



SHROPSHIRE Health and Wellbeing Board Report

Meeting Date	16th November, 2023				
Title of Report	Strategic Housing Update - Housing and Health				
This report is for (You will have been advised which applies)	Discussion and agreement of recommendations	x	Approval of recommendations (With discussion by exception)		Information only (No recommendations)
Reporting Officer (Please include email address)	Laura Fisher – Head of Housing, Resettlement and Independent living, Shropshire Council - Laura.fisher@shropshire.gov.uk				
Which strategic SHIPP priorities does this paper address? Please tick all that apply	Children & Young People	✓	Joined up working		✓
	Mental Health	✓	Improving Population Health		✓
	Healthy Weight & Physical Activity	✓	Working with and building strong and vibrant communities		✓
	Workforce	✓	Reduce inequalities (see below)		✓
What inequalities does this report address?	Housing services work to reduce social and health inequalities.				

Report Content

Executive Summary

This report highlights the importance of housing in supporting and improving population health. It updates the Board on key areas of recent and current activity undertaken by the Council's strategic housing function. It recognises the Local Government Association (LGA) role in providing guidance that supports the improvement of population health through housing, as well as connecting the Better Care Fund strands together through housing.

This report asks the Board to discuss ways in which the system can improve joint working to improve health through housing.

Report Recommendations

- The Board is asked to note the contents of the report.
- The Board is asked to recognise the opportunities raised below to discuss how the system can better integrate housing within its decision making, strategic commissioning and delivery programmes.
- The Board is asked to endorse a workshop with system colleagues to work through opportunities to develop better joint working.
- The board is asked to agree for a return paper in 6 months' time to update on work undertaken, progress made and case studies of improved working relationships / processes.

Main Report

Housing is an important determinant of health because:

- Substandard housing is a cause of health inequalities.
- Ensuring people have good housing can help to delay or reduce a person's need for health and care services in the future and help them retain their independence, health and wellbeing for longer.
- It is estimated that the cost of poor housing to NHS is £1.4 billion per year.

In October 2022, the LGA published a report; [Improving health and wellbeing through housing: A High Impact Change Model](#). This model encourages local partners to integrate housing delivery with local health and care commissioning and service provision. It draws together key elements of the Better Care Fund, including the Disabled Facilities Grant and Discharge to Assess.

The model focuses on two goals and five high impact changes that help realise both goals:

- Goal 1: Improving population health through good quality housing,
- Goal 2: Supporting people to live independently in the community.

The five high impact changes to realise these goals are:

- Change 1: Providing a wide range of housing types and choices;
- Change 2: Influencing and improving local housing markets;
- Change 3: Improving and adapting existing homes;
- Change 4: Tackling housing and associated health inequalities;
- Change 5: Use of technology to support people to live independently at home.

Through policy development, Shropshire Council's strategic housing function is well placed to support an integrated approach to improving population health through housing. The function covers all non-landlord activity. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Strategy and policy preparation, monitoring and review;
- Research;
- Acquiring accommodation to meet housing need;
- Commissioning STAR Housing to deliver schemes to meet strategic priorities;
- Enabling general needs and supported housing;
- Client monitoring the Council's Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO), Shropshire Towns and Rural (STAR) Housing, and the Council's open market development company, Cornovii Developments Limited (CDL);
- Homelessness; and
- Allocations.

Strategy development

There are several statutory strategies as well as best practice strategies that work to deliver the LGA five impact changes and improve the quality and quantity of appropriate housing in Shropshire.

These include:

- [Sustainable Affordable Warmth Strategy](#) – adopted October 2023

- [Empty Homes Strategy](#) – adopted November 2022
- [Tenancy Strategy/ Policy](#) – adopted March 2023
- Independent Living and Specialist Accommodation Strategy – to be adopted 2024
- Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy – review completed, draft document to be developed 2024

The [Shropshire Housing Strategy 2020-2025](#) provides context and local housing need and to some extent addresses the five impact changes the LGA endorse.

