

North East Derbyshire Private Sector Housing Strategy 2024 - 2027



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Introduction

This Private Sector Housing Strategy is the first such strategy that North East Derbyshire Council has published and supports the council's over-arching Housing Strategy by setting out our detailed plans for both home ownership and private rented housing.

Private sector housing performs a vital role in supporting North East Derbyshire's economic growth and meeting housing need in the district. Homes to buy have become increasingly unaffordable and Median Property prices are now 8x median income levels, which has contributed to an expansion in private renting. As demand has outstripped supply, rents in the Private Rented Sector have risen substantially, and households on lower income are spending up to 47.5% of their income on rents. For median income households this figure is 33.7%.

The Private Rented Sector now provides homes for an increasingly diverse range of households and those reliant on Local Housing Allowance are being squeezed out of the market. In 2022, only 2.7% of homes to rent through the Zoopla website were within Local Housing Allowance. Following the autumn spending review in 2023, and assuming that local housing allowance equates to the 30th percentile of local rent, 30.5% of properties would have been available within LHA rates. This Strategy considers interventions that will encourage more landlords to provide homes for rent within Local Housing Allowance levels. The Private Rented Sector now houses 258% more households than it did in 2001 and accounts for 10.2% of all homes across the district, but whilst many private renters in North East Derbyshire are satisfied with their homes, this sector can be a very unfair playing field for lower income households. Whilst most private landlords take their responsibilities very



Owner occupied
and privately rented
properties make up over
80.75%
of homes in North East
Derbyshire.

This strategy sets out our plans for achieving good quality housing across the existing private sector stock - we believe that all residents should have the opportunity to live in a decent home.

seriously, there are unfortunately some private tenants whose properties are in poor conditions with unstable tenancies and charge extortionate rents. Too many residents are trapped in overpriced and, in many cases, poor quality rented accommodation.

Whilst the Private Rented Sector has grown, the owner-occupied sector has reduced slightly from 71.3% of all households to 70.8%. The stock condition survey confirmed in some markets over 30% of owner-occupied homes fail the Decent Homes Standard. The case for well-insulated and energy efficient homes has never been greater. Climate change is already disrupting weather patterns and creating extremes that most homes in the UK are ill-equipped to cope with. In response to the root cause of climate change, the council is committed to creating a net-zero district by 2050 and this strategy therefore responds to the challenges of supporting homeowners and landlords to make their homes more energy efficient. We also know that many homeowners are living in homes that need major repairs and are in poor condition but do not have the income levels to afford this work.

Our strategy considers the different solutions, the council may be able to offer to support these vulnerable households.

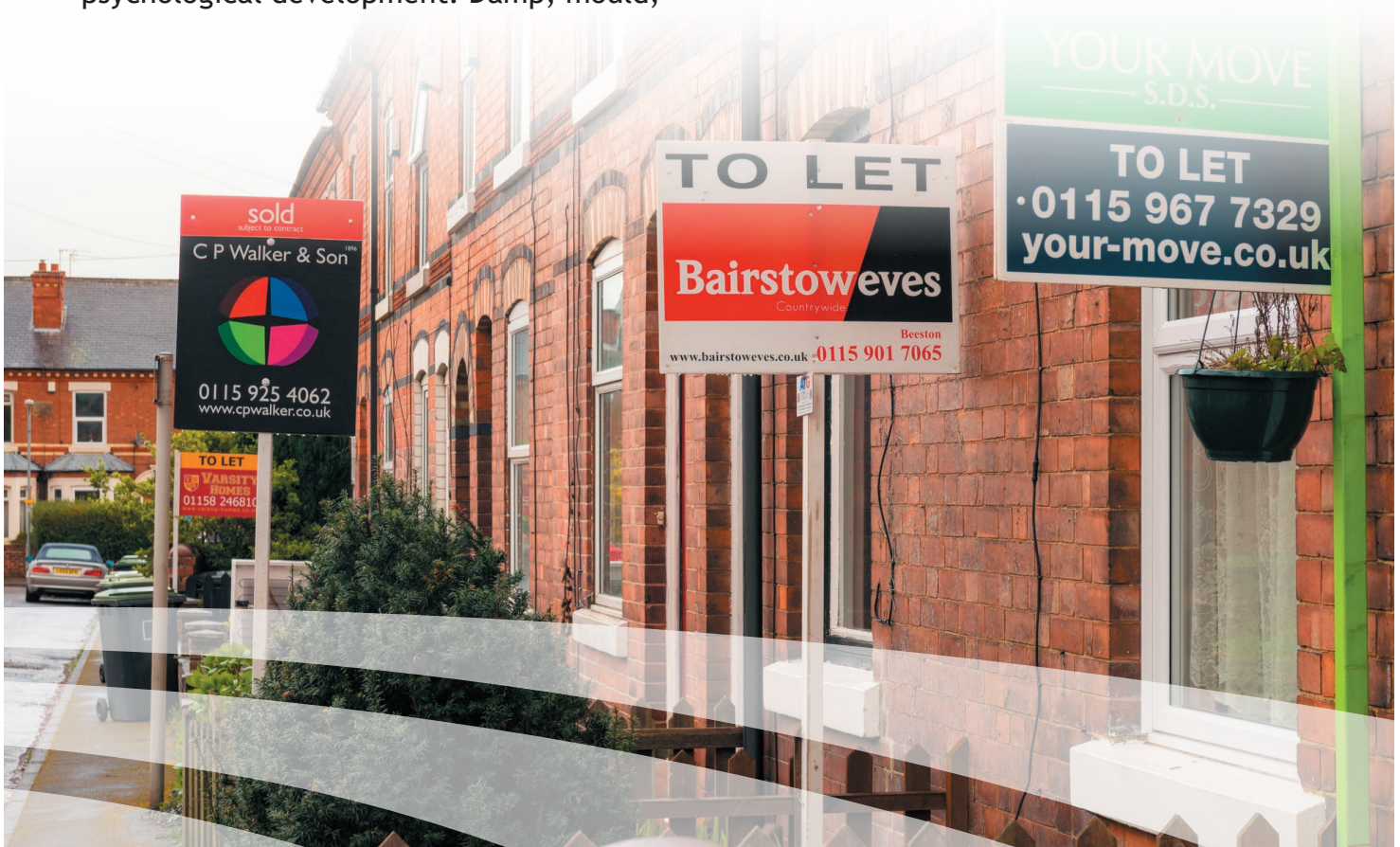
Many homes in the private sector in North East Derbyshire are in poor condition. 45% do not meet EPC C and 14.6% of owner-occupied homes and 17.5% of private rented homes fail the Decent Homes Standard for having a Category 1 hazard, which poses a serious and immediate risk to a person's health. As part of this Strategy we commit to increasing the awareness of landlords of the Decent Homes Standard as well as more information on potential funding.

