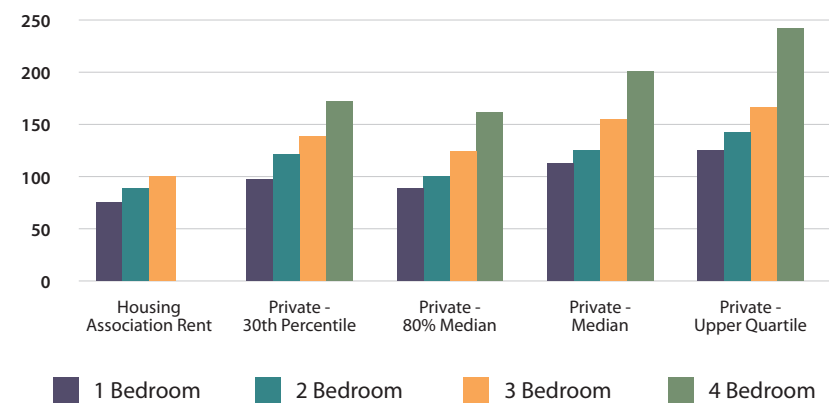
Analysis of House Prices

Pricing level over time



Note:
The chart shows the average property price over time for all types of housing in the area selected. It compares the lower quartile house price to the average price, the upper quartile price and the price at the 90th percentile over time. Small sample sizes can distort the price over time in some areas. The data for this analysis is based on data from Hometrack's Automated Valuation Model.

Rents by Bedcount



Housing Affordability

- 4.9
- The Strategic Market Assessment suggests that around 6000 households are in need of affordable housing (10% of the population) utilising the government’s prescribed methodology to calculate affordable housing need.
- 4.10
- The assessment predicts that Lancaster district’s population will increase by 6% by 2033 and over the next few decades there will be a marked increase in the number and proportion of residents aged 65 and over (from 28,500 in 2017 to 37,000 in 2033).

Assessment Recommendations

- 4.11
- That new housing provision should align to the needs and aspirations identified in the study across sub-areas and that new housing development should contain a wide mix of house types and sizes across tenures to meet local need and support economic growth.
- 4.12
- Going forward, a tenure split of 55% social/affordable rented and 45% intermediate tenure is suggested.
- 4.13
- That the range of housing options available to older people needs to be diversified with action taken to increase the availability of accessible and adaptable homes and specialist homes for the elderly.
- 4.14
- That strategic challenges exist in reducing the level of vacant dwellings and improving the quality of existing dwellings to achieve better thermal efficiency and modern standards.

3 times income

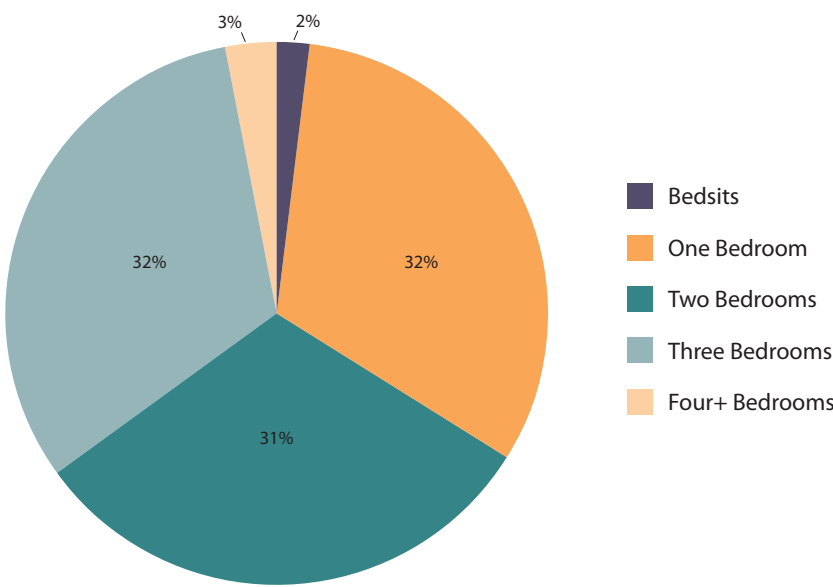
	Percent of households priced out of market
FTB households - Flats	33.57%
FTB households - Terraced houses	52.38%
FTB households - Semi-detached houses	60.20%
FTB households - Detached houses	84.57%
Owner occupier - Flats	33.57%
Owner occupier - Terraced houses	43.71 %
Owner occupier - Semi-detached houses	60.20%
Owner occupier - Detached houses	77.29%

Note:
This table shows the percentage of households priced out of the market in the area. The analysis differentiates between house types and whether or not the purchasers are first time buyers. This is a modelled figure which is derived from the house price and income assumptions in the ‘graph’ section of this analysis. The figures displayed are simply derived from incomes and house prices and do not account for the existing tenures of local residents. The house price data is based on data from the Hometrack Automated Valuation Model and the incomes data is supplied by CACI. Further details on these sources are available in the Help and Information section.

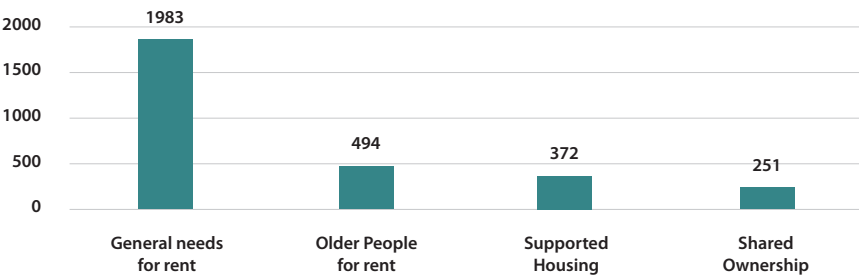
Social Housing Sector in Lancaster District

Lancaster City Council is the largest provider of social housing in Lancaster district with a total dwelling stock of 3702 (2019) broken down as follows:

LA Social Housing Stock by Bed Size



Registered Provider stock portfolio within Lancaster district is currently 3,100 units (2019) with 35 different organisations owning stock which broken down below: -



Average rent levels – Council Housing Stock

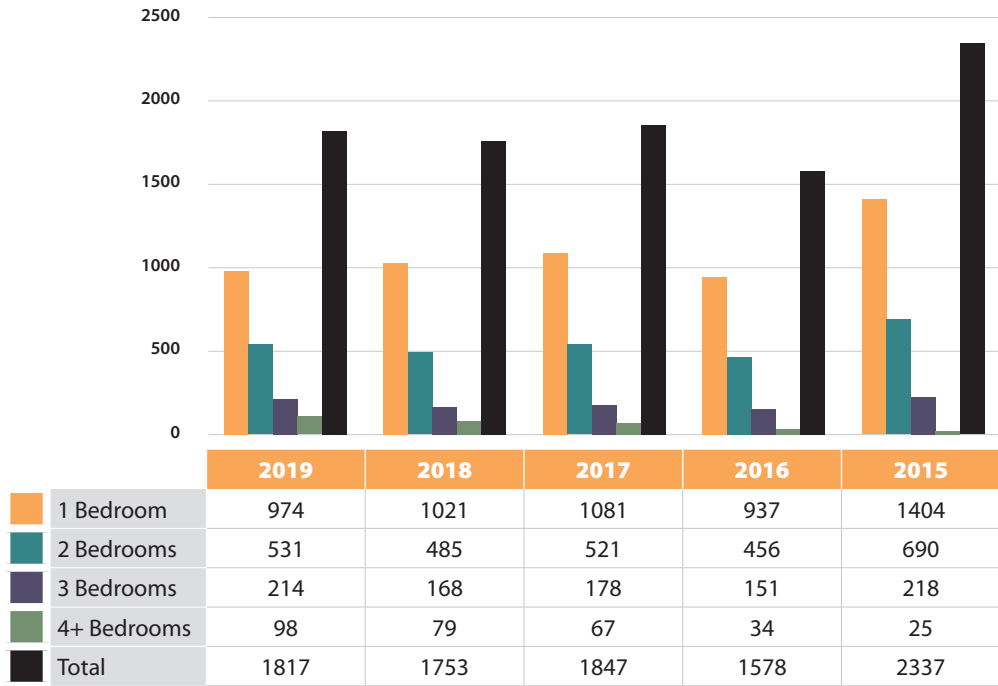
Bedrooms	Average of 2019/20 Actual	Average of 2019/20 Formula
Bedsit	59.17	62.21
1	64.93	69.75
2	69.72	74.82
3	77.33	84.94
4	82.43	93.13
5	87.40	106.32
6	73.77	98.14
Average rent	70.64	76.54

Demand for Social Housing

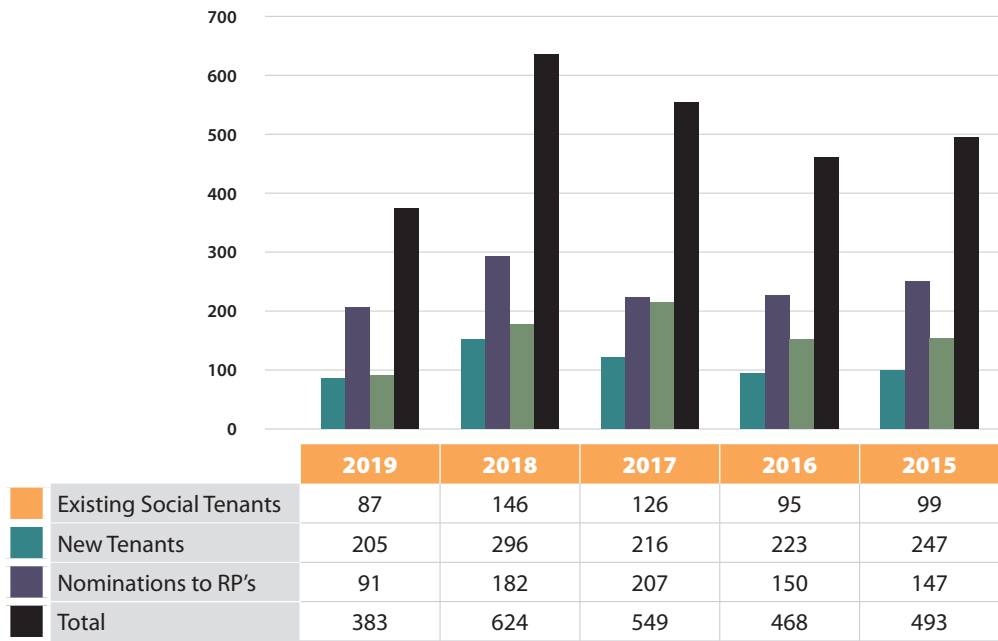
4.15 The analysis of applicants included on the Housing Register since 2015 confirms that the ratio by bedroom size year on year stays at a consistent trend. The marked decrease in the number of households included on the Housing Register since 2015 was because of a comprehensive review of the Housing Register and typically a percentage of applicants do not respond and will eventually be removed from the Housing Register.

4.16 It is clear from the analysis of the council's social housing stock and the waiting list data that there is a mismatch between existing supply and presenting need. In recent years, Registered Providers have been encouraged to bring forward schemes which include one bedroom accommodation in response to the historic under-supply and also the impact of the bedroom tax which has affected all social housing providers although this continues to be a key challenge in levelling out the supply and local need.

Analysis of the Housing Register by Year and Bed Size



All social housing lettings from Housing Register



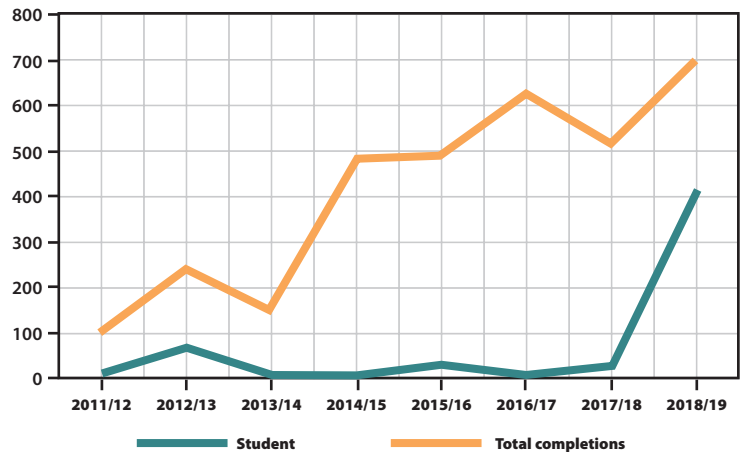
4.17 Annual lettings in the social housing sector in the last five year peaked during 2017 and 2018. This was largely due to the number of new build affordable housing units that were handed over in the period which were 168 and 148 dwellings respectively, and in turn created additional movement within the council's housing stock when tenants move into alternative social housing stock.

4.18 Since 2019, there has been a notable decrease in the supply of new build affordable housing completions and this is a trend that is expected to continue. The main underlying factors for the reduction is the previous changes to affordable homes programme funding which saw grant funding being channelled into low cost home ownership schemes, and whilst this has now been reinstated, during the intervention period pending the council's Local Plan full adoption, there have been significant challenges for Registered Providers to identify and secure suitable sites that can deliver new schemes despite the fact that there is a significant appetite from partners to do so. Furthermore, whilst there has been a shift by Registered Providers to diversify their housing offer and increase the supply of low cost home ownership products and market housing, it is fair to say that some local partners have a strong preference to deliver schemes that provide rented units which remains closest to their core values, operational management practices and perceived risks associated with changing housing markets.

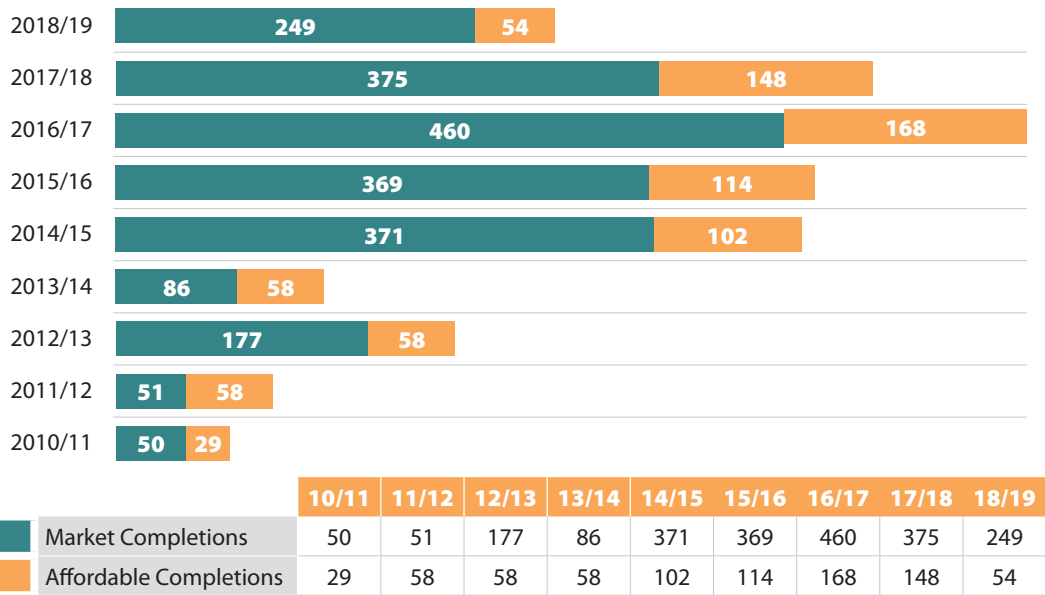
Dwelling Completions

4.19 The Housing Land Monitoring Report illustrates the number of new dwellings completed. 3428 new dwellings (including student accommodation) were completed in the district over the period between 2011 to 2019. 789 of these were affordable housing, which is a mixture of affordable completions required as part of market housing schemes (through Section 106 obligations) and schemes brought forward by Registered Providers which were wholly affordable housing with grant funding.

Dwelling completions



Annual dwelling completions by type



5



Achievements at a Glance

5.1

During the Housing Strategy period 2012-2017 the following achievements have been made: -

- 2898 new residential dwellings have been built
- 760 affordable housing completions across Lancaster district
- A new service/facility for women fleeing Domestic Violence was opened
- A new 23 unit supported housing scheme for single homeless people was delivered in partnership with Adactus Housing Group
- A new supported housing scheme for people with learning disabilities was delivered in partnership with Impact Housing
- £760K collected from new developments as financial contributions towards affordable housing
- The council provided grant funding to directly support 6 affordable housing schemes provided by Impact, Great Places, Guinness and Adactus (with 15 units achieving wheelchair standards)
- The council provided 2 sites to support the delivery of affordable housing schemes by Guinness and Adactus
- The council created a new Empty Homes Officer post to take a strategic approach to tackling empty properties in Lancaster district and an Empty Homes Strategy was approved in 2017
- With funding received from central government, the council has directly supported community led housing in Lancaster district, provided funding for two new community led housing schemes, created a dedicated officer resource and set up a sub-regional Community Led Enabling Hub with local authority partners in Cumbria.
- The council has increased its activities around homelessness prevention and set up a new partnership to increase the supply of temporary supported housing for single homelessness people
- Around 500 households rehoused each year (new and existing tenants) either by the council or Registered Providers.
- £700K grant funding was provided to homeowners to make their properties more flood resilient
- Morecambe's West End – a regeneration scheme has been completed at the Phase 1 Scheme at Chatsworth Gardens through a new partnership with Placefirst, with further schemes in the pipeline
- Lancaster Moor North has been completed which has brought back into use the large Listed Annexe Building achieving an outstanding restoration and conversion into residential accommodation alongside a series of new build housing completions and a new retail store was secured as part of planning requirements which has provided a much needed key service in East Lancaster.
- The regeneration of Luneside West has been completed providing a mix of new market and affordable housing. After a long period of inactivity and uncertainty, development was unlocked through a range of central government funding, private sector funding and £4m Growing Places funding, a new scheme has been implemented at Luneside East which is currently under construction.

6



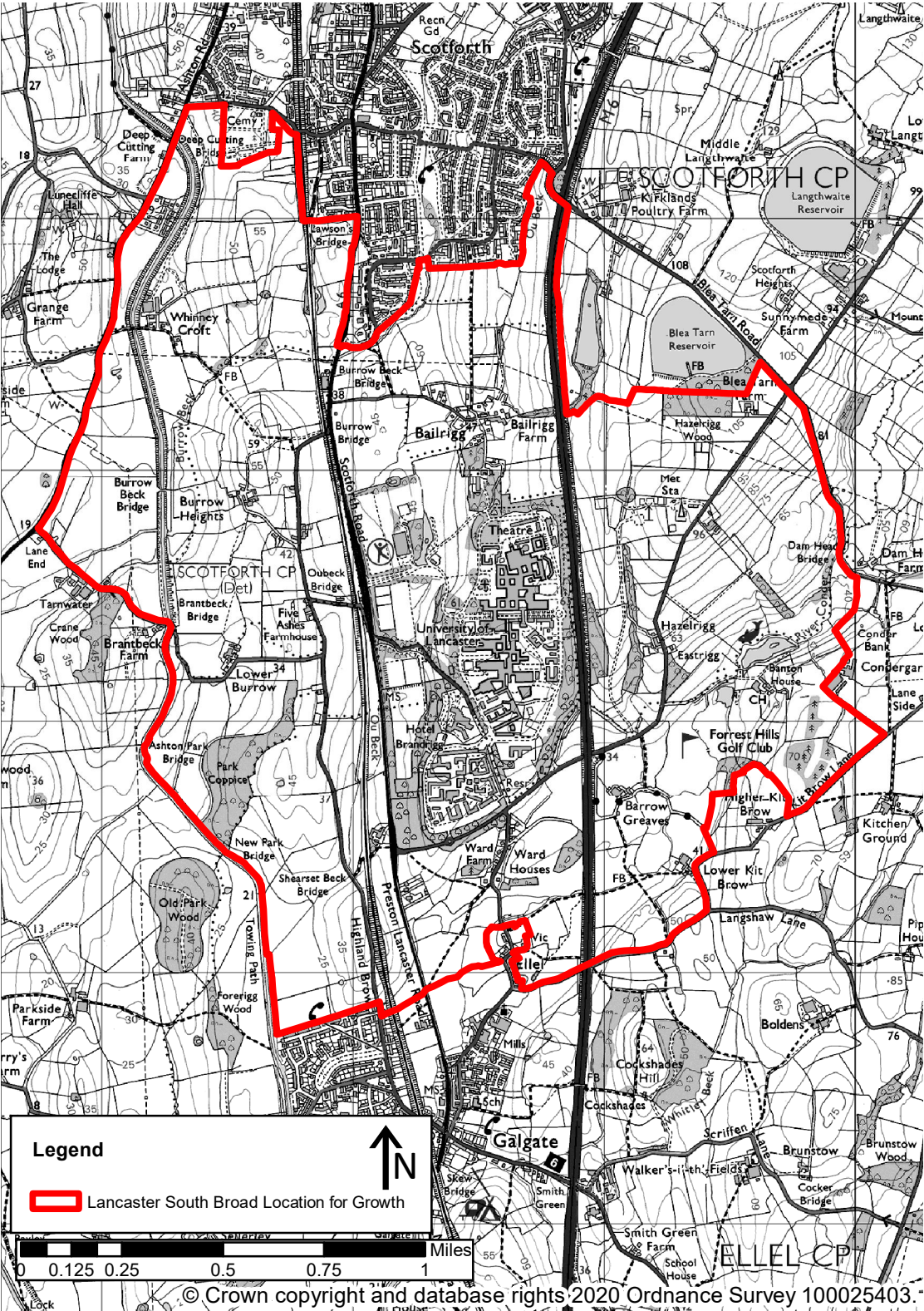
Housing growth regeneration priorities and climate change

- 6.1** The Lancaster District Local Plan sets out plans for regeneration and growth of the district. It includes measures to ensure housing growth is planned and delivered in a sustainable way, secures opportunities for regeneration and plans for infrastructure.
- 6.2** The Housing Strategy and the Local Plan are intended to work together to manage housing and ensure that local needs are met. Both rely on the same evidence, most notably, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The Local Plan sets out the overall development planned for within the district; and the Housing Strategy provides more detail around the housing needs of local communities. The planning process is one of the most important tools that the council has in making sure that new homes in the district meet the district needs. It seeks to ensure that new development provides affordable homes of an appropriate mix of tenures, which are designed in a way to meet people's actual needs, in terms of accessibility and the number of bedrooms.
- 6.3** Whilst not a formal planning document and consequently not part of the Statutory Development Plan, the Housing Strategy will be a material consideration in planning decisions. The 'Supplementary Planning Document – Meeting Housing Needs' and the 'Affordable Housing Practice Note' set out in more detail the expectation of affordable housing provision.