The Strategy objectives are as the following:

1. To meet the overall current and future housing needs of Shropshire's growing population by addressing the housing needs of particular groups within communities.
2. To ensure people whose housing needs are not met through the local open market housing can access housing that meets their needs.
3. Preventing households from becoming homeless and where this is not possible, ensuring they have safe, secure and appropriate accommodation until they are able to resettle.
4. To ensure people can access a mix of housing options within Shropshire's urban and rural landscape, that best meets their needs in terms of tenure, safety, size, type, design and location of housing.
5. To minimise the environmental impact of existing housing stock and future housing development in the interest of climate change. Maximise resource efficiencies and to ensure optimum use of sustainable construction techniques.
6. Ensuring that there is enough housing supply to enable businesses to attract and retain the local workforce that they need.

In early 2023, the former Communities Overview Committee began a series of scrutiny meetings, including a workshop, to consider social housing, the wider housing market and to inform the review and update of the Housing Strategy.

[The Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee set out six recommendations to Cabinet:](#)

- i. Following the implementation of the revised allocations policy and scheme, the Council should ensure that this is adhered to by all registered providers through regular monitoring to guarantee those in the highest need are allocated housing.
- ii. The Council should recognise the importance of the strategic housing function and how housing is integral to planning policy, social care and economic development, and therefore the need to strengthen the relationship between these functions.
- iii. The Council should promote a place-based approach to housing and economic development, which includes commissioning affordable and supported housing based on evidenced need to ensure that housing priorities are delivered in the right place. Thus, responding to the fact that Shropshire is made up of any different communities across a large geographic area with different needs.
- iv. Investment in social housing must acknowledge the specific needs of rural settlements, therefore products need to be tailored accordingly. For example, intergenerational supported housing, which could include staff accommodation, would help to promote a preventative agenda in villages and small towns (e.g., preventing admissions to hospital and care homes, and supporting people with learning disabilities and mental health problems to live independently).

- v. The Council should explore and pursue opportunities to attract funding, such as Community Land Trusts, and lobby for new products specifically to support the rural economy which will not only deliver the preventative agenda, but also balance the housing market and help to ensure that people can continue to afford to live in communities in Shropshire. For example, innovative funding products to fund intergenerational living and for sub-market private rented accommodation for key workers who are not necessarily able to access social housing, as they are not in a high priority reasonable preference category.
- vi. The Council should review and implement any new legislation on short-term lets, helping to ensure that the balance is struck between the economic gain to communities and places through increased visitor spend, against the availability of homes to buy and rent where there is local concern.

The 6 recommendations are being progressed and an update report is due to be presented at a future scrutiny meeting to ensure ongoing monitoring of the actions.

Policy development and operational delivery

Shropshire Council's housing operations, including Better Care Fund schemes, provide the opportunity for better connectivity and joint working to improve health and wellbeing through housing.

Allocations policy and scheme

- All local housing authorities are required to have an allocation¹ policy and scheme, which must comply with the Housing Act 1996 and associated statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England.

In summary the guidance covers:

- who is eligible for allocation, this relates to immigration status;
- how local housing authorities can determine who can qualify for an allocation, this can relate to local connection, financial resources, and unacceptable behaviour; and
- the categories of persons that an allocation scheme must give "reasonable preference" to, this includes households who are homeless (not just those considered to be statutory homeless), overcrowded households, persons with medical and welfare needs, and those suffering from hardship as they need to move to a particular locality.

Implementation of the revised policy and scheme, transitional arrangements were approved and adopted by Cabinet in March 2023. [The revised policy and scheme was implemented in July 2023.](#) It covers eligibility and qualification criteria for applications to the Housing Register; the allocation of the housing stock owned by the Council, which is managed by STAR Housing; and nominations to Private Registered Providers.

- The allocations policy and scheme seeks to ensure that those applicants in the greatest need are able to access social housing, this includes the strategic need to:
 - Prevent and tackle homelessness, including reducing the pressure on temporary accommodation;
 - Promote independent living and reduce admissions to residential care, by ensuring the best use of all tenures and types of social housing; and
 - Enable key workers on low incomes to better access social housing.

¹ An allocation of accommodation under the Housing Act 1996 is when a person is selected to be a council tenant or nominated to be a tenant of a private registered provider.

