

Flintshire Housing Strategy 2025 – 2030

‘The right type of home in the right location for the right people’

Draft

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Foreword

We are pleased to present our Housing Strategy 2025 - 2030.

Our ambition is for residents to live in the right type of home in the right location. This Housing Strategy explains how we will go about making that happen and outlines the key priorities for the next five years.

The last few years have seen significant changes with continuing demand for housing and new homes. In response to this, we are building more new properties, improving access to affordable housing, making better use of our stock and making strategic acquisitions.

The increasing cost of living has meant affordability has become even more of a challenge and we are committed to better understanding demand, so that we can continue to target our resources at those residents who need our support the most.

It is important to understand that demand has not only increased, but the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis have highlighted inequalities and disproportionately affected our most at risk residents.

By working collaboratively with our strategic partners, stakeholders and the Welsh Government we can address these challenges over the lifetime of this strategy, including:

- Providing appropriate, affordable and accessible homes in the right locations.
- Meeting the increasing demand for social and affordable housing.
- Addressing rising levels of homelessness across the county.
- Investing in the Council's housing stock and ensuring it is well managed.
- Bringing forward accommodation to enable independence for people in need of care and support.
- Supporting the needs of populations or groups who are not able to be appropriately represented through the conventional housing market.
- Delivering low / zero-carbon new-build housing and retrofitting existing homes.

Internally, we need to optimise the resources available to us by targeting investment and developing new ways to deliver.

The strategy builds on the successful outputs of the previous Housing Strategy to ensure that Flintshire remains a great place to live and work.

Providing the opportunities to allow residents, particularly for those in the greatest need, to access the highest quality housing appropriate for their needs, enabling residents to access support, encouraging safer communities, and improving wellbeing will make possible our vision of 'the right type of home in the right location for the right people'.

We look forward to working collectively to deliver this vision.

Housing Strategy 2025 – 2030: The right type of home in the right location for the right people

Executive Summary

- Although the environment in which we operate has changed, the ambitions and objectives of the previous strategy remain relevant.
- One of the most significant factors facing Flintshire County Council (and the UK) is the increase in homelessness and growing numbers of households in temporary / emergency accommodation together with the potential for additional presentations due to the rise in mortgage interest rates when fixed rates end.
- A review of Flintshire County Council's homelessness and housing advice services was undertaken in July 2024 by Neil Morland & Co Housing Consultants. A key recommendation was the council needs a plan to reduce the number of households in bed and breakfast accommodation, as this provision is costly.
- The Council faces several external risks that may potentially increase the number of households seeking support from the homelessness service. An analysis of overall net expenditure by area indicated that the increase is almost wholly accounted for by the increase in bed and breakfast and hotel costs. Council expenditure on bed and breakfast / hotel accommodation in 2023-24 was £4.575m compared to £1.503m in 2022-23. For the year 2024-25 the spend was £6.18m.
- The Welsh Government has required every local authority in Wales to produce a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan over the period 2022 to 2027, and in the recent Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation (Wales) Bill has confirmed its intention to abolish homelessness priority need altogether. This new requirement to accommodate more single people has coincided with increased homelessness demand, especially as a result of more evictions from the private rented sector and the cost-of-living crisis. In Flintshire this has been exacerbated by the acute lack of one-bed accommodation available to let, in either social housing or in the private rented sector, leading to the use of hotels growing rapidly and at great expense to the Council.
- The Flintshire Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted on 23rd January 2023 and forms the development plan for Flintshire alongside Future Wales: National Plan. The LDP forms the basis for planning decisions for the period 2015 to 2030.
- The refreshed Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) 2024 for Flintshire provides the latest evidence base to inform the development of the Council's housing, planning and other relevant strategies and policies. The LMHA identifies a shortfall of homes net of planned supply and suggests the need for more affordable homes. The LHMA highlights the need for more large homes (4/5 bed) and smaller homes (1/2 bed homes), particularly general needs housing which represents over 86% of the shortfall.

This strategy:

- Aspires to balance the immediate and longer-term priorities.
- Builds on the collaborative and partnership working model that has been established and engenders an innovative environment, by working with our strategic partners and the Welsh Government (WG).
- Involves working with housing partners to develop and invest in affordable housing and social housing - with modern methods of construction, improving the quality of Council homes, and a commitment towards carbon neutral.
- Influences the County's future prospects and economic destiny, by creating the conditions in a land use context, to allow for growth and investment to occur.
- Plans to maximise all available resources and funding streams.
- Plans to ensure the best use of existing stock and seeks to ensure that the mix of dwellings meets both current and projected demand whilst ensuring the long-term sustainability of communities.
- Takes into account the regeneration of town centres.
- Aims to meet and support the housing needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as those with mental health issues, learning and physical disabilities or those leaving care.
- Aims to support the needs of populations or groups who are not able to be appropriately represented through the conventional housing market.
- Provide enhanced support to prevent homelessness and to sustain current tenure. Offering support to people to retain their housing and live well and ensuring that homelessness is rare, brief, and unrepeatable.
- Ensure that people can explore their housing options so that they can access the right homes to meet their needs.

This strategy sets out our long-term vision to deliver the homes that people want and need. It is built around the following five strategic priorities:

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location.

Priority 2: Prevent and reduce homelessness reducing the reliance on the use of emergency and temporary accommodation.

Priority 3: Support people to access, live, and remain, in the right type of home including specialist provision.

Priority 4: Develop and invest in affordable housing and social housing to improve the quality and sustainability of homes.

Priority 5: Make best use of existing stock ensuring the mix of dwellings meets demand whilst ensuring the long-term sustainability of communities

The Housing Strategy does not sit in isolation; therefore, it references and supports numerous national and Flintshire wide strategies, goals, and the Council's core purpose.

