

South Hams & West Devon
***Better Homes,
Better Lives***
Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Action Plan 2024 - 2025



South Hams
District Council



West Devon
Borough Council





Action Plan 2024 – 2025

South Hams & West Devon Councils have worked in partnership for a number of years. The partnership has enabled the creation of a Joint 5 year Housing Strategy For South Hams and West Devon; ‘Better Homes, Better Lives’ which was launched in 2021.

Both Councils have declared a Housing Crisis and the strategy outlines the aspirations of the councils and the actions we will be taking to achieve these during the five year lifespan of the strategy.



Following the change in administration in both Councils in May 2023, Housing was reaffirmed as a top priority for both South Hams & West Devon. This action plan reflects these election campaigns and the aspirations of elected members and their communities.

The landscape continues to present challenges ranging from properties being unaffordable for local people to rising numbers of homeless households with complex needs. This action plan sets out our ambitions to help tackle the housing crisis locally.

Housing for People

Priority 1 – Homes that support the health and wellbeing of our residents

Housing Strategy Task	Aim	Timescale	Department	Housing Strategy Policies
Conduct targeted activity to ensure maximum uptake of Home Upgrade Grant.	To improve efficiency, removing people from fuel poverty and having a positive impact on climate change.	Mar-25	Environmental Health	<p>Promote and support energy efficiency in homes.</p> <p>https://democracy.swdevon.gov.uk/documents/s29448/Housing%20Crisis%20Changes%20to%20Financial%20Assistance%20and%20Enforcement%20Policies.pdf</p> <p>https://democracy.swdevon.gov.uk/documents/s29637/Housing%20Crisis%20-%20Changes%20to%20Financial%20Assistance%20and%20Enforcement%20Policies.pdf</p>
Enforce reasonable standards in rented accommodation.	To improve energy efficiency in the private sector.	Sept 2024 for 1 year review of new approach	Environmental Health	<p>Ensure the Private rented sector meets the requirements of The Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations.</p> <p>https://democracy.swdevon.gov.uk/documents/s31039/Social%20Housing%20Private%20Sector%20Housing%20Landlords.pdf</p> <p>https://democracy.swdevon.gov.uk/documents/s29637/Housing%20Crisis%20-%20Changes%20to%20Financial%20Assistance%20and%20Enforcement%20Policies.pdf</p>

Housing Strategy Task	Aim	Timescale	Department	Housing Strategy Policies
Support residents live more safely in their home.	Investigate opportunities to promote independent living.	Dec 2024	Environmental Health	Proactively support independent living and support people with disabilities to remain in their homes through disabled facility grants and make better use of the better care fund.
Review Better Care Fund Financial Policy annually and explore ways to increase grant amounts.	To bring more flexibility to the grant process.	Annual policy review	Environmental Health	Proactively support independent living and support people with disabilities to remain in their homes through disabled facility grants and make effective use of the better care fund. https://democracy.swdevon.gov.uk/documents/s29638/Appendix%202-%20BCF%20Financial%20Assistance%20Policy.pdf
Review and update the allocations policies for existing and new Extra care* facilities.	Improve partnership working, deliver consistent outcomes and standards, and ensure best use of stock.	Aug-25	Housing Enabling	Support an appropriately located planning application for an Extra Care housing scheme in West Devon.
Breaches of minimum energy standards and electrical safety standards can be dealt with under civil penalties.	Effective enforcement of the private rental sector.	Ongoing for the lifetime of this strategy	Environmental Health	Ensure the Private Rented Sector meets the requirements of The Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations. https://democracy.swdevon.gov.uk/documents/s29640/Appendix%204-%20Minimum%20Energy%20Standard%20and%20Energy%20Performance%20Certificate%20Enforcement%20Policy.pdf

* Extra Care is purpose built accommodation designed to enable independent living with access to 24 hour care services. It can provide a higher level of support than sheltered accommodation but usually less than a residential home.