Housing is one of the key determinants of health. The quality of people's homes is strongly related to economic prosperity and minimising the adverse effects of poor housing remains a major challenge for the council. Living in a home which is in good condition, that the household can afford to heat, and is in an area in which they feel safe and well supported by the local community underpins the wellbeing of individuals and families. The impact of poor housing in childhood can affect an individual for a lifetime and can affect physical, social, and psychological development. Damp, mould,

cold, and overcrowded conditions can lead directly to physical illness and there is also increasing evidence that poor housing conditions can seriously affect people's mental health and sense of wellbeing.

The outcomes of an improved private sector are far more beneficial than improving housing conditions or the way homes are managed. A safe, warm, and secure home underpins people's ability to build a better quality of life and enables people to maintain independence. Living where you can afford and having security in knowing you won't be 'kicked out' at a moment's notice helps people to put down roots and have a stable base, a sense of community, and belonging. We want to make sure that homes in the private sector-whether owned or privately rented-are safe, well-managed, and well maintained and this Private Sector Strategy sets out how we, along with our partners, will achieve this over the next 3 years (2024-27).

It is therefore essential that we work with our partners to both improve property conditions and provide access to well-managed private sector housing to help meet the housing needs of our residents.



The North East Derbyshire private sector market



13.8% of households are living in fuel poverty.

14.6% of homes in the owner-occupied sector have category one hazards.



This increases to **17.5%** in the Private Rented Sector.

45.7% of private sector homes have an EPC rating of D or below.



This rises to **61.7%** for properties in the Private Rented Sector.

The second main reason for homelessness in 2022/23 was the loss of a private rented tenancy.



There are **37,120** households living in the private sector.

This represents **80.7%** of all stock.



In 2022, the median rent level was **£702pcm**, an increase of **27.6%** since 2018.



The size of the Private Rented Sector has doubled since 2001 from 5.1% to **10.2%** in 2021.



In 2022, only **2.7%** of properties in the Private Rented Sector advertised through Zoopla were within the Local Housing Allowance rate.



Assuming that local housing allowance equates to the 30th percentile of local rent, **30.5% of properties** would have been available within local housing allowance levels in 2023.



Lower Quartile Property prices are **9.5x lower** quartile income levels

People living in the Private Rented sector on Lower Quartile incomes have to



spend **47.5%** of their income on a Lower Quartile rent

1.3% of people living in the private sector in NE Derbyshire, live in overcrowded homes



Derbyshire has similar levels of fuel poverty to the England average with the estimated percentage of households that experienced fuel poverty in 2018 of **10.6%**.



Strategic priorities and achievements

Improving the private sector has been a priority for the council for many years and is reflected within our policy and strategy framework. Over the past five years we have:

- Commissioned a Private Sector Stock Condition Survey
- Held landlord events to inform landlords of new regulation and available help for themselves and their tenants.
- Set up the Supported Accommodation Review Team (SART)- ensure the standard of support, quality of accommodation and value for money of supported accommodation in the district, primarily in the private sector.
- Enforcement action taken against landlords whose properties don't comply with legislative standards. In one case, enforcement was pursued to such an extent that it resulted in a landlord being sentenced to 10 months in prison. This demonstrates the zero-tolerance approach giving a strong message to landlords.
- Establishment of a Community Outreach Service that provides support and advice to help people in cost-of-living crisis, helping people to remain in their own homes or to access housing which is affordable and meets their needs.
- Undertaken project based proactive housing inspections to address poor housing conditions and fire risks in identified hotspots area. Whilst private sector housing work is reactive, we have been able to manage resources such that we can undertake some proactive area-based work.
- Undertaken a proactive project to promote the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) (using Gov funding) contacting all landlords with non-compliant EPCs.

