

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY

2021-2026



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Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

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1 Foreword

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

I am pleased to introduce the new Local Housing Strategy 2021 -26 for the Vale of Glamorgan.

The previous strategy was implemented in 2015 amid changes to the welfare system, legislation and a global economic crisis. We have seen increasing demand for housing, housing advice and support services as people have faced rising costs of living with little or no growth in wages.

I am proud of the way in which the Vale of Glamorgan has embraced the challenges with investment in housing exceeding £82m over the five year period 2015 – 2020, and the partnerships built with stakeholders and residents have continued to go from strength to strength, resulting in the development of solutions to meet needs.

I am delighted to see that the Council has also started building council housing for the first time in many years, and the opening of the One Stop Shop will go some way to ensuring people are able to access help when they most need it.

Against a backdrop of the current recession brought about by the Coronavirus Pandemic, which looks set to see rising unemployment and fluctuating levels of public funding for the foreseeable future, I look forward to our achieving further success, working in partnership with stakeholders and residents.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M Wilkinson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor Margaret Wilkinson

Cabinet Member, Public Sector Housing and Tenant Engagement

1 Foreword (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

The Local Housing Strategy sets out to continue the long term strategic vision for housing in the Vale. That:

All residents in the Vale of Glamorgan have access to good quality, suitable housing and can live happily and independently in vibrant, sustainable communities

In developing the strategy, we have drawn on the views of key partners and residents to help shape and drive the priorities thus making sure we address the issues that matter most.

The effects of the Pandemic on public spending will be seen for some time and will have an impact on our ability to provide housing services, but we are ready to meet the challenge and through this strategy we can make a real difference to people's lives.

In partnership we can build more homes, drive up standards in the private-rented sector and make homes cheaper to run. We can stimulate the economy by creating apprenticeships, training and employment opportunities for local people. Working together we aim to reduce homelessness and help people maintain their accommodation.

The Council and its partners recognise that we must continue to develop innovative and flexible ways of working. The Housing Solutions Service continues to enable all residents access to housing advice, not just at the point of crisis, but throughout their lives as their housing needs change.

With determination, commitment, support from those we work with and the involvement of residents, we will seek to make the vision of the strategy a reality.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Ingram'.

Michael Ingram

Head of Housing and Building Services

2 Introduction

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

The Vale of Glamorgan Council's revised Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026 updates the adopted 2015-2020 Strategy¹. In February 2020, an extensive consultation exercise was held with key partners including Elected Members, community councillors and stakeholders from across the Council, RSL partners, health, probation, police, support providers and others. Key themes were identified in an exercise which is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1



These themes align with the four aims of the 2015-2020 Strategy. For this reason, in the December 2020 meeting of the Overarching Housing Forum it was decided to carry these aims forward into the new strategy.

This Strategy also reflects legislative changes that occurred after the consultation took place and changes to working practices brought about via the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Vision

The Local Housing Strategy long term strategic vision for housing in the Vale is:

All residents in the Vale of Glamorgan have access to good quality, suitable housing and can live happily and independently in vibrant, sustainable communities

It also sets out how the Vale of Glamorgan Council and its partners will shape and deliver housing and housing services across the Vale to achieve our vision.

The Strategy has been developed in challenging times with new legislative duties on local authorities, with COVID19 potentially resulting in the biggest recession in history which will lead to local and national budgetary changes, Brexit and an ever-increasing demand for services as a result of the Covid pandemic; the full extent of which is not yet known.

2 Introduction (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Creating strong communities to ensure they are attractive places to live and work requires the commitment and resources of a range of public, private sector, voluntary agencies and crucially local people. Partnership working is therefore essential to the success of the Strategy and we have drawn on the views of key partners and residents to help us shape and drive the priorities and address the issues that matter most to them.

Aims

The four Aims (Figure 2) outlined in the previous strategy remain important and relevant and therefore the themes are carried through into 2021-2026 Local Housing Strategy and we will continue to build on the achievements to date.

Figure 2

1	More homes, more choice
2	Improve homes and communities
3	Better housing advice and support
4	Equality of access to housing and housing services

Each of these aims is addressed in a separate chapter with the heading “Our Aims”.

Our Partners

Key to the success of any strategy is partnership working. The Council is fortunate to have a wealth of partners, see Figure 3, who share the same values and priorities including:

Figure 3

● Housing Associations (also known as Registered Social Landlords)
● Private landlords and letting agents
● Third sector support providers and agencies
● Statutory partners operating in the Vale including Planning, Health, Probation and Police
● Welsh Government

Welsh National Policy

This Strategy acknowledges the priorities outlined in the Welsh Government’s national planning policy and housing and homelessness strategies.