The Delivery of Housing

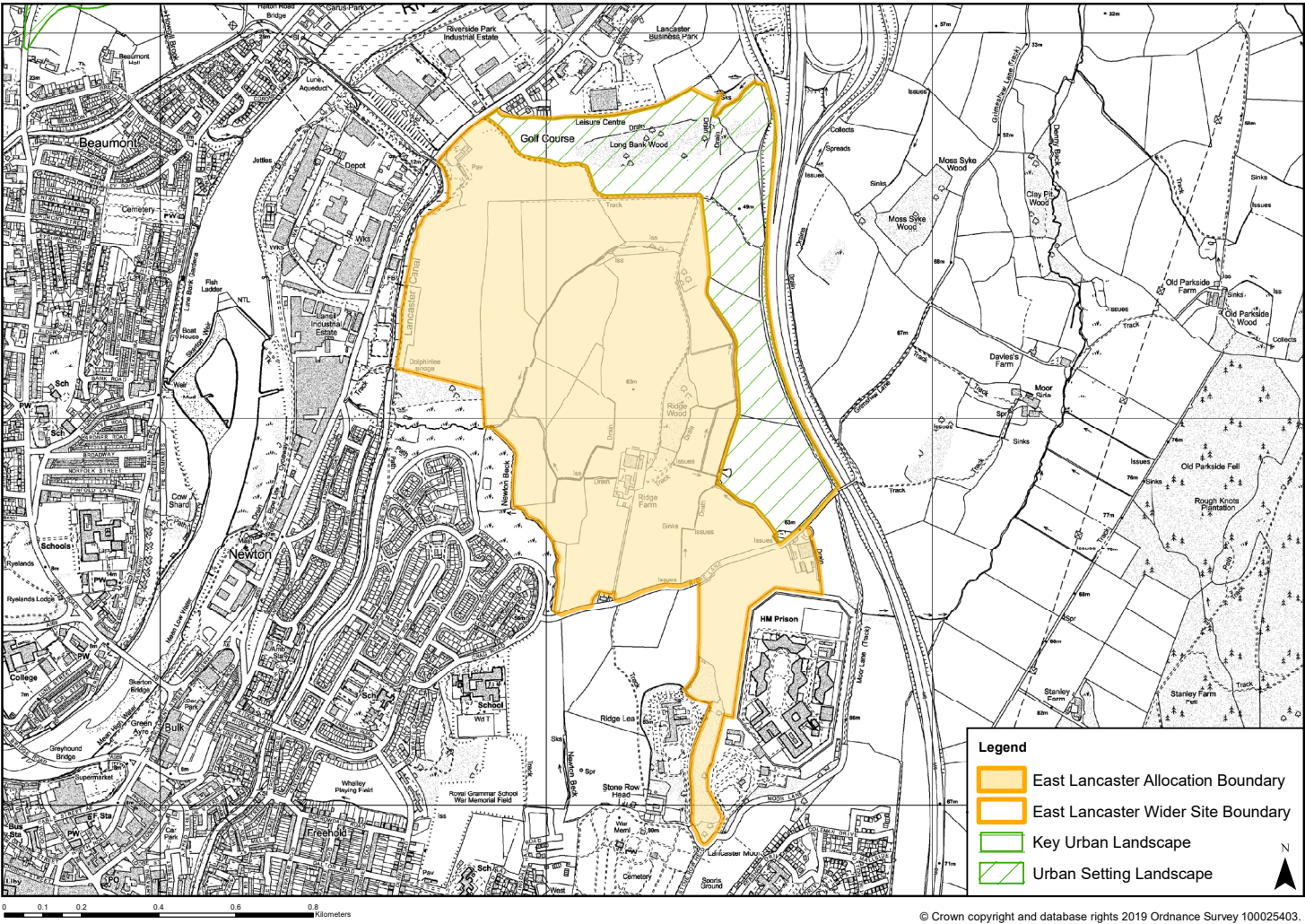
- 6.4** The Local Plan consists of the:
- Strategic Policies and Land Allocations Development Plan Document (SPLADPD);
 - Development Management Development Plan Document (DMDPD);
 - Morecambe Area Action Plan Development Plan Document; and
 - Arnsdale and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Development Plan Document.
- 6.5** The SPLADPD provides the spatial vision and plan for the future of the district and how it will be delivered. It also identifies the land to meet future development needs and land that should be protected for its environmental, social and economic importance. The DMDPD sets out a series of planning policies that are used to determine planning applications.
- 6.6** The Local Plan seeks to ensure the delivery of 10,440 new homes between 2011/12 to 2030/31. 2,595 of these homes had been completed by April 2018. The delivery of new housing through allocations in the Local Plan cannot fully address the objectively assessed need of around 620 homes per year due to constraints in the area. These constraints include areas liable to flooding, environmental designations and highway/ accessibility factors. The Local Plan includes the release of land in the Green Belt.
- 6.7** The Local Plan focuses new development in sustainable locations. These consist of the main urban areas of Lancaster, Morecambe, Heysham and Carnforth and a number of 'Sustainable Settlements' which include rural villages with a range of services and public transport links. New houses in other locations will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that the development will enhance the vitality of the local community and meet an identified and specific local need.
- 6.8** The plan allocates four strategic housing sites, Lancaster South including Bailrigg Garden Village (Policy SG1), East Lancaster (SG7), North Lancaster (SG9) and Lundsfield Quarry, Carnforth (SG11). Together they will provide in the region of 5,380 homes. Bailrigg Garden Village will be a new settlement to the south of Lancaster. Policies SG1, SG7, SG9 and SG11 include criteria against which development will be assessed, including a number of site-specific requirements. A Masterplan and Area Action Plan will be produced to provide the parameters and guide development at 'Bailrigg Garden Village'. These documents will set the policies with regard to the type and tenure of housing and the requirement for affordable housing. It is not anticipated that development within the 'Village' will commence until these documents are available. Policies H1 and H2 allocate a number of smaller sites for housing in Lancaster, Heysham and in the larger villages.

6.9 The sites at north and east Lancaster, Carnforth, the smaller sites allocated in the plan and any windfall sites within the urban areas and 'Sustainable Settlements' will be expected to provide a mixture of housing types and tenures in accordance with the Local Plan.

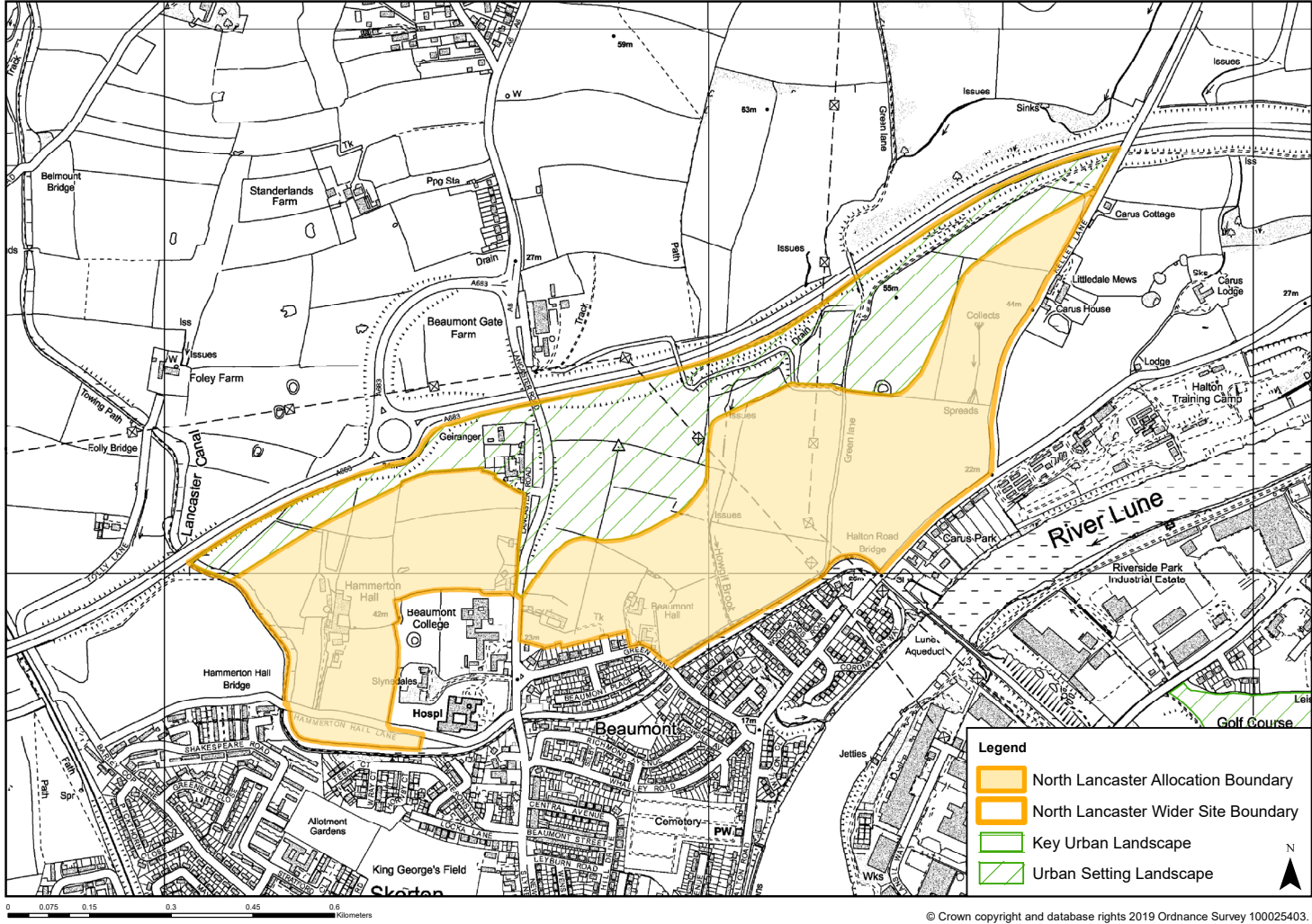


6.10 It is anticipated that the overall allocations policy for the entire area identified as the Lancaster South Broad Area of Growth will define which areas will be developed (and for the purposes of housing numbers, an initial estimate of 3,500 dwellings has been assumed) and the allocations are likely to include:-

- Residential Development
- Specialist Residential
- Local Centre
- Community Facilities
- Public Open Space
- Area of Separation / Green Belt
- Environmental Designations
- Transport Corridors
- Landscape Designations



- 900 residential dwellings
- 30% affordable housing
- Relocation of Lansil Golf Club
- Primary School
- Local Centre
- Country Park
- Cycling/Walking Linkages
- Public Transport



700 residential dwellings

Extra Care Scheme

Local Centre

Cycling/Walking Linkages

Affordable housing

Primary School

Employment Land

Public Transport

6.11

The Arnsdale and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Development Plan Document provide details for the area. The plan allocates a number of small sites for development. The plan addresses the special landscape and provides policies for the determination of application.

Neighbourhood Planning

6.12 Neighbourhood planning gives town and parish councils the opportunity to prepare, with the community they represent, a planning document for their area. There are 2 adopted Neighbourhood Plans at Wennington and Wray with Botton. There are also 8 Neighbourhood Plan Area Designations where the parish or Town Council is working towards a plan. This type of plan can provide for housing to meet local needs and add include specific policies on housing need and affordability.

Housing Growth and Climate Change

6.13 Climate Change is a key priority for Lancaster City Council and in January 2019, a Climate Emergency was declared by the Authority, details of which are as follows: -

‘Lancaster City Council has already committed to reducing carbon emissions to zero by 2050, but the recent IPCC report shows it is imperative that this target is reached much sooner. Lancaster City Council can play its role. Business as usual is clearly no longer an option. We need local wisdom to increase our resilience and to prepare for climate changes already in the system. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 1.5c report, published in October 2018, humanity has 12 years for ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities to deliver rapid and far-reaching transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport and cities is needed to turn this around, so we can avoid reaching a tipping point where we no longer have the ability to avoid extreme weather events. It is vital that rural communities play their part in reducing carbon emissions. Bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, new income streams and localising wealth generation; as well as improved well-being for people locally and worldwide.’

In declaring the emergency, Members called on the Council to undertake nine actions. These can be read in more detail via the full Council papers. However, of significance to the plan-making system was the second objective, which stated that the Council should:

- ‘Support the setting up of a Climate Change Advisory Board which involves Councillor, residents, businesses, experts from the two universities and other relevant parties. Over the following 6 months the board will revisit and update the 2010 Lancaster City Council Climate Change Strategy and help the Council develop a new carbon budget, taking into account both production and consumption emissions and set a target date to:
- Make the Council’s activities net-zero carbon;
 - Consider systematically the climate change impact of each area of the Council activities;
 - Increase local resilience to climate impacts already in the system;
 - Maximise local benefits of these actions in other sectors such as health, agriculture, transport and the economy; and
 - Support and work with other relevant agencies toward making Lancaster District zero carbon within the same timescale.’

6.14 At the time the declaration was made, the Local Plan was at an advanced state in terms of its preparation and therefore the declaration came too late to influence the direction and approach taken in the plan, as this had already been submitted to Government for Examination. Members had already provided a clear direction that they wished to see an immediate review of the Local Plan to address matters of climate change in a more detailed and comprehensive manner. This is a key aim of the Local Plan Review Action Group (LPRG), which was established and Terms of Reference agreed in October 2019. Five key ambitions have been set out: -

AMBITION 1	Achieving low/ zero carbon homes & improving the existing housing stock <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Setting of Districtwide Low Carbon Targets• The Spatial Distribution of Development• Energy efficient: Standard in New Development (Zero Carbon Homes)• Heritage Conservation considerations
AMBITION 2	Reducing car use and increased availability of public/ green/ active transport <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cycling, Walking and modal Shift• Ultra-low emission vehicles• Air quality
AMBITION 3	Regeneration <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritising brownfield development
AMBITION 4	Minimising flood risk <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water management, drainage and flood risk
AMBITION 5	Increasing on-shore wind power generation/ renewable energy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Renewable energy• Green Infrastructure

6.15 A set of objectives were then devised from these ambitions, which have been agreed by LPRG and have formed the basis of the Local Plan review process. A climate change review focused evidence base will also be produced, and work has begun on this. As part of the plan making process, significant consultation and stakeholder engagement will also take place and shape the overall content of the plan review. The first stage of this is the scoping stage and public consultation on this will take place between 25th September until 20th November 2020. Further information and progress so far on the Local Plan review can be found at <http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/about-local-plan>

6.16 Specifically, in the context of housing and climate change, the government has recently undertaken consultation on the “Futures Homes Standard¹” and may seek to set national energy efficiency standards in new housing. If the government do not proceed with this, there could be an opportunity for Lancaster City Council to formulate its own standards as well as exploration and implementation of suitable models for retrofitting of existing housing stock and exploration of decentralised heating systems on strategic housing sites. To further explore these opportunities, Lancaster City Council has created a People’s Jury on Climate Change, a pioneering approach where local residents are selected to represent the diverse population of the district. Engagement sessions took place in early 2020 and, following a short break due to the covid-19 pandemic, the sessions resumed virtually. The culmination of the People’s Jury will be that it produces its own set of recommendations for the city council to consider. However, the council’s ultimate ambition will be that new housing being delivered by the council will make a positive contribution towards climate change mitigation and opportunities to provide ultra-low carbon homes will be fully explored. This also provides opportunities to develop new homes using MMC (Modern Methods of Construction) which often align to standards such as Passivhaus utilising off-site solutions and timber frame construction which can result in less time spent on site, delays due to bad weather and more control over engineering standards. Whilst there are some risks associated with MMC, Homes England has been encouraging partners to develop and use MMC since 2018 and provided some initial funding to deliver a pilot scheme. MMC has been linked to Homes England’s new Affordable Homes Programme (Published September 2020) although it is not yet clear whether it will be a mandatory requirement or form part of the due diligence process when assessing grant applications.

¹ Consultation on this ended in February 2020 and the outcomes of this are anticipated to be announced by Government in Autumn 2020.

Flooding

6.17 On the 5th December 2015, as a result of Storm Desmond, 55,000 dwellings lost power when the electrical substation was submerged in flood water and 252 homes within Lancaster District were flooded. A further 436 homes were affected by flooding in 2017 following extreme downpours (7cm of rain fell in 24 hours). Many more were affected by impacts on access or services. Flooding causes a considerable amount of distress, because of damaged homes, loss of personal possessions and as people need to move out of their home while it is repaired. The bacteria and virus within flood water can continue to damage homes and pose a hazard to health long after a flood. A lack of affordable insurance means that some of our poorest communities are affected for the longest periods.

6.18 The Environment Agency and Lancaster City Council have worked together on the Caton Road Flood Management Scheme which will improve protection to 40 homes. The Environment Agency is now exploring measures that could reduce flood risk to properties along Burrow Beck, including improving the water flow at pinch points such as culverts and sections that have been narrowed by development. In Galgate they are looking at ways to reconfigure the existing flood defences so reduce flooding to properties on Main Road. The EA have also supported and funded the Lunes Rivers Trust in implementing Natural Flood Management measures in the areas upstream of these communities. The Lancaster City Surface Water Management Plan will recommend measures to minimise flooding in and around Lancaster City centre. The City and County Council will work to implement the recommendations with the support of United Utilities and the Environment Agency.

6.19 The City Council will explore ways in which to make properties more resilient to flooding, such as the inclusion of flood barriers, raising the height of electric and other services above flood levels and water resistant, easily cleanable surfaces. Where possible, measures will be included within future planned maintenance programmes and we will keep under review areas/housing stock that could be particularly at risk of flood. Landlords will also be encouraged to make properties resilient to protect tenants. Residents in areas at risk of flooding are encouraged to sign up to the Environment Agency’s Flood Warning. This will give residents, time to prepare for flood events, to install flood barriers and move belongings upstairs where possible. £700K grant funding has been provided by Lancaster City Council to those homeowners previously affected by flooding to make their properties more flood resilient.

6.20 The Local Plan contains policies which focus new homes in the areas which are at the least risk of flooding. Where new houses are built, they must include measures to ensure that they do not worsen flooding elsewhere. The Local Plan Climate Change Review will consider whether the policies can be enhanced to improve the flood mitigation which takes place as part of new development and improve the resilience in new properties.

Impact of Climate Change upon Mental Health and Wellbeing

6.21 Research undertaken by the Scottish Government found that impact of flooding can have serious impacts upon Health and Wellbeing, both short term and longer term, particularly upon more vulnerable groups, children, older people, those who live alone, people with pre-existing stressful life events or medical conditions. Increased stress can impact upon home life and relationships, anxiety and low mood, tiredness and feeling overwhelmed, as well as the upheaval associated with being in temporary accommodation and issues with building work. Those most negatively affected were people who had pre-existing mental wellbeing problems. Climate change can affect physical and mental health linked to air quality (indoors and outdoors) with increasing traffic and more time spent indoors, hotter drier summers, and whether the right balance of heating, air tightness and ventilation can be achieved to prevent harmful pollutants and micro-organisms.

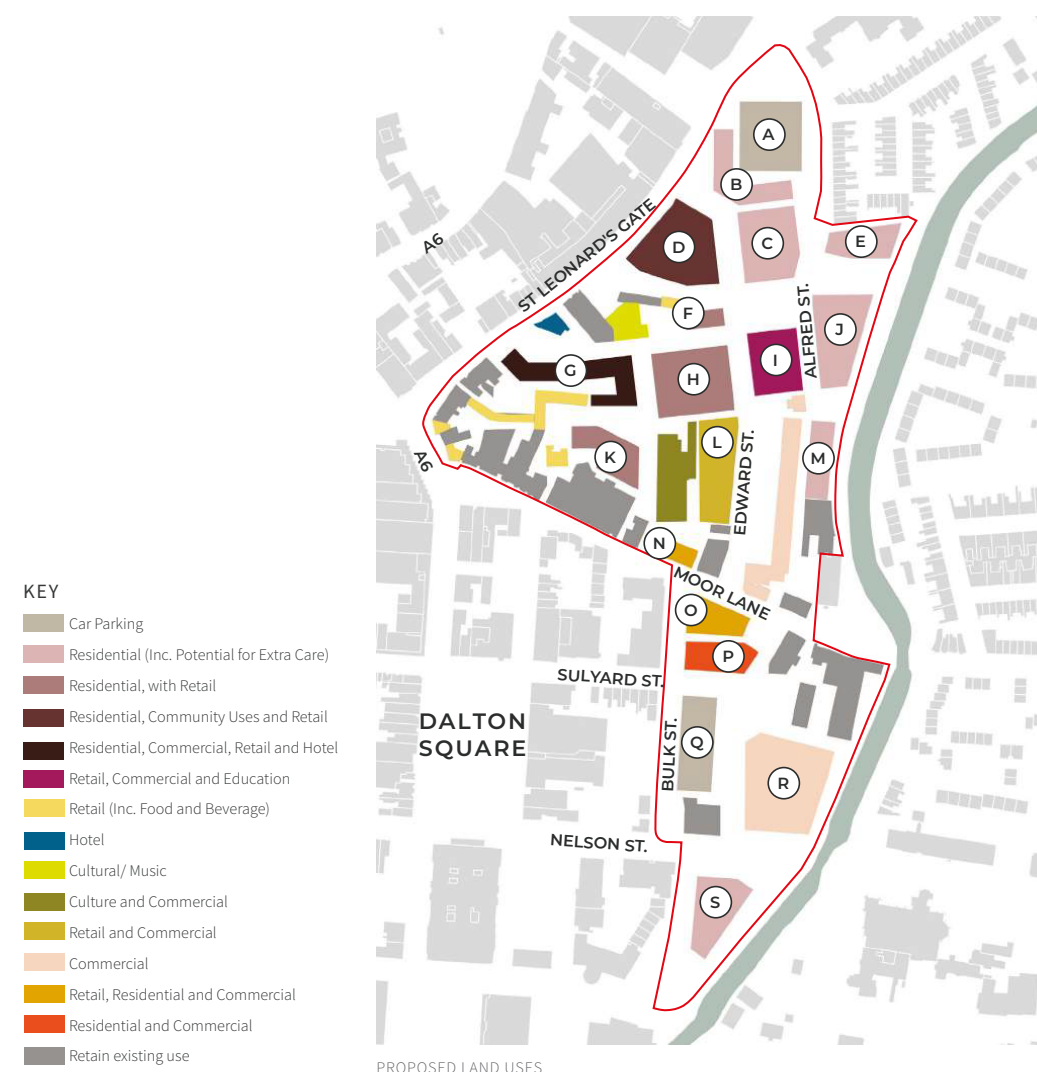
7

Regeneration Priorities



Priority 1 - Canal Quarter

- 7.1** Previously known as the Canal Corridor North, the council's aim and vision is to redevelop the area to create significant and wide-ranging economic benefits to the city and the wider district.
- 7.2** The council is taking a fresh approach to developing the site through a Master Plan. Unlike previous schemes, the new approach will see less reliance on retail and envisages a new mix of uses including housing and business opportunities with arts and culture at its heart.
- 7.3** The public, businesses and organisations will be at the centre of the developing the new scheme. In January 2020 the council undertook consultation on the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) for the Canal Quarter (which is ultimately intended to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document) which seeks to establish a set of design and development principles to guide future investment over the next 15-20 years. The design and development principles underpinning the SRF include sustainability, land use, connectivity and movement, approach to public open space and embracing heritage as well as providing indicative illustrations of suggested land uses across the site.
- 7.4** With the council as a major land holder, this provides a new and exciting opportunity for the council to consider how it can directly contribute towards the residential element of the proposed scheme. It is still to be determined what the right balance of uses will include and very detailed and thorough viability appraisals will need to be carried out testing out a whole range of different scenarios, and in relation of the residential element, the type, standard and tenures of housing that can potentially be achieved.