Whilst we are proud of our achievements, we know there is plenty more to be done, and in preparing this strategy, the council commissioned the most comprehensive review of the private sector that it has ever undertaken in North East Derbyshire, alongside detailed discussions with partners and a tenant and landlord survey. The outcomes of this work underpin the objectives within this strategy and align closely to the ambitions of the Council as outlined in the Council Plan 2023 -2027.

This strategy will meet the vision and aims through the delivery of four priorities:

Objective 1: Improve property and management standards.

Objective 2: Increasing and improving the supply of good quality, well-managed homes in the Private Rented Sector.

Objective 3: Ensuring that housing standards and living conditions in North East Derbyshire contribute towards better health outcomes for all.

Objective 4: Ensuring all areas, neighbourhoods, and streets in North East Derbyshire, irrespective of housing tenure or type, are places where people want to live and are proud to live.

The strategy is accompanied by an action plan which sets out what the council hopes to achieve and by when. The action plan will be agreed with partners and stakeholders and will be used to monitor progress over the period of the strategy.

The outcomes that will be achieved through this strategy are:

- Improved property condition across the private sector.
- Improved management standards across the private rented sector.
- Improved energy efficiency of homes in the private sector.
- Reduced number of properties with a Category 1 hazard.
- Reduced levels of Anti-Social Behaviour across our neighbourhood.
- Reduced number of people presenting as homeless from the Private Rented Sector
- Improved physical, mental health and wellbeing across the district
- Increased access to the private rented sector to offer accommodation to homeless households.
- Increased supply of high-quality affordable housing for the private rented market.
- Residents living independently for longer.
- Improved targeting of resources to maximise our impact in the private sector.
- Reduced numbers of empty homes across the district.



Improve property and management standards

Improving property condition and management standards across the private sector is a primary objective of this strategy. Improving the housing stock is an essential part of protecting the health and wellbeing of our residents.

If homeowner's homes are in good condition, well insulated and safe, people will live healthier happier lives and a good supply of well-managed, well-maintained Private Rented homes can play a very valuable role in helping to make more properties available to lower income households unable to access social housing, help vulnerable households to find suitable accommodation, and reduce homelessness. We believe everyone should have a good quality home no matter what tenure they live in.

All private housing should at least meet the minimum standards that comply with the legislative standards ensuring that the property does not cause a physical hazard or nuisance to residents and the local neighbourhood. We want to work with landlords to increase security, certainty, affordability, and stability for tenants but where landlords do not meet the required standards, we will do everything in our power to ensure that residents are safe in their homes. For vulnerable homeowners, we want to provide as much support as we can through advice, guidance and effective signposting.

Enforcement

The majority of landlords act with fairness and decency towards their tenants and those in the neighbourhoods of the homes they own. They maintain high standards of accommodation and manage their properties well, complying with the requirements of the law. Many landlords work with us and accept more challenging tenants, offering safe, suitable accommodation to those who may otherwise be homeless.

However, a small number of landlords completely disregard their duties and responsibilities towards their tenants and carry out unlawful actions. Their interest in properties is often limited to generating a rental income with little or no investment in the property, tenants, or wider residents and communities. The private sector is also becoming increasingly responsible for providing supported accommodation, often to those with the most challenging and complex needs. The council has a role to play in ensuring such accommodation is well-managed and does not negatively impact other tenants and residents living in the area.

Enforcement is a core function of the Environmental Health Team who conduct private sector housing work. Under the Housing Acts and related environmental health and building legislation, local councils have both legal powers and duties to deal with unsatisfactory housing conditions in the private sector.

Targeting and focusing intervention and proactive enforcement on the very worst properties, landlords, and agents has been a key area of focus for the council over many years.

The council has a crucial role in driving up housing standards in the private sector, and as such, we will focus our resources on those areas with the most insufficient housing stock and the least adequate property management.

We will continue to use the powers provided to us and using the whole range of statutory provisions to facilitate the most appropriate solutions, sanctions and deterrents.

Over the lifetime of this strategy, we will design a ‘best in class’ housing enforcement policy, that reflects the range of enforcement provisions to support both resident and tenants living in the Private Sector.

Damp and mould

We are fully aware of the impact damp and mould has on people’s lives and health. This is why the council has made a clear promise to improve our response to the issue. We are working across the private rented and owner-occupied sectors to reduce the risks of damp and mould in all homes in the district and make sure that cases are being investigated fully. We have always investigated such service requests by offering site visits and do not solely offer advice leaflets as some authorities do. However, there are further improvements that can be made.

