

Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24



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FOREWORD BY

**Councillor Tariq Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
and Dr Martin Reeves, CEO Coventry City Council**

Coventry is a great and welcoming city, with a vibrant and diverse community, an international outlook and proud local identity. So that our communities continue to grow and flourish, central to Coventry's current and future success is making the city's housing ambitions a reality.

As we all know, decent and truly affordable housing is not simply about bricks and mortar, it is absolutely crucial to sustaining and creating prosperous, thriving communities. Housing is the foundation of our city, where people come together to enjoy the opportunities of education, of employment, of leisure and of life itself.

However, these are difficult and uncertain times, with limited public sector resources, stretched incredibly thin. Nationally there is a shortage of affordable housing, a difficult context of increasing homelessness and of widening social and economic inequality.

It is in these challenging conditions that we are proudly launching Coventry's Housing and Homelessness Strategy, which is committed to creating not only a sustainable future for the city through delivering 42,000 new homes by 2031 but also focusing on the here and now by preventing and tackling homelessness head on. We want a Coventry where everyone has a place to call home.

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy before you sets out the council's broad ambitions, focussing on the four key areas of;

- Preventing Homelessness & Supporting Homeless Households
- Support for People and Communities
- Improving the Use of Existing Homes
- Housing Development

The Housing and Homelessness strategy, aims to deliver to all of its aspirations, so that the people of Coventry can enjoy the far reaching benefits of accessible, affordable and decent housing today and for years to come.

Naturally, Coventry City Council cannot do it alone. The strategy can only be delivered in collaboration with key partners, across the private, public and voluntary sectors and of course by working alongside the communities and people of our city.

I am sure you will join us in supporting Coventry's Housing and Homelessness Strategy and our shared ambition of improving the health, wellbeing and prosperity of our great city and of all its' people.



Cllr Tariq Khan
Cabinet Member Housing
and Communities



Dr Martin Reeves
Chief Executive





Introduction

Housing is fundamental to the wellbeing of people, their families and their communities. Decent housing provides a stable base on which people can build their lives and build successful communities. Poor or unsuitable housing, however, can have negative impacts on many other areas of personal and community life as well as physical and mental health and wellbeing. If you do not have decent housing, everything else becomes much more difficult. Improving housing options, conditions and neighbourhoods within the City via delivery of this strategy is essential for economic growth, improving outcomes for children including their educational attainment, health and wellbeing, and community cohesion.

■ Coventry City Council no longer owns any council housing, having transferred its stock to Whitefriars Housing Group in 2000. However, we still have strategic housing responsibilities and a duty to carry out a periodic review of homelessness and to publish a Homelessness Strategy.

This Housing & Homelessness Strategy aims to provide a high-level plan to set out the main priorities for the Council and its partners for the next five years, to guide the allocation of resources and investment, and provide a framework to inform project development, in order to achieve the vision that:

Coventry Citizens will be able to access a suitable, affordable and decent home, with the support they need to sustain their housing.

The Homelessness Strategy and the Housing Strategy have been combined into this one document. Activities to prevent homelessness are dependent on the availability of additional housing, an improvement in the management and quality of existing housing, and the advice and support available to people who need it to successfully maintain their home.

This approach means that the Homelessness Strategy can be read as 'part of the bigger picture' within Coventry's wider Housing Strategy and is not seen in isolation from the range of other housing factors that influence homelessness. It also allows the aims and priorities to be aligned with other key plans and strategies that influence both the Housing Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy. This recognises that homelessness is not an isolated issue but is often the result of an intersection of external influences and personal circumstances.

This Strategy has been informed by the Coventry Homelessness Review 2018 which provides a comprehensive review of statistics relating to housing and homelessness. It has also been prepared to reflect both targeted and broad periods of consultation during 2018 and early 2019.

Key Facts and Figures

■ Homelessness

- From 2013/14 to 2017/18 (inclusive), just over 5,000 households approached the council because they were homeless or threatened with homelessness, and an assessment was made of the duties owed to them by the Council under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.
- 2,940 of these households were found to be 'statutory homeless' and owed the main housing duty – the Council had a duty to offer them suitable accommodation.
- The main reasons for homelessness for those that were owed the main duty were: end of an Assured Shorthold (private rented) tenancy (28% in 2017/18); Parents, relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate (29% in 2017/18); and the violent breakdown of a relationship (13% in 2017/18).
- The majority of 'statutory homeless' households in 2017/18 had dependent children (69%), and were aged 16-24 (26%) or 25-44 (56%).
- Over 1,300 people accessed the commissioned services for homeless and ex-offender accommodation and support services in 2017/18.