Priority 2 – Morecambe

Morecambe Town Centre

- 7.5** A bid for the Future High Streets Fund has been submitted to support the regeneration of Morecambe Town Centre. The funding will support the delivery of a regeneration programme that would bring wide ranging improvements and deliver a mixed-use scheme including commercial, retail, leisure and residential development opportunities. The residential element of the scheme would be another opportunity for the council to invest in housing delivery and increase its existing portfolio. Announcements for the Future High Streets Programme are currently expected by November 2020.

Morecambe’s West End

- 7.6** Morecambe West End is a longstanding regeneration priority which has been benefitting from a range of central government and private sector funding for the last twenty years. The historic housing market data for Morecambe’s West End highlighted an over-supply of poor quality and unsavoury management practices of Houses in Multiple Occupation which was the primary focus of the development of the West End Masterplan. The data showed an over-supply of cheap one-bedroom accommodation which was often a magnet for vulnerable and marginalised single people and in relation to tenure mix, the area had a much higher proportion of private rented stock than the rest of Lancaster district. One of the biggest challenges is the high number, and often absentee, landlords operating in the West End which presents challenges for the Local Authority in dealing with neighbourhood management and tenancy related issues.
- 7.7** The last Housing Strategy drew attention to the original West End Masterplan objectives which were either completed or nearing completion is 2012. These are briefly summarised as **West End Road and Clarendon Road** bringing about the removal of large Houses in Multiple Occupation and remodelling those properties by decreasing the size and creating outright sale and shared ownership units, helping to balance the housing market. Adactus Housing Group completed 23 units of affordable housing on **Marlborough Road** which was a mix of houses and apartments. Two out of a three phased housing project on **Bold Street** were completed using a combination of council funding and Regional Housing Pot central government funding which allowed the implementation of a facelift scheme to existing villa terraced houses and extensive refurbishment including the removal of one storey.
- 7.8** Chatsworth Gardens – former housing exemplar scheme failed due to market crash. A revised scheme needed to be explored. A successful bid to the Homes and Communities Agency provided “Cluster of Empty Homes” funding acted as a catalyst to the formation of a new partnership between Lancaster City Council and Placefirst, an organisation managing a portfolio of high quality market rented homes across the North of England, offering tenants improved spacious energy efficient homes and a direct professional landlord service.
- 7.9** The Chatsworth Gardens scheme taken forward was formulated in two distinct phases matching the physical presentation of the terraced housing – later named West End 1 and West End 2. West End 1 remodelled 29 long term empty guest houses creating a collection of 51 refurbished townhouses and apartments blending the old with the new – retaining original historic features combined with contemporary fittings. The £5.7m development has transformed a key area into a range of aspirational family homes set around a new landscaped courtyard. West End 1 completed in 2016.
- 7.10** Plans for West End 2 were submitted in 2017 seeing 23 long term former guest houses being extensively refurbished to create 45 modern homes providing a mix of two and three bedroom houses and apartments and following approval of the scheme, the project commenced on site and is still currently being completed.



Chatsworth Gardens – West End 1

- 7.11** Bold Street (Phase 3) – 17x two and three storey terraces of very poor quality and structural unsound residential properties and 3 x commercial units were demolished by Lancaster City Council in the last strategy period at a point where mainstream regeneration funding had been withdrawn. Building on the success of the Chatsworth Gardens projects, Lancaster City Council is embarking upon another partnership with Placefirst which, this time, will see a new build development being created which will continue to increase the portfolio of good quality private rented accommodation in Morecambe’s West End. The proposed Bold Street scheme will deliver 42 new homes which will be a mixture of 21 x one and 21 x two-bedroom apartments to be let at market rents.
- 7.12** Frontierland site – the last Housing Strategy confirmed that an outline permission in 2009 was granted for a mixed-use development of predominantly residential with some leisure and retail development. Then in 2014 and 2016, applications were made and subsequently approved for a retail led scheme with restaurant, pub and hotel provision on the site. However, development has not commenced on the site and the planning permission has now lapsed. The site has always been seen as being significantly important, and given its proximity to the proposed Eden North, no more so than now. A mixed-use development is still envisaged and a proposal that is of suitable quality and one which seeks to appropriately captures the potential arising from Eden North.
- 7.13** Whilst recognising that the area has considerably benefitted from large-scale investment and regeneration funding previously, the previous programmes of funding available to support regeneration initiatives ceased by 2011. Notwithstanding this and in order to continue the momentum of interventions already made, Lancaster City Council is keen to explore what potential exists to deliver a housing programme in Morecambe’s West End, and one which not only seeks to increase the choice of good quality affordable housing in the area, but a programme which is developed working in partnership with the existing community. A number of positive links have already been established with community groups as a platform for further engagement and feasibility work that will allow the council to explore options and investment opportunities.

Priority 3 – Mainway Estate

- 7.14** Within the council's existing social housing portfolio is the Mainway estate in north Lancaster. The estate is on the west side of the river Lune to the north of Skerton Bridge. One tower block (Park House), two medium rise blocks (Lune and Derby House) and flats above shops (Captains Row) are to the south of Skerton Bridge. The estate currently consists of:
- 2 x 11 storey tower blocks: Bridge/Skerton House
 - 1 x 8 storey tower block: Park House
 - 15 x 3&4 storey apartment blocks of five different types
 - Derby, Lune House: Four storey maisonettes each over two floors
 - Captain Row: Three storey of flats above shops
 - Church, Kiln, Miller, Stewart House: three storey flats
 - Acre, Greenwater, Shards House: Four storey maisonettes each over two floors
 - Ellershaw, Greg, Fleming, Frankland, Rigg House: three storey flats
 - The Mainway estate is 1960's Wimpey no-fines concrete construction which was over clad in the 1990's with Struthern insulated render. The property mix currently consists of 54 x two-bedroom maisonettes, 159 x two- bedroom apartments and 44 x one-bedroom apartments.

- 7.15** As part of fulfilling the landlord function and meeting statutory obligations to keep properties in good repair, the council continuously keeps its housing stock under review and undertakes a programme of capital and responsive repairs on all existing properties. In 2019 the council commissioned a series of structural survey work on Mainway estate to robustly test the structural integrity of the existing apartment blocks. Although the surveys confirm that the blocks are currently structurally sound, the council will need to take preventative steps to improve and maintain the existing apartment blocks in their current form.

- 7.16** The council could undertake a programme of external refurbishments across the estate which would meet the immediate need to ensure properties continue to be safe secure and fit for purpose for a further 25 years. However, the council would like to consider whether a more comprehensive regeneration programme could be undertaken on Mainway which could potentially deliver some dramatic improvements to the whole area and by providing homes in a surrounding environment that are likely to meet the aspirational needs of our existing tenants. The council is fully committed to extensively consulting existing tenants and understanding their experience of living in the area, tenants wishes, views and expectations, and this will then formulate the regeneration programme undertaken for Mainway. Authority to consult existing tenants, residents and stakeholders has already been approved by Cabinet in July 2020 and is now underway.

Priority 4 – Ridge Square

- 7.17** This is a small mixed tenure scheme which consists of commercial properties including two retail units, a community centre on the ground floor and 8 x first floor deck access residential apartments above, 5 of which are in the ownership of the HRA and 3 sold under right to buy and with the council granting a lease on the retail units. The construction type is dated and the design of the square has lent itself to recurring issues with anti-social behaviour. Residents of the first-floor apartments feel vulnerable due to the existing concrete staircases to each property. As the Ridge is a hilly estate the access on either side is steep. There are garages to rent behind the two main blocks which gives the opportunity to increase the developable area.



- 7.18** Planned maintenance of the council owned properties is scheduled in the next 5-8 years. In order to consider a more comprehensive scheme, the council would need to conduct detailed consultation and undertake a full options appraisal to understand the true costs of a regeneration programme and how this could be achieved and one which can retain the existing key services for the local community.

Other Housing/Regeneration Opportunities and the council’s Capital Investment Strategy

7.19 The Council is currently reviewing its Capital Investment Strategy, which was previously adopted in 2019. The underlying purpose of the Investment Strategy is to generate financial returns that will enable the council to deliver its agreed priorities and bridge the gap of reducing levels of central government funding. The new policy will take account of a wider number of considerations that align to key priorities as well as profiling the risk of investment proposals and the types of investments have been grouped into:-

- Regeneration activities - which could deliver benefits, improvements or development of an area through balanced acquisition, retention, and management of good quality investments and contributing to regeneration outcomes
- Investments Delivering a Social Return- this is a broad category to enable support for a wider range of investments and may include housing or climate change initiatives.
- Operational Investments – that sustain the day to day operational delivery of council services
- Other Investments – which fall outside of the above but which may be considered.

7.20 The proposed Morecambe Property Acquisitions are a clear example of where social value can be achieved. As well as increasing the choice and standards of housing in Morecambe, good housing creates wider benefits such as tackling health inequalities and increasing life expectancy. Other wider benefits for the council can also be achieved in the operational costs associated with dealing with anti-social behaviour, fly tipping etc as a result of creating more settled and sustainable communities where residents take more ownership of their homes and communities.

7.21 There are clear linkages between the Capital Investment Strategy and the Homes Strategy which recognises that the council can seek to generate a return by investing housing development and housing acquisitions and that the returns can be blended with mixed use schemes or help to cross subsidise other housing objectives. Schemes outside of those already identified in the Homes Strategy could provide a good financial return for the council but should be benchmarked against the council’s main objectives i.e. they will positively contribute to meeting a local housing need using the intelligence and housing market data available, the location and types of properties will allow the council to act as an effective landlord in terms of the quality, the space standards and management standards provided, and offer potential to positively contribute towards climate change either through influencing the design standards and thermal performance. Clearly these standards could impact on the level of return generated but this has to be balanced with other objectives which are being met but will still blend well with other commercial investments being made that may generate a higher return.



8

Summary of the council's housing and regeneration ambitions / standards



New build

- Schemes are developed using the National Design Guide to create well-designed places and communities that are beautiful successful and sustainable and contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents
- The council will aim to build ultra-low carbon homes as part of its identified housing and regeneration priorities
- All new homes will meet Nationally Described Space Standards
- The council will seek to exceed the requirement of 20% of new homes meeting Building Regulations M4(2) accessibility standards wherever possible
- The council will have regard to Secured by Design Standards
- New build homes acquired by the council should meet a minimum of EPC* B with scope to increase to EPC A through future investment programmes

Acquisitions of existing housing and retrofitting

- Properties acquired by the council should either meet EPC C or be capable of achieving EPC C through a fundable retrofitting programme and contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents
- Retrofitting of council housing stock will seek to bring all properties up to a minimum of EPC* C
- Planned refurbishments will seek to achieve Secured by Design Standards

*EPC ratings are expected to be reviewed and any changes to the ratings system should still achieve or exceed the minimum ratings set out. Higher standards to those outlined may be required if changes in central government guidance take place.

9



Our Homes Vision

9.1 Effectively meeting affordable and social housing need, promoting independence and creating happy, healthy and sustainable communities to make Lancaster district a great place to live.

9.2 Our vision is that all residents in Lancaster district will be living in:

- good quality affordable homes
- homes with appropriate levels of support
- safe and secure communities and neighbourhoods

Affordable Housing Growth	Maximising the amount of affordable homes available to rent and buy
Improving Housing Quality	Improving the quality and energy efficiency of homes, particularly in the private sector and reducing the number of empty homes
Promoting Independent Living	Minimising homelessness through greater focus on prevention and supporting vulnerable residents to live independently
Creating Sustainable Communities	Creating confident and sustainable communities through effective management of neighbourhoods and tackling anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and crime.
Improving Health through Housing	Promoting healthy lifestyles, reducing health inequalities, tackling poverty and supporting people to meet health needs through housing options
Meeting the Needs of Older People	Ensuring that the right housing options are available which allow older people to remain active and independent in their homes and communities



10

Affordable Housing Growth



10.1 One of the biggest priorities for Lancaster district is to provide enough quality and accessible homes to meet the districts growing population, whilst protecting the environment and respecting community identity. The need for affordable housing is a key issue identified in the Local Plan.

10.2 The Strategic Market Assessment (Housing Needs Survey 2018) suggests that around 6000 households are in need of affordable housing (10% of the population) utilising the government's prescribed methodology to calculate affordable housing need:-

Households in need by sub-area			
Sub-area	No. Households in need	% Households in need	Total no. households
Carnforth & Millhead	275	10.4	2632
Ellel	213	11.3	1888
Heysham	454	9.0	5028
Kellet and Upper Lune Valley	140	7.1	1967
Lancaster Fringes	516	8.3	6232
Lancaster North	1056	17.2	6155
Lancaster South	1603	9.6	16631
Morecambe	906	7.9	11478
Morecambe West	785	13.5	5836
Overton	123	11.5	1073
Silverdale and Warton	114	6.3	1815
Total	6185	10.2	60735

Source: 2017 Household Survey

10.3 The council has developed a suite of policies and practices to secure and maximise opportunities to increase the supply of affordable and social housing within Lancaster district whilst ensuring that new developments provide the right type and size of housing across tenures.

Type and Size of New Housing Development

10.4 Policy DM1: - New Residential development and Meeting Housing Needs promotes balanced communities and proposals which meet evidenced housing need. It seeks to ensure that new development provides a diverse mix of house types, sizes and tenures. The table below provides an indicative approach to mix across the district. There will however be factors, such as specific needs or conditions which may change the mix appropriate for a site.

Property Type	Market (%)	Affordable (%)
House (2 bedrooms)	20	30
House (3 bedrooms)	35	20
House 4+ bedrooms	25	5
Bungalow	10	10
Flat/apartment (may include 1-bedroom houses)	10	35
Total	100	100

The Standard of Housing

- 10.5** Policy DM2: Housing Standards has been introduced to ensure that new homes are built to a standard which will enhance quality of life. The provision of an appropriate amount of living space within new homes is an important element of good housing design and a pre-requisite for basic living. Potential residents of new homes should be provided with enough space for their basic daily activities and needs. This will include space for the furniture they need, the storage of personal possessions and room to prepare food conveniently and to socialise with friends and family. If homes are to have a long life, they must offer functional and adaptable spaces that meet the needs of families, children, older people and people with health conditions or impairments.
- 10.6** Policy DM2 requires that all new homes are built to the Nationally Described Space Standards and that 20% of all new homes (20% of both the affordable and market homes on a site) are built to meet the Building Regulation Requirement M4(2) (accessible and adaptable homes).

The Delivery of Affordable Housing

- 10.7** Planning policies set requirements for the provision of affordable housing within development sites. These requirements are to ensure affordable housing is provided to meet the needs of the district and to ensure it is integrated into development to provide balance communities and must be owned/managed by Registered Providers.
- 10.8** The requirement for affordable housing provision within development is summarised for each housing market area in the table below:

Lancaster, Carnforth and Rural West (the wards of Ellel and Bolton & Slyne)			
Greenfield	15 units and over	On-site	30%
Greenfield	10-14 units	On-site	20%
Brownfield	10 units and over	On-site	20%
Morecambe, Heysham and Overton			
Greenfield	10 units and over	On-site	15%
Rural East (Halton-with-Aughton, Kellet, Lower Lune Valley, Upper Lune Valley, excluding the Forest of Bowland AONB)			
Greenfield	10 units and over	On-site	40%
Brownfield	10 units and over	On-site	30%
Forest of Bowland (Policy DM6)			
All sites	2-5 units	Financial contribution	50% in lieu of on-side provision
All sites	6 units and over	On-site	50%
Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB (Policy AS03)			
All sites	2 units and over	On-site	50%

Types of Affordable Housing

- 10.9** Affordable Housing is generally categorised into two main types: intermediate affordable housing and social housing. The council's existing planning policy require that on new developments requiring on-site affordable housing detailed on Table 8.2, the affordable housing is provided as 50% intermediate housing and 50% social housing (either affordable rented or social rented units). This ensures that the tenure provided on each development will meet the widest range of need but also contributes positively to the creation of sustainable communities and neighbourhoods.

Intermediate Housing

- 10.10** Intermediate housing includes different types of affordable home ownership provided through national government initiatives or local planning policy requirements aligning to the specific needs of that district. In Lancaster district, shared ownership has been deemed the most suitable form of intermediate housing, because it provides the scope and flexibility to align to the lowest income requirement of any other form of intermediate housing.
- 10.11** There have been other forms of low-cost home ownership initiatives provided by central government used to stimulate home ownership, but these have typically only benefitted the first purchaser i.e. the Help To Buy Scheme which provides an equity loan of up to 20% of the market value and falls outside the definition of affordable housing. However, the government has undertaken national consultation on the First Homes scheme, as a more suitable replacement to Starter Homes which were never implemented. The consultation in late 2019 suggests that First Homes are akin to discounted market sale units, but unlike Starter homes, would provide a discount in-perpetuity each time the property is sold on to a qualifying household. The model could provide scope for local authorities to set the level of discount that should apply aligning to local need and affordability. If there is a mandatory requirement for Local Authorities to implement first Homes (as was mooted with Starter Homes) then the council will need to overhaul the existing affordable housing policy and carefully assess the impact of setting the level of discount alongside the types /amount of affordable housing that can be provided.
- 10.12** Lancaster City Council will continue to work in partnership with Registered Providers to bring forward schemes which include or are exclusively shared ownership. In most instances, schemes require grant subsidy through Homes England (previously known as the Homes and Communities Agency or HCA) Homes England is the government agency responsible for the regulation of Private Registered Providers and the main provider of grant subsidy and funding to accelerate housing delivery and affordable housing. Bids to Homes England's Affordable Homes Programme generally require the support of the Local Authority. Since 2010, 526 affordable housing completions have been directly supported with a form of grant subsidy.

Affordable Housing for Rent

- 10.13** The main form of affordable housing in Lancaster district is social rented housing, with Lancaster City Council as the biggest landlord with around 3700 properties in its portfolio, and around 2500 properties owned and managed by Registered Providers for rent (general needs and housing for older people combined).
- 10.14** In 2011, the government amended the definition of social housing to make way for their affordable rent product. Unlike social rents which are typically set at around 50% of market rents, in order to reduce the level of grant subsidy required to support new affordable housing schemes, affordable rents can be set at up to 80% of market rents. In order to ensure that they remain affordable to people in need of social housing, the rents are normally capped at Local Housing Allowance rates – the threshold set for housing benefit payments by property size and entitlement. As a result of these changes, there are now very limited opportunities to bring forward social rented units with affordable rent being the default position.
- 10.15** Lancaster City Council has well established strategic links with Registered Providers operating across Lancaster district and robust nomination agreements in place to ensure that social housing vacancies let through the council's Housing Register will best meet a local need and that that consistency is provided in terms of security of tenure, the standard of accommodation and the management service offered. Given the continued need and demand for affordable/social rented tenure in Lancaster district, the council will continue to support and strengthen partnerships with Registered Providers to increase the supply and availability wherever possible.
- 10.16** Up until 2010 Registered Providers were typically providing social housing in the form of family housing. However, in the last decade and through continuous dialogue with the council, measures have been taken to increase the supply of social housing available for single people. This was particularly important to manage the impact of welfare reform although as the demographic of the Housing Register analysis continues to evidence that there is a considerable under-supply.

New Council Housing

- 10.17** In 2014, Cabinet approved reports to investigate options to bring forward new build council housing in Lancaster district. An exercise was undertaken to identify potential sites on council owned land. Although several sites were initially identified, only two of the original sites were deemed suitable, allowing further detailed feasibility work to be carried out. Activity then stalled because of potential government changes/risks posed around the management of the Housing Revenue Account, perceived risks associated with statutory Right to Buy, a temporary suspension of grant funding to support the provision of social housing, planning issues and the degree of local support.
- 10.18** The council's new administration remains very committed to bringing a programme of new build council housing forward utilising the council's borrowing headroom and any external subsidy that can be drawn down to support schemes to assist with affordable housing and infrastructure. In order to increase our portfolio of social and affordable housing, early indications suggest that the council can comfortably borrow around £25 Million to invest in new build schemes and regeneration programmes. Furthermore, the council can also make use of prudential borrowing through the General Fund and set up a housing delivery vehicle such as a Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo) as a means of generating development funding to bring forward mixed tenure schemes offering a wider range of housing tenures. The benefits of doing this is that the surpluses generated will allow cross-subsidy and offers better potential to deliver a wider range of benefits such as the level of affordable housing, and enhancing the quality and standard of new development with most holistic outcomes and which will contribute positively to climate change. However, these investment plans are not limited to new build schemes. In some areas of the district it is equally important to identify suitable measures and interventions to improve the quality of existing housing and improve the range and choice of housing across the district to meet the widest possible need. The council may also wish to consider the merits of acquiring stock sold under the statutory Right to Buy scheme as a means of increasing its portfolio of housing. A pre-requisite to raising the capital and implementing this programme is that collectively schemes will be self-financing with whatever degree of subsidy can be levered in to improve development viability.

Community Led Housing/Self Build

- 10.19** In 2016/17 Lancaster City Council received £770K Community Housing Fund – a direct award from Central Government given to local authorities most effected by second homes ownership to help promote and develop community led housing. Community led housing can be described as local communities playing a lead role in addressing their housing needs by providing affordable homes which they own or manage. Community led housing is a particularly effective model for delivering affordable housing “in perpetuity” as it sits outside of the statutory Right to Buy scheme.
- 10.20** Lancaster City Council embraced this opportunity positively by initially undertaking consultation and engagement with Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plan Groups, working with specialist advisers, creating a dedicated officer post to work directly with community groups, and by working with partner local authorities in Cumbria to set up the Cumbria and Lancaster Community Enabling Hub.
- 10.21** Lancaster City Council has been directly supporting and has provided grant funding for two new community led projects on Mill Lane in Halton. Senior Co-Housing Group Ltd is seeking to build 20 homes for older people which is 14 homes for sale and 6 affordable homes. Lune Valley Community Land Trust is working in partnership with South Lakes Housing (a Registered Provider) to bring forward 20 affordable homes on the adjacent site which will include a mix of property types and sizes to meet local need. Both proposed schemes will provide ultra-low carbon homes subject to obtaining planning permission later this year and will complement the existing Lancaster Co-Housing development which was built to Passivhaus standards.

- 10.22** Lancaster City Council is also exploring options to deliver a community led housing project in Morecambe's West End having engaged positively with community groups over the last 6-9 months. Further work is required to investigate a suitable community led model and to establish the objectives and scope of what could potentially be achieved, although the ultimate aim is to improve access to good quality affordable housing in the area to meet a local need. The council is also willing to explore a community led model within the residential element of the Canal Quarter Scheme. To date, no existing community groups have been identified but this will be considered further as part of the engagement and consultation undertaken as part of developing the options.

- 10.23** An important adjustment to the council's affordable housing policies is the requirement that all new affordable housing must be provided by Registered Providers. Local Plan adoption, the requirement will be relaxed recognising community groups as a legitimate body for the delivery and management of affordable housing.