During the lifetime of this strategy, we will:

- Increase our engagement with private landlords and residents in the district to

tackle the issue of damp and mould. We are already taking enforcement action against landlords with damp and mouldy properties and are committed to holding private landlords to account on the condition of their properties.

- Improve our data recording to enable easy access to future data to be able to better demonstrate our activities and better understand the extent of the issue in our district.

Promoting rights and responsibilities in the Private Rented Sector

We want to increase awareness of the rights and responsibilities of tenants so that they are able to make more informed decisions about moving into a new home or discussing issues with landlords.

We are planning to deliver a campaign alongside that ensures that people understand what an inexperienced landlord ‘looks like’ and how these are different to Rogue Landlords. Rogue landlords are not landlords who just ‘get it wrong’. A rogue landlord has little regard for Fair Housing Laws, adhering to building codes, or respecting a tenant’s rights to privacy in their rental home. Instead, these landlords target vulnerable tenants and place them in overcrowded or poorly maintained accommodation. They may take part in discriminatory or harassing behaviour, increase rents at a moment’s notice, and evict tenants who may make a complaint, without legal grounds to do so.

This is not acceptable and tackling rogue landlords is a priority for us. A media campaign to ‘shop a rogue landlord’ will be established and promoted through our

website and social media channels which includes The News which has a reach of 47 thousand residents. This will enable those people who do not know how to report rogue landlords to do so.

As part of our campaign to promote tenants' rights, we will be designing a tenant's checklist that equips tenants to ask the 'right' questions when viewing property and ensure all appropriate safety certificates are in place. Our check list will be co-produced with tenants and focus on areas such as Basic Information:

- The length of the lease.
- Deposit and Fees.
- How maintenance and repairs are handled.
- References from previous tenants.
- Emergency procedures in case of emergencies (e.g., fire, flooding).

Promoting DASH

To help improve the Private Rented Sector, we have worked in partnership with DASH (Decent and Safe Homes) Services since 2005. DASH is a nationwide scheme that encourages and rewards good property standards and management practice in the Private Rented Sector.

The service provides a landlord accreditation scheme and 'Call B4 You Serve' to encourage support for landlords to limit evictions. North East Derbyshire is developing a private sector offer which will incorporate the call b4 you serve service. The council has an excellent working relation with DASH, and we will be exploring how we may extend our partnership working, promoting the

service more widely to landlords to use the service, increasing the number of properties that DASH inspects on behalf of the council, and exploring how the partnership between DASH and the council can be strengthened to better share resources.

The loss of private sector tenancy is a significant reason for homelessness in North East Derbyshire.

We will coordinate our homelessness prevention approach to private rented sector tenants, working with Call Before You Serve, Derbyshire Law Centre and other partners to better understand the practical and financial support package that we can offer both landlords and tenants. We will develop a Private Rented Sector specific homeless prevention offer that will offer good quality advice and assistance to landlords and tenants in the district.

Promoting good practice and raising awareness

The council recognises the need for collaborative efforts to raise awareness of tenant and landlord responsibilities and to expand good practice across the sector. We are committed to providing more advice and support to victims of unscrupulous landlords, taking enforcement action against landlords who rent substandard accommodation and exploit vulnerable tenants and those from marginalised groups.

This will involve increasing our use of social media as a platform for our standards, commitments, enforcement action, advice and support to both landlords and tenants, and continuing to work with lettings and management agents, developing formal partnership arrangements.

We facilitate regular landlord forums to share ideas about how we can work together to improve services for tenants and inform landlords of legislative requirements and changes. The focus is to:

- Provide partnership working opportunities.
- Co-operate with local landlord associations.
- Launch initiatives with landlords such as energy efficiency or greener homes.
- Improve access to training and learning.
- Provide forums for discussion and networking.

We will positively encourage landlords to join the Landlord Accreditation Scheme that is managed by DASH and to attend the local Landlord Forum events to educate landlords to provide better support and services for their tenants. We will be extending these invitations to letting agents too. We will be considering more practical benefits to secure membership and attendance at these events such as:

- Consider whether offering grants or loans to improve properties may be something we want to pursue. This consideration would also apply to owners.

- Consider a support package to landlords to extend their portfolios if those properties are made available to residents at LHA rates or similar.

We recognise that not all landlords will be able to attend and so we will also trial promotion of information through online platforms.

Getting ahead of the game

Landlords must ensure that their rental property meets Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES). This means by law properties must have an energy performance certificate (EPC) rating of “E” or above. Improving EPC ratings are better for the environment and better for all residents, in terms of the cost of heating and warmer homes.

We know that 61.7% of private rented homes and 57.9% of owner-occupied homes do not currently meet EPC C and we are planning to undertake research to better understand the plans of landlords and owners to improve the EPC rating of their properties and the support that may be required. We will then develop an Intervention Strategy on the support the council can provide.