■ Housing supply, market and affordability

- The Coventry Homefinder register for social housing has approximately 14,000 applicants at any one time. Approx 2000 of these at any one time are in a priority band, meaning that they have a specific housing need (such as overcrowding, homelessness, etc).
- During 2017/18, 1,551 social homes became available through Coventry Homefinder. This is lower than previous years. Each property received an average of 166 'bids'.
- There is a particular shortage of large family homes – only 14% of properties available through Homefinder in 2017/18 had three or more bedrooms.
- The Strategic Housing Market Assessment calculated a need for an additional 42,000 homes by 2031 to meet the growth needs of Coventry, including 12,000 additional affordable homes.
- The proportion of properties in Coventry that are in the private rental market has increased. The 2011 census showed that 20% of properties were privately rented, up from 11% in 2001. The Office for National Statistics estimates that by 2015, 25% of properties in Coventry were privately rented.
- Average rents for private rented properties in the city have risen by 18% between 2013 (when the average was £520 per month) and 2017 (average £613 per month).
- Affordability of home ownership has worsened – the ratio of lower quartile (entry level) house prices to lower quartile earnings was 5.48 in 2013 but had risen to 6.78 in 2017.
- Property prices have continued to rise after the housing market downturn in 2008. The average property price in Coventry in 2017 was £187,785 and the lower quartile (entry level) property price was £133,500.



Preventing Homelessness and Supporting Homeless Households

■ What are the issues?

Everyone should have a safe, stable place to live. Unfortunately, this is not currently the case. During 2017/18, over 2300 people approached the council for some form of assistance with homelessness and over 1300 people accessed homelessness services commissioned by the council. Many more sought advice and help from other organisations. The main recorded reasons for homelessness in Coventry are the ending of a private sector tenancy (with the applicant unable to find an alternative property which is suitable and affordable), as well as parents/family/friends no longer able to accommodate, and domestic abuse. Outside of these recorded groups are those that are 'hidden homeless', for example, people staying temporarily with friends or family ('sofa surfing'), rough sleepers and squatters, who may not have approached the Council or others for assistance.

There are many different factors which may lead to someone being at risk of homelessness, both personal (such as relationship breakdown, addictions, health or loss of employment) and structural (relating to the housing market, or welfare reform, for example). The homelessness charity, Crisis, has used the image of a dam to describe how poverty and complex social issues cause constant pressure like water behind a dam, until an increase in pressure from a life event causes the dam to break and people are pushed into homelessness².

“The best way to tackle homelessness is to stop it happening in the first place. To do so is both cost effective and humane”

Crisis – 'Everybody In' Report¹

Tackling homelessness is often about more than simply providing access to a property to live in. In order to maintain stable housing, some people require assistance – this may be through health and social care, adaptations to existing homes, or support to attain the skills required to manage a household. Help with accessing training and employment to prevent people becoming homeless is required by some whilst others require intensive support to address the underlying issues which have led to entrenched homelessness.

To be able to provide this support and assistance effectively, the Council needs to work in partnership with other organisations such as health services (including mental health and drug and alcohol services); advice agencies; money advice; voluntary and community sector groups; the Police and other emergency services; and domestic abuse services.

Achieving the vision that everyone has a safe, stable place to live will require an ambitious programme of change to aim to 'design out' homelessness – ensuring that local services provide the support and assistance necessary to prevent homelessness wherever possible, help those that do become homeless, and enable people to build the resilience that helps them deal with events or structural issues outside of their control.

With the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the changing nature of homelessness in the city, there has been a shift in Council services towards providing more prevention advice and support, to help people stay in their home where it is safe to do so; or make a planned move, rather than end up in a crisis situation. There is also more emphasis on addressing the wider range of issues that contribute to a person's homelessness, not just their immediate housing situation.

This Strategy recognises that whilst some improvements have been made, we need to be much more ambitious about providing early help and intervention to prevent people becoming homeless, but also provide better support after the immediate crisis of homelessness has been resolved, to ensure that people can sustain their housing going forward and avoid repeat homelessness.

