

CUMBRIA HOUSING STRATEGY 2006 – 2011

PROGRESS MADE BY APRIL 2010

Research and Information

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment completed 2009/10
- 33 parish housing need surveys completed since 2006
- Supported housing needs analysis completed 2009/10

Affordable Housing

- 485 new affordable homes completed in the period 1/4/06 to 31/3/10
- 60 new affordable homes completed using the rural exceptions site policy
- 71 new affordable homes completed through the renovation grant policy
- 276 new affordable homes completed through joint working with the Council's Registered Social Landlord partners
- 40 new affordable general-needs homes for older people completed (i.e. does not include extra care housing). This includes 25 self-contained homes created through the remodelling of the Gowan Lea sheltered housing scheme
- 24 new affordable homes completed through the South Lakeland Shared Equity Scheme and 4 through the Buy-back Scheme, both working in partnership with Impact Housing Association
- 110 new affordable homes completed on former South Lakeland District Council land
- 2 new affordable homes completed on former Lake District National Park Authority land
- 18 new affordable homes completed on former Church-owned land and 11 more currently under construction
- Agreement reached with Cumbria County Council to enable 17 new affordable homes to be developed within the next 12 months
- Affordable Housing Officer post created to work with local communities to find suitable sites for new affordable housing
- One community land trust (CLT) established and a further 4 in the pipeline. These will provide new affordable housing on land retained in the ownership of local communities. The Council has provided financial support towards the Cumbria CLT post and grants to individual trusts
- South Lakeland Core Strategy published which includes a deliverable planning policy to secure new affordable housing
- Annual Cumbria housing developer forum held each year and regular contact established with housing developers in South Lakeland
- Local Investment Plan for Cumbria completed detailing priorities for housing investment in 2010/11
- Active engagement with the South Lakeland Strategic Partnership through the Affordable Housing Task Group. A working group has been established to research the impact of second homes on local communities

Supported Housing

- Two extra care housing schemes for older people completed in Kendal (37 for rent and 40 for sale)

- Foyer for young people under construction (due to be completed in March 2011). This will provide 14 homes for young people with training and support to help with obtaining employment. It will also provide a new base for the YWCA to enable community groups to undertake their functions
- Supported lodgings scheme for young people commenced
- Scheme introduced to support people with alcohol problems
- Planning permission obtained for a development in Kendal to provide housing and support for people with physical disabilities (construction should commence later in 2010)
- Local Area Co-ordinator appointed to help provide support for vulnerable people with complex needs
- Plans for reviewing and potentially remodelling existing sheltered housing schemes progressed. The conversion of a low demand bedsit sheltered housing scheme in Burneside to 25 x 2 bed flats for over 55s was completed in 2008. SLDC is working in partnership with South Lakes Housing to take forward a review of other sheltered housing schemes

Homelessness

- Choice Based Lettings Partnership developed which includes all Cumbria Local housing authorities and all the larger housing associations. Scheme is due to go live in January 2011. The allocation policy will give greater preference than at present to priority and non-priority need homeless households in South Lakeland
- Increase in take up of rent deposit guarantees via DiGs scheme helping to prevent homelessness. In the first 3 quarters of 2010-11 31 rent deposits were taken up in S. Lakeland compared to 18 for the whole of 2007-08
- Sanctuary measures (i.e. security measures) made available maximum of to victims of Domestic Violence in S. Lakeland, helping them remain safely in their own homes. This can be supplied via the Handyperson scheme
- The number of households in temporary accommodation has been reduced to a total of 19 as of 1st April 2010. The target for the Authority is 31 and the target was achieved in 2008 and has been sustained from this date. This substantial reduction is an improvement in service for homeless applicants.
- The target for the length of stay in temporary accommodation has been achieved with a substantial reduction in the period spent in hostel accommodation.
- A target of 10 successful homeless prevention cases per year has been set, however, a result of 96 has been achieved in 2009 / 2010, this has assisted many applicants and avoided the need for unsuitable temporary accommodation.
- A homeless prevention budget has been established; the budget of £15,000 is estimated to have saved the Authority over £30,000 in 2009 / 2010.
- The court desk service at Kendal Court has been improved through partnership working with Shelter and the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- An assessment of the Authorities hostel by the Supporting People Team has resulted in the highest quality rating being awarded in all categories.
- Working in partnership with Barrow Borough Council, Cumbria County Council, and housing and support providers to provide a monthly Young Peoples Panel to establish joint solutions to meet the needs of vulnerable young people

Decent Homes

- Home Improvement Agency run by Anchor Staying Put providing help and assistance to vulnerable households both within and outside the grant system. A Handy Person Scheme was set up in 2005, and this scheme is now well established in South Lakeland for the provision of small scale repairs and improvements, in most cases the works are free, in 2009/2010 458 jobs were completed by the Handy Person Scheme. The scheme has been expanded to provide further additional security measures where deemed appropriate by local Police and a Facelift scheme.
- Countywide protocol in place for enforcement of standards in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and countywide agreement on HMO licence fees. 52 HMO's have been licensed in South Lakeland and an inspection programme is in place.
- Empty Homes Officer appointed, who has contacted all empty home owners in areas of greatest housing need. A Matchmakers scheme is in place to bring sellers of empty dwellings and potential buyers together. An Empty Homes Strategy for South Lakeland is about to be issued.
- In South Lakeland our local energy efficiency has been expanded to provide free loft and cavity wall insulation to homes where there is a child of 16 years and under as well as a person of over 60 years of age; in 2009/2010 some 1190 dwellings had work done under the scheme. An Affordable Warmth strategy is about to be issued, with ambitious proposals to offer free cavity wall and loft insulation to all private sector dwellings over a phased period.
- Joint countywide private sector stock condition survey to be completed late in 2010.