Increasing the supply of good quality, well-managed homes in the Private Rented Sector

A key priority for the council is to maximise the number of high-quality and genuinely affordable homes in the district for all our residents, catering for people from a wide range of backgrounds and on different incomes. This very much includes the Private Rented Sector. A number of new pieces of legislation have been introduced relating to private sector housing and there are concerns that a number of landlords may choose to leave the market, selling their homes. Whilst these properties may remain in the sector, others may not; reducing supply.

Increasing access to the Private Rented Sector

There are clear opportunities to increase access to the Private Rented Sector through the development of an attractive and comprehensive North East Derbyshire landlord offer. Alongside this, we will explore the feasibility of developing a countywide private sector leasing scheme.

Increasing access to the number of private sector homes which can be used to support move-on accommodation for people who are homeless is critical if we are to reduce our reliance on temporary accommodation and provide stable and secure homes for people. This is challenging; with the significant demand for private rented homes and increasing rent levels, landlords can 'pick and choose' tenants, taking advantage of higher rent levels than are payable by tenants who are reliant on Local Housing Allowance (LHA).



We are building a dedicated team that will work to engage with private sector landlords and agents and explore new ways of securing access to the Private Rented Sector. By developing close working relationships with landlords and letting agents, this team will co-produce a tool kit of options that will enable us to increase access to more homes in the Private Rented Sector and we will consider every potential option. Over the lifespan of this strategy, we will:

- Review our Bond Guarantee schemes, a fund set up to help those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, to help finance a new rental property. We want to ensure this is working for both tenants and landlords.

- Consider the opportunity to work with property owners who have moved into long-term residential care and whose home is vacant through leasing schemes. We will look to provide opportunities for much needed housing for the council, especially in areas where the lack of housing is more challenging. Look to provide opportunities for much-needed accommodation for the council, especially in areas where increasing numbers through development is more challenging
- Intervene where landlords are choosing to leave the sector to ensure that these homes remain in the Private Rented Sector and are sold to accredited landlords. We will be consulting with landlords to identify those that want to extend their portfolios and consider support packages to enable them to do so. We will explore whether council funding could be made available to support the purchase with the council taking an equity stake in the homes.
- Explore working with brokers to find properties and provide short-term move-on support to homeless families.

Exploring the types of incentives, we can offer landlords will help to secure landlords' engagement with the council. We will research best practice elsewhere and consider new ideas of our own in conjunction with landlords and letting agents. Without pre-empting the outcomes of these discussions, we could consider:

- Financial options that use current funding more flexibility to support landlords to undertake improvement work.
- Rent guarantees over and above Local Housing Allowance levels through

considered and effective use of Discretionary Housing Payments and / or homelessness prevention funds.

- The council acts as property guarantor.
- Up front rent payments.
- Additional support for tenants as tenancies start.

Building more homes

- The council will explore potential delivery options to increase the number of private rented homes across the district. There are many models to explore, and we will consider how each of them fit with the priorities for the council, our risk appetite, and our funding availability.

Over the lifetime of this strategy, we will:

- Explore co-living housing as an opportunity to increase the supply of homes in the district.
- Continue to create innovative opportunities for development by considering the opportunity to repurpose council buildings, identify vacant and underused land, and consider building options including modular build.

Attracting investors

- A driving force behind investor led delivery models is the fact that they can attract institutional investment, which is seeking a long-term income stream used to provide, for example, a return for pension funds or a revenue stream for councils.

We will:

- Develop a commercial evidence base to help to secure investment and promote North East Derbyshire as a place to invest through our planning system.
- Work with partners to develop a delivery and management model for their Private Rented Sector stock, with a focus on how new delivery can be affordable to local incomes.
- Plan to proactively secure investment in North East Derbyshire, building relationships and working with private sector partners, through models such as, Rent Plus and Later Living.

Build to Rent can raise the quality and options of private rented housing, contribute to the creation of well designed, sustainable places, support labour market mobility by providing homes for people moving into areas for work, and provide much needed discount market rent, offering rent at different price points.

We are working with Rentplus in Clay Cross to deliver new homes. Rentplus offers an opportunity for tenants to build up their credit history for a minimum of five years so that they have a better opportunity to get a mortgage. When they buy their homes Rentplus provides a 10% gifted deposit. We will look to expand such schemes.



Ensuring that housing standards and living conditions contribute towards better health outcomes for all

Good quality housing is essential for everyone's health and wellbeing; safe and sustainable housing can support good physical and mental health, reduce fuel poverty, decrease carbon emissions, reduce hospital admissions, and help people live independently for longer.

Poor housing is a driver of poor health and of pervasive and growing health inequalities. Housing also has a huge influence on mental health and wellbeing. Affordability has a major impact on an individual's ability to keep homes warm and how people travel to work and maintain social connections. As well as physical housing conditions, environmental blight and anti-social behaviour can all influence the way people feel about where they live.

The Derbyshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy contains a priority to 'Support our vulnerable populations to live in well-planned and healthy homes' and recognises that older people in Derbyshire have increased housing, accommodation, and support needs. In order to enable older and vulnerable people to live independently for longer, the Health and Wellbeing Board will work to join up planning, housing, and health systems by empowering existing partnerships to work seamlessly together.