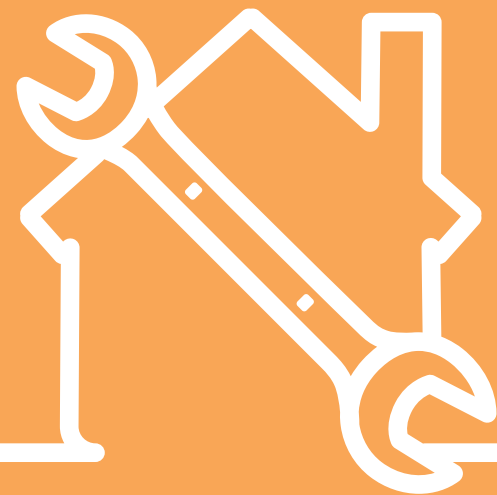
Self-Build

- 10.24** The Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 requires Councils to have a register of those who wish to acquire a plot for a self-build or custom-build dwelling. The Council holds a register of potential interest in self or custom build plots across the district. Planning Practice Guidance clarifies that evidence of demand from the registers should inform Local Plan policies, supplemented by other evidence.
- 10.25** At present both evidence from the register and evidence from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Part II) indicates limited demand within the District for self and custom build housing. The evidence indicates in general a wide search area across the District as well as a desire for larger properties of three or more bedrooms. The Assessment also identified that those who do have a desire for self or custom build housing are generally on high incomes.
- 10.26** Whilst suitable opportunities may exist for larger self or custom build properties to be constructed, the thrust of the policy is to support opportunities for individuals or groups of individuals that wish to build their own homes as a more affordable means by which to access home ownership.
- 10.27** Planning applications for self, custom or community-led housing, built by individuals or groups of individuals for their own occupation will be supported by the Council where they are located in sustainable locations. The Council will seek to identify plots for self and custom build housing where the need is clearly identified via the Self Build Register. The Council will support proposals from community groups seeking to provide affordable housing units and who will implement their management and lettings arrangements (providing these meet a local need and comply with other relevant planning requirements and policies).



11

Improving Housing Quality



Private Sector Housing Stock

- 11.1** Improvements in the private rented housing stock continue to focus on Morecambe's West End, which has been a well-established regeneration priority, and which continues to address some of the worst housing conditions in the district, balance the housing market and increase the choice of tenures available in the area.
- 11.2** The private rented sector represents around 20% of the housing market in Lancaster, and with increasing barriers around affordability and access to deposits for newly forming households unable to buy their own home outright, it is likely to be a growing sector. Lancaster City Council had delivered a range of measures to encourage and promote responsible renting but will also use enforcement and legal powers to deal with poor property conditions and management standards.
- 11.3** Mandatory Licensing already exists for houses in multiple occupation (HMO), and the government recently broadened the definition of HMO's in 2018 to include properties let to 5 or more people or 2 or more households, and also applies to blocks of purpose built flats where there are up to two flats in the block and one or both are occupied as a HMO. Around 480 properties are currently licensed by Lancaster City Council.
- 11.4** Selective Licensing is a scheme which allows a local authority to introduce licensing conditions to all other private rented housing within a designated area. Selective licensing can only be introduced if certain conditions are present, such as low housing demand, the area experiences significant and persistent problems around anti-social behaviour and some or all of the private sector landlords are failing to adequately manage anti-social behaviour within their tenancies. Selective Licence can be applied for up to a five-year period and can only be renewed with permission from the Secretary of State. A Licensing Fee normally applies.
- 11.5** Lancaster City Council undertook extensive consultation in 2017 regarding the proposed designation of Harbour and Heysham North wards, which contain the highest proportion of private rented accommodation in the district. The main objectives were: -
- To improve the housing conditions within the designated area which would contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of tenants and reducing the number of complaints
 - To identify a named individual who was responsible for the properties and thereby creating a comprehensive database of private rented sector stock within the area
 - Reduce anti-social behaviour within the designated area
 - Target rogue landlords and creating a level playing field with clear and consistent standards being applied
 - Contribute towards the council's Empty Homes Strategy
- 11.6** 711 responses to the consultation were received, with around 80% of the responses being from tenants and homeowners and 11% were landlords/managing agents. The consultation findings concluded that tenants and homeowners were supportive of the implementation of Selective Licensing although some tenants had concerns about the wider implications and potential repercussions if the scheme went ahead and a fee applied, such as rent increases and seeing an increase in eviction notices etc. However, the vast majority of residents felt that Selective Licensing would benefit the area. In contrast, landlords were generally unsupportive, particularly around a licensing fee being applied, and that good landlords could effectively be subsidising poorly performing landlords and viewed it as a tax on good landlords.

11.7 The findings were reported to Cabinet. Members at the time decided not to proceed with the implementation of Selective Licensing and instead wanted the council to undertake further engagement with landlords and where necessary apply targeted enforcement action for a period of 18 months before a further report was brought back to Cabinet, and instead approved a refreshed Housing Standards Enforcement Policy in December 2018 which took account of regulatory changes and additional powers that local authorities can use to tackle rogue landlords including civil penalties which includes Rent Repayment Orders, Banning Orders and the operation of a database for rogue landlords and property agents. A further report will be taken back to Cabinet in 2020/21 to seek clarification from members on whether further consultation should be undertaken around options to implement Selective Licensing.

- The Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy aims to:
- improve the standard of homes in the private sector
- assess local housing conditions
- reduce the number of properties with serious risks to health and safety
- reduce the number of vulnerable households living in non-decent homes
- improve the energy efficiency and warmth of homes and to help reduce fuel poverty
- improve standards in private rented accommodation
- improve the standards in HMOs (houses in multiple occupation)
- work closely with private sector landlords towards improving conditions and the standard of management of private rented housing to meet the council's statutory obligations

11.8 Each year, around 200 Category One Dwelling Hazards are identified and resolved through the intervention of the council's Housing Standards Team. Lancaster City Council successfully bid for government funding to tackle rogue landlords in 2019. The funding is intended to provide local authorities with additional resources in increase capacity and create new digital tools. The funding has allowed Lancashire authorities to create a training programme for existing enforcement staff across the Lancashire region. The first round of training has been provided and this has increased the skills and knowledge of staff as well as creating a platform for best practice and shared learning across local authorities in Lancashire. A further programme of training is planned for 2020/21.

11.9 In order to encourage positive relationships between the council and private sector landlords, a Landlord Forum was set up some years ago and is currently in operation. The council was instrumental in establishing this and taking the strategic lead. This has reaped some benefits and in recent years, although some tensions that had arisen within the sector as a result of the roll out of Universal Credit, allowed these to be managed. Recent attempts have been made to encourage landlords to run their own forum, and some further support may need to be provided by the council to explore and set up a web-based Forum which may attract better engagement and participation.



Public Health Act/Public Protection

11.10 Under the Public Health Act 1936 our Public Protection team have the powers to deal with our most vulnerable residents living in private rented accommodation. They assist residents who have been identified as living in "Filthy and Verminous" conditions through referrals from GP's, Social Workers, Hospital Discharge Teams and Community Care providers.

11.11 With their powers under the PHA 1936 the council is able to serve notice on tenants and their landlords, when their premises are deemed to be in such a filthy and unwholesome condition as to be prejudicial to health. This allows the property to be cleaned up, which can potentially give the tenant a fresh start and a more positive outlook.

11.12 Public Protection Officers then work alongside several other agencies and the affected individual to identify what has caused the decline in the state of the property and to get the appropriate help for them, as well as taking steps to stop it from reoccurring. Other agency involvements to help with the ongoing welfare of the individuals highlighted can include Adult Social Care, Mental Health Care, Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Teams, LFRS, NWS, Local Policing Teams, Children and Family Wellbeing, as well as various voluntary sector organisations.

Stock Condition analysis

11.13 Lancaster City Council last commissioned a district wide housing stock condition survey in 2004. This was a comprehensive study and included a sample of physical survey work. Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 places a duty upon local authorities in assessing the housing needs of its area in relation to housing conditions and the needs of the district. This obligation is primarily been met through the commissioning of a district wide housing needs survey every five years. Whilst the survey seeks to collect data from household responses on property condition and the level of satisfaction with their current home, this should not be relied upon to provide accurate and reliable indicators on the condition of the existing housing stock. More recently, stock condition surveys have been replaced with stock condition modules which draw down a wide range of technical housing data from various sources, and the datasets are periodically refreshed and will provide data on dwelling hazards. Data typically includes dwelling hazards, excess cold, SAP, fuel poverty, disrepair, energy performance data and insulation types, Co2 emissions, EPC data and prevalence of HMO's (the latter linking directly with both Selective Licensing and Article 4 Direction). The council needs to address this at the very earliest opportunity. Not only would commissioning a district wide stock condition module allow the council to hold a wide range of housing related data that will subsequently identify where necessary interventions should be targeted, but data of this nature is often critical to attract external or central government funding, and will greatly assist operational practices across housing teams.

Fuel Poverty/Excess Cold

11.14 Lancaster City council recognises the impact of and importance of tackling fuel poverty across the district which can directly impact on the health and wellbeing of local communities and can result in excess winter deaths for the vulnerable and elderly population. Increasing the energy performance of housing stock can create wide ranging benefits to improve health, improve housing stock, contribute towards tackling fuel poverty and the reduction of carbon emissions.

11.15 Within the last Strategy period, work to tackle fuel poverty was progressing well. The North Lancashire Affordable Warmth Partnership formed in 2011 (representatives from NHS, Lancashire County Council, district councils delivery partners/third sector organisations) creating an Affordable Warmth Statement and Action Plan, and a steering group was set up in Lancaster to create a district action plan. Because of a combination of cuts to funding and staff changes, both groups ceased operating. However, a number of crucial links were well established and continue through the Lancashire Energy Officer Group and through collaborating working, the Cosy Homes in Lancashire scheme (CHiL) which launched in 2014 leveraging in Warm Homes Funding. Over £10million funding has allowed more than 10,500 residents to save money through energy saving advice and measures across Lancashire. Since 2018, 41 measures have been undertaken in Lancaster district.

Referrals/Measures through CHiL (Cosy Homes in Lancashire) scheme

Measures

Loft Insulation	1
Boiler Replacements	21
First-time Central Heating (WHF)	18
Emergency Boiler (WHF Cat3)	1
Total Interventions	41

Funding sources

Central Heating (WHF) Funding secured (£)	£42,026
Emergency Boiler (WHF Cat3) Secured (£)	£1,970
ECO Funding Secured (£)	£32,016
LA Funding Secured (£)	£14,298
Customer / Landlord Contribution Secured (£)	£946
Charity Contribution Secured (£)	£0
CHiL CIC Contribution Secured (£)	£2,657
Total Funding secured	£93,913

Green Homes Grant/Retrofitting

11.16 The government recently made funding available to local authorities under the Green Homes Grant LAD scheme. The initial requirements set a minimum bid threshold of £500,000, targeting properties rated at EPC E, F and G only with measures requiring completion by the end of March 2021. This meant that Lancaster City Council was unable to make a bid. However, the government has re-launched LAD 1B which reduces the threshold to £250,000, includes properties at EPC D and extended the deadline for measures to be completed by September 2021. The city council is now in discussions with other neighbouring authorities in Lancashire to explore a consortia bid. Bids must be submitted by 4th December 2020.

11.17 A critical component of installing measures is undertaking an independent assessment of the property to identify the most suitable type of measures. This is critical to prevent vulnerable householders being given inappropriate advice by speculative contractors, leading to significant problems with the quality and type of measures being installed. To overcome this, the council is investigating the merits of a new Retrofit Advisor post being created. This will likely be for a fixed term period initially to align to the funding opportunities that are available, and to ensure that a strategic approach is adopted which is capable of being delivered across tenures.

Student Accommodation Houses in Multiple Occupation and Planning

11.18 There has been a significant increase in the amount of purpose-built student accommodation in Lancaster. 332 student bedrooms were completed between 2018/19 with a further 420 completed in 2019/20. Student completions will increase further with continued development at Bulk Road and Luneside East. Policy DM7 of the DMDPD seeks to ensure that new purpose-built accommodation is located in appropriate locations and does not adversely affect the amenity of communities. It focuses new accommodation on campus or within or directly adjacent to Lancaster City Centre.

11.19 Lancaster University has set up Lancaster University Homes which is the official accreditation scheme for student housing in Lancaster, operated by Lancaster University and backed by Lancaster council, the student unions and the University of Cumbria. Students attending one of the Universities in Lancaster are encouraged to choose accredited properties where stringent checks are in place and high standards of management and maintenance take place.

11.20 The proliferation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), in particular the concentrations within some areas of Lancaster and Morecambe, has an adverse impact upon the amenity of residents. Policy DM13 of the Development Management DPD is being introduced to control the increase in HMOs and their concentration. The policy will prevent the introduction of additional HMOs where the concentration will exceed 10% within a 100m radius of an application site. The Council has also produced a Residential Conversions and Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Guidance which includes standards for the accommodation and facilities provided.

11.21 The conversion of dwelling houses to small HMOs (3-6 occupiers) does not require planning permission. The increase in small HMOs cannot be controlled at present. To address this, the Council is taking action to introduce an Article 4 Direction (of the Town and Country Planning - General Permitted Development Order 2015) to remove this permitted development. If Article 4 Directions comes into effect all conversions of dwelling houses to HMOs will be controlled by policy DM13. The quantum of HMOs within areas of Lancaster also creates an unfortunate ancillary, visual impact. The properties used as HMOs often display To Let Boards for prolonged periods, creating an unacceptable degree of clutter and an adverse visual effect along terraced streets. The introduction of advertisement controls through Article 7 Direction will seek to reduce this clutter and improve the appearance of these areas.

Cladding and Fire Safety

11.22 A joint initiative between Lancaster City Council and the Fire Service has previously been undertaken in 2017 to identify issues with cladding and fire safety, a number of fire safety measures have been implemented, and as matters have developed with cladding nationally, further inspections have taken place with issues highlighted and improvements planned where problems have been identified.

11.23 Capita has been assisting with the council compiling a list of external wall materials on high rise buildings, as required by Government (Building Safety Programme). A comprehensive list of properties across the district has been compiled of various height and risk in preparation for expected regulatory changes. The proposed new regulatory regime is designed to change every step and stage of the design, construction and occupation of a building, including its operation and lifecycle. Officers will also respond to future national policy changes which develop from the Building Safety Bill, Fire Safety Bill and Hackett Review.



Empty Homes Work/Social Lettings Agency

- 11.24** When Lancaster City Council re-affirmed its housing and regeneration priorities in 2011, one of the priorities identified was to tackle empty homes. A new temporary officer post was initially created in 2013 to allow the council to take a more strategic approach to tackling empty homes creating a dedicated resource to compile comprehensive and reliable data on empty homes and to use a range of methods, tools and incentives to bring empty homes back into use. The Empty Homes Officer post was made permanent in 2017 and a refreshed Empty Homes Strategy 2017-2022 was approved by the council.
- 11.25** Many of the objectives identified in tackling empty homes were being achieved through sub-regional partnership between Preston, South Ribble and Lancaster City Council was formed with Methodist Action North West, who were successful in securing empty homes funding through the Government's Affordable Homes Programme (Empty Homes – Communities Groups). The empty homes scheme allowed Methodist Action NW to provide financial assistance to refurbish empty homes. The refurbished properties were then leased to Methodist Action for a minimum of 5 years and subsequently offered to the council's Housing Options Team to refer people in housing need creating a new social lettings agency for Lancaster district. The social lettings agency also allowed other private sector landlords to participate in the scheme albeit the leases were for a shorter period, thus increasing the supply of housing available to people who presented to the council in need of rehousing or facing homelessness.
- 11.26** The initial scheme utilising the empty homes funding from central government was completed in 2015 with 12 empty homes being brought back into use in Lancaster district. Although the sub-regional partnership ended, Lancaster City Council continued to work with Methodist Action NW bringing empty homes back into use through council funding and a further 10 properties were brought back into use whilst maintaining the social lettings agency for both Lancaster and Preston City Council. However, in August 2019, the partnerships came to an end when Methodist Action went into liquidation and immediately wound up their operations. The council is actively pursuing alternative schemes to continue the pro-active work already achieved on empty homes. Since the officer post was created in 2013, a total of 459 empty homes have been brought back into use with officer intervention.
- 11.27** It is vitally important that the council also identifies a replacement social lettings agency. With such limited supply of social housing provision in Lancaster district, the private rented sector plays a crucial part in meeting the district's housing needs, and a social lettings agency offers the potential to ensure all properties meet reasonable standards of repair and are free from hazards, the rents are affordable for the end user and can provide more certainty for the tenant rather than a conventional private sector tenancy. This must be seen as a key priority for Lancaster City Council.

Grassland Management Strategy

- 11.28** Critical for the district's recovery from Covid-19 and instrumental to the well-being of our district's residents is the importance of access to good quality amenity space. The council is currently preparing a new Grassland Management Strategy which will seek to enhance biodiversity and aesthetic value, improve workload planning and create a financial saving across public realm.

Social Housing – Lancaster City Council

- 11.29** Lancaster City Council is a stock retaining authority with 3702 properties held within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and is the largest social housing provider in the district. The HRA is a landlord account, recording expenditure and income arising from the provision of housing accommodation by local housing authorities (under the powers and duties conferred on them in Part II of the Housing Act 1985 and certain provisions of earlier legislation). It is not a separate fund but a ring-fenced account of certain defined transactions, relating to local authority housing. The main items of expenditure included in the account are management and maintenance costs, major repairs, loan charges, and depreciation costs and the main sources of income are from tenants in the form of rents and service charges.
- 11.30** The Localism Act abolished the previous housing subsidy system replacing it with a self-financing model. In 2012, the council took on just over £31M of debt when the current subsidy arrangements ceased allowing for greater financial autonomy. That said, as part of a series of welfare reforms and austerity measures, the government imposed a mandatory 1% rent reduction upon social housing landlords. Then, in October 2017, the government announced its intention to set a long-term rent deal for both local authority landlords and housing associations. This would permit annual rent increases on both social rent and affordable rent properties of up to CPI plus 1 percentage point from 2020, for a period of at least five years. Clearly these recent rent controls place additional pressures on social housing providers to maintain their Business Plans, keep their housing stock maintained to the required standards and provide neighbourhoods that people wish to live in.
- 11.31** In 2010, the government set the minimum standard that all social housing must meet the decent homes standard, which means homes: -
- must be fit for human habitation
 - they must be in reasonable state of repair
 - they must have reasonably modern facilities
 - provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort
- 11.32** All dwellings owned and managed by Lancaster City Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) already met the decent homes standard but the council set its own Lancaster Standard to maintain its stock above that of the decent homes standard and has adopted "Decent Homes Plus" which is maintained through a pre-determined capital programme and provides a commitment that tenants will be properly consulted and have a degree of choice about planned works such as kitchen layouts and finishes. The renewals cycle is sometimes more frequent than that of the decent homes standard and the scope of works are more comprehensive including environmental improvements and a home security policy. Since 2010, capital investment of the council stock has averaged £4M per year which has included kitchen and bathroom replacements, external refurbishments, re-roofing, window replacements, boiler replacements, septic tank renewals, rewiring, lift replacement and sheltered scheme improvements. The council also has its own dedicated budget for adaptations to council stock which is circa £300K per annum.
- 11.33** The regeneration of Mainway estate, as referred to earlier in this strategy, is also a key priority and costs expected to be considerable. Whilst the council will still seek to provide the maximum level of investment possible across its existing housing stock, as the Lancaster Standard was introduced some time ago, it would seem timely to review the standard in consultation with tenants and the District Wide Tenants Forum to review its appropriateness and deliverability.

Mainway Regeneration

- 11.33** The regeneration of Mainway estate, as referred to earlier in this strategy, is also a key priority and costs expected to be considerable. Whilst the council will still seek to provide the maximum level of investment possible across its existing housing stock, as the Lancaster Standard was introduced some time ago, it would seem timely to review the standard in consultation with tenants and the District Wide Tenants Forum to review its appropriateness and deliverability.

Social Housing and Climate Change

11.34 A series of energy performance measures have been carried out incrementally on sheltered housing schemes summarised below:

Solar Panel Installation

- In 2012, a 26.5-30kWp roof mounted PV system was installed on Beck View, Kingsway, Ripley and Glebe Court. The combined PV systems have the capability to generate approximately 96,000kWh of power per annum, which is the equivalent of the annual electricity demand of 24 average domestic properties. The generated power is used within the communal areas of the building to power many areas, such as the laundry, lift and lighting systems.
- Due to a reduced demand on the grid, the combined Solar PV reduces CO2 emissions by approximately 68 tonnes per annum and generates a Feed-In Tariff revenue of somewhere in the region of £33,600 per year.

LED lighting system

- An annual smart LED lighting programme was commenced in 2014 to sheltered schemes which provides substantial energy and maintenance savings compared to the previous lighting system. The sensor controlled, crisp bright white light emitted from the new fittings brightens up the communal corridors, stairwells and lounge areas as residents move around the building, and also 'dull-down' to 10% energy efficient background lighting when the sensors do not pick up any movement.
- The new lighting system is expected to deliver more than 80% energy savings on the previous system. This coupled with the reduced maintenance costs will be a huge decrease in the running costs of lighting to all sheltered schemes.

Lift replacements

- The new energy-conserving lift installation program commenced in 2013 and has now been completed to all sheltered schemes. It is designed to be up to 75% more energy efficient than conventional systems with non-regenerative drives. The excess energy generated when the empty lift is going up, and when the full lift is going down is turned into electricity and is reused by other systems within the building.
- The lift is also fitted with LED lighting, which again reduces energy consumption and lasts up to 10 times longer than conventional fluorescent lamps, meaning more energy savings and less downtime.
- The advanced, automatic switch-off mode, when there's no passenger demand for the lift, makes LED lighting up to 80% more efficient than conventional lighting options.

Boiler Replacements/Solar Thermal Improvements

- All sheltered schemes have recently had their inefficient boilers replaced with high efficiency condensing boilers that fully modulate to meet the demand required. In addition to this, two hot water cylinders were replaced with smaller, highly insulated, high recovery cylinders, this means re-heat time is vastly increased so less stored water is needed. The cylinders were also fitted with a dual coil to allow for future fitting of a solar thermal system. The plant room pipework was altered and insulated to reduce heat loss within this area. Thermostatic Radiator Valves were replaced throughout the scheme, which allows for greater control of the system and in-turn, higher efficiency.
- Solar Thermal tubes have also been fitted on the south-facing boiler room roofs to Beck View and Ripley Court – solar energy heats the water in the panels via evacuated tubes which in-turn heats the water in the recently installed cylinders reducing the amount of gas needed to raise the temperature of the water to the desired level.

Whole House Improvements

- The council has undertaken a series of pilot projects to measure the practicality, cost and effectiveness of measures to improve thermal performance in advance of planned works for a major refurbishment of 60 properties in Beaumont avenue and Hill Road. The aim of the pilot is to assess what specification delivers the most cost effective improvement in thermal performance in conjunction with the planned renewal of doors and windows, re-plastering and essential repairs to the building fabric, which are the drivers for the project.