Housing Strategy Task	Aim	Timescale	Department	Housing Strategy Policies
Promote the Seamoor Lettings service, to potential landlords.	Ensure full use of social media and other platforms to promote properties.	Dec 2024	Housing Advice Housing Enabling	Seek to expand our own in-house private lettings service Seamoor Lettings.
Develop a property offer for refugees and asylum seekers.	Maximise opportunities for accommodation and support provision for resettlement through robust understanding of opportunities and funding.	June 2024	Housing Advice	Proactively support independent living.
Investigate the introduction of a holistic support worker for those in temporary accommodation.	Provide focussed support to address issues preventing access to housing and learn to sustain and manage tenancies effectively.	Apr-24	Housing Advice	Proactively support independent living.

Housing for People

Priority 2 – Make the best use and improve the quality of our existing housing

Housing Strategy Task	Aim	Timescale	Department	Housing Strategy Policies
Continue to lead on the Devon wide development of the Care Leaver Protocol to support care leavers to plan for their housing needs.	Through effective collaboration ensure that quality partnership working is central to our approach to meeting care leavers housing needs.	Dec-24	Housing Advice	Plan for future health needs.
Deliver accommodation that reflects local housing need through delivery of smaller properties with a focus on 1 bedroom properties.	To meet the highest need on the councils housing register and to maximise opportunity for best use of stock through downsizing.	Ongoing for the lifetime of this strategy	Housing Enabling	Address under occupation and overcrowding within social housing stock and by doing so reduce length of time on the housing register.
Work with business owners and registered providers to ensure best use of buildings available through regeneration.	To increase housing supply on predominantly brownfield sites where buildings and the area are in need of regeneration.	Ongoing for the lifetime of this strategy	Housing Enabling	Work with our partners to seek re-development opportunities to enhance the current housing stock and to meet the needs of the residents.

Housing Strategy Task	Aim	Timescale	Department	Housing Strategy Policies
The Council will continue to lobby for legislative and regulatory change to address the challenges that the district faces around second homes and short-term let holiday accommodation. Specifically, the Council will lobby for the ability to register short-term lets and to licence them. The Council will then seek the ability to limit the number of holiday lets in a particular area when market penetration of short-term holiday lets exceeds a given proportion of total homes.	To increase the amount of affordable Private Rented accommodation available for local residents to access to enable them to remain in their communities and work towards housing being for primary residence only.	Mar-25	Elected Members Housing	Restrict second home ownership and holiday lets. https://democracy.swdevon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=151&Mid=1692 https://democracy.swdevon.gov.uk/documents/s29771/Council%20Tax%20Discounts%20and%20Premiums.pdf
Work with DCC and other partners to deliver accommodation for people with disabilities and support needs (such as Care Leavers with support needs and those on the Disabled Adapted Needs Panel).	To ensure a diverse mix of tenures and property type to meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents.	Ongoing for the lifetime of this strategy	Housing Enabling	Work with our partners to seek re-development opportunities to enhance the current housing stock and to meet the needs of residents.
Assist Neighbourhood Plan groups with preparing a Principal Residence policy in parishes where such an approach can be justified to protect housing for local people.	To ensure that new open-market homes are occupied on a permanent basis, and help to minimise the social and economic impacts of second and holiday homes.	Ongoing	Housing Enabling Planning	Restrict second home ownership and holiday lets.

Housing for Place

Priority 1 – Promote balanced and sustainable communities

Housing Strategy Task	Aim	Timescale	Department	Housing Strategy Policies
Invest in Council owned Temporary Supported Accommodation to meet local needs.	Reduce reliance on pay nightly bed and breakfast accommodation, ensure homeless people are accommodated within the area.	South Hams 10 bed April 25 West Devon 1 x 3 bed Feb 24 West Devon 3 x 1 bed Oct 24	Housing Enabling	Encourage provision of a wide range of housing options including social housing, managed shared accommodation and managed intermediate assured short hold private rental, part ownership and market sale. Redevelop existing homeless provision in West Devon to ensure good quality accommodation for people when they need it the most. https://democracy.swdevon.gov.uk/documents/s29846/Housing%20Crisis%20Update.pdf https://democracy.swdevon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=271&MId=1846
Work in partnership with other public bodies to maximise use of existing and redundant assets & buildings to deliver affordable housing.	To increase the delivery of Affordable Housing by making best use of publicly owned assets.	Ongoing for the lifetime of this strategy	Housing Enabling	Work creatively with Devon County Council to provide quality specialist adapted housing and housing for people requiring support to live independently.
Roll out the South Hams Housing Offer and investigate the feasibility of a similar scheme in West Devon.	To support Communities to deliver Affordable Housing Schemes through CLTs and other partnerships.	Jan-25	Housing Enabling	Support alternative ways to deliver affordable housing and manage local housing needs, such as co-operatives and community land trusts. https://democracy.swdevon.gov.uk/documents/s31091/Housing%20Policy%20Update.pdf