We are looking to be much more flexible about how we fund this agenda and will maximise the opportunity that commuted sums funding may offer to increase access to homes that are affordable. This may include:

- Supporting officers to manage bringing empty homes back into use.
- Investing in long-term empty private sector housing stock to bring it up to the Decent Homes Standard, with the proviso it becomes available to the councils for nominations.
- Purchasing an equity stake in open market properties to help households to right size or move to more appropriate housing.
- Providing support to sustain tenancies.

Health and safety at home for longer

The most vulnerable residents are those least likely to reach out for support and assistance when things go wrong. This is especially so for owner-occupiers who may not consider that the council can support them where they are coping with significant disrepair or squalid living conditions that they are unable to rectify themselves.

Poor quality or unsuitable accommodation can prevent people living independently in their home for longer and force unnecessary displacement, away from familiar surroundings. Many deteriorating situations in private rented housing stem from tenants and landlords not understanding their rights and responsibilities or not having the ability or capacity to exercise those rights.

We believe that suitable, safe, and sustainable accommodation for everyone is a right, and is the foundation against which people can achieve positive life outcomes. Ensuring those with the most challenging and complex needs can sustain stable housing is seen as key to achieving more cohesive neighbourhoods in our district. Improving health and safety in existing homes will have a significant impact on people's ability to remain living at home for longer.

The council offers a comprehensive adaptations service, futureproofing existing housing stock with relatively low-cost adaptations such as small ramps, grab or handrails, small steps to entrances, or moving power sockets. These are low-cost solutions to enable older people or people with a disability or complex housing needs.

We will review how we to maintain independent living. We will continue to promote the take up of these adaptations.

When we undertake adaptations, we will take a holistic approach and ensure that homes are safe. If additional work is required, we will undertake that so that residents can truly benefit from the adaptations they need.

It is often simpler for owner occupiers to access adaptations. As the owner of the property, they have the choice to have adaptations undertaken. This is not the case for tenants and ensuring that tenants living in the Private Rented Sector are aware of these adaptations and that landlords are supportive of having them installed in their properties is essential. We know from experience that landlords may not understand tenants' longer-term needs and may not wish to adapt property. As well as promoting adaptations to owner occupiers, we will be supporting older people or people with a disability or complex needs in the Private Rented Sector and will explore options that:

- Better inform and advise landlords of the challenges for older people living in unsuitable properties and the potential support landlords can offer.
- Ensure training is provided to landlords about safeguarding.
- Provide better information and access to affordable warmth measures and how to secure them into their properties.

- Provide specific training to enable landlords to support tenants as they age in place and educate landlords to be dementia friendly and aware of how to sign post tenants to support services.
- Provide advice and referral information for landlords providing homes for people with mental health challenges
- Develop a directory of support services for landlords to provide to tenants explaining the services available and a named referral point.
- Encourage take up of Disabled Facilities Grants by offering a commitment to support landlords to find tenants requiring adaptations in the future. The council will explore step-up step-down care in partnership with the NHS to identify tenants for adapted properties.

Providing practical support for homeowners

Whilst the majority of home owners want to remain living in their home, others will want to move. One of the barriers for older households to move is trying to negotiate the purchase chain whilst trying to find the

right home for their future, and in parallel to sell their current home. These issues can prevent many moves. The council will explore the impact this has on older people and consider potential solutions. We will explore potential funding opportunities for owners to move in a timeframe that works for them and to enable them to find the 'right' property, which may encourage more people to make the move.

Derby City Council, as the lead council, is researching the feasibility of establishing a low cost / zero interest loan scheme. We will learn from the findings which may enable us to support ideas such as:

Homeowners who are eligible for Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) where estimated or actual costs for adaptations are above the amount of grant that is available.

Homeowners wanting to carry out retrofit energy efficiency works, including those whose income would typically exclude them from existing government grant programmes.

Private Rented Sector landlords wanting to carry out retrofit energy efficiency works.



There may also be older households that wish to move but are unable to afford a more appropriate home. Without financial support, these households are likely to be trapped in unsuitable housing. The council will explore the potential of enabling owners to utilise the equity in their homes and move to a more suitable property.

In the same way as owner occupiers or social tenants are enabled (social tenants through the downsizing scheme and owners through their equity) to access more suitable housing, households living in the Private Rented sector may be unable to do this. The cost of moving, facing a potentially higher rent, and finding a more suitable property may all act as barriers. The council will research potential options to support low-income households living in the Private Rented Sector to move to more suitable accommodation.