11.35 Major voids at 30 and 1 Mount Avenue presented the opportunity to carry out the pilot scheme. Energy improvement measures were developed on an elemental basis and assessed using commercial EPC criteria. However, because of existing cavity wall and adequate roof insulation and the age of existing windows, some measures such as insulated plasterboard would only yield marginal improvement. With the deep knowledge of the building fabric, a range of effective thermal improvements were specified which included: -

- Full electric re-wire with new distribution boards to 18th edition, USB sockets, energy efficient LED lightbulbs and external security lights.
- Full renewal of plumbing system
- New plaster to all internal walls
- New radio-linked smoke & heat alarm system (Grade D1, Category LD2) with control switch and CO detection
- New 'A' rated double glazed windows
- New energy efficient composite front and back external doors
- New 'A' rated condensing Combi boiler and complete central heating system with room thermostat & TRV's
- New electric focal point fire with surround & mantelpiece
- Installation of insulation and draught-proofing under all timber floors whilst renewing floorboards
- Upgraded insulation to roof spaces
- New insulated loft hatch
- Installation of insulated plasterboard to all sloping ceilings
- New humidity-controlled heat recovery extract fans in both kitchen and bathroom
- New bathroom suite including shower & wallboard
- New modern design kitchen units & worktops with upstands and splashback behind cooker space
- New vinyl flooring to kitchen & bathroom
- New skirting boards, door frames, architraves and 6 panel grained internal doors
- Fully decorated upon completion



- 11.36** Air tightness often causes the biggest challenge in creating thermal efficiency. Air tightness tests were conducted at 1 Mount Avenue by a certified engineer under controlled conditions. Prior to refurbishment the property was tested at 15, the lowest recordable rating. Following the refurbishment by RMS and its contractors, the property is significantly improved and achieved a 10 rating, the minimum standard for a new home. Due to Covid-19 no further properties will be completed in the current financial year, with 20 planned for next year.



Climate Change Action Plan

- 11.37** Since the council declared the Climate Emergency in January 2019, work has been taking place to examine the extent to which the council's direct activities contribute towards the district's carbon emissions and in November 2019, the council approved a Climate Change Action Plan to allow the council to become net zero carbon by 2030. This primarily focuses on changes to operational services and the council's direct estate (excluding council housing). However, the Action Plan sets a requirement that more details plans are to be developed to show the indirect actions the council will take including the council housing stock and the need to review the capital programme to ensure that repair and maintenance programmes are prioritised to reduce carbon. Any measures considered will need to be affordable both in terms of the installation costs borne by the council, the running costs for the end user and taking account the age and condition of the existing housing stock. However, the recent pilot projects have allowed the council's Repairs and Maintenance Team to increase their capacity and knowledge to undertake, supervise and manage energy efficiency works and to develop those skills further in devising suitable retrofitting systems. Whilst this is an evolving project a cost benefit analysis must always be undertaken to understand the value, benefits and impact on the council's capital programme.

Disposals Policy

- 11.38** Less than 100 existing council properties have been rated at EPC E or below. These are typically due to their age, construction type and constraints such as conservation areas requirements. In instances where the combined value of the property and retrofitting is not cost effective, on a case by case basis, the council may consider disposing of properties if and when they become vacant. This is only envisaged in a very small number of cases, and whereby the proceeds of sale can be recycled into new build schemes or to acquire more suitable properties. The council will be developing a policy around disposals and acquisitions of stock held in the HRA.



12a

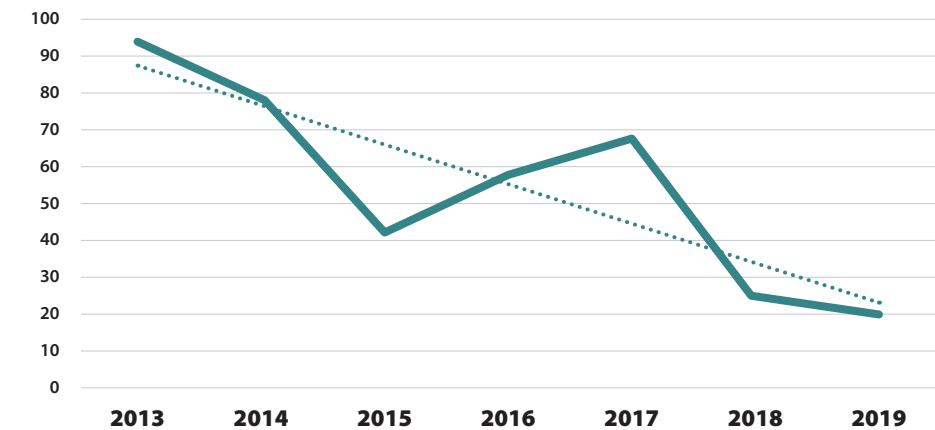


Promoting Independent Living (including Homelessness and Housing Options)

12.a Homelessness: - Rough sleeping/ Prevention/support/actions for those experiencing homelessness

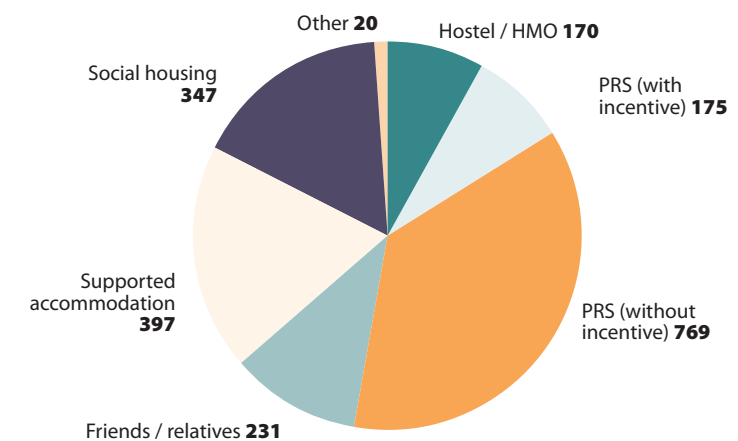
- 12.1** When the previous Housing Strategy was produced in 2012, significant progress had been achieved to reduce the number of statutory homeless acceptances which has remained fairly consistent in the intervening period. However, it should be stressed that the prevention and reduction of homelessness remains a constant challenge for Lancaster City Council even though additional staff resources have been provided to focus on homelessness prevention and outreach services and more recently external funding through successful bids to MHCLG to bolster and develop homelessness services.
- 12.2** Analysis of P1E data from the previous five years shows that there has been an overall downward trend in households presenting who are owed a duty under the Housing Act 1996 section 193. Over 50% of those owed a duty continue to be single adult males.

Applications - eligible, unintentionally homeless & priority need



- 12.3** A total of 1066 people were supported to stay in their previous homes in order to prevent homelessness; 2109 were helped to find alternative accommodation to prevent or relieve homelessness.

Alternative accommodation to prevent / relieve homelessness, 2014-2018



12.4 In relation to the national policy context, a series of changes have had a direct impact on households being threatened with or experiencing homelessness. Lancaster district became a Universal Credit (UC) full service area in July 2016; with evidence suggesting that the implementation of UC has reduced the willingness of private sector landlords to accept people on benefits and that delays with UC payments has led to increased evictions as a result of arrears. Furthermore, the freezing of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates from 2016 suggests that the gap between average rents and the LHA reduces the affordability of decent quality accommodation in the private rented sector for those dependent on benefits. This is a particular issue for the majority of those aged 35 and under who are only entitled to the Single Room Rate of the LHA.

12.5 Furthermore, changes to primary legislation came about through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (which came into effect in April 2018) which widened the duties of local authorities, who are now required to provide certain types of advice and support (but not necessarily accommodation) to all individuals or households who are homeless or assessed as being at risk of homelessness within the next 56 days. The national Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 also sets out the government's vision for halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027.

12.6 In relation to the local context, the strategy has already drawn attention to the fact that Lancaster district has a lower level of social housing than the national average with strong housing markets operating many areas and across tenures which puts pressure on low income households finding suitable accommodation without requiring some support or intervention provided by the local authority.

12.7 Lancaster City Council commissioned a Homelessness Review in 2014 which set out six key objectives detailed below: -

1. Preventing Homelessness
2. Developing the Council's Services
3. Facilitating Effective Multi-Agency Working
4. Developing the Private Rented Sector
5. Addressing 'Inward Migration' and Rough Sleeping
6. Monitoring Performance and Keeping Abreast of Changes in Legislation and Policy



12.8 Significant progress has already been made in relation to these objectives briefly summarised below

Preventing Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing drop-in sessions have been set up in a number of different locations across the district.• CAB outreach surgeries implemented at both Town Halls.• Roll out of the Duty to Refer requiring other public bodies and partner agencies to inform the council of those at risk of homelessness.
Developing the Council's Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Significant increase in the provision of supported housing in Lancaster district since 2014: -• Oak Tree House – 23 bed space facility for single homeless households• Women's Refuge – 6 bed space facility for women fleeing domestic violence with increased provision planned• Shared housing for young people (7 units)• Temporary supported housing at Aldcliffe Road/Portland Street (12 units)• Walter Lyon House – recovery housing service for people with a history of substance misuse
Facilitating Effective Multi Agency Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing and Offender Protocol/Joint Working Arrangements for Homeless 16/17-year olds/ Homeless in Hospital Protocol aligned with Duty to Refer and Rough Sleeper/ Complex Needs Panel merged with the Royal Lancaster Infirmary Frequent Attenders/ Mental Health multi-agency meetings
Developing the Private Rented Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rent Deposit Scheme and rent in advance payments made introduced for all those experiencing homelessness (regardless of priority need from the Homelessness Prevention Grant. Discretionary Housing Payment used to cover rent in advance and deposit.• Extension of the accommodation finding service• Commissioned Pre-Tenancy training
Addressing 'Inward Migration' and Rough Sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The City Council has funded 6 spaces on the cold weather provision at Aldcliffe House• A number of successful bids from the MHCLG Rough Sleeper Initiative to fund:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▫ Rough Sleeper Outreach Worker with bespoke budget▫ Rough Sleeper Navigators and Supported Lettings Officer (Rapid Rehousing Pathway)▫ Funding for Trauma-informed counselling for adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)▫ By the end of May 2020, rehoused 37 individuals who were sleeping rough or in shelters as part of the Councils COVID 19 response.
Monitoring Performance and Keeping Abreast of Changes in Legislation and Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding the impact of the Homeless Reduction Act following implementation and taking further action to prevent and relieve homelessness

12.9 In 2019 Lancaster City Council commissioned the independent social research consultancy Imogen Blood & Associates (IBA) to conduct a Homelessness Review which involved relevant partners, including statutory partners, voluntary sector and specialist providers, and people with lived experience. The Review considered the relationship of the wider policy context and links to the council's corporate policy framework, reviewed data on current levels of homelessness, its causes and the profile of those experiencing homelessness and reviewed activities to prevent homelessness and to provide support and/or temporary/settled accommodation to those experiencing homelessness.

12.10 Between February and June 2019, IBA collected and analysed a wide range of data in order to inform the recommendations for the Action Plan which included research conducted by peer researchers with 30 people who had experienced homelessness in a range of settings including day centre, supported housing and temporary accommodation, a professional stakeholder event, data collection from supported housing providers, analysis of local authority homelessness statistics H-CLIC and P1E data collated and published by MHCLG.

12b

The Homelessness Strategy



12b. Lancaster City Council Homelessness Strategy 2020-2023

12.11 The LCC homelessness Strategy 2020-2023 identifies 3 key priorities and that will help us address homelessness in the district

12.12 Preventing homelessness at key transitions:

- Improving our first contact services
- Greater promotion of our services through partnership work
- Providing a smooth transition from hospital/prison/care settings to home

12.13 Tackling rough sleeping and supporting people out of homelessness

- Enhancing our outreach services
- Build a network of support
- Evaluate and improve our services
- Develop a range of accommodation and support to meet the needs of our homeless residents

12.14 Improving access to settled housing

- Facilitate access to the private and social rented sector
- Increase provision and standards

Preventing homelessness at key transitions

12.15 The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 which came into force in April 2018 placed new legal duties on local authorities so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness gets access to meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status, as long as they are eligible for assistance. This aimed to ensure that local authorities across England were focused on preventing and relieving homelessness for all, alongside the provision of housing under their statutory obligations as defined in the Housing Act 1998.

12.16 HRA brought in the following key measures:

- An extension of the period 'threatened with homelessness' from 28 to 56 days – this means a person is treated as being threatened with homelessness if it is likely they will become homeless within 56 days
- A duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need
- A duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants, regardless of priority need
- A duty to refer – public services will need to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless
- A duty for councils to provide advisory services on homelessness, preventing homelessness and people's rights free of charge
- A duty to access all applicants' cases and agree a personalised plan

12.17 The introduction of HRA meant a number of system and administrative changes within the homelessness team and minimal central government funds were made available to implement the changes; subsequently, Lancaster City Council's Homelessness Team experienced a drop in outcomes over the 2018 period. 2019 has seen outcomes improve and plans for the next three years will enable the council to fully embrace the aspirational principles of the HRA.

Improving our first contact services

- 12.18** Over the next 3 years we will develop our initial contact services both in-house and through outreach to ensure that anyone facing homelessness is aware of their rights, knows what help is available and that our staff are adequately trained and resourced to deliver an excellent quality of service. To do this we will:
- Review the **homelessness team structure** and processes, including an internal audit of a sample of prevention cases and Personal Housing Plans. Restructure the service if required and provide training and resources where needed.
 - Upgrade our **housing management software** so it is fully compatible with MHCLG H-CLIC system and start monitoring statutory work in more detail
 - Fund and deliver a **flexible floating support service**, this service will provide outreach to prevent tenancy/ family breakdown as well as to support resettlement. We envisage this service to provide both one-off and ongoing support as needed.
 - Offer all our customers the opportunity to provide **feedback** on their experience of our service and this will be regularly reviewed by service managers with 'you said, we did' responses on our notice boards and website.
 - Review our **website** alongside our customers to ensure it offers the most accessible, up to date and helpful initial contact information for people facing homelessness from a range of circumstances.
 - Deliver a social lettings agency either in-house or through trusted providers, to increase and enhance the PRS provision to those on Universal Credit

Greater promotion of our services through partnership work

- 12.19** We recognise that we cannot solve homelessness alone, our partners are key to ensuring we reach each and every individual in the district who is at risk of homeless. To do this we will:
- Increase awareness of **Duty to Refer**: through promotion, training and feedback to partner agencies: raise awareness that people at risk of homelessness should present at the earliest opportunity.
 - Seek 'duty to refer' champions from key partners and meet with them regularly to review referrals and evaluate progress.
 - Develop a marketing plan to raise awareness about the role of the Housing Options team to citizens and other professionals
 - Raise awareness about housing options and the HRA with young people and families in schools, and with colleagues in education, health and children's services. Refresh and extend the pool of **accredited mediators** recruited under the last strategy and work in partnership to promote and target their offer to people of all ages asked to leave by family / friends.
 - Promote greater awareness of **Alternative Payment Applications** (APA). Partnership work with advice agencies and LCC Housing Enforcement to challenge poor/ illegal practice

Providing a smooth transition from hospital/ prison/care settings to home

- 12.20** Individuals leaving prison, hospital or the care system are at a significantly increased risk of homelessness whilst also being some of our most vulnerable people in housing need. LCC is committed to ensuring all those leaving prison/hospital or the care system, are prevented from becoming homeless. Through the closer working arrangements between the council and health leads, the arrangements for hospital discharge were reviewed to align to the duty to refer for patients who may be homeless or sleeping rough or may not be able to return to their previous home. As a result of the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust covering South Cumbria and Lancaster the key contracts for each responsible housing authority have been clearly identified in a new protocol.

- 12.21** In order to deliver our commitment, we will:

- Continue with and review the recently established **multi-agency prison pre-release panel**.
- Develop or revise specific protocols with all institutions for preventing and reporting homelessness on discharge/ release
- Recruit a **health link worker** to further improve joint working with health professionals and improve access to a range of housing options and advice for patients, including those experiencing domestic abuse, older people, etc.
- Explore opportunities to embed homelessness prevention in **Integrated Care Communities** roll out, e.g. to raise awareness of homelessness, identify those at risk early on, and develop recovery initiatives in the community

Tackling rough sleeping and supporting people out of homelessness

- 12.22** Despite increasing numbers of people presenting on the streets all over England, Lancaster has been able to keep rough sleeping numbers fairly consistent with street count figures ranging from 4 to 8 since 2014. The Coronavirus pandemic presented both challenges and opportunities for those sleeping rough and LCC responded quickly by providing housing to 22 individuals in a matter of days. The challenge now for our teams will be to ensure those housed are supported to maintain their housing whilst meeting the needs of those who newly present on the streets.

Enhancing our outreach services

- 12.23** To ensure we continue to provide support to those recently housed as well as those who newly present on our streets we will:
- Continue the re-launched LCC **Outreach service** which provides a rapid response to **end rough sleeping** for those with a local connection, and support those with no local connection to re-connect where possible.
 - Continue our regular **drop-in sessions** at the YMCA, West End Impact, Probation and in supported housing services.
 - Recruit **Navigators and Supported Lettings Officers** with MHCLG funding to provide additional support and a more flexible approach for those with more complex needs.
 - Explore the **feasibility of a high-fidelity Housing First offer** (non-time limited support alongside ordinary housing, based on principles of choice, harm minimisation and linking into healthcare and other relevant services) for this cohort. Draw on good practice and learning from MHCLG pilots.

Build a network of support

- 12.24** To provide the most effective, sustainable, person-centred offer to individuals who presents in need, we must ensure all support services in the district and beyond work together cohesively and are clear and transparent about what they can and can't offer. To support this, we will:
- Map existing directories of support and services which might be relevant to those facing homelessness.
 - Improve the **sharing of information about services** for professionals and citizens (online, regular homelessness forum meetings)
 - Work in partnership with the County as it reviews the supported housing offer, including for care leavers, veterans and people with autism.
 - Set up a multi-agency working group to scope feasibility of/ draft and agree a **common assessment form** which is GDPR-compliant

Evaluate and improve our services

12.25 To ensure our services continue to evolve to meet the needs of those who present on our streets we will:

- Commission **Psychologically/ Trauma Informed/ Adverse Childhood Experiences training** as widely as possible across the local homelessness system, using MHCLG funding
- Conduct a Homeless Health Needs Assessment, leading to an evidence-based action plan.
- Better strategic coordination of the response to rough sleeping between statutory, VCS and business sectors:
- Establish and work to shared goals
- Reduce activities which might duplicate or be counter-productive
- Identify areas where the VCS/ business offer can best supplement current provision, e.g. the social integration of those moving into independent accommodation
- Work with housing support providers and VCS to support and build a lived experience forum to feed into and advise future strategy and service development.

Develop a range of accommodation and support to meet the needs of our homeless.

12.26 We recognise that investment in our accommodation and support provision is necessary to continue to meet the specific needs of those who are homeless as well as offer a sustainable package of support to help them maintain their accommodation. To achieve this the council will:

- Open a new 23 bed **refuge** for those who have experienced domestic abuse, including six spaces for people with complex needs
- **End all use of B&B by year 2**, by increasing prevention activity and access to a range of leased, hostel, and supported lodging accommodation.
- Continue plans to develop a **multi-agency one-stop hub** for complex needs/rough sleepers in partnership with CGL/Inspire. (At Feb 2020, capital secured – planning applications submitted)
- Fund and deliver a **flexible floating support service**, which can support resettlement. This should be able to offer one-off or ongoing support as needed.

Improving access to settled housing

12.27 Providing access to affordable and secure housing is paramount to our homelessness strategy. The homelessness review identified a number of challenges our residents face when trying to access affordable housing, these are:

- Welfare reform – landlords being resistant to accepting universal credit, under 35's on reduced housing benefit rate and the bedroom tax
- Financial barriers – lack of deposits or fees, insecure work or lack of work
- Local housing market – lack of affordable housing options, much of the stock in the city goes to students and the PRS market in Morecambe is often poor quality

12.28 Despite these challenges, there is much that is positive to build on in Lancaster and Morecambe, including:

- LCC's ongoing ownership and direct management of a considerable amount of diverse housing stock
- Local Registered Providers (i.e. housing associations) who are developing in the area and may be interested in further partnership working with the council in relation to Housing First, leased Temporary Accommodation, etc.
- Synergy with the council's Empty Homes strategy which has already generated some new lets for previously homeless households
- A strategic commitment to the development of affordable housing through the Housing Strategy, which is in the process of being renewed.

12.29 To improve access to settled housing we will:

Facilitate access to the private and social rented sector:

- Continue funding the **Calico Accommodation Finder offer** and explore a more **robust rent bond offer** within this.
- Explore the feasibility of a **new Social Lettings Offer** for Lancaster and Morecambe. Explore within this the feasibility of a managed shared offer for under 35s.

Increase provision and standards:

- Review within the new LCC Homes Strategy the potential for an initiative to bring **empty homes** back into use for those in need of affordable housing (e.g. using Empty Homes Grants with conditions to rent at LHA rates after work completed).
- Take a more strategic approach to the provision of student housing in Lancaster district, working collaboratively with the two Universities and existing student housing providers, and make use of existing planning powers to control applications that seek to provide more student housing in residential areas.
- Re-consider the introduction of the **selective licensing** scheme in Morecambe's West End, assessing (and where necessary mitigating) likely impact on supply of affordable housing for those experiencing/ at risk of homelessness
- Ensure the needs of homeless singles, couples and families are considered throughout the **new LCC Homes Strategy**, through the **forthcoming Allocations Policy review**, and through **continued work and monitoring within the RP Strategic Partnership Meetings**.

Impact of Covid-19 and Homelessness

12.30 A National campaign called "Everyone In" began in March 2020 to bring all rough sleepers indoors as a direct response to the need to control the spread of Covid-19 and protect those most vulnerable within our community from contracting the virus. Lancaster City Council has engaged fully with the Lancashire Resilience Forum, a group of organisations that are working together to prepare and respond to emergencies in Lancashire. At an early stage the LRF Sub-Group (Homeless Cell) was established to create a robust strategic framework to manage rough sleeping across the county which was a collaboration between the Lancashire Homeless District Housing Leads, Public Health Leads, NHS, CCG's, Police -Partnerships Officer, Lancashire Fire and Rescue and the ICC's. The primary aim of the sub-group was to identify the health needs of all rough sleepers across Lancashire and create health pathway action plans for each district within the County to include local arrangements for COVID care and COVID protect by making available self-contained accommodation available for homeless and those discharged from a hospital setting with no fixed abode. As a direct result of the joint collaboration between housing and health during the lockdown and the commitment from all the key partners to maintain and mainstream the joint working and improved outcomes for rough sleepers and those recently accommodated, the Lancaster Homeless Health and Wellbeing Sub-Group was also set up: -

- To coordinate a multi-agency response to COVID and the longer term health consequences of the pandemic for people who are rough sleeping, homeless or temporarily housed across the Lancaster District, bringing local authority (housing, social care and public health), local NHS partners and the criminal justice service together.
- The focus of this group is to develop a bespoke health pathways to improve access to health services and improve the health of the homeless population, recognising that other groups, particularly the Homeless Advisory Group and Homelessness Forum, are working on the wider housing, economic and welfare issues.

12.31 Lancaster City Council took immediate action to bring all rough sleepers indoors utilising a range of vacant council housing stock, supported housing and hotel accommodation. Sustaining rough sleepers in those settings is a constant challenge and through the sub-group, a very strong and effective partnership has been created through weekly Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings which has provided rapid access to GP appointments and referrals to other health and wellbeing services.