This strategy outlines the strategic housing priorities and details the planned activity to achieve these priorities. An annual monitoring report will be published to chart progress against the various objectives contained within this strategy.

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1: Achievements of the previous strategy

Social Housing

By working collaboratively with registered social landlords (RSLs) and the Welsh Government we have provided circa 660 additional social homes up to 31st March 2025. The homes have been delivered utilising, in the main, Social Housing grant (SHG). There has been significant investment of over £45 million on behalf of Welsh Government through the Planned Development Programme (PDP) and Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP).

Empty Homes

Between 2019/20 and 2024/25 ninety-three empty homes have been brought back into use across the County. This has been enabled through 'Houses into Home' loans, tracking down existing owners, use of enforcement action and the provision of other assistance to owners.

Specialist Housing

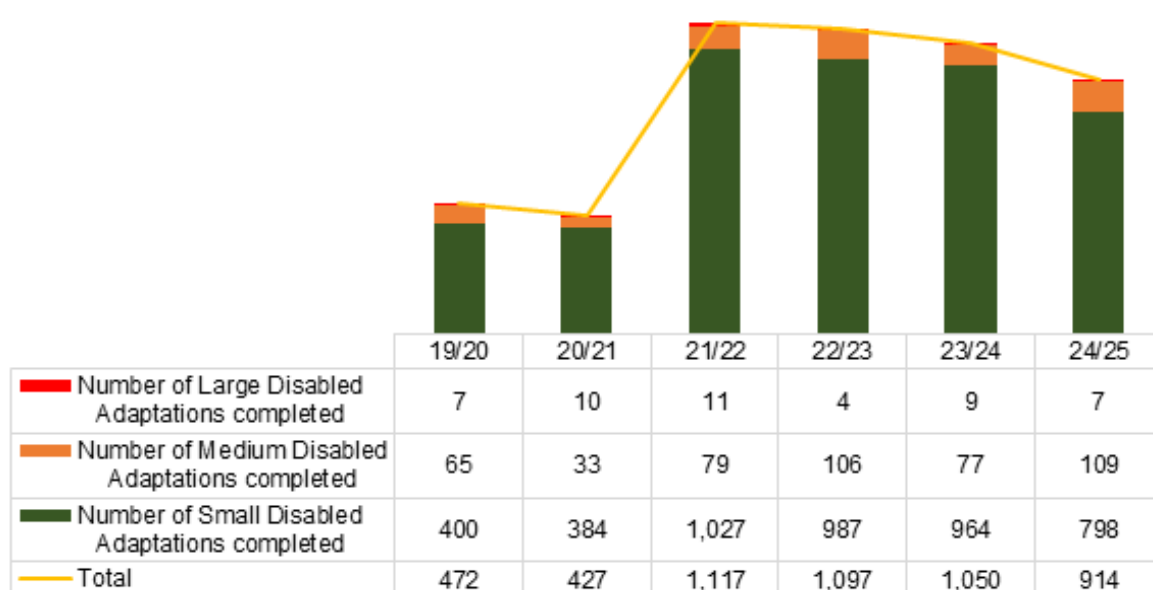
Between 2020/21 and 2024/25 twenty four units of specialist provision have been delivered to support applicants on our specialist housing register.

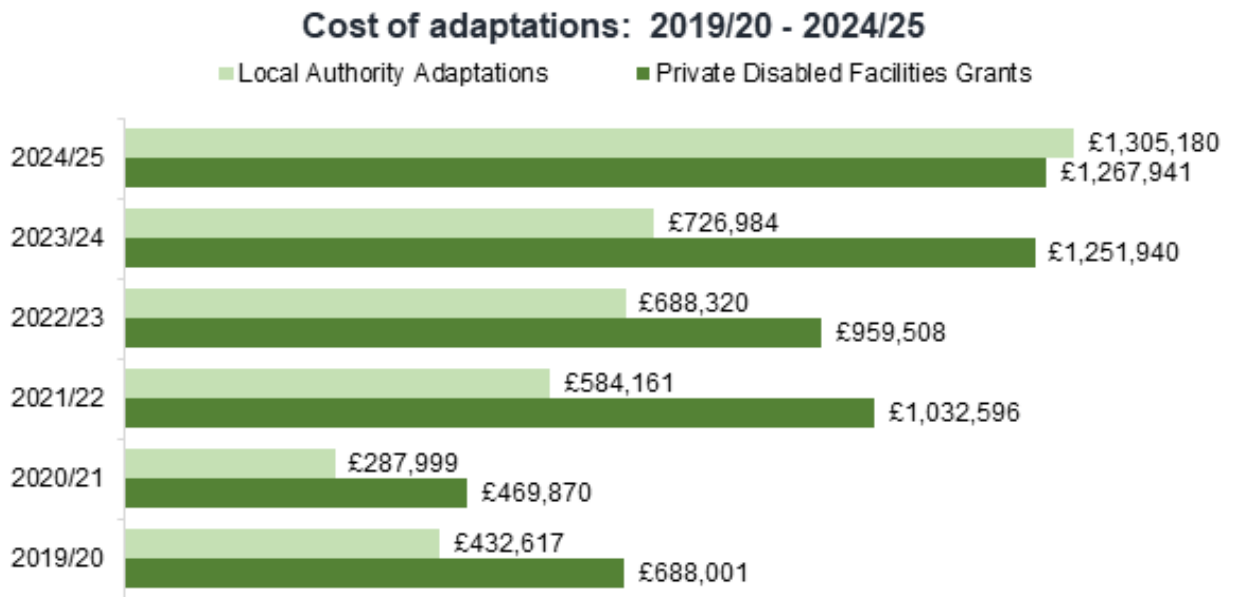
Adaptations

A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a capital grant which is utilised to help individuals living with a disability and provides financial support towards the cost of adapting their homes to enable them to continue to live at home with the maximum amount of independence.