Affordable warmth and fuel poverty

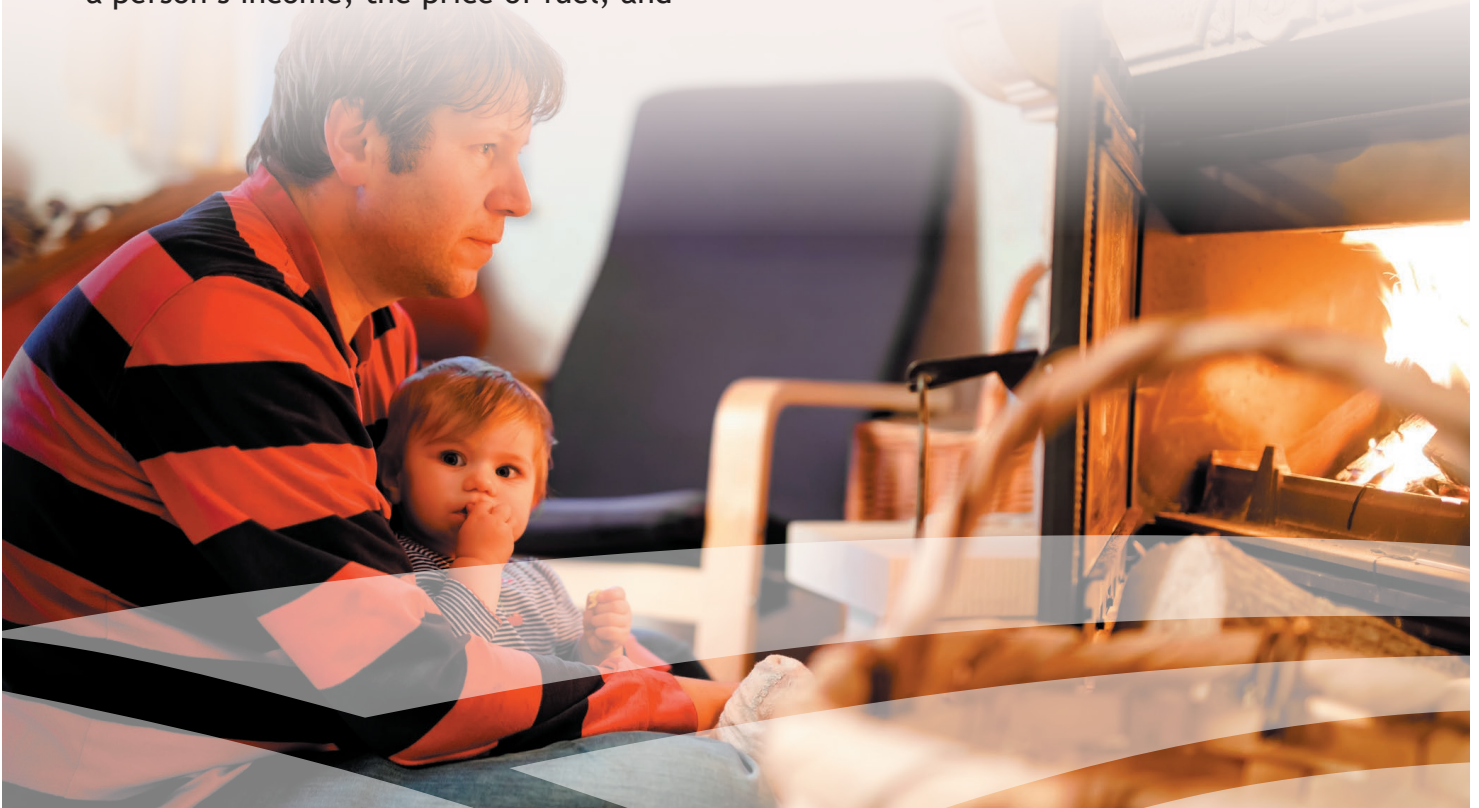
A home should be warm and comfortable and provide a healthy and welcoming environment that promotes well-being. Fuel poverty is influenced by three factors: a person's income, the price of fuel, and

the thermal efficiency of their home. Whilst the council can signpost residents to increase benefit uptake and advice, it cannot influence a person's income or the price of fuel.

However, the council recognises the need to improve thermal comfort and reduce energy costs through a range of initiatives and will assist vulnerable residents to do so. This will also support the council's commitment to tackling climate change and reducing our carbon emissions.

We will:

- Continue to seek external funding opportunities to provide energy efficiency measures for both privately owned and rented homes.
- Continue to use our affordable warmth coordinator post, to offer advice support and guidance for people to access financial incentives/grants and help with energy saving.
- Ensure landlords are aware of the potential funding support that is available and their obligations to provide housing that is sufficiently warm and comfortable, in compliance with minimum standards.



Places where people want to live and are proud to live

Ensuring all areas, neighbourhoods, and streets in NE Derbyshire, irrespective of housing tenure or type, are places where people want to live and are proud to live.

A good mix of housing types and tenures is vital for creating sustainable communities and meeting the district's housing needs. It is important that all our residential areas feel welcoming and safe and are locations where people are more likely to be invested in their homes and neighbourhoods.

A significant factor in neighbourhood decline is locations that attract short term renters, where rooms or properties are let out on a short-term basis. Whilst this type of accommodation meets the housing needs of some in our community, a proliferation of more transient short-term living makes it less likely that people will form connections to their local area and feel any ownership or investment in it. A high turnover of tenancies can also lead to a decline in standards, outward migration of more established residents, and a spiral of decline.