Housing Strategy Task	Aim	Timescale	Department	Housing Strategy Policies
Support the objectives of the Devon Housing Task force, and the Devon Housing Commission.	Work collaboratively across the county to take an interventionist approach and lobby for change to meeting long term housing needs.	2025	Elected Members Housing	Use strategic planning policy to ensure sustainable housing growth. https://www.exeter.ac.uk/about/regionalengagement/impact/devonhousingcommission/
Maximise opportunities to attract grant funding to invest and deliver affordable housing in towns and villages where financially viable.	Increase the amount of good quality affordable housing available.	Ongoing for the lifetime of this strategy	Housing Enabling	Invest in affordable housing with and without Joint Venture (JV) partners where it improves affordable housing and “placemaking” outcomes.
Investigate a number of varied options in size and location for Gypsy & Traveller sites based on need.	To investigate the need for a suitable site to inform the JLP review.	Dec 2024	Housing Enabling	Promote effective partnership working to meet the needs of Gypsy and Travellers.
Relaunch the Gypsy, Traveller and Caravan Dweller Forum and enhance by the inclusion of external partners.	To ensure the voice of the G&T community is heard and has direct input into potential outcomes.	May-24	Housing Enabling	Promote effective partnership working to meet the needs of Gypsy and Travellers.
Implement a Devon Wide approach to responding to reports of Gypsy, Traveller, and Caravan Dweller encampments.	To maximise cross boundary partnership working.	June-24	Housing Enabling Planning	Promote effective partnership working to meet the needs of Gypsy and Travellers. https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/family-support/gypsies-and-travellers/

Housing Strategy Task	Aim	Timescale	Department	Housing Strategy Policies
Build an evidence base of the number and condition of unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller sites within the area.	Ensuring that we have current knowledge of standard of dwellings and H&W of occupants to enable us to deliver targeted outcomes.	Dec 2024	Housing Advice Housing Enabling	Promote effective partnership working to meet the needs of Gypsy and Travellers.
Work with the land owners / developers of allocated sites and review who could bring forward sites for self-build purposes. Consider opportunities on Council's own land.	To maximise opportunities to diversify the way in which affordable housing targets are achieved.	Ongoing for the lifetime of this strategy	Housing Enabling	Encourage opportunities for people interested in custom build / self-build development, both within community housing schemes and wider housing delivery.
Work in partnership with DCC to develop a specialist accommodation offer for those care leavers with very high needs.	Maintain a focus and collaborative creative solutions approach toward those young people currently experiencing significant unmet needs.	April 2025	Housing Advice	Work creatively with Devon County Council to provide quality specialist adapted housing and housing for people requiring support to live independently.
Work with DCC to provide accommodation for perpetrators of domestic abuse engaged with children's services to support survivors of domestic violence to remain in their homes.	Ensure perpetrators of domestic abuse are supported to resolve their housing and behaviour needs to ensure the best outcomes for the family unit.	Sep-24	Housing Advice	Work creatively with Devon County Council to provide quality specialist adapted housing and housing for people requiring support to live independently.