12.32 A Homelessness Advisory Group was established in May 2020 (chaired by the Housing Portfolio Holder and is a partnership which includes other elected members representing Lancaster and Morecambe wards, council officers, supported housing providers, the Constabulary's Partnerships Officer, Lancaster BID, third sector organisations and faith group) and a Lived Experience Sub-Group was subsequently formed in June 2020. Both groups were created as our response to the work undertaken as part of Everyone In campaign for organisations supporting the homeless/rough sleeper community to come together and work in a more streamlined collaborative way to respond to the pandemic. Initially a mapping exercise was undertaken of all available services and resources so these could be best deployed where needed initially focussing on the immediate need to bring rough sleepers indoors, but also to plan for post pandemic recovery to prevent people from returning to the streets.

12.33 As part of the mapping exercise, the council committed funding to deliver a new intensive floating support service to housed rough sleepers which seeks to support people to remain in accommodation and not return to the streets. This intensive floating support service for ex rough sleepers and new rough sleepers is intended to work alongside the councils rough sleeper Outreach Service, it is the council's intention that they should be delivered with sufficient integration that service users accessing them experience them as a cohesive service offer.

12.34 This new service will provide a support service tailored to the individual as appropriate, allocating service users a named key worker who will engage and support the service user placing them at the centre of their individual support plan. The service provider will work creatively to enable service users to engage with other specialist services and will build relationships with partner agencies to ensure effective referrals and joint work to ensure health, rehabilitation and development needs are met. The funding initially committed by the council will allow the service to be provided for a six-month period, and it may be extended further. A tendering process was undertaken in July 2020 and the new contract has recently been awarded to Calico Group.

Funding Opportunities

12.35 Following a pledge from government to increase the support to local authorities with the next stage of the Covid-19 rough sleeping response, in July 2020, the next steps Accommodation Programme was launched providing opportunities for both revenue and capital funding required to increase the existing supply of housing and support services for rough sleepers over the next four years.

12.36 Bids for the Phase 1 funding had to be submitted by 20th August 2020, with a requirement to spend the funding by the end of March 2021. To this end, Lancaster City Council had submitted a bid for revenue funding only and has been awarded £192K funding. The award takes account of the direct costs to the council for provision of temporary accommodation for rough sleepers, funding for winter provision, funding to set up the Help2Rent Landlord Incentive Scheme to increase access to private rented accommodation to house rough sleepers, additional funding to facilitate timely moves from supported housing and funding that allows the council to extend the new intensive floating support service.

12.37 In future bidding rounds, the council will be seeking to secure funding for longer-term move-on accommodation as well as revenue funding to provide the necessary support packages which are critical to tenancies being sustained.

12.38 Whilst it is critical that the council drives forward the district's recovery from the pandemic, the economic downturn is expected to bring a national increase in homelessness. The eviction ban on tenants has been extended and landlords must now provide six-month's notice with some limited exceptions.

13a/b

Promoting Independent Living



13 Promoting Independent Living

Housing Options/Housing Register

- 13.1** Lancaster City Council introduced a new Choice Based Lettings Scheme in 2011 called “Ideal Choice Homes” as a means of advertising and letting social housing vacancies (all council housing and an agreed proportion of Registered Provider vacancies). On a weekly basis, properties are advertised, and all eligible housing applicants can bid for properties, having been registered and prioritised through a banding scheme. This system then allows housing applicants to see how they are ranked when bids are placed. Choice based lettings schemes are widely recognised as being fairer and more transparent and provide a greater degree of choice to people included on the Housing Register.
- 13.2** The council is currently reviewing its allocation policy. Going forward, the council is seeking to extend the functionality of the Ideal Choice Homes scheme by including other forms of housing, such as the private sector and all forms of affordable housing and is seeking to make the system more user friendly and interactive. The council is also considering the merits of having a dedicated shop unit to have a more prominent high street presence for the Choice Based Lettings Team.

Housing Related Support

- 13.3** The last Housing Strategy focussed on the Supporting People Programme which was a partnership between Lancashire County Council and the 12 lower tier authorities across the county. The SP Programme funded both accommodation based tenancy support such as supported housing, sheltered housing, refuges and hostel accommodation as well as floating tenancy support which could be delivered to people across tenures who were in need of and qualified for the service. Due to significant funding reductions within the SP programme, Lancashire County Council had to reduce the number of services it could fund through the Programme and in order to safeguard some of the existing supported housing services across Lancashire, the floating tenancy support had to be discontinued. This led to a considerable gap in options to provide tenancy related support to enable vulnerable households to maintain a tenancy and prevent homelessness. Many social housing providers have needed to respond to some degree by re-modelling their service offer to tenants as a direct response to the cuts, in order to provide mechanisms to allow the support to continue. Although this typically means that shorter term interventions are in place rather than a support package that could have previously been provided for up to two years.
- 13.4** Lancaster City Council created a new Household Intervention Service with two new officer posts being created in 2017 and then a further post created in 2018. The team support council tenants who are referred by the Housing Option Team, Estate Managers or the Income Management Team. The service is designed to assist with straight forward tenancy set up, debt issues, supporting tenants involved with multi-disciplinary teams and working with tenants who have complex needs i.e. chaotic lifestyles, mental ill health including issues around hoarding and substance misuse issues. The support will remain in place for as long as it will be required although there is an expectation that the level of support will reduce over time and taper off. The Household Intervention Team members normally support around 20 clients at any one time. The creation of this type of support has been invaluable and has directly resulted in tenancies being sustained that would otherwise fail and has positively impacted on rent collection. A new Energy Advice officer post is also planned within the Council Housing Service to support tenants by providing advice on heating systems, budgets and energy tariffs and advice on new energy measures and initiatives.

Training and Employment

- 13.5** In order to achieve an inclusive and prosperous local economy, the council can play a leading role in improving access to educational attainment, raising aspirations and address skills shortages in Lancaster district.

Employment and Skills Plans

- 13.6** In the context of housing and other forms of development, the council has recently implemented a requirement for major developments to include an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) as a requirement of planning permission working closely with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). The council has also attained CITB's National Skills Academy for Construction status and has established a suitable framework/toolkit to assist in the implementation of this through a Supplementary Planning Document and working with Calico Enterprises as a delivery partner. The ESP seeks to ensure that wherever possible, local labour/ local suppliers will be used during the construction phase and that local people will be provided with the opportunity for training and apprenticeships.

Full details of the Employment and Skills SPD can be found at:
planningdocs.lancaster.gov.uk/NorthgatePublicDocs/00929302.pdf

Green Skills

- 13.7** Delivery of the Green Skills agenda is another potential growth area in the light of the climate emergency and the national economic recovery from Covid-19. The Government has recently announced a package of funding through a National Green Homes Grant Scheme which seeks to tackle the worse performing dwellings rated at EPC E or below. The Green Homes Grants will largely focus on primary measures such as different forms of insulation, heat pumps and solar thermal. Higher levels of grant (£10K) will be means tested to low income households who are homeowners with £5K available for all other households including social housing tenants. A critical element of delivering suitable measures is accessing local contractors who meet the required accreditations for measures (either Trustmark or PAS2035) and there is a clear role for the council to provide the necessary advice support and infrastructure to make use of the funding available and to create the local labour force needed. A number of staff employed by Lancaster City Council's Repairs and Maintenance Team are already trained in Domestic Energy Assessments with scope to become Retrofit Assessors, training to create an in-house team to become qualified installers is being investigated as well as partnerships with local contractors for deep retrofitting schemes. Undertaking retrofit assessments across all tenures could be critically important to ensure local residents are given impartial advice and directed towards the most appropriate measures.

Links with training providers

- 13.8** A number of social housing providers have established links with a range of organisations that provide practical support to help people access training and employment. This is a key function of the local supported housing providers in Lancaster district and forms part of the pathway plan developed for each resident. Local providers include Inspira providing certificates in construction, H&S and CSCS cards. PHX Morecambe provide vocational training and functional skills in Maths and English and More Positive Together/Calico provide a Lancashire wide scheme which provides employment skills through a mentoring programme primarily targeting young people aged 16-24. The scheme also links directly with employers to match suitable candidates with job vacancies. Volunteering opportunities are normally arranged through CVS or through established links with local organisations and supported housing providers are also delivering their own in-house solutions through their existing staff teams such as interviewing skills, help with CV's and running themed activities such as DIY/ painting etc. Some existing partners such as Jigsaw Homes have an Employability Team working alongside Neighbourhood Management staff and supported housing staff but delivering solutions to residents in general needs tenancies.

Kickstart

- 13.9** The government have recently announced the Kickstart programme which can be used to create new six-month job placements for young people (16-24) who are currently on Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment. Job placements should support the participants to develop the skills and experience they need to find work after completing the programme. It is expected that a high percentage of young people benefitting from the scheme progress into employment, in many cases with the employer offering the job placement. Alternatively, they may progress into a traineeship or apprenticeship.

- 13.10** The job placements created with Kickstart funding must be **new jobs**. They must:
- be funded by the Kickstart Programme grant and would not exist without this funding
 - be paid from the grant money for the 25 hours per week on National Minimum Wage for their age group (employers can pay a higher wage and pay for more hours)
 - a minimum of 25 hours per week, for six months

- 13.11** Clarion Futures are leading a specific Kickstart in Housing programme working with housing providers across the country to provide opportunities for young people to gain real and valuable experience within housing organisations. The Council is committed to support this initiative within its Housing Services in partnership with other organisations, with job placements due to begin from April 2021.

Smart Technology and Digital Connectivity

- 13.12** To keep up with the fast pace of technology, having an inclusive IT infrastructure will greatly contribute to creating inclusive communities where residents are engaged and empowered and have access to the same life chances and opportunities. The council is already exploring linking their buildings and sites using full fibre connections. For social housing providers, not only is this important in relation to improving the quality of life of residents, but the use of smarter technologies can also bring cost efficiencies, operational efficiency and enhanced fire safety measures benefitting tenants and landlords. Lancaster City Council as the largest social landlord has already begun upgrading equipment in sheltered schemes by replacing analogue equipment so that all schemes are digitally enabled and provision of free Wi-Fi access. The benefits of this include: -
- More options for tenants to self-manage their contact, for example there is now an “I’m OK” button which they can self-activate if they will not be in for the Scheme Manager visit/contact supporting independent living.
 - The units themselves are very simple to use and tenants have easily transitioned to them.
 - More ability for multiple users to contact the Control Centre at once from a scheme which helps with call management.
 - More flexibility to link different technology enabled devices including telecare.
 - Scheme Managers have more ability to work remotely from the scheme & manage contacts. This is not a replacement for home visits but will complement it.
- 13.13** Further work is also taking place with Lancaster University and local partners to explore modern Internet of Things technologies, with the aim of developing sensors that can improve the quality of life for our residents whilst preserving their privacy. The council also wants to explore the use of modern technologies to support meeting our strategic goals around the Climate Emergency and Improve our customer services offering to give our residents access to the services they need.

People with Learning/Physical Disabilities/Mental Health

- 13.14** Lancashire County Council has developed a ‘Housing Care and Support Strategy 2018 -2025’ the aims of which are to outline its vision for the modernisation of care and support across the 12 Lancashire districts and their plans to adopt partnership working with key stakeholders including District Strategic Housing Leads that can influence local Housing Strategies and ensure the needs of individuals with care needs are met.
- 13.15** A recent needs analysis was undertaken by Housing LIN on behalf of Lancashire County Council to identify need across all 12 districts for the next 10 years and this has highlighted the need in Lancaster and Morecambe of 22 additional units by 2021; 48 units by 2025/26 and 75 units by 2030/31 for young adults with care needs.
- 13.16** Housing with Care and Support is accommodation which has been designed, built or adapted to facilitate the care and support needs that its tenants or owners may have now or in the future. For younger adults with disabilities, it means new apartment schemes with each scheme usually incorporating around 12 apartments.

- 13.17** The existing provision includes a number of shared houses in Lancaster and Morecambe that no longer meet the needs of the current service users due to age and ill health and challenges introducing new service users due to age and compatibility issues. Current supply of Housing with Care and Support is not equitable across Lancashire – there are too many properties for shared households and not enough modern apartment schemes which is restricting choice, shared households provision has been in existence for decades and, whilst this still represents one of the best ways of supporting some people, there is a need to offer more apartment schemes. This is because many people expect to be able to live in their own self-contained accommodation with their own front door.

- 13.18** There is also a need to shift to a model of Housing with Care and Support which is more financially sustainable and enables opportunities for improved independent living. This includes an alternative to residential care settings, which can easily lead to a home for life, institutionalisation and create dependency unnecessarily. There are people currently living in residential care who may want to progress to be more independent in a community setting, but there is a lack of availability of suitable accommodation, such as Flat Schemes.

13.19 Key facts

- There are approximately 1,500 people with learning disabilities and/or autism living in more than 700 shared households at an average gross weekly cost of over £850 per person.
- There are 185 people with mental health needs in shared households or apartment schemes.
- In June 2018, Lancashire County Council was supporting over 257 adults with learning disabilities and autism in long-term residential care at an average gross weekly cost of £1,321 per person.
- In June 2018, Lancashire County Council was supporting 289 adults with mental health needs in residential care, which is very high when compared to other councils, at an average gross weekly cost of £966 per person. N.B. There is variation in the profile at a district level in Lancashire
- There is currently only one jointly commissioned apartment scheme in Lancaster ‘Factory Hill’ and the need has been identified for more schemes of this type over the next 10 years and beyond
- Lancashire County Council need to reduce our reliance on residential care by ensuring alternative options are available to help us manage the growing demand and financial pressures.
- Lancashire County Council aims to have more smaller-scale apartment schemes for younger adults with disabilities.

- 13.20** The target agreed with Lancashire County Council in the formulation of this Strategy is to provide 60 new apartments by 2025. At the present time, three new services are planned in Lancaster, Morecambe and Heysham, subject to planning permission being granted and as new provision comes forward, there will be a need to review the existing group home provision and agree a decommissioning plan. The city council will continue to work very closely with Commissioning Leads to bring schemes already identified into fruition and identify other potential opportunities.

Purpose built Wheelchair Accommodation

- 13.21** The council works closely with Registered Provider partners to create new purpose-built wheelchair accommodation wherever possible on new developments. Homes England do not current apply any mandatory standards around this, although previously the Housing Corporation did require that one in every 10 dwellings provided at least one wheelchair accessible dwelling. Since the last strategy was produced, there has been a net increase of 22 wheelchair properties: 12 at Factory Hill Lancaster (Impact Housing Association), 3 at Riverview Close Lancaster (Jigsaw Homes) and 7 at The Globe, Westgate (Jigsaw). Lancaster City Council provided grant funding to directly support the delivery of 15 of these properties. Policy DM2 of the Local Plan requires that all new homes are built to the Nationally Described Space Standards and that 20% of all new homes (20% of both the affordable and market homes on a site) are built to meet the Building Regulation Requirement M4(2) (accessible and adaptable homes). The council will still actively explore opportunities to provide wheelchair accessible accommodation on new schemes wherever possible.

13b. Creating Sustainable Communities

Safe and Secure Neighbourhoods

13.42 The council plays a fundamental role in achieving community cohesion through a range of activities. Planning for new homes seeks to provide neighbourhoods that meet the needs of the widest possible range of residents with social and affordable housing being integrated into market housing schemes. In design terms, the development management team regularly consult the Designing Out Crime Officer at Lancashire Constabulary. There are also very well-established links and close partnership working with the Lancashire Constabulary's Partnerships Officer who is consulted on proposals that may impact upon community safety within neighbourhoods, the City and Town Centres. This is particularly relevant for new housing services that seek to meet the needs of vulnerable groups. Ideally the Constabulary would like to see a requirement that all new housing complies with Secured by Design standards – these standards are sometimes required as part of the planning process but it is not a mandatory requirement for all new residential housing at the present time. However, the council can give a commitment that its own new housing and regeneration projects will seek to comply with the standards and will work closely through existing channels at key stages of development proposals and will work with Registered Providers partners to adopt the standards where this isn't being done already.

13.43 In October 2014, following a collaborative bid formulated by Lancaster City Council and Lancashire County Council, funding was secured under the Transformation Challenge Award (TCA). The aim was to focus on addressing poor quality housing stock in the private rented sector, and tackling underlying health needs of residents to deliver improved outcomes through a range of partnerships linking public sector programmes (Better Care Together, Prevention and Early Help for Children Young People and Families, Integrated Wellness Service, Early Response and Morecambe Regeneration) through smarter use of data systems to inform strategic planning, and developing improved pathways to support. The project activity was intended to be in Morecambe, based in three wards – Harbour, Heysham North and Poulton. All three areas have high concentrations of private rented sector (PRS) housing.

13.44 In order to bridge a gap between statutory nuisance and Police intervention, a new Anti-Social Behaviour Team was established in 2018, utilising funding from Transformational Challenge Award, Lancaster City Council and Morecambe Town Council. Whilst the initial focus was Morecambe, the ASB Team is now a mainstream function within Lancaster City Council's establishment with 2 full time officers and a seconded PCSO. The Team cover a wider geographical remit which includes neighbourhood management issues, working with the two Universities to prevent and detect crimes against the student populations, Public Space Protection Orders in the City Centre, County Lines/ drug related crime and activities, Closure Notices, detection and prevention of youth crime and developing initiatives such as the new Youth Shelter with Wi-Fi access in Morecambe.

Community Connectors

13.45 In 2019 the council created a new Team of three Community Connectors. The aim of this service is for the community-based team to bring Lancaster City Council closer to residents who live and work within the district, and actively contribute to the council's key ambition of supporting healthy and happy communities. The community connectors have already engaged with a wide range of communities and organisations across the district to listen to resident's views about council services, to support communities to engage with each other and promote community work and activities as well as providing practical support. Each community connector has their own geographical area covering Central and South Lancaster, Morecambe and Heysham and Skerton and Rural areas.

Gypsies and Travellers

13.46 In 2017, Lancaster City Council commissioned a new Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Lancaster district. The overall objective was to form a clear evidence base to inform the development of planning policies relating to Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople. The study was commissioned in the light of regulatory changes made in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites in 2015 which altered the definition of Gypsies and Travellers. The full report can be found at planningdocs.lancaster.gov.uk/NorthgatePublicDocs/00909789.pdf

13.47 The exact population of Gypsies and Travellers in Lancaster district is not known. However, the 2011 Census identified 112 households that considered themselves to be White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller, of these 14 households living in a caravan or other mobile or temporary structure and 98 households living in bricks and mortar accommodation.

13.48 The study found that out of a total of 82 existing permitted Traveller pitches in Lancaster district provided across one council owned site and 18 privately owned sites mainly providing permanent pitches, with some temporary or transit pitches. This represents the largest provision in the whole of the county. Visits were made to all sites with a number of interviews conducted concluding that 57 pitches were occupied by Gypsy and Traveller households, 12 pitches were vacant on one permitted site and 8 were unoccupied having been reserved for family members only and 5 occupied by non-Gypsy and Traveller households.

13.49 Using standard methodology to calculate future requirements, the study calculated that there was a need for 8 additional pitches up until the period 2031. Since the study was published, a further two pitches have been granted permission, and the council has undertaken two separate call for sites and assessed sites nominated using the published criteria for new Traveller sites. Of the sites nominated, none were found to be suitable. Another limiting factor is that some of the existing site owners have an aspiration to expand their current provision, but due to existing sites now falling within Flood Zone 3, this cannot be supported.

13.50 A multi-agency practitioner group chaired by Lancashire County Council had previously been established, represented by a number of city council staff, adult social care and health representatives, schools, fire service and police. The group was initially set up to improve the engagement with the Gypsy and Traveller communities. Unfortunately, due to reduced officer capacity the meetings have needed to be postponed although the possibility of a county wide meeting was being considered rather than a district focus.

Mellishaw Caravan Park

13.51 In November 2019, the council approved the transfer of the existing Mellishaw Traveller Site from Lancashire County Council to Lancaster City Council. This was due to the county council declaring the site as surplus as part of a budget saving exercise approved on 5th September 2019. The potential transfer of the site to a third party was considered by the city council to leave existing residents in a vulnerable position. The site was also identified as being in need of major re-investment to the amenity blocks, sewerage and electricity infrastructure. The cost is estimated at £1.2M and in January 2020, Full Council authorised a programme of capital works to be phased over a four-year period with full engagement planned with existing residents to agree suitable design and layouts.

Domestic Violence

13.52 Since the last Strategy was prepared, a six-bed refuge was commissioned for women fleeing domestic violence. This was commissioned through the Supporting People Programme in an existing building in Lancaster district. Whilst a welcome addition to specialist services in Lancaster, due to the nature and size of the building it could not provide level access accommodation or accommodate women with complex needs. The provider Safenet expanded the service by providing some additional safe homes for victims whose needs were better suited to an independent setting and this has included a male-only provision for up to two people.

- 13.53** Earlier this year, Safenet have expanded their Service again into a much larger facility in Lancaster district, which is a 20-bed scheme, providing a safe setting for up to five women with complex needs and for up to 15 families. This has proved possible through a mix of central government funding and Lancashire County Council. The original 6-bedroom refuge has been retained and will form part of a number of settings for women fleeing violence and may be used as move-on accommodation from the new facility.
- 13.54** Through the council's homelessness funding, a 'Sanctuary' and 'Haven' service is offered which provides a range of security works and equipment to the homes of 'at risk' clients suffering Anti-Social Behaviour and Domestic Violence, for victims who wish to remain in their current home rather than move to alternative accommodation.
- 13.55** The increase in provision is extremely timely in the light of Covid-19 which has seen a marked increase in the level of incidents of domestic violence nationally and arguably the ability to refer women with complex needs into a suitable service will clearly meet an identified gap. As the new service only opened in June 2020 it is too early to analyse any trends or patterns, but worth noting that given the nature of Refuge provision, unlike other services no local connection criteria applies to allow flexibility and to ensure that a place of safety can be identified for victims which sometimes involves moving well away from their existing home area. A limiting factor, therefore, is that women who wish to remain in the district without a local connection will experience difficulties in accessing a full range of move-on options given the shortage of social housing vacancies locally.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

- 13.56** There are three main schemes through which Lancaster City Council is involved with the assistance of asylum seekers and refugees, and another which is administered by Lancashire County Council.
- 13.57** Lancaster City Council chair a multi-agency forum which meets regularly to bring all the partners involved in the schemes together.

Refugee Resettlement Programmes

- 13.58** There are two resettlement schemes for Refugees: Lancashire County Council has primarily been the lead authority on both these schemes, and funding from central Government for each person accommodated accompanies both schemes.
- 13.59** The Syrian Resettlement Programme: Lancashire gave a commitment to welcome 500 Syrian Refugees.
- 13.60** The Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme: Lancashire gave a commitment to welcome 75 people under this scheme (this includes children and their families).
- This gave a total of 575 persons to be placed across Lancashire over a 5-year period.
- 13.61** In 2017, Lancaster City Council agreed to accept ten families who arrived on two dates. Five families were resettled from each programme, coming from Syria, Sudan and Iraq. The first six families arrived in July 2017 and then a further four in September 2017. The families have been housed in a combination of council housing, Registered Provider stock and private rented accommodation. The Council prepared the houses and provided furniture and decoration. A further five families were accepted in 2018 and a further five families are expected this year and will be housed in the private sector.
- 13.62** Lancaster City Council tendered the integration support work. A local organisation, Global Link, who had experience working with refugees were awarded the contract. Intensive support was provided for the first two weeks by a combination of paid workers and volunteers supervised by Global Link, with the assistance of interpreters provided by Lancashire County Council. Their responsibility was to settle the families into their accommodation, help them register with GPs, the benefits system etc. etc. After the first two-week intensive orientation, a paid caseworker was allocated to the family (five families per caseworker) for a 24-month period. Their responsibility is to help the families integrate into society and to promote independence. All over 18s are provided with nine hours per week English lessons, and all under 18s are in education.