All our adaptations, whether small or large, have an effect on whether someone stays in their home, makes them safe in the property and is completely needs led.

Number of adaptations completed: 2019/20 - 2024/25





Affordable Homes

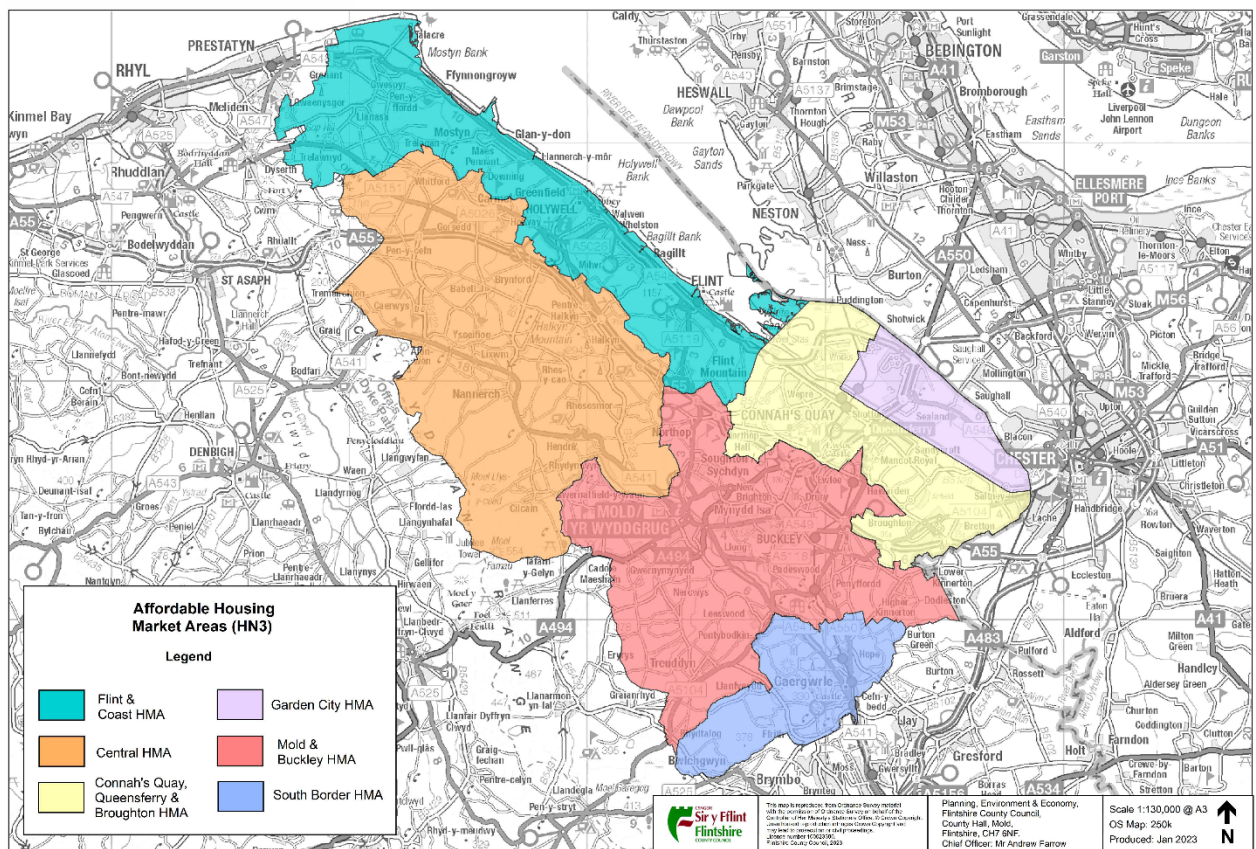
North East Wales (NEW) Homes, a Flintshire housing company with Flintshire County Council as the only shareholder, aims to deliver and acquire new affordable rented homes. NEW Homes has a stock of 187 properties, 84 of which were completed between 2019 and 2025, with households living in high quality discounted rented (90% of market rent) accommodation.

The adoption of the Local Development Plan (LDP) in January 2023 has seen the release of new land for development and a stream of section 106 planning gain in affordable housing delivery. Section 106 allows a local planning authority to enter into a legally binding agreement or planning obligation with a landowner as part of the granting of planning permission in order to provide affordable homes.

Going forward, affordable housing contributions will be sought on developments of ten or more units, in accordance with the following quotas in the six sub-market areas which should be taken as a target for negotiation on a site-by-site basis subject to detailed viability considerations:

- 40% in the Central submarket area;
- 35% in the Connah's Quay, Queensferry and Broughton submarket area;
- 15% in the Flint and Coast submarket area;
- 20% in the Garden City submarket area;
- 40% in the Mold and Buckley submarket area;
- 30% in the South Border submarket area.

It is the expectation that affordable housing will be delivered on-site and only in exceptional circumstances will off-site or commuted sum contributions be accepted in lieu of on-site provision.



Map: Affordable housing market areas sub-market areas

Welsh Housing Quality Standard and Energy Efficiency

The Council has invested heavily in bringing its own stock up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) and achieved compliance in 2021. We are now in the process of working towards complying with the new WHQS 2023 standards.

The Council have allocated circa £15m capital funding to upgrade our housing stock by improving kitchen, bathrooms and overall energy efficiency. In addition, over £10m, including both Council budget and grant funding, has been allocated for work to properties in the Holywell and Mold capital district areas associated with new roof coverings, cavity and loft insulation, new windows and doors along with solar PV.