Research

Housing needs survey

- The Housing Act 1985 requires local housing authorities to undertake a periodical review of housing needs, “*Every local housing authority shall consider housing conditions in their district and the needs of the district with respect to the provision of further housing accommodation*”.
- In summer 2022 the Council undertook an authority-wide housing needs survey. A random sample of households stratified by Place Plan Area were asked to complete a questionnaire which aimed to understand the housing needs residents had in their current homes and the types of new homes that are required for existing and future households.
- The findings of the housing needs survey allow for cross-tenure housing information to be considered both on an authority-wide and Place Plan Area level. This includes information about current households’ intentions and those of concealed households.

Temporary Accommodation Programme

The Council has a duty to provide interim (temporary) accommodation if, at any point during enquiries surrounding a homelessness application, there is a reason to believe that an applicant may be: homeless; eligible for assistance, and in priority need. Where an applicant is owed the main duty, this being an offer of settled accommodation, and is currently accommodated in temporary accommodation the Council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation until such time as the duty is ended, either by an offer of settled accommodation or for another specified reason.

Given that the basis for accommodating households under the interim accommodation duty is either because the Council has reason to believe that the household is eligible for assistance, homeless and in priority need or where the main duty is owed, this means that single households who are required to be accommodated will be vulnerable.

The provision of temporary accommodation in the form of supported housing, either with on-site or floating intensive housing management and support, is therefore the most appropriate form of housing the Council can provide to these vulnerable single person homeless households.

In January 2022 the Council agreed to deliver a temporary accommodation programme of up to 60 units of accommodation to be held in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), funded by Section 106 commuted sums, and borrowing on rental income, and managed by STAR Housing. The programme was to comprise two elements:

- the delivery of supported accommodation schemes for single homeless people who require on-site management and support; and
- the “purchase and repair” of one- and two-bedroom dwellings across Shropshire to provide a dispersed temporary accommodation scheme.

To date the Council has acquired seven 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings of dispersed accommodation where single homeless households receive intensive housing management and support; and the homeless hostel at 70 Castle Foregate, Shrewsbury, where there is on-site management and support. The Council has also recently been granted planning

permission for Coton Hill house, a previous care home in Shrewsbury, to provide 25 x 1 bed self-contained supported housing units. This will be live by March 2025. The Council is currently seeking to acquire further units of accommodation and has successfully been awarded external funding regarding this (details are still embargoed).

Disabled Facilities Grant and Occupational Therapy

Through collaborative working with partner organisations, including the voluntary and community sector, the Disabled Facilities Grant and Shropshire Council's Housing and Occupational Therapy teams bring together housing, health and social care to support some of Shropshire's most vulnerable people. A person-centred approach is taken to better identify and address the needs of individuals and families. The financial support provided via the grant process enables people to live their best life in Shropshire. It may also prevent escalating care and support needs and thus reducing unnecessary costs to the client and the Council.

The approach aims to make the best use of available funding from a variety of sources to find the most suitable solutions for the people of Shropshire.

The Occupational Therapy (OT) team will undertake an assessment of needs to identify what is necessary and appropriate for a person to remain living independently in their own home. During this assessment an OT may liaise with other health professionals and, if applicable, the voluntary sector to gain a holistic viewpoint to address a person's identified needs. The result of any OT assessment may range from advice to minor adaptations, such as grab rails or assistive technologies, up to major adaptations like shower facilities or stairlifts etc.

The Private Sector Housing Team have been piloting a new 'grant' aimed to make the process quicker and easier to navigate as well as an increased limit on grant allowance (currently DFG maximum is £30,000). The team are in the process of developing an updated Assistance Policy detailing the new grant and the processes surrounding it.

As previously mentioned, adaptations can help alleviate the need for care and support, but they also have the potential to reduce hospital admissions and readmissions, for example, by removing the risk of slips, trips and falls in a person's home.

By utilising some of the adaptation budget, Shropshire Council has made assistive technology more accessible. Assistive technologies can prevent accidents from occurring. Like adaptations, it can also provide a more independent lifestyle and give reassurances to family and friends who are concerned for their loved ones by alleviating the pressure of carers who are struggling to cope in their role.