It also responds to Welsh Government legislation including the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (and the five ways of working for sustainable development), Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016, together with changes in UK Government policy, specifically around welfare reform.

2 Introduction (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Following the publication in April 2019 of the Affordable Housing Supply Review, in February 2020 Welsh Government committed £2billion to housing and published its new strategy “Re-imagining social housing in Wales” to support its aim of delivering 20,000 new affordable homes during the period 2016 - 2021. Figure 4 shows several recent Welsh Government strategies and documents, which have also informed this Strategy:

Figure 4

- Re-imagining social housing in Wales: A Modern Methods of Construction Strategy for Social Housing – February 2020
- Prosperity for All: A low Carbon Wales – 2019
- Report from the Homelessness Action Group for the Welsh Government – March 2020
- Housing Support Grant (HSG) Guidance 2019
- Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers: June 2018
- Planning Policy Wales Edition 11: February 2021
- Future Wales: National Development Plan 2040
- Housing LIN Connecting people, ideas and resources: Assessment of the demand for specialist housing and accommodation for older people in Wales – January 2020
- The National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence 2016-2021



2 Introduction (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Local Policy

Council Strategic Planning

The Vale of Glamorgan Corporate Plan, Figure 5, “Working together for a brighter future 2020 – 2025” is the Council’s key strategic document and together with “Our Vale – Our Future” the Public Service Board’s wellbeing plan for the Vale, sets out the Council’s vision for the future of the Vale of Glamorgan: “Strong communities with a bright future”

‘Working together for a brighter future’ is a five-year plan and details four new wellbeing objectives we want to achieve:

- To work with and for our communities
- To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth
- To support people at home and in their community
- To respect, enhance and enjoy our environment

The plan has a strong emphasis on collaboration and working partnerships. The partnership working is wide ranging, including working with families, children and young people, our health partners, the Police and the Fire Services as well as other public sector bodies, the third sector, Town and Community Councils and our communities.

The Local Development Plan

In addition to the corporate plan, the Vale of Glamorgan Council has an Adopted Local Development Plan 2011 – 2026 (LDP), Figure 6.

This document was adopted in June 2017 and is the key document in terms of delivering new homes and infrastructure in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The LDP is supported by the Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Affordable Housing. This SPG sets out the Council’s approach to delivering affordable housing through the planning system. It sets out the Council’s planning requirements and mechanisms for securing and delivering affordable housing within the Vale of Glamorgan.

Figure 5



Figure 6



2 Introduction (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Housing Strategy and related policies

The Local Housing Strategy 2020-2025 provides the vision for housing in the Vale of Glamorgan and is supported by several related strategies and policies , Figure 7:

Figure 7



■ Monitoring and Review

The Strategy sets out several ambitions to be undertaken over the next 5 years and a separate action plan has been developed to accompany it which will be continually monitored with partners through the Overarching Housing Forum (OHF) to inform reporting and progress each year. The achievements will also be regularly reported to the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee.



3 Living In The Vale – Housing Market Information

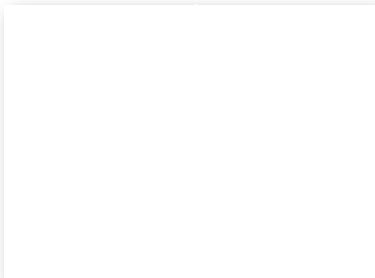
Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Housing Supply

In March 2020, Technical Advice Note 1 was deleted, and Planning Policy Wales was amended to remove the five-year housing land supply policy and replace it with a policy statement making it explicit that the housing trajectory, as set out in the adopted LDP, will be the basis for monitoring the delivery of development plan housing requirements as part of LDP Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs). There is no longer a requirement to provide a Joint Housing Land Availability Study.

Since the previous Local Housing Strategy (2015-2020) was launched, house building in the Vale of Glamorgan has increased as evidenced via the collected annual data². The latest data is set out in Figure 8 below:

Figure 8



The data collected shows a rise in new housing completions from 272 new dwellings completed in 2014/15 to 917 in 2019/20.