We have been retrofitting existing homes that have previously received improvement works with energy-saving measures and ensuring new builds are designed to high environmental standards to reduce the carbon footprint of our housing stock.

The Warm Homes Programme, which concluded in 2021, supported 658 households. More recently the Domestic Energy Efficiency Team have continued to support Flintshire residents supporting 763 households from both the private and public

sector between October 2023 to April 2024. In 2024/25 the team facilitated the installation of 515 new energy efficient condensing gas boilers and the installation of loft and / or cavity insulation to 301 Flintshire Council homes. Some of those supported would be classed as being vulnerable and in the most need of assistance to help tackle fuel poverty.

Tackling homelessness

During the period of the last strategy work has been ongoing to address the increase in homeless presentations. This has included:

- The development of six units of temporary accommodation in Duke Street, Flint and Park Lane, Holywell.
- Continued engagement with private landlords and the signing up to the All Wales leasing scheme.
- Potential purchase offer for landlords selling properties and an established process in partnership with the Homeless Prevention team and Empty Homes Teams. This has been in direct response to landlords telling us they are selling up and leaving the market.
- Delivery of the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme acquiring circa 26 properties and bringing around 130 void properties back into use over the last two years (to end of March 2025).
- Flexible use of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) stock creating ten house shares utilising low demand properties.
- Delivery of an agreed restructure of the Housing and Prevention Service increasing resources to engage with private sector landlords.
- Work to promote housing support and homelessness services through the development of website content and active engagement with residents electronically, which for many is a preferred method of sourcing information.
- Regular attendance at local activities to promote services, and support offers through groups such as local Community Hubs, Children's Services Forum and Citizen Advice Bureau frontline worker events and the Flintshire Support Network (FSN).

2: Background and key changes

Flintshire is uniquely placed as a key gateway to Wales and is an important part of a regional economic hub that transcends the national border. The county of Flintshire is situated in North East Wales.

Flintshire borders the Dee estuary to the north, Wrexham County Borough to the south and Denbighshire to the west. Cheshire lies to the east.

The largest settlements within the County are Connah's Quay, Flint, Buckley, Hawarden, Holywell, Mold, Queensferry and Shotton.

The remainder of the population are located in either a westward linear pattern extending along the Flintshire coast, within more rural and dispersed communities to the central and western areas of the County or in more commuter-based villages to the south and east.

Housing Market Areas (HMAs) are areas that have been defined geographically based on the functional areas where people currently live and would be willing to move home without changing jobs, recognising that housing markets are not constrained by administrative boundaries. A number of key factors need to be taken into account when defining these areas, including the broad price of housing (to consider 'transferability' within the market) and major transport links by road or rail (to take account of commuting patterns).

As such the various areas and communities of the County are comprised of a mixture of industrial, urban, suburban, and rural communities.

This strategy builds on the partnership working which has been established, engendering an innovative environment, working collaboratively with our strategic partners, other third parties and the Welsh Government (WG).

The previous strategy ran from 2019 - 2024. Largely unforeseen when the housing strategy was developed were the impacts of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, inflation generally, and specifically around building costs and supply chain disruption, all of which impacted on the housing market and the delivery of planned supply.

Inflation in housing prices, and in particular, private rented sector rents have exacerbated the affordability crisis in housing. In addition, the perceived loss of private rented sector homes has impacted on the increases in homelessness across the UK and Wales.

Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA)

The refreshed housing strategy is underpinned by the renewal of the LMHA in 2024 and approved by Cabinet for submission to Welsh Government in March 2025.¹

¹ <https://committeemeetings.flintshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=391&MId=5739&Ver=4&LLL=0>

The LHMA provides the latest evidence base to inform the development of the Council's housing, planning and other relevant strategies and policies.

One of the key outputs from the LHMA is the estimated surplus or shortfall between existing and predicted need, and supply of accommodation inclusive of turnover of existing supply and newly planned delivery of accommodation.

The LHMA took into account the Welsh Government Planned Development Programme (PDP) and acquisitions through the Welsh Government Transitional Accommodation Capital programme (TACP). The latter two funding streams represent £17- £18 million per year. If the shortfall is to be addressed in part or in full it will require additional resources over and above that currently provided.

The LMHA also highlights the need for more affordable home ownership (shared equity), more affordable rented homes and more social rented, including additional larger homes (4/5 bed) and smaller homes (1/2 bed homes).

The existing supply of stock does not align with the demand profile, where over 80% of our homeless cohort are singles / couples under retirement age. As such, making best use of the existing social housing stock is critical.

The current sheltered housing review and recently commissioned review of the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) are key building blocks to underpin the new strategy. Consequently any conclusions and recommendations will require careful consideration.

Challenges remain, relating to the enduring challenging economic situation, the additional costs of borrowing and servicing debt repayments and meeting updated Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) 2023.

Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector should be an option for people to consider, but again demand is greater than supply and this drives up prices.

The private rented sector is increasingly unaffordable for many low-income households even though Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates have increased from 1st April 2024.

Whilst increases in LHA is much needed and positive, the availability of private rental accommodation is still a challenge. Research commissioned by the Council, to help inform the LHMA, evidenced availability in the private rented sector is down approximately 60% in the last five years with many landlords having sold their properties or found other uses for them. The private rented sector appears to be adversely affected by the full implementation of Renting Homes Wales Act 2016 in December 2022.








Although the priorities remain broadly similar to the previous strategy the immediate focus is on tackling the homelessness crisis. Coupled with the findings of the

independent review and recommendations it is considered including an additional priority on homelessness is fully justified.