Empty homes can similarly lead to deterioration and attract blight, criminality, and community tension. Keeping the numbers and clusters of empty homes to a minimum is essential if we are to sustain healthy and thriving streets and estates. It is also the case that those living in deprived areas in the least energy-efficient homes are likely to be those living in fuel poverty. This can contribute to poor health outcomes for

residents, the deterioration of general standards, and broader housing instability. Improving domestic energy efficiency will help the council meet its zero carbon 2040 commitments, reduce carbon emissions, and protect residents from harmful effects of climate change.

It is important that all our neighbourhoods are welcoming and safe and are locations where people are invested in their homes and neighbourhoods. A high turnover of tenancies can lead to a decline in standards, outward migration of more established residents, and a spiral of decline. This can also impact the desirability of properties and locations and tension between more settled and short-term renters.

Sharing intelligence to target resources

Within the Private Rented Sector, the worst criminal landlords operate under the radar, often using all space such as kitchens, cellars, and corridors as sleeping accommodation. Tenants in these properties are vulnerable, often undocumented, and extremely unlikely to contact the authorities for assistance. Likewise, for owner occupiers who are vulnerable and living in poor quality housing, many will not seek support. Our stock condition survey recommended a series of actions that will promote joint working protocols to help to address housing inequalities. This strategy is the platform for delivering those recommendations.

We will work with partners to create a database that will aggregate, monitor, and cross-reference data on properties to enable a better targeting of resources and act as an early warning system to predict challenges. This will be collated with private sector developed indices that predict certain activities and tenures which will provide profiles to assist the council to identify potential locations to target enforcement action, and as part of this, have a vulnerability index for people and the likelihood that services may be required.

Making every contact count

We will make sure that every contact counts where access is granted to a home. We will do this by ensuring we are considering the health, wellbeing, and needs of each member of the household as well as assessing the physical housing standards and the environmental conditions in the locality.

We want to ensure that our residents in the private sector have access to support and are empowered to report their concerns. We will support officers from both the council and its partner organisations to be able to report concerns by introducing a Triage Service, designed as a portal for professionals to report and discuss housing issues and explore potential solutions with housing colleagues. Its focus will be for Adult Social Care, Children's Services, the NHS trusts, Public Health, and the police who are regularly visiting clients' homes. If staff are trained to spot anomalies and then empowered to report it, officers can build up a picture of concerns and act accordingly.

Creating a portal for reporting and discussing information will help to develop a more robust working relationship with these departments and organisations. Whilst it will occasionally 'find' a very serious breach of housing standards or management practices, its primary focus is to deal with 'low level' problems quickly before they create major problems for people.



Bringing empty homes back into use

Short-term empty homes are part of the normal housing market. However, long-term empty homes are a wasted resource, have a negative impact on neighbouring properties, and often act as a focus for anti-social behaviour. Keeping the numbers of empty homes to a minimum is essential if we are to sustain healthy and thriving streets and estates. We are planning to introduce the maximum charge on empty property through council tax premium and we are considering different options to enable homes to be brought back into use.

To reduce the number of empty homes in the district, over the next 3 years we will explore:

- The potential for a new bespoke product to provide repayable grant assistance to first time buyers to purchase long-term empty homes at the lower end of the market.
- The council acting as guarantor on a mortgage to support first time buyers to buy a property and secure repayable grant to undertake improvements.
- The council and / or partners leasing empty homes and improving them. These properties would be rented out on the private rented market to recoup the council investment.



Monitoring arrangements and delivery plan

Monitoring the Private Sector Housing Strategy

The Action Plans supporting this Strategy will be monitored on a quarterly basis, with an annual report to Scrutiny and Executive.

Minor changes which make no significant difference to service provision will be made to the document under delegated authority by the Assistant Director of Housing Management and Enforcement in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

Reviewing of the Private Sector Housing Strategy

The Private Sector Housing Strategy will be reviewed at least every three years in line with internal Strategy/Policy development procedures. The Strategy may be reviewed more frequently than this as a result of changes in legislation, changes in the Council's corporate vision or as a result of monitoring outcomes.

Equalities Statement

North East Derbyshire District Council is committed to equalities as an employer and when delivering the services it provides to all sections of the community.

The Council believes that no person should be treated unfairly and is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations between all groups in society.

Access for All statement

You can request this document or information in another format such as large print or language or contact us by:

- Phone: [01246 231111](tel:01246 231111)
- Email: connectne@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk
- Text: [07800 00 24 25](tel:07800 00 24 25)
- BSL Video [Call](#): a FREE, three way video call with us and a BSL interpreter.
- Call with [Relay UK](#) via textphone or app on [0800 500 888](tel:0800 500 888). FREE phone service for anyone who has difficulty hearing or speaking.
- Visiting our [offices](#) at Wingerworth: 2013 Mill Lane, [S42 6NG](tel:01246 6426NG).