Many of the new affordable homes delivered are through market-led developments, in which via a Section 106 Agreement requires a percentage of the overall number of houses to be affordable. The number of S 106 affordable homes³ can be seen in Figure 9 below:

Figure 9

Annual number of affordable dwellings delivered via S 106 Agreements	
Period	Additional Affordable Dwellings Provided
2015-16	111
2016-17	186
2017-18	217
2018-19	105
2019-20	156
2020-21	122
Total	897



3 Living In The Vale – Housing Market Information (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

The type and size of new dwellings built differs between private sector developers and Registered Social Landlords (RSL) and according to data collected by Local Authority Building Inspectors and the National House Building Council between 2014 and 2019⁴ shows:

- **83% of the properties built by private developers were houses and 17% were flats. In terms of house size, 4-bed houses are the most common type, whereas 2-bed flats are the most common size of that type.**
- **41% of the properties built by RSL's were flats and 59% were houses. In terms of house size, 2-bed houses were the most common size type whereas for flats, 1-bed flats are the most common size.**

The Vale has an estimated 59,891⁵ households as at 31st March 2020. Most households, 75%, own their own home, 11% rent from a social landlord and 13% from a private landlord. The percentage of owner occupiers is higher than the Wales average of 70% home ownership.

In terms of affordable housing delivery, the RSLs active within the Vale of Glamorgan have steadily increased their provision over the last 5 years. In the period 2015-21, RSLs in the Vale of Glamorgan provided new 1303 affordable homes. The LHS shall continue to promote the delivery of affordable homes through ongoing collaboration between the Local Authority and RSLs and removing unnecessary barriers to meeting the need in the Vale of Glamorgan area. For example, maintaining the planning obligation exemption for 100% Affordable Housing schemes of 25 units or less as agreed by the Vale of Glamorgan Cabinet on 5th September 2016.

Figure 10

Annual number of affordable dwellings delivered ⁶ via Social Housing Grant	
Period	Additional Affordable Dwellings Provided
2015-16	52
2016-17	40
2017-18	69
2018-19	0
2019-20	138
2020-21	107
Total	406



Junction House, Barry
Hafod Housing

3 Living In The Vale – Housing Market Information (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Additionally, the Vale of Glamorgan Council has initiated their own affordable house building programme taking advantage of grant funding from Welsh Government and financial contributions secured through Section 106 planning. In the period 2017-18 the Local Authority delivered three affordable homes, following the success of this trial development the Local Authority has increased its development programme with 28 units planned in the period 2020-21. The Vale of Glamorgan Council will continue to deliver affordable housing collaborating with partners to ensure effective delivery.

Population changes

At the time of the last Census in 2011 the population of the Vale of Glamorgan was 126,336⁷, with most people being of working age. However, the Vale of Glamorgan had a lower proportion of working age people and a higher proportion of children in comparison to the rest of Wales. In contrast, the proportion of people over the age of 65 was representative of Wales as whole.

On 4th August 2020 Welsh Government published the Local Authority Household Projections for Wales 2018⁸, based on information obtained from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) national projections. These household projections provide an indication of the future number of households and their composition in Wales based on how many additional households would form if the population of Wales continues to change as predicted using the mid-year population and household estimates.

Figure 11

Population Projections to 2028											
Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Population	132,165	132,987	133,864	134,749	135,617	136,448	137,233	137,999	138,713	139,384	140,044

The household projections shown in Figure 11 for the Vale of Glamorgan are also based on data about 'household formation'. Assumptions about the formations, or different types of households, are based on 2001 and 2011 Census data, produced by the ONS.



3 Living In The Vale – Housing Market Information (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Figure 12

Household Projections to 2028											
Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Population	57,230	57,762	58,297	58,816	59,358	59,885	60,383	60,863	61,316	61,750	62,176

The Vale of Glamorgan Local Authority area is predicted to have a percentage increase (4.2%) in the number of households in Wales for the period 2021-2026, as shown in Figure 12. Although the total number of households in Wales is projected to increase during the period 2021 to 2026, the number of one-person and two-person households will increase the most. This will result in the number of these type of households with no children continuing to be the most common household type in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The number of households with children is projected to rise by 4.2% between 2018 and 2028 and the number of children between the ages of 0 and 15 years old is set to increase during this period (up 2.8%). There is a projected increase of 8.6% in households with no children between 2018 and 2028.