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3: Housing in Flintshire: Key Facts

Average House Prices February 2025

	Average House Prices in Wales & Flintshire²
	Wales
	£207,000
	4.0% yearly increase
	Flintshire
	£215,000
	5.4% yearly increase

Average Monthly Private Rent March 2025

	Average Monthly Private Rent in Wales & Flintshire³	
	Wales	
Average Monthly Rent		£792
Yearly Increase		8.8%
	Flintshire	
Average Monthly Rent		£748
Yearly Increase		5.2%

² https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/housingpriceslocal/W06000005/#rent_price

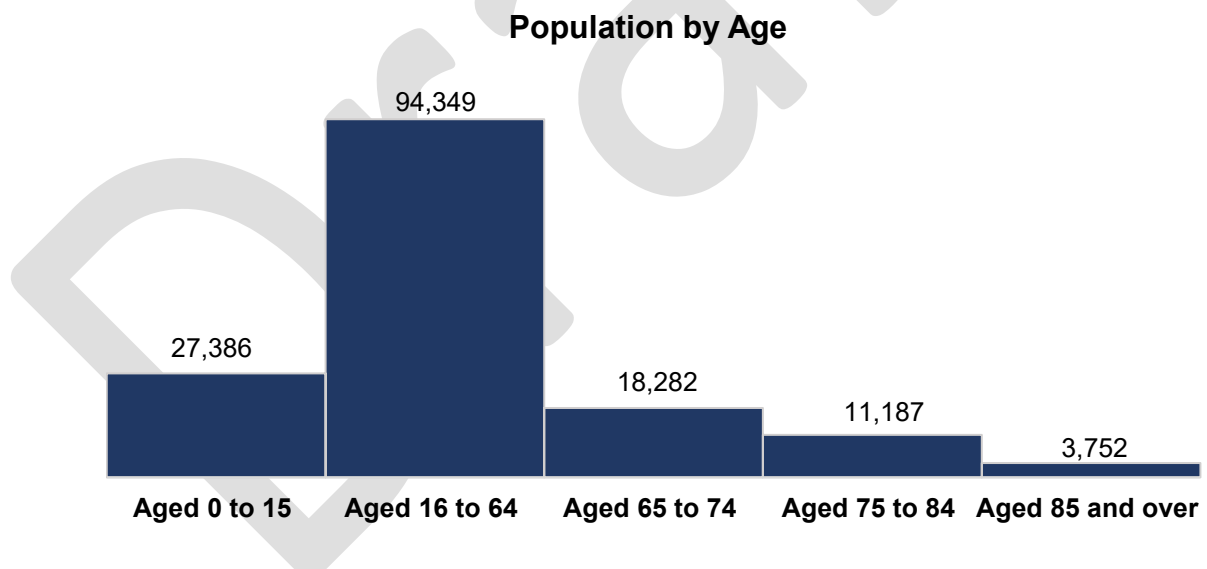
³ https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/housingpriceslocal/W06000005/#rent_price

Average paid by first time buyers (Flintshire):⁴

The average price paid by first-time buyers was £185,000 in February 2025 (provisional). This was 5.7% higher than the average of £175,000 in February 2024 (revised).

Data from the Census 2021 for Flintshire:

- Population of 154,983 living in 66,931 households.
- The predominant tenure is:
 - owner occupied (71.7%),
 - affordable tenures (15.0%)
 - private rented sector (13.3%).
- The population of Flintshire by age is predominantly made up of 16 – 64-year-olds.
 - 16.5% of residents are aged under 15
 - 33.9% are aged 15-44,
 - 28.1% aged 45 to 64 and
 - 21.4% are aged 65 and over.



- 29% of households in Flintshire are comprised of a one-person household, 66.7% are comprised of a single-family household.

⁴ https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/housingpriceslocal/W06000005/#rent_price

Data from the social housing register:

- The number of applicants on the social housing register, as of March 2025, is 1,880 applicants as detailed below:

Number of applicants by age group and number of beds required								
Age Band	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	7 Bed	Total
Age not available		1						1
Under 20	26	3						29
20 - 24	86	85	2					173
25 - 29	78	79	19	4	1			181
30 - 34	118	70	15	18	1			222
35 - 39	105	56	27	39	7		1	235
40 - 44	92	39	25	22	10			188
45 - 49	85	27	16	8	4			140
50 - 54	85	31	7	4				127
55 - 59	104	26	9	2				141
60 - 64	109	17	4	1				131
65 - 69	91	11	4	1				107
70 and over	187	17		1				205
Total	1,166	462	128	100	23	0	1	1,880

- The greatest demand across all age groups was for a one bed home at (c.62%) with demand for one and two-bed homes across all age groups at c.86%.
- The greatest demand for applicants aged 65 and over was also for a one-bed property (c.90%).
- 1568 applicants are aged from under 25 to 64 – around 83%.
- Around a third are under the age of 35 - this is similar level reported in the 2019 - 2024 Housing Strategy.
- The local housing market areas most in demand were Mold and Buckley, Connah's Quay, Broughton & Queensferry and Flint and Coast. This aligns with the main population centres.
- As of the end of March 2025 there were 334 homeless placements comprised of 419 people.

Life expectancy in Flintshire has fallen slightly for both male and females.

	Life expectancy for males		Life expectancy for females	
2017-2019	79.4		82.7	
2018-2020	79.1	↓ - 0.3	82.2	↓ -0.5
2019-2021	78.8	↓ - 0.3	82.2	→ 0
2020-2022	78.6	↓ - 0.2	82.1	↓ -0.1

4: Priorities for 2025 – 2030: where we want to be, the priorities and actions

Although the operating environment changed significantly over the period of the previous strategy the ambitions and objectives remain relevant. As does the themes of people, homes and services to support the well-being objectives and ensure housing in Flintshire meets the needs of our residents whilst supporting safer communities.