Local Authority Housing Fund

In January 2023 the Council was allocated £3.2m grant funding under the Local Authority Housing Fund Round 1 to part-fund the acquisition of 26 homes for Ukrainian households and 4 homes for Afghan refugee households. In June 2023 the Council was allocated £1.2m under the Local Authority Housing Fund Round 2 to acquire 9 dwellings to be initially allocated to

Afghan refugee households; and 1 dwelling to be used for temporary accommodation for homeless households where the Council owes the interim duty to accommodate².

Once the immediate need is met each home can then be used to meet the Council's wider housing and homelessness priorities. In March and July 2023 the Council agreed to apply match funding comprising Section 106 commuted sums and borrowing on rental income, and to use best endeavours to acquire the full target of dwellings to which the allocation of grant funding related.

Social housing enabling, delivery and commissioning

The below table provides a summary of the additional social housing delivered by Private Registered Providers (housing associations and other housing organisations registered with the Regulator of Social Housing) and the Council via its ALMO (STAR Housing). These homes have either been directly delivered by the Registered Provider or instead are acquisitions of dwellings provided by private developers under Section 106 agreements or open market dwellings.

Table 1: Additional social housing dwellings

	2021-22	2022-23	Q1 2023-24
General needs dwellings for rent	131	167	50
Supported housing for rent	2	1	0
Older persons supported housing for rent	38	70	28
Low-cost home ownership dwellings	68	86	42
Total additional social housing dwellings	239	324	120

From April 2023 the Council has been commissioning STAR Housing to produce feasibility reports and progress supported housing schemes. This includes independent living schemes for people with learning disabilities and a supported housing scheme for vulnerable young people.

Commissioning priorities

In May 2023 the Council produced a document setting out its commissioning priorities for general needs social housing and supported accommodation. See Appendix A. It is an iterative document informed by a range of sources, including the Council's housing register, the authority-wide housing needs survey, schemes on site, current development proposals, homelessness statistics, Adult Social Care and Children's Services.

The commissioning priorities provide direction for key partners – STAR Housing, Private Registered Providers and Cornovii Development Limited (CDL) in delivering social and supported housing in Shropshire to meet identified need.

² Households are accommodated by the Council under the interim duty when the Council has reason to believe that the household is eligible for assistance, homeless and in priority need; and where the main duty is owed, the Council has determined that the household is unintentionally homeless, eligible for assistance and in priority need.

Opportunities and Integration

There are significant opportunities to connect housing and health schemes and transformation development. These include:

- working with OTs as part of our Primary Care Network Additional Roles
- including housing in our demand and capacity modelling work
- ensure housing colleagues and schemes are considered across transformation programmes including Local Care, MSK, UEC, and across the health pathways from prevention, primary care, planned care, urgent care through to discharge.
- embedding housing within service design and MDT approaches, building on the RESET multi-disciplinary team approach to support clients with substance use issues who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

Conclusion:

Whilst it is recognised that there is a huge amount of work taking place to deliver housing legislation, improve access to housing, create opportunities for more affordable housing and to connect housing and health (particularly with our most vulnerable populations including homeless and migrants), there is more we can do to support the system.

To explore these opportunities, it would be helpful to bring health, social care and housing officers and practitioners together to jointly undertake a workshop to develop closer working relations. Doing so would allow the system to work through how to maximise the housing and health links across the full prevention, treatment and recovery pathways and to build on and extend further the good practice that is happening.

Risk assessment and opportunities appraisal (NB This will include the following: Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community, Environmental consequences and other Consultation)	Housing services work to reduce inequalities and health inequalities.	
Financial implications (Any financial implications of note)	No direct implications as a result of this report;	
Climate Change Appraisal as applicable	N/A	
Where else has the paper been presented?	System Partnership Boards	Shropshire Integrated Place Partnership (SHIPP)
	Voluntary Sector	
	Other	
List of Background Papers n/a		
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Cllr. Cecilia Motley, Portfolio holder for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Communities Dean Carroll, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Assets		
Appendices Appendix A – Affordable housing commissioning priorities		

Appendix A – Affordable housing commissioning priorities as of May 2023

This is an iterative document informed by a range of sources, including the Council's housing register, the authority-wide housing needs survey, schemes on site, current development proposals, homelessness statistics, Adult Social Care and Children's Services. Its purpose is to provide direction for key partners in delivering new affordable housing in Shropshire to meet identified community priorities and reflects currently known housing delivery plans where possible. This document will be updated annually.