One person households are projected to increase in all local authority areas with the Vale of Glamorgan representing one of the larger increases in Wales, with the projected one person households increasing by 16.9%. The number of one person households with a person aged 65 or over is projected to account for nearly 45% of all one person households by 2028 in the Vale of Glamorgan. The increase in one person households with a person aged 65 or over demonstrates that there will be a greater need to deliver older persons accommodation to reflect this change in household formation. This will be addressed through the aims and objectives of the LHS.



3 Living In The Vale – Housing Market Information (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

However, it is important to draw a distinction between the predicted household figures and the number of dwellings required to meet the anticipated population growth in the Vale of Glamorgan. Multiple households can be contained within one dwelling (HMO – House in Multiple Occupation) resulting in a difference between the household projections and the dwelling requirement for a Local Authority. Both population and household projections are required to inform the dwelling requirement for a Local Authority. The Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan calculated the anticipated residential requirement over the plan period from 2011 to 2026. A more in depth analysis of these predictions and requirements are outlined within the LDP⁹.

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Living/Planning/Policy/LDP/LDP-Adoption/Adopted-LDP-Written-Statement-June-2017-final-interactive-web-version.pdf>

Since the LDP adoption, the Welsh Government have released the 2018-based projections. The principal variant for the 2018-based projection for the Vale of Glamorgan identifies 134,749 people in 2021 which is projected to grow to 144,536 by the end of the replacement LDP period (2036).

The potential residential requirement in the replacement LDP would be informed by the most recent projections at the time of the LDP review, however, this may decrease or increase depending upon the local context and objectives of the local planning authority. The LHS will help inform how the projections are translated into the residential requirement and how the need for affordable housing is addressed in conjunction with the most recent LHMA.

Furthermore, working in collaboration with partners and the LPA the objectives and aims of the LHS can inform the development plan policies in the replacement plan.



3 Living In The Vale – Housing Market Information (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

■ Housing Demand

The latest Vale of Glamorgan Council’s Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) 2019¹⁰ calculates the need for affordable housing and identifies that the Vale of Glamorgan’s greatest need is for social rented accommodation. The development of social housing must therefore remain a priority, particularly in relation to the affordable housing delivered on market housing developments in compliance of the Supplementary Planning Guidance for Affordable Housing (SPG) which requires a contribution of between 30% and 40% affordable housing on most sites, depending on the area in which they are being built as viability varies throughout the Vale of Glamorgan.

The key outcome of the LHMA 2019 is the identified need for an additional 890 units of affordable housing per year over the coming 5 year period 2019 – 2024, broken down to 799 units of social rented accommodation, 70 units of intermediate rented housing and 21 units of housing for assisted home ownership per year. It is anticipated that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and resultant lockdowns will increase the number of households in financial difficulties and facing a housing crisis, and that the next LHMA, due to be completed in the summer of 2021 will show an even higher affordable housing need.

However, it should be noted the 2019 LHMA used the 2014-based projections which are not the most up to date projections available. This is due to the 2018-based projections being recalled by ONS during the period the 2019 LHMA was being drafted. This was because ONS had identified several errors in the projections which significantly increased the predicted population for some Local Authorities which included the Vale of Glamorgan. Therefore, it was considered appropriate to use the 2014-based projections to inform the 2019 LHMA as it was the most reliable data available at the time.

Although the 2019 LHMA projections differ from the projections discussed in the LHS, the LHMA is reviewed every two years to ensure the document reflects the most recent data. Consequently, the 2019 LHMA will be reviewed in 2021 bringing the projections in line with the LHS.



3 Living In The Vale – Housing Market Information (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

■ Property Condition

Whilst homeowners are responsible for maintaining their homes, the Council is committed to improving the quality of housing across all sectors and accepts that many homeowners, especially the elderly may not have the resources needed to keep their homes in a good state of repair. The Council has a role to provide help in these circumstances.

The Council, as social landlord, achieved 100% compliance with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) in 2020, ensuring the minimum quality standard for housing.

On all new proposed social-rented housing (including those being secured via Section 106 agreements via market-led developments), the Council requires developers to deliver them to Development Quality Requirements (DQR), the current social housing standard defined by Welsh Government (WG). DQR for new builds is currently under review by WG and looks set to be replaced with a new standard 'Beautiful Homes and Spaces' (BHS) which sets out minimum functional quality standards for new and rehabilitated general needs affordable homes. The new standard considers not just homes but also their environs and is as much about the external spaces created as it is about the design of the home.

■ Affordability

The Vale of Glamorgan has considerable socio-economic disparity, with some of the most affluent and some of the most deprived communities in Wales.