We recognise that in order to achieve our shared objectives, influence the County's future prospects and economic destiny and create the conditions in a land use context, to allow for growth and investment the immediate focus will be to:

- Utilise limited resources including all funding streams to help deliver high quality, sustainable homes by prioritising resources and efforts on schemes which deliver the most significant levels of affordable housing delivery particularly smaller one and two-bedroom homes.
- Work with housing partners to develop and invest in affordable housing and social housing - with modern methods of construction, improving the quality of Council homes, and a commitment towards carbon neutral.
- Ensure that those at risk of homelessness are able to access advice, help and support in a timely and appropriate manner including via their preferred channel/s. This includes online advice and information so as to enable people to retain their housing, live well and ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and unrepeatable.

The updated strategic priorities, in the context of the changed and fluctuating environment, are as follows:

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location.

There is continuing demand for both social and affordable homes across all cohorts. To work to meet these demands, we need to consider a range of solutions including building new homes; improving access to the private rented sector; better use of existing stock; or strategic acquisitions.

Importantly we need to ensure that we are providing the right type of homes to meet peoples' needs in the right location. This includes addressing the housing needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as those with mental health issues, learning and physical disabilities or those leaving care; and to support the needs of populations or groups who are not able to be appropriately represented through the conventional housing market.

To address this priority the following actions will be prioritised:

- Ensure delivery of those schemes included in the current PDP, premised on Flintshire receiving anticipated WG funding of around £13.5m per year. The

delivery of additional homes via the PDP is estimated to be around 75 per year.

- Contingent on the continuation of TACP funding aim to acquire circa 20 additional homes per year
- Complete the sheltered housing and SARTH reviews to ensure the most efficient targeted use of existing stock.
- Work within the planning framework, and with housing partners and developers, to ensure affordable and accessible homes are delivered as per the Local Development plan (LDP) framework within each of the six local market housing areas and any legal / s.106 agreements.
- Allocate affordable housing led sites in development plans to ensure the future pipeline of supply.
- Review the forward development plan for the Council's new build programme - Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP).
- Bring empty homes back into use by developing policies which identify options for securing empty properties and bringing them back into use.
- Identify, assess and report emerging risks associated with development scheme financing.
- Improve management information to oversee the effectiveness of agreed scheme delivery activities in line with housing demand, scheme timescales and budget.
- Identify the specific housing need requirements of households within Flintshire including:
 - Populations or groups who are not able to be appropriately represented through the conventional housing market
 - Vulnerable groups, such as those with mental health issues, learning and physical disabilities or those leaving care.
 - Single persons and childless couples.
 - Older persons.
 - Ex-offenders.
 - Gypsy and Roma travellers.
 - Those with additional needs.

The LHMA also identifies / confirms that there are particular housing needs that ought to be considered:

- Increasing and diversifying the supply of specialist housing for older people. However, the LHMA acknowledges the need for older person social rented accommodation is likely to be addressed through turnover in existing stock.
- More accommodation for young people with complex needs and one bedroom supported accommodation for young people.
- Move on accommodation for people leaving supported living provision, with a recommendation for more smaller hostel provision to be developed.

- Support for people experiencing domestic abuse, with a need for move on accommodation after fleeing their home.

Priority 2: Prevent and reduce homelessness reducing the reliance on the use of emergency and temporary accommodation.

One of the most significant factors facing Flintshire County Council (and the UK) is the increase in homelessness and growing numbers of households in temporary / emergency accommodation, together with the potential for additional presentations due to the rise in mortgage interest rates when fixed rates end. In Flintshire this has been exacerbated by the acute lack of one-bed accommodation available to let in either social housing or in the private rented sector. This has led to a recent period in which the use of emergency accommodation has grown rapidly and at considerable expense to the Council.

The Council faces several external risks that may potentially increase the number of households seeking support from the homelessness service. An analysis by area indicated the increase in overall net expenditure is almost wholly accounted for by the increase in bed and breakfast and hotel costs. Council expenditure on bed and breakfast / hotel accommodation in 2023-24 was £4.575m compared to £1.503m in 2022-23. For the year 2024/25 the spend is £6.188m

The table below provides a snapshot of the numbers of open cases across all duties of homelessness legislation (s.66 Prevention Duty, s.73 Duty, Relief, s75 Final Duty) as of March 2025.

Current Homeless Officer Caseloads	Prev Month	MAR 2025	Variance
Total open cases to the Homeless Team	698	695	-3
Homeless Officers	10	10	0
Average caseload per officer	69	69.5	+0.5

Placements by accommodation type at the end of March 2025

Accommodation type	Total Placements	Total People
Emergency Accommodation^[1]	207 (↓ 13)	228 (↓ 33)
Homeless Hub^[2]	24 (↓ 1)	25 (↓ 1)

^[1] Emergency accommodation: hotels, bed and breakfasts, holiday lets and caravans.

^[2] Homeless hub: facility at Glanrafon in Queensferry, which is a 24/7 hostel.

Temporary Accommodation^[3]	103 (↑ 12)	166 (↑ 18)
Overall Total	334 (↓ 2)	419 (↓ 16)

Therefore a key priority within this strategy is to prevent and reduce homelessness whilst satisfying the statutory requirement for the Local Authority to have a Homelessness Strategy under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

It is recognised that the provision of housing support and homeless prevention including offering support to people so that they may retain their housing and live well and ensure that homelessness is rare, brief and unrepeatable should form part of the action plan. As does providing housing options advice to ensure that residents are able to explore their housing options so they can access the right homes to meet their need at the right point in their life journey.