1. General needs accommodation (non-specialist) housing for applicants³

- 1.1. In terms of outstanding⁴ absolute need (pressure) for affordable housing from persons in statutorily defined housing need (this being housing register applicants in the reasonable preference groups), the "strategic centre" of Shrewsbury⁵ has by far the highest level of need for additional affordable dwellings.
- 1.2. In descending order, a high level of need for affordable housing is also found in the principal / key centres and community hubs of:
 - Oswestry
 - Bridgnorth
 - Market Drayton
 - Whitchurch
 - Ludlow
 - Shifnal
 - Church Stretton
 - Ellesmere
 - Broseley
 - Albrighton
 - Bayston Hill
 - Wem
 - Baschurch
 - Craven Arms
 - Bishops Castle
 - Minsterley
 - Bicton
 - Much Wenlock
 - Pontesbury
 - Cleobury Mortimer
 - Bomere Heath

³ This includes the need for forms of dispersed supported accommodation where the occupant will be provided with floating support, for example, "move-on" accommodation.

⁴ Outstanding need is the "net" need for affordable housing which takes into consideration the level of existing stock.

⁵ The parish of Shrewsbury contains just over 30% of all the County's dwelling stock, which includes just under 30% of its general needs rented accommodation.

- 1.3. Broadly speaking there is housing need (as not only defined by reasonable preference, but those households not in these groups, but unable to access the open market) across Shropshire, however, where settlements contain less than 1,000 dwellings housing need will require further evidencing through a local housing needs survey which considers local housing need and turnover (how often dwellings become available for re-let) of existing stock.
- 1.4. In terms of dwelling mix, percentage splits for both 100% Affordable Housing sites and S106 on-site provision in urban settlements (3,000 dwellings and over) to be in line with:
 - 30% 1B2P dwellings (potentially higher, dependent on site and location; can be flats or houses);
 - 20% 2B3P dwellings (accessible dwellings for older and disabled⁶ persons, the second bedroom allowing for a carer / relative to stay; can be bungalows or flats, however, latter may require the inclusion of lifts);
 - 20% 2B4P dwellings (both bedrooms to each be able to accommodate 2 no. persons and associated furniture, so in line with the allocations policy / DWP policy);
 - 20% 3B5P dwellings (two bedrooms to each be able to accommodate 2 no. persons and associated furniture, so in line with the allocations policy / DWP policy); and
 - 10% 4B plus dwellings (although there appears to be “low” need for large dwellings, the very low stock of numbers of these properties (325, this being less than 2% of general needs rented stock) results in very limited turnover.
- 1.5. Purchase and repair programmes should also consider the above dwelling mix, however, it is recognised that the current programmes (temporary accommodation – see section 4 below – and the Local Authority Housing Fund) are subject to defined requirements.
- 1.6. In smaller settlements the proportions may differ as there may be less need for larger properties, however, there remains a strong need for one-bedroom dwellings.
- 1.7. When considering property sizes (as opposed to bedroom numbers), there will be a need to be cognisant of general needs applicants with physical disabilities.
- 1.8. Dwellings to be predominantly for rent, which can include rent to buy as a low-cost home ownership (LCHO) product, with no more than 10 to 20% of shared ownership dwellings (this being due to the current “unaffordability” of shared ownership).

⁶ Not necessarily physically disabled, likely to include learning disabilities and autism (LD&A) and mental health (MH)

- 1.9. It should be noted that from a cross-tenure dwelling mix perspective (so to help to inform open market development) the suggested mix based on a minimum number of bedrooms for existing and concealed households planning to move in the next five years is:
- 20% 1-bedroom dwellings;
 - 40% 2-bedroom dwellings;
 - 30% 3-bedroom dwellings; and
 - 10% 4 + bedroom dwellings.

2. Older persons' specialist accommodation

- 2.1. Retirement accommodation for rent and older persons' shared ownership (OPSO) as below. This can include extra care sheltered housing but could also be a modern sheltered housing offer (sometimes called sheltered plus) with on-site management, an office for a care provider and a lounge, but without revenue costly communal facilities.

