

**South Lakeland District Council**  
**Council**  
**27 July 2021**  
**Housing Portfolio Holder Report**

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**Portfolio:** Cllr Helen Chaffey

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Implementing of the Local Plan housing objectives.

Working in partnership to improve the standard, availability and affordability of housing in the District to meet local needs, championing these issues at national, regional and sub-regional level.

**Policies, Plans and Strategies**

- South Lakeland Local Plan
- Housing Strategy and Policy (including Choice Based Lettings Allocation Policy)

**Key Areas**

- Development Management and Building Control
- Housing Options and Homelessness Prevention
- Strategic Housing and delivery (including Housing Enabling and Housing Grants)

**Local Plan**

The Council Plan seeks to ensure that a new local plan is in place by 2023 to replace most of the current suite of documents with a single plan. These include the Core Strategy, Land Allocations and Development Management policies. The Council has taken a major step forward with the commencement of a wide-ranging issues and options consultation for the new plan. We are seeking the views of consultees and stakeholders on all aspects of the plan including the approach to climate change, development strategy and allocations.

Because of Covid issues, it is not possible to run face-to-face consultation events at the present time. However, the situation is being reviewed in August and we are hopeful of being able to run face-to-face consultation events towards the end of the period if the situation permits.

The consultation will run until the end of September and the outcome of the consultation will be used to prepare a draft plan, which is expected in summer 2022.

**Development Management and Building Control**

Development management and building control continue to manage the volume of work within government statutory deadline in spite of the additional challenges that Covid continues to represent.

A significant piece of work is commencing with the implementation of the DEF IT system to replace Fast Suite and will take a 12-month period to implement.

We continue to prioritise enforcement case on a priority basis determined by impact on the communities. Planning Committee Meetings are now happening in person with the expiry of the legislation governing virtual committees and we continue to ensure that they are held in a Covid secure way to allow full public participation on high profile applications over the coming months.

### **Housing Options and Homelessness Prevention**

The Council introduced a target measure of the number of homelessness households living in temporary accommodation will be no more than 20 at a time. The highest number of households in Temporary Accommodation at any one time was 39, which was in Quarter 1 in 2020/21 following on from the Government's 'Everyone In' message. The figure had reduced to 24 in Quarter 3 2020/21 and now reduced to 27 in Quarter 4 2020/21.

In order to support the reduction of the homelessness households living in temporary accommodation, the Council introduced the Homelessness Strategy 2019/2024 which identifies four key priorities:

- Homeless prevention
- Increasing the supply of settled accommodation
- Ensuring appropriate support is available
- Tackling complex needs

The Council was successful in a bid totaling £388,897 from MHCLG to create an additional 12 bed spaces under the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme. This Scheme, hosted by Home Group, is funded for three years and includes 4 complex bed spaces to support the most vulnerable in our communities. This is additional to the £35,982 received to support the Government's directive 'Everyone in' at the height of the pandemic. Cumbria County Council were also awarded an additional £30,000 for this work, which was split between Districts. The Council was successful in bringing into use six move on flats to help with a scheme known as Protect+. These units are also owned by Home Group and support staff provide low-level support and advocacy to individuals to whom no legal duty would be owed by SLDC and are at risk of rough sleeping. To date there has been a 100% success rate in securing sustainable accommodation through this project.

Impact Housing Association (part of the Riverside Group) are providing a shared housing scheme for young people, which was one of the Strategy's actions. Further work is continuing:

- Working with private rented sector to secure accommodation for people in housing need/at risk of homelessness;
- Bringing empty homes back into use by implementing actions within the Housing Strategy;
- Working with public sector bodies and churches to identify any potential sites that could be used for affordable and supported housing;
- Using housing renovation grants to enable potential new schemes suitable for tenants with specific needs;
- Working with housing associations to develop new affordable homes;

Over the winter period, December to March, the Rough Sleeper Coordinator received 60 referrals from both partners and individuals seeking advice and assistance and has successfully found accommodation for a third of those placed into the Cold Weather Provision.

The Homelessness team are continuing to create better working partnerships to ensure appropriate health support is available for those in temporary accommodation and to develop a more effective hospital discharge pathway. Alongside this is the development of complex case meeting through what is currently the police led hubs to ensure all individuals facing barriers are receiving support from appropriate agencies, removing duplicity and seeking to find sustainable outcomes for all.

The Council continues to bring a minimum of 70 long-term empty homes back into use each year. Since 2015 to Q4 2021, the Council has brought 448 empty homes back into use throughout the District.

### **Strategic Housing and delivery (including Housing Enabling and Housing Grants)**

At Q4 2020/21, the Council had supported 538 affordable homes to rent since 2014. Affordable Housing delivery in the last two years has been affected by Covid. However, there is a significant pipeline of active schemes across the District and it is still a reasonable expectation that the target 1000 affordable homes to rent by 2025 will be met.

The Council has supported the delivery of extra care housing and a new 104-unit scheme is underway at a site in Oxenholme by Housing 21. This includes provision of 29 affordable rented units and 43 shared ownership units. The Council enabled the delivery of 22 extra care units at Gatesfield in Windermere contributing £90,000 for this Community Led housing project working in partnership with Cumbria County Council. This was through the completion of Craft Cottage so that the entire scheme of 22 units could be made available for extra care provision. The Council is also providing Disabled Facility Grants to improve accessibility of these units.

We have been continuing to work closely with partners such as Highways England, Cumbria LEP and Housing Developers to ensure the development of the Cross-a-moor roundabout.

A Private Sector Stock Condition survey is being carried out using a new methodology by the Building Research Establishment. Work is now underway and this research will help determine the best use of resources to tackle housing standards issues in the private sector.

The £2.36 million Community Housing Fund was designed to support community provision of affordable homes. SLDC were awarded the funding to help address the impacts of high levels of second home ownership. The funding was broken down into two available grants.

- CLH Capacity Building Grant
- CLH Scheme Grant

The fund is being used to enable the delivery of new community-led housing schemes through new build, re-use of existing buildings and bringing empty homes back into use. In December 2020, the Council approved a grant scheme of £350,000 and an infrastructure grant of £368,244 to the Levens Community Project (LCP). Work has now commenced at Levens. The Council has also approved a grant of £185,318 for a co-housing scheme at Holme Farm and a grant of £136,825 has been approved for a scheme at Cragfoot, Grasmere for Lakeland Housing Trust subject to necessary grant agreements being entered into.

The Council provided £30,000 for South Lakes Housing for an energy efficient affordable housing scheme at Parkside Road in Kendal. These units offer energy efficiency savings for

occupants, which reduce fuel poverty whilst providing much-needed affordable homes to rent.

<b>Signed off by</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date Signed off</b>
Section 151 Officer	Not applicable (N/A)	Not applicable (N/A)
Monitoring Officer	N/A	N/A
CMT	12/07/2021	13/07/2021

<b>Circulated to</b>	<b>Date sent</b>
Lead Specialist	12/07/2021
Human Resources Lead Specialist	N/A
Communications Team	N/A
Leader	N/A
Committee Chairman	N/A
Portfolio Holder	09/07/2021
Ward Councillor(s)	N/A
Committee	N/A
Executive (Cabinet)	N/A
Council	N/A