Housing Strategy Task	Aim	Timescale	Department	Housing Strategy Policies
Develop a process to evidence Housing Need, tailored to local parishes and communities which include more than the single settlement.	To ensure local communities remain central to the delivery of housing in their area.	Jun-24	Housing Enabling	Work collaboratively with communities in the formation of Neighbourhood Plans to deliver the right development available to meet local needs.
Work with partners to identify key worker roles which have remained vacant due to lack of affordable housing/distance to travel to work.	Support the economies and communities by ensuring that those vital to making them thrive are able to access accommodation.	Mar-25	Housing Enabling	Innovate the delivery of key worker housing to meet localised need.
Proactively apply Office of National Statistics data as part of our DEV8 – (Meeting Local Housing Need in the Towns and Thriving Villages policy area) policy requirement to resist applications for large dwellings in areas that are already over-supplied.	To ensure a resilient housing mix that isn't skewed by large, expensive dwellings that don't meet local needs.	Ongoing	Planning	Use strategic planning policy to ensure sustainable housing growth.
Review affordable housing thresholds as part of any plan review process to ensure the highest defensible level of provision is written into future policy	To reflect the most up-to-date position of need, supported by the housing crisis declaration and housing strategy to justify a higher onsite percentage.	JLP review	Planning Housing Enabling	Continue to drive the JLP affordable homes agenda.

Housing Strategy Task	Aim	Timescale	Department	Housing Strategy Policies
Consider affordable housing being the priority section 106 developer contributions where there is justification above other S106 asks where a viability consideration could reduce the available contributions	To reflect local priorities in decision making	Ongoing	Housing Enabling	Continue to drive the JLP affordable homes agenda.
Provide ongoing strategic planning support for the preparation and adoption of neighbourhood plans that identify sites for housing co-ops and CLTs, or that have positive and proactive policies that seek to promote the delivery of these types of development	To diversify the supply of new homes, benefitting small and medium sized enterprises and local supply chains	Ongoing	Housing Enabling Planning	Support alternative ways to deliver affordable housing and manage local housing needs, such as co-operatives and community land trusts.
Consider implementation of an Article 4 Direction breaking the proposed permitted development between use classes C3 and new use class C4 'Short Term Lets' should it be implemented Nationally.	To protect existing housing from use as short term Lets.	Upon introduction of new use class C4 and associated Permitted development.	Planning	Restrict second home ownership and holiday lets. https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/introduction-of-a-use-class-for-short-term-lets-and-associated-permitted-development-rights/introduction-of-a-use-class-for-short-term-lets-and-associated-permitted-development-rights

Housing Strategy Task	Aim	Timescale	Department	Housing Strategy Policies
<p>Provide dedicated Affordable Housing Planning Officer to manage Pre-applications and Planning Applications for Affordable Housing, Community Lead Housing schemes.</p>	<p>To support affordable housing scheme in the Planning Process to expedite the delivery of Affordable housing.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Planning</p>	<p>Support alternative ways to deliver affordable housing and manage local housing needs, such as co-operatives and community land trusts.</p> <p>https://democracy.swdevon.gov.uk/documents/s28444/Housing%20Crisis%20Update%20Report.pdf</p> <p>https://democracy.swdevon.gov.uk/documents/s28396/Housing%20Crisis%20Update%20Strengthening%20Housing%20Delivery.pdf</p>
<p>Planning Officers will consider the Housing crisis as a significant material consideration, in the determination of Planning Applications for Affordable Housing Schemes and areas with identified housing needs.</p>	<p>Seek to ensure that Affordable housing provision is an important consideration in planning applications.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Planning</p>	<p>Use strategic planning policy to ensure sustainable housing growth.</p>

Housing Strategy Task	Aim	Timescale	Department	Housing Strategy Policies
<p>Encourage and support the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans for parishes that have a Sustainable Village (as identified in Fig. 5.8 in the JLP),. Encourage the inclusion of site allocations including affordable housing models to help meet the provision of the 550 dwellings allocated in JLP Policy TTV25 and set-out as indicative levels in Fig. 5.8.</p>	<p>To deliver the dwellings allocated in JLP Policy TTV25, thus making an important contribution towards the overall housing requirements across the plan area including affordable housing. This represents a key element of housing supply in the TTV Policy Area and would deliver affordable housing in the rural areas. It would also help to diversify the supply of new homes, benefitting small and medium sized enterprises and local supply chains.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Planning</p>	<p>Continue to drive the JLP affordable housing agenda.</p>
<p>Engage with Town/Parish Councils and NP groups in parishes with an adopted plan to consider undertaking a full or partial review of the plan. Specifically, to address affordable housing issues where evidence supports this and opportunities may exist.</p>	<p>To provide for specific locally identified housing needs and to help ensure that our communities are inclusive and equitable places in which to live.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Planning Housing Enabling</p>	<p>Continue to drive the JLP affordable housing agenda.</p>