With this ambition in mind, we are proposing to use the Pathways model (originally developed by the homelessness charity, St Basils) which has also been adopted by the West Midlands Combined Authority Homelessness Task Force in their vision of 'designing out' homelessness. This provides much greater emphasis on universal and targeted prevention, and on recovery, move-on and sustainment, in addition to crisis relief for those that require it. The pathways model is described in more detail below.

■ Our Priorities

In order to prevent homelessness and support homeless households, our main priorities will be:

- The Council will meet the duties placed upon it by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).
- Preventing Homelessness will be a corporate priority across all sections of the Council, and the Council will work in partnership with partners, providers and other stakeholders to prevent homelessness and support households that do become homeless.
- We will develop a clear partnership approach to street homelessness.
- We will adopt the Pathways model to prevent homelessness wherever possible, and support people that do become homeless. The aim of the model is to change systems where necessary in order to 'design out homelessness'

Universal prevention - People will be able to access good, early advice about their housing options, rights and responsibilities, to prevent issues which may lead to homelessness

Targeted prevention – Identify and enable specific groups and households who are at risk of homelessness to avoid homelessness through early intervention and effective prevention measures

Crisis prevention and relief – provide advice and assistance to people who do become homeless or are at imminent threat of homelessness, to secure suitable accommodation and support. Help given in an emergency or crisis situation.

Recovery and move-on support – advice and assistance for people who have experienced homelessness, supporting people to recover from the effects of homelessness, find alternative housing and support to set up their home.

Sustain Housing - to support people who have experienced homelessness to build resilience, sustain long term accommodation and avoid repeat homelessness.

¹ Crisis (2018) 'Everybody In: How to end homelessness in Great Britain'. Available to download: www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/the-plan-to-end-homelessness-full-version/executive-summary/ (accessed July 2018)

² 'Poverty puts pressure on people, like water pushing against a dam – it's constant and strong. If the pressure builds up, the dam can break and people can be pushed into homelessness – sleeping on friends' sofas and floors, living in crowded or unsafe places, sleeping on buses or in cars, or even being out on the street. The pressure comes from high housing costs, low wages, and inadequate government support, building up, until it's close to a breaking point. A sudden increase in pressure from a life event – like losing a job, a relationship breakdown, or a health crisis – can quickly become a rushing flood that pushes people into homelessness.' (Crisis Everybody In report – ref above)

■ How we will achieve this:

We will ensure that we have the correct structure and services in place to:

- Continue developing and improving the Council's Homelessness Prevention Service to provide advice and assistance and meet our duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017).
- Allocate funding for homelessness prevention and relief measures and pursue additional funding as it becomes available - ensuring that funding which is intended to prevent or relieve homelessness is used in the most effective way.
- Work collaboratively in partnership with partners, providers and other stakeholders to prevent homelessness and support households that do become homeless.
- Improve early information and advice making sure that it is available through appropriate and accessible channels.
- Strategically review how we receive store and process information from homeless households and share that information with partner organisations in a safe and secure way to ensure data only has to be provided by the client once as part of the homeless presentation and engagement process.
- Identify ways to improve the early identification of people who may be at risk of homelessness, including engaging with public bodies that have the Duty to Refer, in order that appropriate advice and support can be put in place to prevent homelessness.
- Develop and continuously review a package of support and securities for Private Sector Landlords to enable homeless and vulnerably housed applicants to access the private rented sector.
- Develop appropriate partnerships, links and referral pathways for people to access support services where necessary to maintain housing and avoid repeat homelessness – including homeless 16 and 17 year olds, care leavers and young adults, victims of domestic abuse, prison leavers and others.
- Re-commission the homelessness and ex-offender accommodation and support services.
- Strategically plan to improve the provision of suitable emergency and temporary accommodation.
- Review the Coventry Homefinder Policy to ensure that it contributes positively to homelessness prevention and relief, enabling access to social housing for households that require it to prevent or relieve their homelessness.
- Develop the Homelessness Forum to bring together representatives from statutory and voluntary agencies that have an interest in enhancing housing provision and support, and preventing and resolving homelessness across Coventry in a cohesive and co-ordinated approach.