The latest Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation published in 2019¹¹ shows 3 areas within the Vale (within Barry) which fall within the 10% most deprived lower super output areas (LSOAs) in Wales, accounting for 3.8% of the Vale of Glamorgan's population. There are also some smaller concentrated pockets in rural areas and south east Vale.

The impact of the economy on house prices, mortgage availability and households' incomes have a significant effect on affordability and in turn on housing need.

In December 2019 the Welsh Government announced a five year rent policy for social housing tenants in Wales, which will help keep rents affordable while allowing social landlords to build more affordable homes across the country. Housing providers have a role to place affordability calculations for social housing within their rent policies from 2021-22.

The number of people accessing housing advice has increased year on year and reflects changes in the housing market i.e. the shortage of housing across all tenures, the growth of the private rented sector, increasing affordability issues and difficulties for first time buyers. It is anticipated that the Covid-19 pandemic will increase these pressures further as more people find themselves in financial hardship or unemployed.

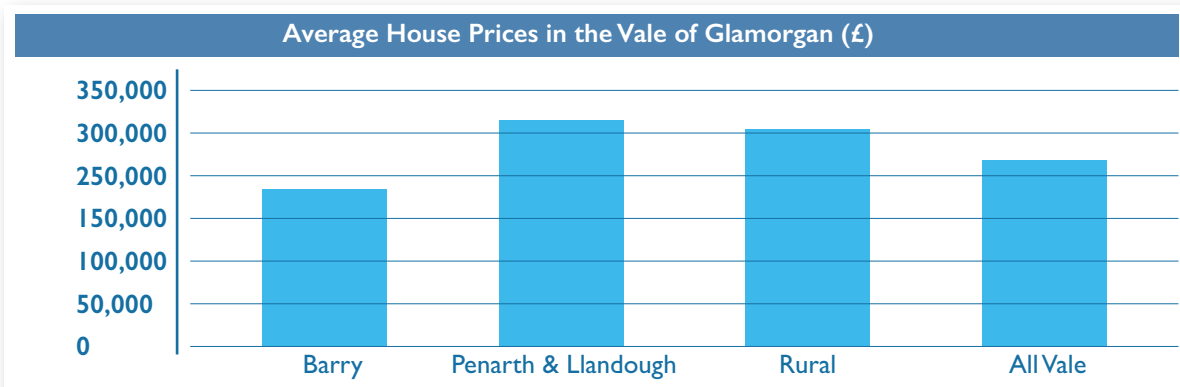
3 Living In The Vale – Housing Market Information (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

House Prices

The average overall house prices in the Vale of Glamorgan¹², Figure 13, in December 2020 was £264,915; the average cost of a one bedroom flat was £116,280 and a two bedroom terraced house £176,720, while a detached property was £400,008, with Penarth & Llandough and rural Vale seeing average prices considerably higher than those in Barry.