- 13.63** The programme paid for a full-time interpreter for 12 months, and access to additional interpretation as required.

- 13.64** Both resettlement programmes are fully funded by the Home Office through Lancashire County Council. This funding is for a five-year programme which will reflect the changing needs of the families. Medical care is not funded by this part of the programme, but the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are able to access additional funding. A few of the families resettled in Lancaster have very complex medical needs, so there will have been a resource implication for the CCG.

The Asylum Seekers Dispersal Scheme

- 13.65** In July 2015, the Home Office embarked on a widening dispersal programme with the Local Authorities that had not previously been engaged in supporting the dispersal of Asylum Seekers.
- 13.66** Serco were awarded the contract by the Home Office to provide accommodation for asylum seekers. Lancaster agreed that Serco could source a maximum of 30 properties in the Lancaster City Council district, which equates to approximately 150 people.
- 13.67** The Asylum Seekers Dispersal Scheme has been ongoing in Lancaster since October 2015. Serco find accommodation in the private sector then consult with the Local Authority and police on standards and suitability. Currently there are 35 properties in use.
- 13.68** The Home Office contract support to the residents, but additional support is provided through the voluntary and faith sector by organisations including Global Link, Lancaster and Morecambe City of Sanctuary, and RIAS (Refugee Advocacy Information and Support Service). This included a period of intensive support to help a person find their way in Lancaster as well as offering access to drop-ins; activities such as sports, games, crafts; English lessons; and social activities. This provision of support is becoming more challenging for the voluntary sector as numbers increase, and because of the complexity of some situations. Any reduction in support from the voluntary sector will have an impact on statutory services. Access to mental health services is a regular issue raised at the multi-agency forum.
- 13.69** Once an asylum seeker receives a decision from the Home Office on whether they are able to stay in the country and granted Refugee status, they are given 28 days to vacate their Serco accommodation. If the decision is positive, then they can access the usual Housing Options and Benefits Services. If it is a negative decision, then the Home Office have a procedure in place. The number of decisions, and whether they are positive or negative is changeable. Where people receive a positive decision then choose to stay in Lancaster and seek assistance from the Housing Options Team, there will be a resource implication. The short time period of 28 days to vacate the property (as defined by Government) does not always allow enough time to find suitable accommodation. This is a problem nationally. During the pandemic, there was a cessation of evictions but this has recently been resumed. There is a strong push from the Home Office for participating local authorities to increase the existing provision further. The biggest perceived risk in doing so is whether there will be further increase in applications for rehousing with competing demand.
- 13.70** Some excellent partnerships have been created locally with some private sector landlords providing designated short-term accommodation for single Refugee households who may not be owed the full rehousing duty through current homelessness legislation.

Communities Together

- 13.71

In 2012, the Lancaster District Communities Together Group was established which was a formation of the diverse faith groups which came together to build relationships and share experience with the aim of improving community cohesion, having a sense of belonging and inclusion.
- 13.72

In 2019, ahead of the preparation of the new Homes Strategy for Lancaster district commencing, the members of the Communities Together group were consulted. A questionnaire was developed to establish if specific groups had any particular housing needs or requirements that needed to be captured. The group will be re-consulted before the final version of the document is adopted.
- LGBT

13.73

Whilst the law aims to protect people from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identify, people who consider themselves to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans often find themselves as an invisible minority and their needs and challenges still too often go unrecognised. Many feel isolated and live with mental health issues, addiction, homelessness or are victims of hate crime. It is likely that as a group they are under-represented in the social housing sector and that some of the LGTB could experience barriers in accessing suitable housing. The UK is an increasingly diverse place to live and our understanding of diversity is developing with the UK becoming a more tolerant place to live and less tolerant of discrimination, particularly by young people.
- 13.74

A key issue in the context of provision of housing services is that they can gain the trust of specific groups and provide a high quality service, whose staff teams include people from the LGBT community and where customers feel welcome and confident they will receive a high quality service fair treatment and has a zero tolerance policy towards homophobia, biphobia and transphobia and hate incidents.
- 13.75

Out In The Bay is a community organisation working with and representing the LGBT community in Lancaster district offering support with health and wellbeing, drug and alcohol issues, sexual health and support people with mental health issues providing both one to one support and group settings. Out In The Bay also raise awareness and provide training to a range of organisations. Some initial engagement has taken place to explore options to create a community led housing scheme for the LGBT community in Lancaster district to provide housing and a degree of support to people who experience difficulty in accessing mainstream housing and would like the opportunity to live in a mutually supportive setting.

Young People

- 13.76

A very well-established partnership has existed between Lancashire County Council and Lancaster City Council for many years. This has taken the form of a strategic partnership through the former Supporting People Commissioning Board leads and longstanding operational links between the Children’s Social Care Teams, the Housing Options Team and supported housing providers in the form of a Young People’s Housing Panel. The Panel will consider the most appropriate intervention for each young person referred, which can be crisis led where a young person is homeless or threatened with homelessness or planned moves for care leavers.
- 13.77

In the context of the supported accommodation sector being unregulated, the ability to commission quality accommodation for young people in the right location at the right time is often challenging. It is a key aim of all partners to ensure that young people have a wide range of accommodation and support options available to them.

13.78 There are a number of designated services for young people summarised below:-

Commissioned Services (Block Contract)

Scheme	No of Bed spaces	Type	Support Provider
Morecambe Foyer	25	5 crisis/4 x 5 clusters Shared – 24 hr staff	Barnardos
Dallam Avenue	4	2 x shared tenancies With visiting support	Barnardos
High Street	7	Shared/24 hr staff	Barnardos
Mariners View	11	Self-contained with visiting support	Jigsaw

- 13.79

Lancashire County Council also commission placements under spot-purchase arrangements via the regional purchasing system. Supply in the local area is very low with only one provider (of a total of 47 in the North West region) delivering services in the district and limited to the Morecambe and Heysham areas.
- 13.80

A new shared house at Coulston Road was also commissioned in 2017 through a partnership between Places for People and Barnardos which is used as move on accommodation for young people who are ready to leave a supported housing setting and are working towards independent living.
- 13.81

In 2017, the former crisis provision provided at New Road Lancaster (which formed part of the Places of Change Scheme next to the YMCA building) was decommissioned. Whilst a relatively new scheme attracting funding in 2008, the crisis element was physically separated from the main building with different ownerships existing (Adactus owned 10 New Road and secured the Supporting People funding to provide the support element and YMCA own the main building). Whilst it had always been expected that the main hub would act as a hub/community café for the young people, this could not be achieved and in isolation 10 New Road did not provide a satisfactory level of space and facilities for young people.
- Children Looked After

13.82

Statistical information supplied by Lancashire County Council confirms that over the past three years, there has been a significant increase in Lancashire in the number of young people starting to be looked after who are aged 16-17 years and a 60% increase in the use of supported accommodation services over that period. There were 347 children looked after who were 16/17 within the county. 38 have a primary address in Lancaster district, representing close to 10% of the overall number. Of these, 16 entered block or spot commissioned supported accommodation type services, 11 were moved into fostering placements and 10 went into a form of residential placement. Despite Lancaster being an area that young people want to live in, evidence shows that the district is consistently a net exporter of children looked after, with six placed in Blackpool based services.
- 13.83

Lancashire County Council has a key objective to work collaboratively with partners to develop clearer accommodation pathways for young people and to that ensure that better processes are in place to plan accommodation moves at earlier stage, both short and long-term, with young people. The joint-working approach specifically for care leavers will be formalised in the Care Leavers Housing and Homeless protocols that are currently being developed. Better planning will secure more appropriate accommodation, should reduce the reliance on spot purchase of accommodation and will provide a clearer picture of demand for the different services.
- 13.84

Re-tendering of the existing block contract in Lancaster, Fylde and Wyre is currently underway and contracts are expected to be awarded in 2021. Once the new contracts are awarded, commissioners and housing providers will continue to work collaboratively to agree an action plan for the additional provision required in these districts. However, what is already apparent is that there is a significant lack of move-on accommodation for young people once they are ready to leave supported housing and this will need to be addressed to enable priority access for care leavers and vulnerable young people.

Ex-Offenders

- 13.85** People with an offending background often prove the most challenging and difficult to place. Local social housing providers have established allocation policies that will exclude people with unspent convictions being able to qualify for inclusion on housing registers, although all housing providers should have their own established processes in place which enables each application to be assessed on its own merits.
- 13.86** After the last Housing Strategy was published, the former ex-offender hostel at Hubert Place, which was owned and managed by Stonham Housing, was decommissioned. The six-bed space supported housing service provided very low-level staffing during office hours and an on-call facility. This directly impacted on the risk assessment undertaken at service entry. When the new service at Oak Tree House, West Road, Lancaster was commissioned providing 23 units of purpose-built accommodation, a range of on-site services and round the clock staffing teams, the Stonham Project closed. Oak Tree House was originally intended to meet the needs of single homeless people over the age of 25, which included people with an offending background. Since service opening, the age criteria was reduced to 18 and above which was primarily to address the cuts to the Supporting People programme and to improve access to supported housing across Lancashire. For the most part, however, residents do have a local connection to Lancaster district. Offender Managers work closely with staff at Oak Tree House in terms of supervision and establishing a programme of rehabilitation.
- 13.87** The Lancashire Strategic Reducing Reoffending Board has sought to develop housing pathways for offenders. A Reducing Re-Offending Task and Finish Group was set up to develop accommodation pathways as a direct response to the report findings of the HM Inspectorate of Probation citing that the lack of accommodation and support for offenders is jeopardising public protection and rehabilitation of offenders. Placing high risk/schedule 1 Offenders is increasingly problematic, and to address this, a commitment has been given by local authorities in Lancashire to create a pool of suitable properties across the county that all districts can potentially access.
- 13.88** In terms of prison release, there is a duty to refer those who will be homeless on release from prison through an early identification notification form. With reasonable notice and engagement with the Housing Options Team before release, every effort will be made to arrange supported accommodation working closely with providers to facilitate this. Little or no notice considerably increases the risk of rough sleeping and re-offending. Within the prison service, in recent years, efforts are made to place in-mates into prison in their local area. This should assist with developing a suitable pathway/discharge plan. Earlier this year, the council engaged in dialogue with staff at HMP Lancaster Farms to discuss options to improve the current operational practices and communication networks in place. Furthermore, Calico Enterprises is exploring a pilot scheme that would provide a guaranteed construction training placement and supported housing offer in Lancaster district for those leaving prison with a local connection, and this is something the council is very keen to develop and implement. There is a need to increase the supply of one-bedroom accommodation, ideally in a dispersed setting, for difficult to place offenders.
- 13.89** Assistance and support is currently provided to assist with accessing move on accommodation. Pre-tenancy training is provided, the council has commissioned an Accommodation Finding Service through Calico, the city council assists with rent deposits/rent advance, periodically financial assistance can also be applied for through the Vicars Relief Fund and floating tenancy support for ex-offenders is offered through HumanKind.

HM Forces

- 13.90** In 2014, Lancaster City Council and partners signed the Armed Forces Community Covenant which provides a commitment to ensure fair treatment of the Armed Forces Community. In relation to rehousing, households leaving the Armed Forces may require advice and support to find suitable accommodation. The council's allocation policy was previously amended to ensure that Veterans are not disadvantaged through local connection requirements and financial resources available to them. Any compensation for injury or disability sustained on active service is disregarded and for those leaving HM Forces as a result of injury from active service are deemed in high housing need for up to five years following discharge, with medium housing need applying in all other cases.
- 13.91** The council's allocation policy is currently being reviewed to ensure that it meets the latest guidance outlined in Improving Access to Social Housing for Members of the Armed Forces 2020. As a result the local connection criteria will be further amended to include applicants who were previously living in Services Family accommodation but are having to leave due to relationship breakdown with a member of the Armed Forces and adult children of service personnel who are no longer able to remain in the family home due to the impact of their family moving from base-to-base.
- 13.92** Lancaster district remains in a fortunate position as Guinness Partnership manage Westfield Memorial Village which is housing specifically designated for HM Armed Forces personnel with all vacancies being prioritised to Veterans, and on new developments where a local lettings plan is agreed between the council and the Registered Provider, HM Forces will be included as a group receiving priority. HM Forces personnel also continue to receive priority over other groups for shared ownership products.

Key Workers

- 13.93** Key workers are public sector employees who provide a vital frontline service in areas of health, education and community safety. In some districts, new housing developments can be exclusively intended for key workers or a set percentage depending upon the needs of the area. In Lancaster district, there has never been any formal arrangements for the provision of key worker accommodation, and a clear need has never been identified. Notwithstanding this, key workers are unlikely to qualify for social housing, and their circumstances may not allow them to access market housing. The provision of rented housing which can meet the needs of key workers, particularly in regeneration areas such as the Canal Quarter, should be explored. Ideally the rents should be set at intermediate rent levels (somewhere between 80-100% of market rents) with an income threshold applying to target the most appropriate key workers.



14/15



Improving Health through Housing

14. Improving Health through Housing

- 14.1** The provision of good quality housing is intrinsically linked to tackling health inequalities but must also form part of a wider framework of support and advice around maximising income, tackling worklessness, improving life chances and promoting healthy lifestyles and effective partnership working with a wide range of health and social care professionals and 13.95
- 14.2** The key priorities identified in this Strategy seek to create high quality housing that will positively contribute to the health and wellbeing of new and existing residents, and in terms of the recovery stage of the pandemic with more time spent indoors, will enable the council to think about the way new housing is developed with the most energy efficient heating systems, the provision of defensible space and access to green spaces. The Everyone In campaign and closer working with Health professionals has dramatically improved access to health services for rough sleepers.

Health inequalities

- 14.3** Research and analysis has previously been undertaken through the Lancashire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. This was published in 2014 but was planned to be refreshed in 2020 and concluded three overarching themes and top ten goals to reduce health inequalities: -
- Premature mortality (dying before the age of 75)
 - Mental health and wellbeing
 - Unplanned hospitalisation
- 14.4** The JSNA set out 10 major causes/trends around ill health summarised, with income, fuel poverty smoking and alcohol consumption cited as contributing factors:

Diabetes	Those in the most deprived areas are over 7 times as likely to die prematurely from diabetes
Respiratory Disease	Those in the most deprived areas are over 4.5 times as likely to die prematurely from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
Digestive Disease	Those in the most deprived areas are over 3 times as likely to die prematurely from Chronic Liver Disease
Mental Health Problems	Those in the most deprived areas are over 3 times as likely to suffer from extreme anxiety and depression
Lung Cancer	Those in the most deprived areas are over 2.5 times as likely to die prematurely from lung cancer
Circulatory Disease	Those in the most deprived areas are over 2.5 times as likely to die prematurely from coronary heart disease and over twice as likely to die from stroke
Accidents	Those in the most deprived areas are over twice as likely to die prematurely as a result of an accident
Quality of Life	Those in the most deprived areas are over twice as likely to experience extreme pain and discomfort and over one and half times likely to have problems with mobility, self-care and performing usual activities
Unplanned hospital admissions	Those in the most deprived areas are over one and a half times as likely to be admitted to hospital in an emergency
Infant Mortality	In the most deprived areas, babies up to one year and over are one and a half times as likely to die

- 14.5** Morecambe Bay's Clinical Commissioning Group's Population Health is an approach aimed at improving the physical and mental health outcomes and wellbeing of people, whilst reducing health inequalities. It includes action to reduce the occurrence of ill-health including addressing wider determinants of health, and requires working with communities and partner agencies and uses data modelling to identify local "at risk" cohorts and then designing and targeting interventions to prevent ill-health and improve care and support.

Integrated Care Communities

- 14.5** An integrated care community works together to improve the overall health and wellbeing of the community by joining up health and care services to work better together, providing more care out of hospital where possible and supporting people to have information about their health conditions.

The Morecambe Bay Poverty Truth Commission

- 14.6** In 2016, the Morecambe Bay Poverty Truth Commission was established which includes representatives of those with lived experience of poverty, local councillors, the NHS, Lancaster University, faith groups, CVS and charities collectively seeking to bring lasting individual, social and cultural change. Presentations have taken place for a range of staff within the council to improve relationships, gain an understanding of the issues and to develop shared aims.

Food Poverty

- 14.7** A key component of health and wellbeing is maintaining a healthy diet and nutrition. Lancaster District Food Poverty Alliance (LDFPA) is a formal coalition of organisations and individuals who come together to campaign to reduce food poverty in the local authority district of Lancaster. LDFPA was first convened in June 2018, when various organisations came together following the Sustainable Food Cities Re:Fresh event where food poverty was raised as an important local issue.
- 14.8** Since then the Alliance has grown and now LDFPA encompasses a wide range of organisations drawn from key public sector authorities, third sector organisations, charities and faith groups.
- 14.9** LDFPA's core purpose is to campaign for, advocate for and implement changes that contribute towards delivering the actions set out in the **Lancaster District Food Poverty Action Plan**. The Action Plan will set out a wide range of actions that together will reduce the number of people in the district that are affected by food poverty.

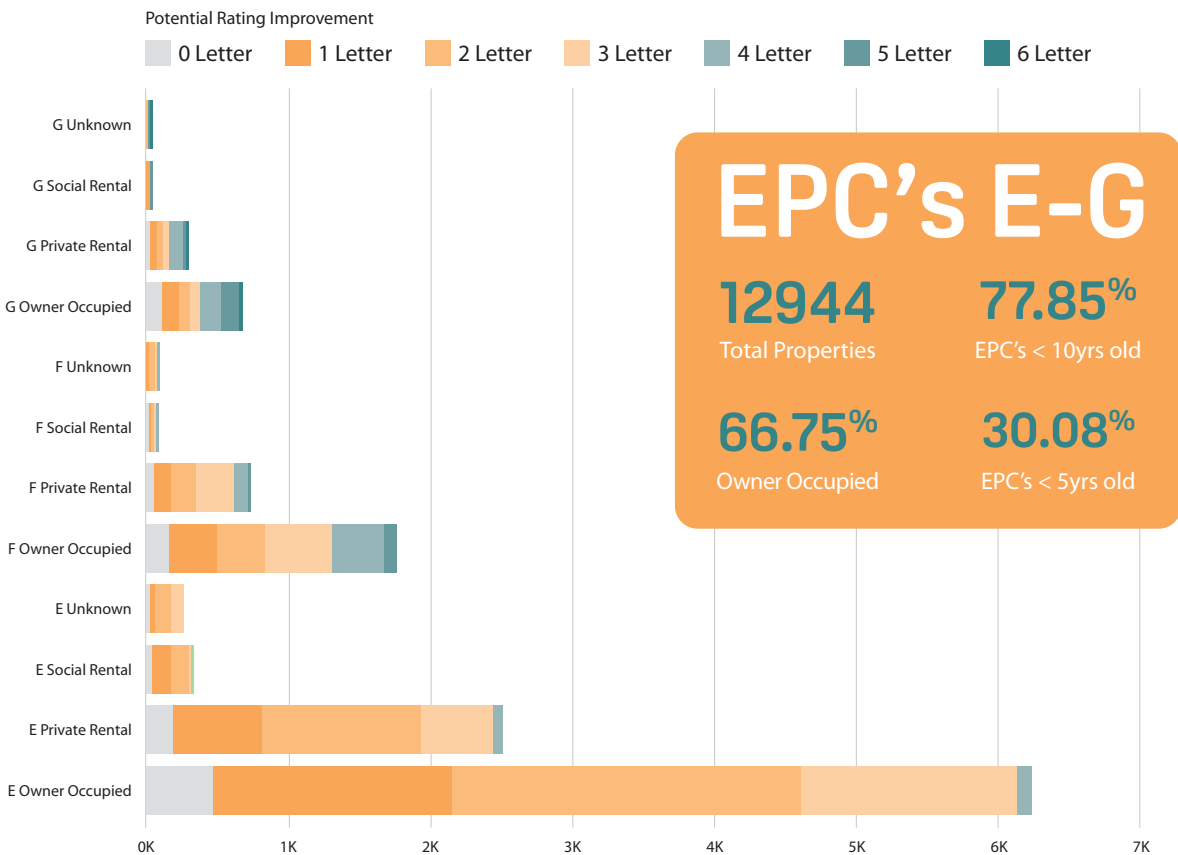
Local Food Services

- 14.10** Morecambe Bay Food Bank (the Trussell Trust) provide three days' nutritionally balanced emergency food and support through a voucher system provided to local people who are referred to them and in crisis. Over 90% of the food is donated locally with donation points available across the district including in supermarkets. During the pandemic, Lancaster City Council and Morecambe Bay Foodbank launched a partnership, with the support of other local charities, organisations and volunteers, to co-ordinate and deliver emergency food parcels to vulnerable people across the district. Other offers of emergency food support include faith-based organisations such as The Olive Branch, Salvation Army and West End Impact.
- 13.105** Eggcup stops good quality, surplus food going to waste by running food clubs to get it out to individuals and families instead. In ordinary times, these food clubs would take place in community settings. Throughout the pandemic, Eggcup have been providing their members with weekly doorstep deliveries. Moving forward, a city centre hub has been established to help give members more choice in a covid-19 safe environment and they aim to set up a similar hub in Morecambe. During the pandemic, Eggcup have also worked alongside Lancaster City Council, Age UK Lancashire, Lancaster & Morecambe College and Chefs Catering NW to produce and distribute nutritious frozen ready meals to vulnerable individuals in the community.
- 13.106** Several Food Clubs independently run by community groups are operating to redistribute surplus food that would otherwise go to waste in a social setting. Members enjoy a refreshments and take home around two bags of shopping per week for a small fee. The social element allows members to meet people in a similar situation and provides a route for accessing additional advice and support. There are currently 12 Food Clubs in operation, 7 in Lancaster and 5 in Morecambe, although the aim is for all areas to have a food club accessible to members.

Tackling fuel poverty

- 14.11** The 2019 Indices of Deprivation suggests that Lancaster was the 112th most deprived area out of 317 districts in England, but as high as 33rd most deprived if a local concentration measure is applied.
- 14.12** 13.6% of households in Lancaster district are estimated to live in fuel poverty, which is higher than the national England average of 10.9% with the main factors considered to include energy efficiency of housing, energy costs and household income.
- 14.13** Analysis of the Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) ratings of those previously assessed confirm that nearly 13000 dwellings in Lancaster district fall within EPC E-G.

Number of Properties by EPC Rating and Tenure Type



- 14.4** Tackling fuel poverty links directly to the council's Happy and Healthy Communities ambition and is one which will require a strategic approach in the context of an absence of regeneration funding post 2011. More comprehensive targeting of the most poorly performing properties needs to be undertaken, making use of available funding to deliver measures will be critical, and the provision of appropriate support and advice to householders will be required from qualified retrofit assessments, identifying the most suitable measures for each property to practical help with fuel bills and budgeting.
- 14.5** A new Energy Advice Officer post is being created within the Council Housing Service to provide the necessary degree of support to existing council tenants to reduce incidents of fuel poverty. Further capital works to existing council housing stock is also planned to increase the provision of solar thermal and a pilot scheme is to be undertaken which will provide additional internal wall insulation on properties of solid wall construction.