- Commit to working with the Multiple Complex Needs Board and embed the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) approach to removing barriers and effecting systems change and allocating resources in order to improve services to the most marginalised people affected by homelessness, including rough sleepers.
- Develop further measures to tackle rough sleeping and support vulnerable people who are (or are at risk of) rough sleeping, understanding the reasons for non-engagement and developing appropriate 'challenge and support' policies
- Include people with lived experience in future service design and improvement (Experts by Experience).
- Maximise opportunities arising from the West Midlands Combined Authority Homelessness Task Force – with the aim of designing out homelessness.
- Develop, implement and monitor a Housing First service in Coventry (under the West Midlands Combined Authority Homelessness Task Force project which has received funding from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government).
- Increase the range of housing options available for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness - see the wider housing development themes below.

Support for people and communities

■ What are the issues?

Although Coventry has a relatively young population profile compared to the rest of England, the number of older people in the city is expected to grow from approx 46,600 people aged 65+ in 2016 (the latest population estimates) to approx 54,200 people aged 65+ by 2024 and approx 60,300 by 2030³. These population changes will present an increasing challenge in relation to additional pressure on health and social care services, helping people to remain independent, and the need for more specialist accommodation.

There continues to be a strong preference for older people and those requiring care or support to remain independent in their own home for longer, where this is safe and appropriate. This requires homes that are flexible enough to take account of changing needs as people's needs change, with a range of adaptations and assistive technologies available where they are needed.

There is also a need for more choice in relation to supported housing options, for a wider range of support services and improved housing information and advice services to enable people requiring care or support to make an informed choice about their housing options.

Traditional sheltered housing with single rooms and shared bathrooms is increasingly unpopular and not suitable to meet the current needs of older people. Many schemes of this nature have been closed or remodelled, with an increase in more suitable models such as self-contained accommodation and Extra Care models.

The Care Act 2014 includes housing as a fundamental component. The Act looks at the suitability of accommodation for those at home receiving care and support. The Act and the accompanying regulations and guidance outline how housing can support a more integrated approach.

Some communities are experiencing the impact of an increasing proportion of housing that is converted to multiple occupation, especially (but not exclusively) for student housing. Where HMO's are well managed and maintained, they provide an important housing option. However, where there is poor management and poor standards, this can have a detrimental effect on the occupiers and adversely impact on the local community. The Local Plan contains policies to provide student accommodation in the most sustainable locations and the suitable management of HMOs. This is with a view to 'freeing up' family housing for purchase or private rent and helping to maintain and build stronger, more stable communities. It will be important to monitor

3. Office for National Statistics (2018) Population projections for local authorities: 2016 based. Available: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2 [accessed June 2018].

how the development of purpose built accommodation impacts on the market for student housing in traditionally 'family' type housing, and whether any further measures are required in the future.

Where there are areas of poor quality housing, poor public spaces or just the wrong type of housing for today's needs, estate regeneration can transform neighbourhoods and people's lives through the delivery of high quality, well designed housing and improved public space. It provides an opportunity both to improve housing for existing residents and to provide much needed new homes.

Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. Neighbourhood Plans allow local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community, where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. They can put in place planning policies that will help deliver that vision alongside the Local Plan. Decisions on planning applications will be made using both the Local Plan and the neighbourhood plan, and any other material considerations.

Neighbourhood plans can be developed by a Parish Council or a Neighbourhood Forum, with advice and assistance from the local Planning Authority. There is currently a Neighbourhood Plan for Willenhall, which was adopted in 2018 following a local referendum.

■ Our Priorities:

- Ensure that housing in the city is fit for an aging population
- People will be able to access and sustain suitable housing, including support for vulnerable people.
- People will be able to access advice and information about their housing rights and responsibilities, and how to sustain their tenancies.
- Support communities that want to develop a Neighbourhood Plan.
- Support estate regeneration in appropriate locations.

■ How we will achieve this:

We will:

- Carry out a Housing Needs Assessment for Older People, including an exploration of the barriers to downsizing, and develop an Older Persons Housing Strategy to ensure that the housing in the city is fit for an aging population.
- Encourage the development of new housing which is suitable for disabled people by encouraging higher accessibility standards from Part M of building regulations – with adaptability 'designed in'.
- Encourage housing providers to develop supported accommodation and floating support for people who require it to maintain independent living.
- Ensure that information and advice regarding supported accommodation and floating support services is easily available and accessible.
- In response to needs, to commission/develop additional specialist housing where required (such as specialist housing for people with learning disabilities or dementia).
- Support regeneration and redevelopment schemes in areas that require improvement, including opportunities arising from the 'Inclusive Growth Corridor' which seeks to maximise the benefits to local communities of the HS2 development.
- Revisit options for the redevelopment of the permanent Gypsy & Traveller site at Siskin Drive and explore options regarding a suitable transit site, to ensure that the needs of Gypsy & Traveller communities are met.
- Support and assist communities that want to develop a neighbourhood plan.
- Commission research into the HMO (Houses in multiple occupation) sector, including assessing the impact of HMOs on local communities, and the effect that additional purpose-built student accommodation is having on the student housing market.
- Update the Tenancy Strategy for the period 2019-24.