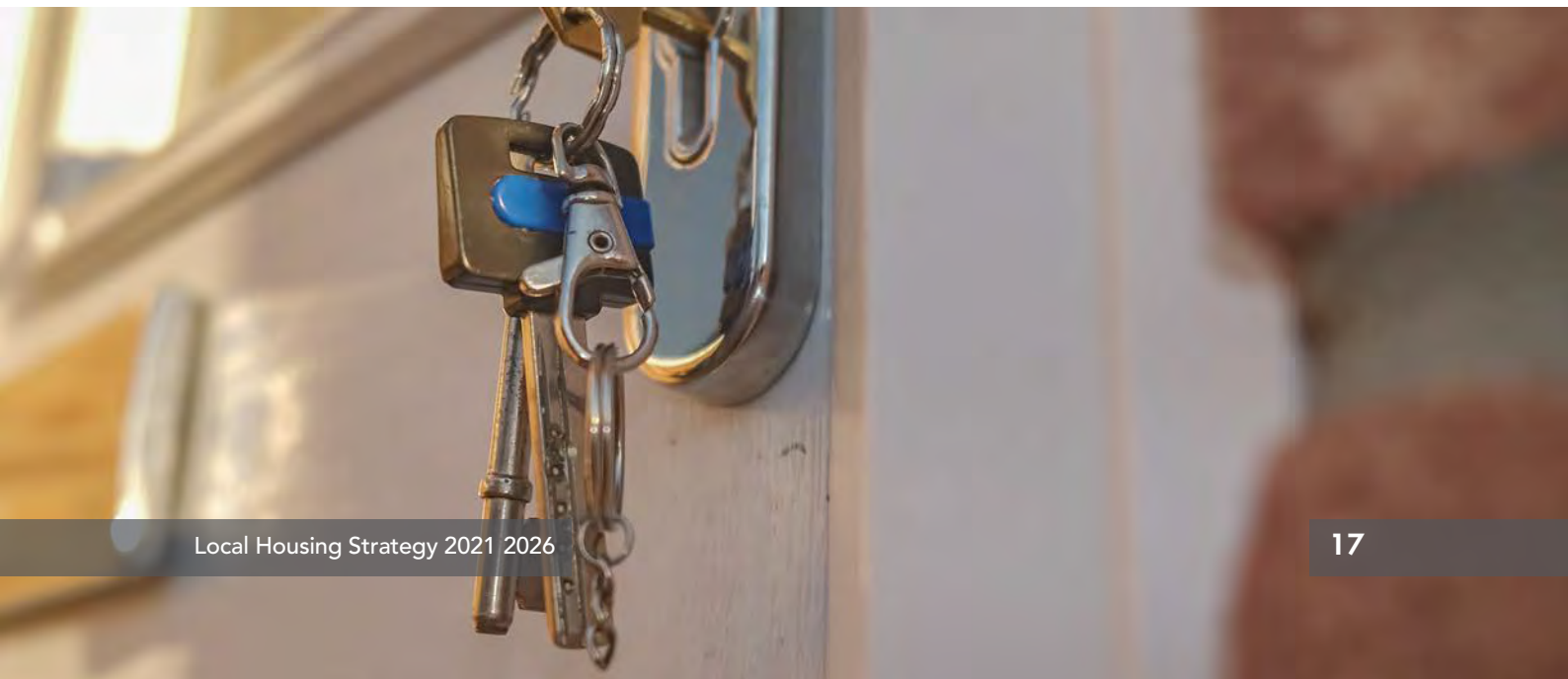
Figure 13



Average house prices in rural Vale vary, figure 14, one significant fact is that there are very few, if any, one-bedroom properties available for sale in rural vale:

Figure 14

Average House Prices in Rural Vale (£)											
Type	Dinas Powys	Sully	Cowbridge	Llandow/Ewenny	Peterston-super-Ely	Rhooose	St Athan	St Bride's Major	Wenvoe	Rural Total	Rural Average
1 bed Flat	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
2 bed Flat	153,000	185,398	180,000	N/A	N/A	226,500	N/A	280,000	N/A	1,146,898	191,150
2 bed House	198,375	287,000	296,250	N/A	171,938	263,750	113,125	224,600	163,750	1,892,875	210,319
3 bed House	249,464	298,773	394,529	302,834	259,423	340,577	185,475	364,870	419,197	3,037,243	303,724
4 bed House	411,591	463,083	474,609	451,727	356,844	674,284	313,420	492,188	419,238	4,931,658	493,166
AVERAGE	253,108	308,564	336,347	377,281	262,735	376,278	204,007	340,415	334,062	3,026,783	302,678



3 Living In The Vale – Housing Market Information (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Average house prices in Barry, Figure 15, are much less and whilst they do vary, the variation is less:

Figure 15

Average House Prices in Barry (£)										
Type	Baruc	Buttrills	Cadoc	Court	Castleland	Dyfan	Gibbons-down	Illtyd	Barry Total	Barry Average
1 bed Flat	97,800	N/A	72,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	169,800	84,900
2 bed Flat	145,333	115,429	N/A	95,000	128,000	N/A	N/A	167,500	651,262	130,252
2 bed House	157,391	132,125	136,150	157,661	126,375	165,494	132,889	151,428	1,159,513	144,939
3 bed House	224,911	163,343	156,602	150,902	156,125	194,761	175,771	198,338	1,420,753	177,594
4 bed House	317,103	195,417	303,476	180,250	201,317	250,906	235,000	267,409	1,950,878	243,860
AVERAGE	188,508	151,579	167,057	145,953	152,954	203,720	181,220	196,169	1,387,160	173,395

Rental Costs

The average rent charged for a private sector two bedroom property in the different areas of the Vale varies considerably, with Penarth/Llandough being the most expensive at 22.5% more expensive than the average rent of £152.41 (per week), and Barry being the cheapest at 25% lower than the average rent. Housing association and local authority rents are less expensive, with the average housing association rent for a 2-bedroom home being £109.43 a week and the average for council 2 bedroom properties being £100.54¹³.