Housing Strategy Task	Aim	Timescale	Department	Housing Strategy Policies
<p>Encourage and support Town/Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plan groups to liaise with and pro-actively support their communities to establish CLTs and to seek to identify sites that could be delivered under the provisions of Policy TTV27.</p>	<p>To provide for specific locally identified housing needs and to help ensure that our communities are inclusive and equitable places in which to live.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Housing Enabling</p>	<p>Support alternative ways to deliver affordable housing and manage local housing needs, such as co-operatives and community land trusts.</p> <p>https://plymswdevonplan.co.uk/policy</p>
<p>Encourage and support the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans in parishes that do not have one of the Sustainable Villages. To encourage the inclusion of site allocations including affordable housing models commensurate with the identified local housing need. Where the level of Local Housing Need is low, encourage collaboration with neighbouring parishes on a 'cluster' basis.</p>	<p>To provide for specific locally identified housing needs including affordable housing and to help ensure that our communities are inclusive and equitable places in which to live.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Planning</p>	<p>Continue to drive the JLP affordable housing agenda.</p>

Housing for Place

Priority 2 – Ensuring that homes support the health and wellbeing of our area

Housing Strategy Task	Aim	Timescale	Department	Housing Strategy Policies
Explore partnership and site options to enable the delivery of specialist accommodation for older residents to remain in their communities.	To plan for future health needs and support our most vulnerable residents to find a home.	Ongoing for the lifetime of this strategy	Housing Enabling	Work collaboratively with providers to respond to a need for an extra care facilities. https://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/jsna/
Tackle damp and disrepair in rented properties.	To improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and to improve standards in RP housing stock. More robust triage and investigation into D & M reports.	Sept 2024 for 1 year review of new approach	Environmental Health Housing Enabling	Develop proactive relationships and work collaboratively with Registered Provider for mutual benefit and to improve standards in Registered Provider housing stock.
Make best use of stock by further promotion of success of the TIS scheme.	To work with RPs to identify tenants for whom downsizing would be an advantage to ensure best use and occupation of existing stock.	Review annually	Housing Enabling	Promote the Tenants Incentive Scheme to encourage and incentivise tenants in social housing to downsize. https://democracy.swdevon.gov.uk/documents/s27159/Response%20to%20the%20Housing%20Crisis.pdf https://democracy.swdevon.gov.uk/documents/s27487/HOUSING%20CHALLENGES%20WD.pdf

Housing Strategy Task	Aim	Timescale	Department	Housing Strategy Policies
Work with RPs to minimise unnecessary disposals of social housing stock, particularly in rural locations where the impact is most acute.	To maintain the supply and condition of social housing and make best use of existing stock.	Continue to monitor	Housing Enabling	Develop proactive relationships and work collaboratively with Registered Providers for mutual benefit and to improve standards in Registered Provider housing stock.
Collaborate on the development of the Young Persons Protocol to ensure positive outcomes for young people.	Ensure collaborative working practices are central to the approach taken toward young people needing to leave the family home age 16 & 17.	Jun-24	Housing Advice	The Councils are compelled to addressing hardship, deprivation, ill health and inequalities that exist within our areas.
Work with DCC to develop a portfolio of 'Places of Safety' to meet the housing and support needs of families fleeing violence.	Develop a Devon wide property portfolio with attached support to specifically meet the needs of those families fleeing domestic abuse.	Dec-25	Housing Advice	Work creatively with Devon County Council to provide quality specialist adapted housing and housing for people requiring support to live independently.



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