



Improving Homes

Thematic Progress Update

April 2022

A Plan for West Devon



Lead Member Introduction

Ensuring that everyone within West Devon has access to a safe and warm home is a key priority within A Plan for West Devon, particularly given we have recently declared a housing crisis within the borough.



Cllr Barry Ratcliffe
Lead Member for improving homes

This update report sets out the progress the Council has made in achieving the key actions set out in the 2021/22 thematic delivery plan and significant progress has been made so far.

Since adoption of A Plan for West Devon, in September 2021 some of the key achievements have been:

- ✓ Declared a Housing Crisis and developed a high level plan for responding
- ✓ Launched a new Seamoor Lettings Website making it an easier system to use.
- ✓ Seen 36 units of affordable housing delivered in West Devon
- ✓ Carried out a public consultation on our draft homelessness strategy 2022/2027 which is now ready for consideration by Full Council in May.

5 Activities on Track and within budget	1 Activities requiring additional intervention or have uncertainties that require managing	0 Activities off track with no current clear plan to resolve	0 Not yet due to start
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Over the coming pages, we set out more in-depth update for each action along with the wider benefits to our communities.

As we look to the second year of the delivery plan, the Council is taking a key role in supporting the Government Homes for Ukraine Scheme, ensuring that properties where Ukrainians will be hosted are safe and suitable. At the point of writing this report we have already seen the first Ukrainian guests arrive within West Devon and we will do all we can to welcome and support them.

Cllr Barry Ratcliffe

Cllr Barry Ratcliffe

Lead Member for Improving Homes



Action IH1.1 – Deliver local homes that meet the needs of local people through a cumulative 300 new homes by the end of 2023/24 across the joint local plan area

Key Highlights

In total during 2021/22, 175 new affordable properties were delivered in the West Devon and South Hams JLP area. Specifically for West Devon, 36 units of affordable housing were delivered and occupied. The planning consent was achieved on the homeless hostel to re-provide this much needed temporary accommodation (See IH1.6 for more information on this).

Key Risks / Issues

There will be further affordable housing completions over the next 12 months although there is a risk delivery could slow down due to issues sourcing labour & materials. This has been reported as a potential issue nationally by Registered Providers and house builders.

Overall Rating GREEN – On Track

Action IH1.2 – Work with Devon County Council to support people to live independently, identifying opportunities for specialist, purpose-built accommodation

Key Highlights and benefits

We are currently exploring specialist, purpose built accommodation at a site in West Devon. We have worked with Devon County Council and as a result received data from Devon County Council about how many people require specialist accommodation in West Devon to demonstrate the need.

Key Risks / Issues

- Planning permission would need to be obtained

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

- Arrange a briefing on S106 for Plymouth Road
- Feasibility work to be undertaken on bringing a site forward

Overall Rating GREEN – On Track

Action IH1.3 – Develop our understanding of housing need and implement plans for responding

Key Highlights

Housing Need mapping is currently being undertaken and this has provided useful information which is being finalised to evidence where the delivery of affordable house should be encouraged. This will be through consultation with Neighbourhood Planning Groups, communities and our Registered Providers when land opportunities arise.

Good progress is being made on Housing Needs surveys. North Tawton Town Council have carried out their own Housing Needs survey, The results of the Brentor Housing Needs survey are being finalised.

Key Risks / Issues

There is a resource requirement to deliver housing needs surveys at pace which is being considered as part of the ongoing resource needed to respond to the housing crisis

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

- Data mapping will be available with key information on towns and local centres. Further areas of high demand will be identified and added to the system to ensure there is a coherent picture of current stock, turnover, delivery of new properties and demand.
- Schedule Housing Needs surveys for Princetown and Mary Tavy

Overall Rating GREEN – ON TRACK



Action IH1.4 – Promote and support energy efficiency in homes through ensuring the private rented sector meets the requirements of the Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards, Green Homes Grant Phase 2 and Energy efficiency improvements social housing decarbonisation fund

Key Highlights

Using a government grant, the council is currently working with Tamar Energy on a project to improve or have proper exemptions for an initial 60 non-compliant rental properties.

Key Risks / Issues

The original plan was to fund a post to support this work, however we were unable to recruit and have commissioned this support from Tamar Energy. This work has included building a bespoke webform for engaging with landlords, ensuring that all of the information is provided to landlord so that they are aware of the requirements. This should reduce advice calls and interactions. The webform and back office database is complete and ready to go.

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

- Engaging with non-complaint landlords, 700 properties have been identified, letters starting to go out week commencing 11/4.
- Exemptions database interrogated and checked for false claims.
- 60 homes improved or properly exempted

Overall Rating

GREEN – ON TRACK

Action IH1.5 – Promote the best use and improve the quality of existing housing including through a new Seamoor Lettings website, a new tenancy strategy and seek redevelopment opportunities with partners to enhance the current housing stock to meet the needs of residents.

Key Highlights

We have launched a new Seamoor lettings website which, so far has been well received and we have seen more people signing up as landlords and possible future tenants. A regular communications plan is being planned to ensure we continue to progress.

We took part in promoting National Empty Homes week which ran from 28th Feb – 6th March to encourage people to report empty properties - although we know that the number of empty properties in West Devon is lower than the South West and national average. This was promoted alongside our Lendology borrowing scheme which enables access to good borrowing rates to make improvements to properties in the hope that it will bring more back in to use.

Our new Tenancy Strategy has been developed and was adopted by Members in November 2021.

Our registered provider partners have identified a number of potential regeneration projects but these are currently at early stages of discussion. More information will follow.

Key Risks / Issues

- Changes to Energy Performance Certificates etc for rental properties that are in the pipeline may see landlords become more reluctant to let properties. We will ensure that we build this in to our communications strategy and promote the Lendology finance options for landlords.
- Action IH1.5 is slightly off track against the original plan as we have not rolled out our package of support for HMO management and promoted it to landlords. This action has been rolled forward to 2022/23

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

- Project Team meeting to develop next phase of promoting Seamoor lettings website.



- Progress discussions with our registered provider partners on potential regeneration projects.

Overall Rating Amber – Slightly Off Track

Action IH1.6 – Deliver on our plans for 11 self-contained apartments in Tavistock to support people who are homeless

Key Highlights

We have received planning consent for the self-contained apartments in Tavistock.

On 20th April a Design Workshop was held to scope out the designs prior to going to tender for a contractor.

Key Risks / Issues

- The cost of both labour and materials continues to increase which may impact the business case for the project.

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

- Publish tender for contractors to deliver the scheme
- Refine Full business case for consideration by Members in July or September 2022.

Overall Rating GREEN – ON TRACK

This update will be considered by the West Devon Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 26th April 2022.

You can view the meeting by visiting our  **YouTube** channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDZEXV47SxBpXUDR6qbhtiA>

You can find out more about A Plan for West Devon by visiting

www.westdevon.gov.uk/plan-for-west-devon