Health and Social Care

Health in the Vale of Glamorgan is generally good with life expectancy like at or above the Welsh average. The 'above average' life expectancy is not experienced equally across all areas and there is a gap in healthy life expectancy between people living in the most and least deprived areas of the Vale.

Census and demographic predictions suggest that the rise in the number of older people is set to continue with the number of those aged 65 and older predicted to increase by more than half between 2013 and 2036 in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The proportion of people with a long-term limiting illness or disability increases with age, hence population changes are likely to have a large impact on the demand for health and social care.

3 Living In The Vale – Housing Market Information (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

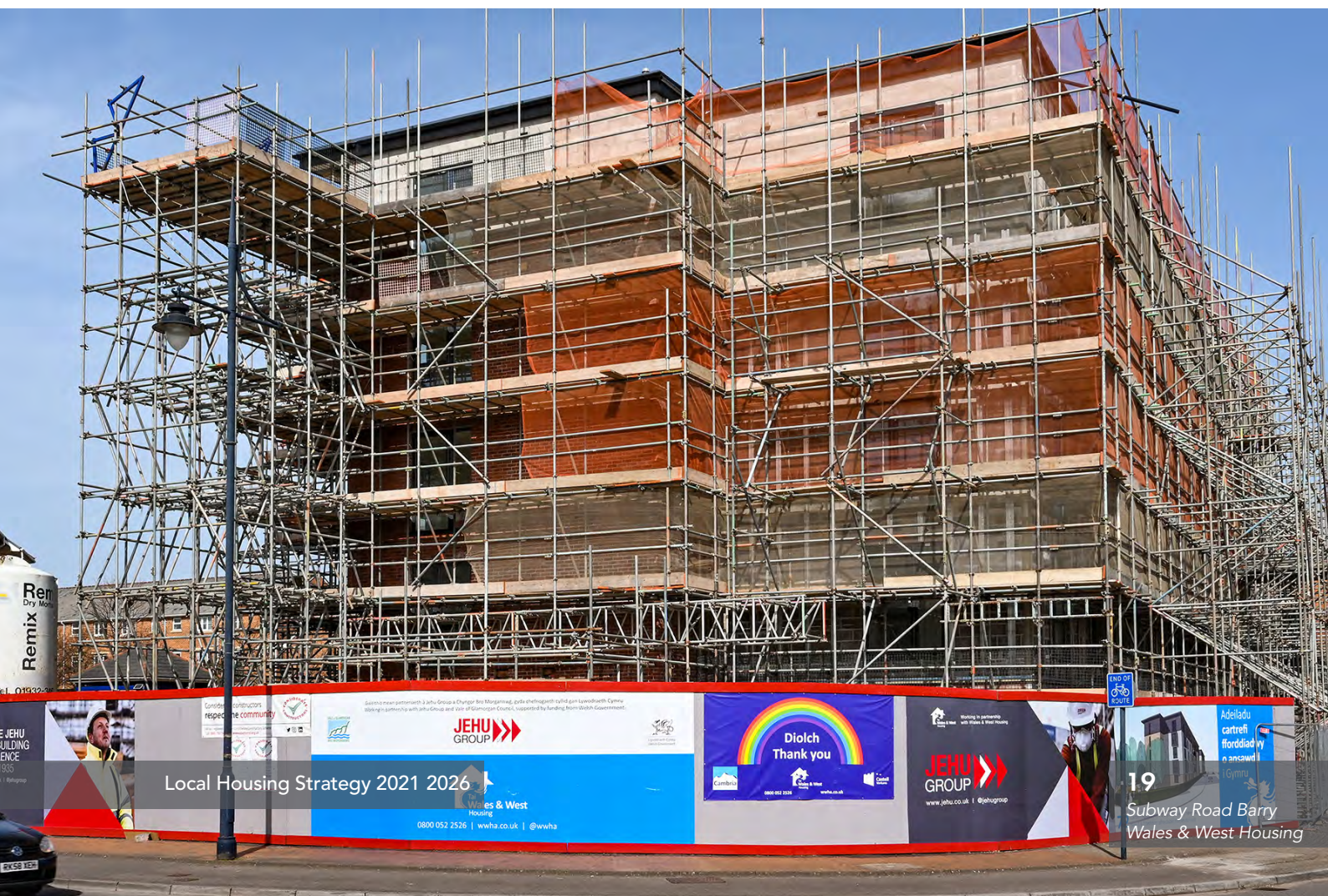
Economy

The global economic recession (2007-2009) has had a severe impact on the housing sector for many years since. It is currently uncertain how the current recession (2020), brought on by the Coronavirus pandemic, will impact housing in terms of demand and delivery.