National Policy - Homelessness

The Welsh Government has required every local authority in Wales to produce a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) over the period 2022 to 2027 and in October 2023 published a White Paper on Ending Homelessness in Wales. Welsh Government received over 160 formal responses and recently published the Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation (Wales) Bill in which they confirmed their intention to abolish homelessness priority need alongside other changes which will place additional responsibilities and duties on the council.

To address this priority the following actions will be prioritised:

- Flex and maximise resources to accommodate potential future legislative changes and obligations. To support this the recommendations and conclusions of the sheltered housing and SARTH reviews will be crucial.
- Deliver the existing Homelessness Strategy and plans under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
- Deliver the recommendations of the independent review of homelessness and housing advice services including tasking the established delivery groups of the Ending Homelessness Board to drive the activity required across the Council, some of which are not exclusively housing related, to better respond to the current challenges around homelessness.
- Deliver the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan covering the period 2022 to 2027.
- Provide access to timely information, advice and support across a range of channels including digital and online to enable people to retain their housing, live well and ensure that homelessness is rare, brief and unrepeatable

^[3] Temporary accommodation: Council owned or long term leased accommodation.

- Provide housing options which meets residents identified needs ensuring all cohorts are able to explore their housing options so they can access the right homes to meet their need at each stage of their life.
- Review and enhance the offer to private landlords.

Priority 3: Support people to access, live, and remain, in the right type of home including specialist provision.

Support does not only include access to housing options and help to secure, sustain and retain a home but also the provision of adaptations and homes for specific cohorts. We aim to meet and support the housing needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as those with mental health issues, learning and physical disabilities or those leaving care. In addition, we will support the needs of populations or groups who are not able to be appropriately represented through the conventional housing market.

Adaptations

The Council wants to provide accessible homes for all residents and this includes helping individuals living with a disability to continue to live at home with the maximum amount of independence through the installation of adaptations. The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 places a mandatory duty on local authorities to provide disabled facilities grants (DFGs). The grant is available for adapting or providing facilities for a disabled person in a dwelling.

The installation of adaptations is needs led and the Council must ensure that any adaptation works will provide the most effective long-term solution to meet the needs of the disabled person. To do this, the property is assessed by a surveyor and an occupational therapist. Appropriate considerations will determine the best option for the individual considering their needs and the most cost-effective solution.

People with Learning Disabilities

There are currently twenty-five people on the waiting list (March 2025) with a learning disability. This includes four people who require specialist housing to autistic specific accommodation and eleven individuals with elderly carers who are over the age of 70 years.

There are forty-two out of county placements due to no suitable accommodation or support being available in Flintshire that will meet their needs.

In addition, there will be young people who will be leaving education / care from 2026/27 onwards who will also require suitable accommodation.

Older persons

As at March 2025 there were 43 applications for Extra Care provision.

Armed forces

The provision and eligibility for the armed forces will be evaluated as part of the SARTH review. Any recommendations will be reviewed and implemented through the SARTH steering group.

Children's Services Residential Care Programme

The Programme for Government 2022 - 2027 contains a number of commitments that describe a new vision to transform children's services. The delivery of these commitments will effect change across the whole care system in Wales.

A key component of this new vision for children's services is the Programme for Government commitment to remove private profit from the care of children looked after.

However, following concerns during consultation that the reform would disrupt the supply of placements and children's care, the Labour-run Welsh Government has dropped its original plan to require compliance from all providers by April 2027.

While new providers registering from April 2026 would have to be not for profit, existing services would be able to continue delivering for-profit care for an indefinite transitional period under conditions determined by regulations.

In the context of the private sector providing 87% of children's home and 35% of fostering placements in Wales, the Welsh Government said this would "mitigate disruption" to the lives of children in existing placements.

The ambition is to deliver up to thirty-three additional child residential care placements in small houses over the next 5-6 years. This will bring children back from expensive out-of-county placements and help to support the eliminating profit agenda⁵.

To address this priority we will

- Deliver additional child residential care placements in small houses over the next 5-6 years.
- Provide adaptations to help individuals living with a disability to continue to live at home.
- Deliver homes / supported housing provision for vulnerable groups including young persons and those with learning disabilities.
- Provide accommodation for those not appropriately represented through the conventional housing market i.e., gypsy and traveller site provision.

Priority 4: Develop and invest in affordable housing and social housing to improve the quality and sustainability of homes.

The 2021 - 2026 Programme for Government contains the commitment to "build 20,000 new low carbon social homes for rent". This target will focus exclusively on homes rented out by social landlords and will be defined within the recognised Technical Advice Note (TAN) 2 affordable housing definition. It will only include social homes for rent, intermediate homes for rent and shared ownership schemes. It is also anticipated that good quality affordable housing will contribute to better health

⁵ <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2024/05/24/bill-to-end-profit-from-childrens-care-placements-in-wales-published/>

outcomes as per the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015)⁶. To address this priority we will:

- Ensure new build developments meet Welsh Development Quality Requirements (WDQR) standard.
- Ensure existing social homes meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023 in line with the milestones set by Welsh Government.
- Retrofit the Council's social housing stock to increase energy efficiency.
- Adopt innovative design and construction such as modular build and flexible portable dwellings for use by various cohorts such as those experiencing homelessness.

Priority 5: Make best use of existing stock ensuring the mix of dwellings meets demand whilst ensuring the long-term sustainability of communities

With future standards increasing in terms of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards and Welsh Government's ambitions with regards to decarbonisation, there is a need to ensure our existing housing stock continue to meet our resident's needs and identify the costs associated with investment and future maintenance. The Council are required to ensure that any future expenditure is allocated appropriately. This will include reviewing our current stock profile considering demographic data and local housing need to better understand the wider sustainability issues which will influence decision making.