Improving the use of existing homes

■ What are the issues?

It is important to increase the number of homes to meet the city's growth needs, but the majority of housing available in the city is already in existence. There are approximately 142,000 existing homes in the city, compared to 24,600 additional homes to be provided over the life of the Local Plan (to 2031).

25% of properties in the city are now Private Rented properties, with 17% social rented and 57% owner-occupied⁴.

The condition of the existing housing stock is important to ensure that residents are living in decent, safe accommodation which is suited to their needs. Rented homes must be well managed by landlords who meet their responsibilities, and tenants should understand their rights and their own responsibilities too.

Living in poor condition, cold, damp homes that are not suitable for a household's needs has a detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of the occupiers. When accidents and illness occur because homes are not fit, it has an impact on a person's wellbeing and ability to participate in work, education, social and other activities and consequently impacts on other services such as social care services and the NHS.

The Government has introduced new powers for Local Authorities to tackle 'rogue landlords' who leave their tenants at risk through poor maintenance, poor standards and poor management of homes. These include civil penalties, rent repayment orders and banning orders, and a database of landlords who have been prosecuted for breaching the law. Private rented properties must also meet minimum energy efficiency standards. The Council's approach places emphasis on advice and assistance to help landlords bring their properties up to standard, but enforcement action will be taken where this is not successful.

It is mandatory for some Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) that meet certain criteria to be licensed and from October 2018 the criteria will be expanded to include all HMOs where 5 or more people are living in 2 or more households.

The Council also has powers, where evidence shows it is necessary, to introduce discretionary licensing schemes to improve standards in the private rented sector. This can include selective licensing (where all privately rented properties in a designated area are required to be licensed) and additional licensing (where HMOs in a designated area that would not require a mandatory license, are required to be licensed as well under the additional licensing scheme).

There are around 1,350 homes in Coventry that have been empty for over 6 months⁵. Most of these homes are empty because they are going through a particular process – either being marketed, in the conveyancing process, being repaired ready for occupation or going through probate. Some are empty for more complex reasons, for example long term disrepair that the owner is struggling to address. Long term empty properties often have a negative impact on a neighbourhood, with a higher risk of associated

⁴ Office for National Statistics, 'Subnational Dwelling Stock by Tenure Estimates'. Released 4th December 2017, available: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/subnationaldwellingstockbytenureestimates (accessed June 2018)

⁵ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 'Live Table 615: Vacant dwellings by Local Authority district: England, since 2004'. Available: www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants [accessed June 2018]

vandalism, anti-social behaviour, or potential damage to adjoining property (through damp etc). Ultimately, a home which is empty long term is a housing resource that is not being used to its best advantage.

People also need access to housing that is suitable for their household – one of the most common reasons for an applicant being awarded priority for social housing on the Homefinder Register is overcrowding (approx. 36% of those in priority bands 1A to 2C - over 750 families), and there are smaller households or single people in large homes that they may be struggling to maintain that may need assistance to downsize.

Fuel poverty is associated with low income and vulnerable households. Studies have shown that households living in fuel poverty are more likely to suffer adverse health impacts than those who can afford to heat their home to an adequate temperature. The physical and mental health consequences of cold homes can affect children, young people, adults and older persons. Householders whose health is already compromised, such as those with certain cardiovascular, respiratory, neurological and musculoskeletal conditions, can be particularly affected by living in a home that isn't warm enough for them. There is also a linkage between cold homes and excess winter deaths.

A household is considered to be in fuel poverty if *'they have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level) and were they to spend that amount they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line'*⁶.

The latest Government fuel poverty statistics for England, released in June 2018⁷, show that 15.3% of all households in Coventry (20,479) are fuel poor, compared to 11.1% in England.

The Council's Affordable Warmth Team and Public Health Department collaborate closely to develop and deliver a range of affordable warmth projects that provide help to low income and vulnerable householders within the resources available. The help provided falls into three categories; i) insulation and heating measures to improve home energy efficiency, and ii) lower fuel bills through the Council's Switch and Save scheme, and iii) affordable warmth advice and information to deal with things like fuel debt, accessing funding such as the Warm Home Discount, and registering for the Priority Services Register.