Substance Misuse

14.6 Lancashire County Council remains the lead commissioning body for Drug and Alcohol services. Since the last Housing Strategy was produced, a previous supported housing service of Aldcliffe Road was decommissioned for people with a history of substance misuse because of cuts to the Supporting People programme and due to Walter Lyon trust's intention to bring Walter Lyon House back into use as a recovery housing service. Walter Lyon House has previously operated as a Tier 4 Residential Rehabilitation Service and there was an eagerness to retain the building to meet the needs of the recovery community but also meeting a local need. Walton Lyon Trust appointed Acorn Recovery (a subsidiary of the Calico Group) to provide the operational management of the service which currently provides 14 bed spaces. Since opening, Acorn have developed a very close partnership with the city council, and through collaborative working, went on to re-commission the premises at Aldcliffe Road/ Portland Street as temporary supported housing for single homeless households.

14.7 In its former use, Walton Lyon house and Littledale Hall both provided Tier 4 Residential Treatment Services. Neither service was block commissioned by Lancashire County Council, therefore, referrals could be made from any other local authority area whether the treatment is funded by the responsible Local Authority or self-funded. A Detox Treatment Service is also provided at The Pavilion, run by Delphi Medical, which is a shorter-term course of treatment and often the first step into abstinence. The geographical location of services posed some practical issues for the city council because of the number of homeless presentations being made when people were leaving Treatment Services. Through closer working and regular dialogue with the county's Commissioning Manager, it was established that Lancaster City Council had the largest amount of Tier 4 Services than any other district in Lancashire until Walter Lyon House closed as a Tier 4 Treatment Service. In order to improve the links between the city council and substance misuse service providers, a Substance Misuse Provider Forum was set up by the council in 2016 by Residential and Community based Treatment Services, supported housing providers and commissioners county and city council staff. A working agreement was then drafted, circulated and entered into between parties that clearly defined the housing options that would be provided to people entering Treatment Services depending upon whether they had a local connection to Lancaster district.

14.8 In 2019, following the re-tendering of the Community Treatment Services in Lancaster district, re-awarded to CGL/Inspire with sub-contracting arrangements through local recovery service providers such as Red Rose, The Well and Positive Futures, the engagement has significantly improved communication and partnership working across agencies. Inspire have been providing direct support to supported housing providers (Oak Tree House in particular) and maintain very strong links with Lancaster City Council. The city council's ultimate goal is to ensure that residents in Lancaster district can be referred to Treatment Services in a timely way with an appropriate housing pathway and support plan being agreed between agencies.

14.9 Whilst recognising that Lancaster district offers a wide range of Treatment Services within the district, there is an intention to create a bespoke Housing First model (housing with intensive support) which can accommodate the most chaotic individuals who can be supported in an appropriate setting to become abstinent and eventually go on to live independently.

15. Meeting the Needs of Older People

15.1 A major strategic challenge for Lancaster City Council is to ensure a range of appropriate housing provision, adaptations and support for the district's older population. The number of people across Lancaster aged 65 or over is predicted to increase from 28,500 in 2017 to 37,000 by 2033 (29.8%). Whilst it is too early to understand the national and local impact of Covid-19 the total number of deaths in Lancaster district as at the end of August 2020 is 64 and therefore a marked change in population growth is unlikely.

Table 5.10 - Older persons' housing options

Housing option	% would consider
Continue to live in current home with support when needed	67.4
Buying a property on the open market	20.8
Rent a property from a private landlord	7.1
Rent from HA	13.3
Sheltered accommodation - To Rent	17.3
Sheltered Accommodation - To Buy	13.9
Sheltered Accommodation - Part Rent / Buy	5.0
Extra care housing - To Rent	13.8
Extra care housing - To Buy	9.0
Extra care housing - Part Rent / Buy	3.5
Residential care home	5.6
Co-housing	10.7
Go to live with children or other relatives / friends	4.0
Other	3.5
Base (<i>total households responding</i>)	24,668

Source: 2017 Housing Survey

15.2 In Lancaster district, there are over 1000 social housing units that are designated for older people, which is a mix of flats, bungalows and sheltered housing schemes and are generally well distributed. Older people in need of social housing generally have better choice and prospects than other groups who need rehousing. The most significant need identified for Lancaster district is to provide new purpose built extra care housing that will complete the range of housing options needed to allow our ageing population to remain in an independent setting for as long as possible.

15.3 Extra care housing is traditionally provided for older people above the age of 55 years in the form of self-contained homes (often in the form of apartments) with the provision of an on-site care team who will provide varying levels of support and care services to residents.

15.4 The care and support delivered within an extra care scheme setting includes onsite staff who provide background support and an emergency response service. This service benefits all tenants and is not allocated to any one individual resident. Planned care is also provided to tenants who have an eligible care need (which meets the threshold applied by Lancashire County Council in accordance with the Care Act) and can also be provided to tenants who are able to self-fund their planned care need often utilising welfare benefits such as attendance allowance.

15.5 In practice, an allocation policy is agreed between Lancashire County Council , the district council and the accommodation provider, which would give a degree of priority to applicants who would otherwise require residential care if they were not able to access extra care housing as well as other people with statutory care needs. However, the allocation policy would be framed to ensure that there is a suitable mix of tenants selected at any one time to ensure the right balance is maintained, to keep the scheme sustainable and attractive to tenants. Therefore, it provides scope for older people to apply who may not have acute care needs at the point of application but who are seeking to move to more suitable accommodation in a timely way which should also be encouraged.

15.6 Extra care housing models are typically a combination of a landlord function and a care function which can either be provided by one organisation (less common) or with the care function being procured through contractual arrangements with the upper tier local authority’s Commissioning Team. For the purposes of this report, the latter is envisaged with the landlord function and the care function being delivered by separate organisations.

15.7 Lancashire County Council’s Extra Care Strategy, first published in 2014 and relaunched as The Housing with Care and Support Strategy 2019, seeks to increase the provision of specialist housing for older people and younger adults with disabilities. This report focuses on extra care housing for older people. The main purpose of the Strategy is to: -

- To promote health wellbeing and independence.
- Reducing reliance on residential care placements (admissions in Lancashire were 24% higher than the national average and 31% higher than other shire counties which is too high.
- To provide at least one purpose built extra care scheme for older people in every district in Lancashire by 2025.
- Wherever possible to bring forward extra care schemes that would provide a minimum of 60 dwellings for rent (either stand alone or part of a mixed tenure development) to achieve efficiencies and economies of scale for the on-site provision of care and support.

15.8 Lancashire County Council commissioned The Housing Learning and Improvement Network (LIN) to undertake some detailed analysis of demand for extra care housing by district and based on projected population of people aged 75 by district in 2025:

Estimated Need for Extra Care Housing by District

District	Estimated no. of units needed	No. of units in existence or development
Burnley	134	0
Chorley	206	65
Fylde	194	0
Hyndburn	123	0
Lancaster	238	0
Pendle	138	0
Preston	165	60
Ribble Valley	125	0
Rossendale	107	42
South Ribble	204	0
West Lancashire	217	111
Wyre	265	72
Total	2,117	350

15.9 A key priority for Lancaster City Council is to work collaboratively with Lancashire County Council to bring new extra care schemes into fruition. An opportunity for the city council itself to bring forward a new extra care scheme on a site in North Lancaster is currently being investigated, along with a proposal to provide a new extra care facility on a site within the existing University of Cumbria’s Lancaster campus which is currently submitted for planning approval with a decision pending.

15.10 In the event of new extra care schemes being delivered thus increasing the choice and quality of housing for older people, this could pose some challenges for existing social housing providers who need to ensure their existing housing for older people is suitable, desirable and fit and for purpose for the client group and plan ahead.

15.11 Intelligence from the existing providers of extra care housing in the management of Covid-19 has been positive. Although providers have needed to make some changes and adjustments around the use of communal spaces and facilities, the provision of self-contained accommodation has proved highly effective in relation to infection control and provides an even greater incentive for the provision of extra care schemes.

Adaptations and increasing the provision of accessible homes

15.12 Lancaster City Council has an impressive track record of undertaking adaptations and creating more accessible homes across tenures in Lancaster district. This has been as a result of creating a dedicated budget for adaptations to council properties and development of a robust partnership with Lancashire County Council to deliver a Home Improvement Agency through the Better Care Fund.

15.13 As part of its landlord function, the city council has always maintained a specific budget to fund the cost of adaptations to council properties. The budget is circa £300K per annum providing around 60-80 adaptations each year which can range from very low to medium level interventions/equipment to improve accessibility such as wet rooms to more comprehensive physical alterations to property. Due to the high cost of major adaptations, other housing options will also be investigated before a final decision is made to proceed with an adaptation and when existing adapted properties do become available, a suitable matching process will be conducted to make the best use of properties.

Home Improvement Agency (HIA)

15.14 The council’s in-house Home Improvement Agency (HIA) aim is to enable vulnerable residents to maintain independence and to remain safe, secure and warm in their own homes. The agency is formally recognised by Foundations, the Government’s body for Home Improvement Agencies and has won national awards for ‘Adaptation service of the Year’ in 2016 and commended in 2018.

15.15 The in-house HIA model, incorporating all adaptations services in one place is seen by the government as the model of excellence. All HIA clients are vulnerable elderly or disabled residents. The HIA work reduces social isolation, increases health and wellbeing, improves homes, reduces fuel poverty, improves neighbourhoods and reduces the need for residents to go into alternative housing. The HIA casework also seeks to increase resident’s income, which indirectly improves the local economy.

Services provided by HIA

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

- 15.16

The HIA delivers the councils DFG programme. DFG’s provide funding to help vulnerable residents adapt their homes to enable them to lead more independent lives or be cared for at home. These statutory grants are means tested and delivered in accordance with the Housing Grants, Construction & Regeneration Act 1996. The DFG programme was audited in 2012 and in 2019.
- 15.17

The grant has been in existence for 25 years, however in recent years it has formed part of the Better Care Fund, a pooled health and social care budget with funding distributed by Lancashire County Council. The aim of the fund is to provide more joined-up and customer focussed services to reduce hospital and care admissions.
- 15.18

All HIA clients are screened for possible DFG adaptations. The HIA has no waiting lists in operation and clients are assisted throughout the grants process.
- 15.19

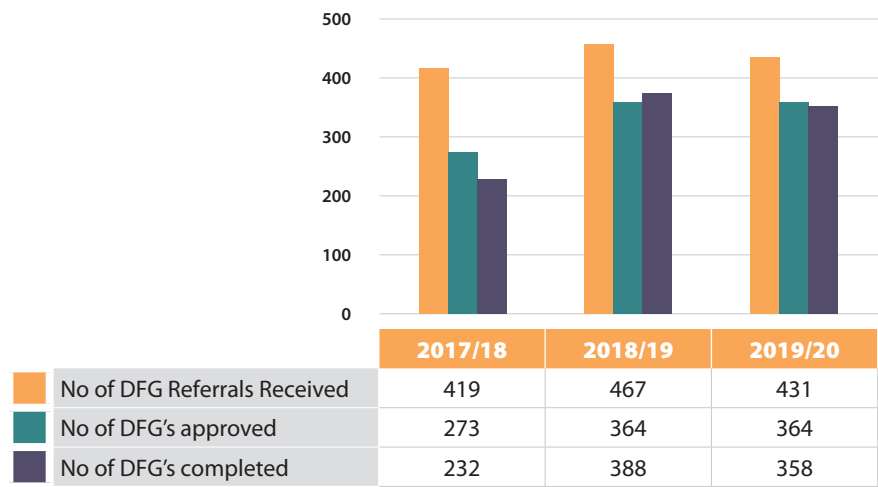
In recognition of the ageing population and the rising need for adaptations, funding for DFG’s has increased considerably over recent years (see below).

Lancaster’s DFG allocation through Better Care Fund	
2017/18	£1,775,217 including £168k additional allocation
2018/19	£1,966,022 including £214k additional allocation
2019/20	£1,889,809

- 15.20

The HIA assists residents to obtain independent Occupational Therapist (OT) reports to enable them to make applications for DFG assistance. This avoids residents having to wait for an OT assessment through Lancashire County Council. The HIA has also undertaken a significant marketing campaign to increase awareness of DFG’s to residents and other local organisations.

Disabled Facilities Grants



Minor Adaptations Service

- 15.21

The HIA undertake minor adaptations on behalf of Lancashire County Council. Adaptations are undertaken at a fixed price and the majority of minor adaptations are completed within 7 days from receipt of referral. The HIA is also classed as a Retailer which enables health professionals to issue prescriptions to residents for aids and equipment. The HIA can accept the prescriptions and provide the required equipment and charge the county council for the work. In the last year, the HIA has agreed a new way of working which enables the HIA staff who are ‘Trusted Assessor’ to assess clients whilst in their home and if necessary self-prescribe the equipment.

Home Improvement Support

- 15.22

The HIA will provide assistance with undertaking works of maintenance and repair and dealing with contractors. Caseworkers will also provide initial housing options advice and provide help with obtaining support services locally as well as checking entitlement to financial help and assistance in raising funding to complete adaptations & repairs to properties.

Handyperson Service

15.23 The Handyperson Service carries out minor work, which residents find difficult to find a contractor to undertake and which helps them to remain independent in their own home. There is currently no charge for using the Handyperson service, however clients are required to pay for any materials required. The handyperson team can complete up to 2 hours work at a property on each visit. However, a Service Implementation Plan has been drawn up which seeks to introduce a new charging system for able to pay residents whilst continuing to deliver free core services to the most vulnerable.

15.24 In addition to the above services the HIA also provides a number of bolt-on services for vulnerable residents including:

Sanctuary and Haven Service

15.25 The HIA delivers a 'Sanctuary' and 'Haven' service, completing security works to the homes of 'at risk' clients suffering Anti-Social Behaviour and Domestic Violence. These services are currently delivered with funding from the council's Homelessness service.

Warm Homes Service/Referrals to CHiL (Cosy Homes in Lancashire)

15.26 The council no longer receives public health funding to deliver an in-house Warm Homes Service. However, referrals can still be made into the CHiL scheme for measures such as loft insulation, first time central heating and boiler replacements for qualifying households. Because most Local Authorities are unable to provide the match funding that some measures require, Rhea Projects, who are the partnership's appointed delivery partner, set up a Community Interest Company through a successful bid securing funding from Electricity North West, and use these funds for vulnerable residents where a shortfall contribution is required.

Hospital Discharge

15.27 During the pandemic, the HIA as a Trusted Assessor has temporarily set up a rapid response to provide a (Trusted Assessor) handyman service and minor adaptations installations to facilitate unblocking beds. The HIA offer the following solutions to enable patients to be discharged to their own homes in conjunction with other discharge care support. So far, 47 patients have been discharged from the RLI via our service. Jobs have taken place in Lancaster, Morecambe, Heysham, Galgate, Over Kellet, Carnforth, Bolton-le-Sands, Middleton and out of district in Pilling, Winmarleigh and Burton-in-Kendal. Measures have included stair rails, grab rails, furniture and bed relocation/provision/removal, property cleansing, mould removal, key safe installation and heating installation. Response times have been in accordance with the wishes of the RLI staff member using the service, the fastest job being completed 1.5 hours after the request in order to facilitate a swift and safe return home.



16



Implementation Delivery and Monitoring of the Housing Strategy

- 16.1** The implementation and delivery of the Homes Strategy relies on the council taking forward its own housing priorities as outlined in this document, and through effective partnership working with a number of key stakeholders including Registered Providers, funding bodies such as MHCLG and Homes England, other public sector organisations such as Health and Social Care Commissioning Leads and Teams, the Police, Fire Service, Probation, HM Prison Service, House Builders, Developers and local contractors, Private Sector Landlords, a range of Third Sector Organisations, Community Groups and our communities.
- 16.2** In order to prepare a new Homes Strategy for Lancaster district, a cross party working group of elected members was set up in September 2019 with cross party representation, supported by council officers. This working group will form a new Housing Advisory Group, with representation from external bodies still to be identified, who will oversee the implementation and monitor the progress of this Strategy.

Glossary

This Glossary provides terms and references which will be of use whilst reading the Homes Strategy and Action Plan. Some of the terms included within this Glossary supplement and compliment the definitions found within Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Affordable Rent

means rented housing let by a Registered Provider to prescribed persons agreed by the Council and Registered Provider. Rents will be set at no more than 80% of the local market rent including service charges.

Affordable Homes Programme

The Affordable Homes Programme aims to increase the supply of new affordable homes in England. It is managed by the Homes England. The majority of the new programme will be made available as Affordable Rent with some for affordable home ownership, supported housing and in some circumstances, social rent.

Affordable Housing

means affordable housing as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) updated February 2019 (as may be updated superseded or replaced with equivalent policy from time to time) that will be available to persons who cannot afford to rent or buy housing generally available on the Open Market on readily available terms with eligibility determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

Affordable Housing Viability Study

A study that tested the circumstances in which the district's housing market can deliver various levels of affordable housing by examining the influence of a range of affordable housing proportions and thresholds on viability.

Brownfield

Also referred to as Previously Developed Land (PDL). The regeneration of these sites is recognised as a priority within the local plan system although challenged within the current economic climate.

Communities

Are a group of social interacting people, this interaction may be due to the close proximity of where people live (i.e. within neighbourhoods) or groups of people that share the same common interests or values.

Community Led Housing

local people playing a leading and lasting role in meeting local housing need and creating affordable homes and strong communities in ways that are difficult to achieve through mainstream housing.

Commuted Sums

monies received by the council from market housing schemes that can be subsequently provided as grants to social housing providers to bring forward the development of affordable housing.

Concealed households

Family units or single adults living within 'host' households.

Conservation Area

An area which has been designated for its special architectural and/or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. It is recognition of the value of a group of buildings and their surroundings and the need to protect not just individual buildings but the character of the area as a whole.

Core Strategy

This is the key document within the local planning system, the document sets out strategic policy guidance on future development requirements and policy issues. Lancaster City Council adopted its Core Strategy in the summer of 2008 now been superseded by the Local Plan 2011-2031.

Development Plan Document (DPD)

Spatial planning documents which are prepared by the local authority and are subject to public consultation and independent Inquiry. Both the Development Management document and Land Allocations documents are classified as Development Plan Documents.

Discounted market housing

Homes sold at a discounted price with the level of discount differing from scheme to scheme depending on house prices in the different locations, and according to eligibility criteria agreed between the council and the developer.

Extra Care Housing

Housing designed with the needs of older people in mind and with varying levels of care and support available on site. People who live in Extra Care housing have their own self-contained homes and benefit from communal facilities being available. Properties can be rented, owned or part owned/part rented.

Fuel poverty

Fuel poverty is determined when a home cannot be heated to a comfortable level by utilising 10% or less of the household’s income. This means that choices must be made between warmth and other essentials. Fuel poverty can contribute to excess winter deaths, cold-related illnesses, high health care costs, and deteriorating housing conditions.

Greenfield

Is land which has not been previously developed on, Greenfield land is often but exclusively characterised by open countryside and agricultural land.

Gypsies and travellers

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of Travelling Showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

Homes England

The national housing and regeneration agency for England. Provides investment for new affordable housing and to improve existing social housing, as well as for regenerating land.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

For the purpose of this document a HMO is defined according to the Use Class Order 2010. A property is an HMO if it is a small shared dwelling house occupied by between three and six unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence, who share basic amenities such as a kitchen and bathroom.

Housing Needs Survey

The Council’s current evidence base on many homes are needed, (market and affordable), and the type and size of homes required. The survey was carried out in 2017/18 by arc4 and will be updated throughout the Local Plan period in accordance with relevant Government guidance.

Intermediate Housing

a form of affordable housing for sale or for rent at a cost above social/affordable rent but below market levels.

Intermediate Rent

rented accommodation normally provided by Registered Providers which is set between 80% and 100% of market rents.

Key Services

In a rural context key services include a Post Office, basic shop, primary school, and bus stop.

Local Housing Need

The housing requirements of existing and concealed households living with Lancaster District as evidenced in the 2011 Housing Needs and Demand Survey and other appropriate evidence.

Localism

Is a term used by the current Government to encourage local people and communities to take more ownership in local issues. In terms of planning playing a greater role in shaping the future for their own communities through the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.

Local Development Documents

This is the collective terms for Development Plan Documents, including the Core Strategy, Development Management DPD, Land Allocations DPD, Area Action Plans, Proposals Maps and Supplementary Planning Documents.

Local Planning Authority

The statutory authority (usually the local council) whose duty it is to carry out the planning function for its area.

Market housing

Private housing for rent or for sale, where the price is set in the open market.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

A document published in March 2012 and updated in February 2019 that sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Planning policy for traveller sites

A document published in March 2012 by the Department for Communities and Local Governments that sets out the Government’s planning policy for traveller sites which was amended in 2015.

Registered Provider of Social housing

The technical name for social landlords that are registered with Homes England. Most are housing associations, but some are trusts, co-operatives and companies that own or manage affordable housing. Now referred to as Registered Providers (RP’s). A distinction between this system and the old system of Registered Social Landlords is that a provider of social housing can now be either a non-profit organisation or a profit-making organisation.

Registered Social Landlord

The technical name for independent housing organisations registered with the Housing Corporation under the Housing Act 1996. Most are housing associations, but there are also trusts, co-operatives and companies. The term has now been replaced by Registered Provider of social housing.

Rural locations

For the purposes of this document rural locations are defined as Caton and Brookhouse, Halton, Hornby, Wray, Slyne-with-Hest, Silverdale, Galgate and all other locations outside of the urban locations (as specified in this Glossary).

Section 106 Funds

monies (commuted sums) collected from market housing schemes, held by the council, that fund grants to Registered Providers to develop affordable housing.

Section 106 Agreement

legally binding document or planning obligation that setting out specific requirements, and is normally used to secure on-site affordable housing on market housing schemes, or commuted sums.

Shared Ownership

where a share or proportion of the dwelling is owned by the occupier and the remainder owned by a Registered Provider.

Sheltered Housing

Housing specifically for older and/or disabled people. Includes a block or group of houses with resident or visiting scheme manager, and individual houses, bungalows and flats, which receive support from a mobile scheme manager or pendant (emergency) alarm service.

Social housing

accommodation owned by local authorities or Registered Providers governed by Housing Acts and allocated to prescribed persons in need.

Social Rented Housing

Rented housing owned and managed by Local Authorities and Registered Providers for which guideline target rents are determined through a national rent regime.

Stakeholders

Are groups, individuals or organisations which may be affected by or have a key interest in a development proposal planning or housing policy. They may often be experts in their field or represent the view of many people.

Supporting People Programme

revenue funding provided by central government to provide tenancy related support services to vulnerable groups to allow them to live independently.

Travelling show people

Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family’s or dependants’ more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.

Urban locations

For the purposes of this document urban locations are defined as Lancaster, Morecambe, Heysham, Carnforth and Bolton-le-Sands. Although Bolton-le-Sands is not classed as an urban location in the adopted Core Strategy it is recognised as being a large sub-urban village by both the adopted the Core Strategy, and the (saved) Policy H10 of the adopted Local Plan.