2.1.1. Circa 100 units in Shrewsbury (2 no. schemes). However, it should be noted that there are proposals for two affordable extra care schemes in Shrewsbury, each to provide around 60 to 70 units and should either go ahead this will reduce / negate the need for further specialist accommodation.

2.1.2. Circa 40 to 60 units in Bridgnorth, Oswestry⁷ and Ludlow and (a scheme in each location). There is also need in Whitchurch, however, the new Pauls Moss scheme being delivered by WHG should negate the need for this.

2.1.3. Small age restricted schemes⁸ with floating support, for example, clusters flats / bungalows of 10 to 20 dwellings in Market Drayton, Church Stretton, Broseley⁹, Wem, Albrighton, Much Wenlock, Cleobury Mortimer, Pontesbury, Highley, Bishop's Castle, Gobowen, Ellesmere, Craven Arms and Shawbury.

- 2.2. Where possible the dwellings should be 2B3P, although an element of 1B2P would be acceptable in schemes with on-site care and support, it is very important that where there is no on-site support the dwellings are 2B3P so as to allow for a carer / relative to stay overnight.

3. Young persons' specialist accommodation

- 3.1. There is a need for a supported housing scheme of circa 12 units of accommodation with 24/7 on-site intensive support and management in Shrewsbury and for this scheme to provide the level of facilities for those young

⁷Dependent on the impact of the new Council scheme at Weston Rhyn, it may be that only a 40 no. unit scheme be required at Oswestry.

⁸ Where possible, should funding allow, these schemes should be open to vulnerable persons with disabilities of "working age" (so not necessarily 55 years and over).

⁹ The proposal at Ironbridge may potentially meet an element of this need

people aged 18 to 25 with multiple and complex needs. The Council has proposals to meet this need.

4. Single homeless households

- 4.1. The Council has a duty to provide interim (temporary) accommodation if, at any point during enquiries surrounding a homelessness application, there is a reason to believe that an applicant may be: homeless; eligible for assistance, and in priority need. Where an applicant is owed the main duty, this being an offer of settled accommodation, and is currently accommodated in temporary accommodation the Council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation until such time as the duty is ended, either by an offer of settled accommodation or for another specified reason. For a single person household to be considered to be in priority need they will have been determined by the Council to be vulnerable.
- 4.2. The provision of temporary accommodation in the form of supported housing, either with on-site or floating intensive housing management and support, is therefore the most appropriate form of housing the Council can provide to vulnerable households. Please note the Temporary Accommodation Programme reports approved by Council in January 2022 and May 2022.
- 4.3. There is a need for a supported housing scheme of up to 30 units of accommodation with 24/7 on-site intensive support and management in Shrewsbury and for this scheme to provide the level of facilities for those single person homeless households with multiple and complex needs (following assessment at 70 Castle Foregate). The Council has proposals to meet this need.
- 4.4. There is an outstanding need for two smaller schemes of accommodation (each to provide circa 12 to 15 units) with 24/7 on-site support and management in the north and south of the County, these being in Oswestry and Bridgnorth respectively. The Council has proposals to meet the need in the south.
- 4.5. In addition, there is a need to continue with the purchase and repair and acquisition and works programme of one-and two-bedroom units or larger units in market towns which are remodelled into one-bedroom self-contained accommodation. This not only allows for Housing First type move-on accommodation, but also for can provide Housing First accommodation for specific client groups, for example, survivors of domestic abuse with multiple and complex needs.
- 4.6. Finally, fundamental to the homeless pathway for single households is ensuring that there is sufficient smaller one-bedroom general needs accommodation delivered (see section 1.4).

5. Mental health specialist provision

- 5.1. There is a need for between 20 to 40 units of accommodation across Shropshire, this includes a scheme of circa eight units in Shrewsbury and smaller schemes in the north and south of the County.

6. Learning disabilities specialist provision

- 6.1. There is a need for between 75 to 90 units of accommodation across Shropshire, this includes circa 40 units in Shrewsbury (this need could be met through the provision of three or four schemes of 8 to 12 units) and schemes of 4 to 12 units in the north and south of the County. In addition, there will be circumstances which require acquisition (and associated works) of dispersed dwellings in Shropshire to meet the specific needs of individuals.