■ Our Priorities:

- Support and advise landlords and private homeowners to improve the management and maintenance of all properties, with a focus on health and wellbeing impacts.
- Improve energy efficiency and affordable warmth across all tenures, focusing on those who are vulnerable or on a low income.
- Make the best use of the existing housing stock in the city, including bringing empty homes back into use.

■ How we will achieve this:

- We will carry out (or commission) research into the current housing conditions in the private sector (both private rented and owner-occupied homes) to understand the scale and the nature of poor housing conditions in this sector.
- We will commission research into the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) sector, including assessing the impacts of HMOs and student accommodation and the effect that additional purpose-built student accommodation is having on the student housing market.
- We will proactively identify HMOs and license those that require licenses, embedding the new national mandatory HMO licensing criteria which applies from October 2018.
- We will investigate the opportunity to introduce discretionary property licensing schemes in the City and monitor outcomes as a result.
- In association with this work on property licensing, we will explore opportunities to develop a Coventry City Council Landlord Accreditation Scheme for Private Sector Landlords
- We will proactively identify poorly maintained properties or dangerous conditions, as well as responding promptly when properties are reported to us, and provide advice and assistance to landlords to improve their homes (including taking enforcement measures where necessary).
- We will take formal enforcement action on landlords who continue to compromise tenants' safety, including using new powers to issue Civil Penalties, Rent Repayment Orders and Banning Orders.
- We will explore reasons for long term empty homes, review the existing Empty Homes Policy and develop effective actions to bring them back into use. This will include advice and assistance for owners to sell or bring their properties back into use, but will include enforcement measures where necessary.
- We will continue to work with partner organisations and play a leading role in the development and implementation of projects to improve home insulation and heating efficiency, and to provide help to reduce fuel costs and maximise incomes.
- We will pursue new funding opportunities as and when these arise, and continue to provide affordable warmth services across all tenures. We will focus our help on those households who are vulnerable or on a low income.
- We will work with partner agencies to ensure effective information sharing and referral processes where any agency identifies that a vulnerable person is living in poor housing conditions (for example, advice agencies, or the Fire Service when they carry out Safe and Well Checks), to ensure that appropriate assistance can be provided.
- We will review the Coventry Homefinder Policy to ensure that it continues to meet the aims of providing applicants with an informed choice and encouraging sustainable communities, whilst also prioritising the available social housing for those that need it most, including addressing issues such as overcrowding.

6. www.gov.uk/government/collections/fuel-poverty-statistics

7. www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sub-regional-fuel-poverty-data-2018

Housing Development

■ What are the issues?

Coventry City Council adopted its Local Plan in December 2017. This is a statutory planning document which plans positively for the growth needs of the city (including homes, employment, retail and infrastructure), by identifying land available to meet these needs, and policies to direct the form of development. Whilst the lifetime of this overall strategy is five years, the priorities in this theme are much longer-term and align with the Local Plan which has a lifespan up to 2031. Reviews of this Theme will be carried out on the same timetable as for the Local Plan.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the sub-region (Coventry and Warwickshire) is a key housing evidence document underpinning the Local Plan. The SHMA looks at the level of future household growth and housing supply, to identify how many additional homes will be needed to meet market and affordable housing needs.

Coventry's population has grown over recent years and will continue to grow. The SHMA showed a need for an additional 42,400 homes up to 2031 to meet needs arising from the population growth of Coventry. This includes an additional 12,000 affordable homes.

However, Coventry has identified land available to provide an additional 24,600 homes (the equivalent of 1,230 per year, including 348 new affordable homes per year), with the neighbouring Warwickshire Authorities agreeing to identify land for the remaining 17,800 homes.

It is important that any new housing development is of the right type and tenure, and in the right location, to meet the housing needs and aspirations of Coventry households. This includes diversifying the range of properties available and the range of providers to include more small to medium sized developers, community build, self-build and custom build.

Currently, approximately 70% of properties in the city are in Council Tax Bands A and B, indicating smaller properties at the lower end of the market (compared to 56% in the West Midlands and 44% for England).