To address this priority we will:

- Complete the review of the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) and implement agreed recommendations.
- Complete the sheltered housing review and implement agreed recommendations.
- Complete the review of large scale assets and progress to option appraisals.
- Update Flintshire's Housing Prospectus.

⁶ <https://futuregenerations.wales/discover/about-future-generations-commissioner/future-generations-act-2015/>

5: The challenges we face

The housing crisis creates huge cost for the whole of society. Not just the money spent on housing benefit but the rising levels of homelessness and the difficulties that the NHS, police, and schools may have in staffing roles in expensive locations. Fixing housing shortages may reduce pressure on the rest of society including health services and the welfare state.

In September 2024, Audit Wales expressed the view that “the 20,000 social homes target will not be met without significant additional spending”. This assertion is borne out by the refreshed LHMA and anticipated shortfall which is unlikely to be met from current anticipated resources i.e. PDP and the planning system.

Moreover that “the delivery of affordable homes has been slow and more expensive than initially expected, partly due to pressures outside of the Welsh Government’s control. If the Welsh Government is to meet the 20,000 social homes target by March 2026 it will need to spend significantly more than planned. It will also need to deliver all the schemes in its pipeline, some of which are considered risky, and a small number more”.

For many social landlords, investing in their stock to reach the required standards will need to become their priority. Thus, delivery rates of additional homes may fall as a result, as might purchase levels of s.106 homes.

The ability to ensure that planned developments meet the standard viability models as required to access funding from the Welsh Government may also be compromised.

Furthermore, from anecdotal experience / knowledge the private rented sector appears to have been adversely affected by the Renting Homes Wales Act 2016 leading landlords to exit the market.

This raises the question of what realistically can be achieved through the existing privately owned housing stock to provide what is needed most now and the feasibility of flexibility and compromise to allow for retrofitting to meet standards later.

Consequently, deliverability and viability will be constrained and influenced by the anticipated and available levels of finance and funding made available for affordable housing, including public subsidy, Welsh Government and Council funding streams. This includes the Welsh Government Planned Development Programme (PDP) and acquisitions through the Welsh Government Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP). The latter two funding streams represent £17-18 million per year for Flintshire. If the shortfall is to be addressed in part or in full it will require additional resources over and above that currently provided.

Notwithstanding these limitations the immediate focus of the strategy is to:

- Prioritise resources and efforts on schemes which deliver the most significant levels of affordable housing delivery of smaller one and two-bedroom homes and larger four or more-bedroom homes.
- Co-ordinate existing plans and identify issues that people and places are experiencing, such as public and green spaces, vacant shops, accessibility and commercial and housing needs so as to demonstrate exemplary place making credentials.
- Although for most people, an independent, mainstream home will be the default approach, others may choose or need supported / tailored or specialist accommodation.

This objective is reflective of our shared ambition and commitment to ensuring everyone has a safe, suitable and affordable place to call home.

How we will measure performance

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location.

- Number of social and affordable homes under construction
- Number of social and affordable homes completed
- Number of property acquisitions
- Number of Council properties redesignated through the sheltered housing review
- Number of empty homes brought back into use
- Number of homes provided for vulnerable groups
- Number of homes provided for those not appropriately represented through the conventional housing market i.e., gypsy and traveller site provision.

Priority 2: Prevent and reduce homelessness reducing the reliance on the use of emergency and temporary accommodation.

- Number of Housing Support Gateway referrals processed within 5 working days
- Number of households moved on from temporary accommodation
- Percentage of successful prevention outcomes for homelessness under Housing Wales Act 2014
- Percentage of successful relief outcomes for homelessness under Housing Wales Act 2014
- Number of applicants rehoused via SARTH by Flintshire County Council
- Number of applicants rehoused via SARTH by all housing partners
- Number of applicants rehoused via Tai Teg
- Number of applicants rehoused with significant adaptation requirements
- Number of private landlords signed up to Leasing Scheme Wales

Priority 3: Support people to access, live, and remain, in the right type of home including specialist provision.

- Number of additional child residential care placements in small houses delivered
- Number of homes adapted
- Average number of days to complete a small disabled adaptation
- Average number of days to complete a medium disabled adaptation
- Average number of days to complete a large disabled adaptation
- Number of homes provided for vulnerable groups
- Number of homes provided for those not appropriately represented through the conventional housing market i.e., gypsy and traveller site provision.

Priority 4: Develop and invest in affordable housing and social housing to improve the quality and sustainability of homes.

- Maintain the Welsh Housing Quality Standard to all Flintshire County Council stock (%)
- Council homes with an assessment and Target Energy Pathways (%)
- Council homes meeting a minimum of SAP 75 (EPC C) (%).
- Council homes which are currently void (empty) against current stock level (%)
- Council homes retrofitted to increase energy efficiency (%).
- Number of new build homes which meet Welsh Development Quality Requirements (WDQR) standard.

Priority 5: Make best use of existing stock ensuring the mix of dwellings meets demand whilst ensuring the long-term sustainability of communities

- Implementation of the recommendations from the review of the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH).
- Number of Council sheltered housing schemes reviewed
- Number of Council units redesignated:
 - Mini group to sheltered
 - Mini group to general needs
 - Sheltered to general needs
 - Sheltered to general needs accessible
- Number of large scale assets reviewed and option appraisals progressed
- Housing Prospectus will be updated

In addition to the performance measures the annual report will also outline demand and trend information as follows:

- Number of applicants on the common housing register
- Number of applicants on the Tai Teg register
- Number of presentations to the homeless service
- Number of people accommodated in temporary / emergency accommodation
- Number of completed applications for small disabled adaptations
- Number of completed applications for medium disabled adaptations
- Number of completed applications for large disabled adaptations