There is a shortage of larger family homes in the social housing sector, and also a shortage of desirable smaller homes (such as bungalows) for existing tenants in large homes to downsize to. Affordable housing in Coventry is mainly developed by Registered Providers (Housing Associations) and through developer's contributions on larger sites (known as Section 106 contributions) according to the policies in the Local Plan. The Council has also entered into a Joint Venture with Whitefriars Housing Group, jointly contributing land and funding, to enable development on small sites across the city.

In addition to affordable housing for people who cannot access the market, we need to develop a range of sizes and property types, including 'aspirational' housing to capitalise on economic growth and employment opportunities in the city.

New homes that are developed will have a life span many times longer than this strategy, and it is important to ensure that they are well designed and sustainably built. This may include using modern methods of construction, and we would encourage all developments to demonstrate high levels of energy efficiency, space standards and accessibility. In addition, we would encourage all planning applications to demonstrate how the development will promote the health and wellbeing of new and existing communities.



■ Our Priorities:

We will:

- Enable new high-quality housing development to meet the existing and future growth needs of the city.
- Diversify the housing offer to meet a range of needs and aspirations
- Ensure that affordable housing is developed of the right type and tenure to meet the needs of the city's households.

■ How we will achieve this:

We will:

- Make the most of opportunities in the Local Plan to increase the development of market, affordable and specialist housing.
- Ensure that development provides a range of housing types, tenures and sizes to meet identified housing needs and demands.
- Ensure a pipeline of developable land through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and the Brownfield Register, and identify Council-owned land that can positively contribute to meeting housing needs.
- Develop and adopt a Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (to include the required developer contributions for affordable housing), to maximise contributions by developers to provide new affordable homes
- Develop and adopt a policy regarding the allocation and spend of financial contributions, where a financial contribution is provided in lieu of on-site affordable housing through developer contributions.
- Work creatively in partnership with Registered Providers and Homes England to enable additional affordable housing development.
- Continue to work closely with Whitefriars on the New Build Housing Partnership Joint Venture, to maximise opportunities to develop the most strategically important types of affordable housing that may not otherwise be delivered through the market or other programmes. Explore opportunities to expand this approach to other projects or providers.
- Support Build to Rent development on appropriate sites.
- Develop and adopt a Design Guide SPD (Supplementary Planning Document) for the Strategic Urban Extensions to ensure good quality design of properties and the urban realm in these large developments and Residential Design Guidance for all new housing development across the city. We will implement the principles of the Health Impact Assessment SPD and work with the West Midlands Combined Authority on design standards for healthy new communities.
- Monitor and respond to demand for self/custom build opportunities through the self-build register.
- Encourage development of purpose-built student accommodation in suitable locations to reduce pressure on family housing.
- Identify opportunities to intervene in the market where the market is not meeting the evidenced need for additional homes, especially affordable homes and strategically important housing types (large family homes, wheelchair accessibility etc).
- Explore options for a Local Housing Company (or other suitable model) for the Council to directly acquire and/or develop property.



Monitoring and Updating the Strategy and the Action Plan

This strategy will cover the five-year period 2019 to 2024, and Theme 4 in particular will align long-term (to 2031) with the Local Plan.

However, it is important that this Housing & Homelessness Strategy is regularly reviewed and kept up to date, to respond to changes in guidance and legislation, and any changes in trends relating to need and demand for housing and services. A check will be carried out on an annual basis, or in the event of major new legislation or guidance or a major change in services, to determine if a wider review of the Strategy is required.

The Action Plan will be a live document, to be updated when necessary as actions are completed and new actions arise, but in any case will be reviewed at least on an annual basis.

The Council's Strategic Housing Board will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the strategy and the action plan and ensuring that these are kept up to date as described above.

The Homelessness Forum will act as a critical friend to hold the Council to account on the delivery of the Homelessness element of the overall strategy, as well as facilitating partnership working and a joined up approach to services.

The Homelessness Review (the evidence document detailing homelessness in the city) will be updated when 12 months' worth of data is available to consider the impact of the new duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) and identify any changes in trends, need or demand as a result. The Action Plan will be updated as necessary.

■ How the Strategy relates to other local strategies and plans

This Housing & Homelessness Strategy has strong links to many other Strategies and Plans that the Council and other partnerships have produced. These include:

- The Corporate Plan
- Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents
- City Centre Area Action Plan
- Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- Domestic Abuse Strategy
- Drug & Alcohol Strategy
- Children and Young People Plan
- Parenting Strategy
- Climate Change Strategy