Unemployment levels look set to rise dramatically and at the same time, higher energy, food and transport costs have all added to the increasing cost of living which has been further compounded by Welfare Reform and austerity measures that have taken place over recent years. Changes to the welfare system have and will continue to have an impact on tenants, landlords and local authorities in years to come.

The UK House Price Index¹⁴ for September 2020 shows UK house price growth hit a two and half year high because of high demand over the summer, this is moderating now to pre-Covid-19 levels although remains 40% higher than a year ago.

Many of the challenges set out in this strategy reflect much wider social and economic issues along with the anticipated effects of Brexit.



4 Our Aims

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

To provide more homes and more choice; ensuring that all residents have access to suitable and affordable accommodation

A home is more than just a place to live. Good quality housing is key to good health and well-being; poor or unsuitable housing contributes to ill health, leading to the need for greater levels of social care and often having a negative impact on education and employment.

Houses are about the people who live in them and the communities they are located in. Housing drives the demand for local services, shops and facilities and the contribution housing makes to thriving communities is clear.

Creating and sustaining strong, vibrant communities, and re-vitalising town centres to ensure they are attractive places to live and work, requires the commitment and resources of a range of public, private sector and voluntary agencies and, crucially, local people. Working in partnership to deliver housing and housing services and to develop innovative solutions to address local housing needs is therefore imperative.

The Council and its partner Registered Social Landlords (RSL)s are committed to continuing to deliver as many new affordable housing units as possible to contribute towards the need identified in the Local Housing Market Assessment 2019, of 890 units of affordable housing per annum over the 5-year period 2021-26.

In April 2020, the Council's Cabinet approved the first Council Housing Development Strategy and an ambitious five-year development programme, with the objective of delivering over 500 new homes across the Vale, including homes for market sale. The Strategy focuses on delivering new homes in the communities that have greatest need, evidenced in the most rent Local Housing Market Assessment. The Council has committing £68 million through the Housing Business Plan to achieve this objective, over the next five years.



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

The Vale of Glamorgan's aim to provide **more homes and more choice** will be achieved by working towards the following key objectives:

● 1.1 Enable a functioning housing market

The Housing Market refers to the supply and demand for housing, in an area, country or region. A functioning housing market is defined as one where all residents can access suitable and affordable housing, regardless of their income.

The housing market can be affected by several factors, including:

- House prices
- Population and demographic changes
- The buy-to-let investment market and demand from tenants
- The mortgage industry and interest rates
- Government intervention
- Economic factors such as income and employment rates, and changes to welfare reform

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has an enabling role in ensuring that the housing market is functioning well; without intervention it is likely that many households would find housing inaccessible, as the market house prices and rents would be unaffordable to them.

The Council has several levers available to it which can be used to influence and shape the housing market, these include:

- Information on housing need and demand
- Orchestration of the views of tenants and communities
- Finance in the form of grants, e.g. to subsidise housing development, provide welfare assistance and housing support services
- Planning powers to oversee and influence land usage
- Facilitating more land to come forward for development
- Legal and regulatory powers, e.g. environmental health
- Statutory responsibilities, e.g. in relation to homelessness

The Council's strategic housing function needs to maintain a sound knowledge of the local housing market to ensure that the development of the housing market and housing supply meets the locally identified needs.

As already highlighted, the Council gains a significant amount of information about the local housing market from the bi-annual Local Housing Market Assessments (LHMA), with the most recent carried out in 2019.

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Living/Housing/Local-Housing-Market-Assessment-LHMA.pdf>

4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

The Council's Housing and Planning departments work closely with market housing developers and RSLs to enable housing development in the public and private sectors. A strategic approach will continue to be taken to meet local housing need and the Housing Department will continue to provide responses to planning consultations based on local housing need data.

ACTIONS

Adopt and monitor the Local Housing Strategy 2020-2025

Review governance structure of the existing forums

Complete a Local Housing Market Assessment as directed by Welsh Government

Understand need – LHMA and Housing Solutions needs

Balance housing need with the needs to balance communities

Have due regard to affordability when setting rents

Assess housing need within geographic boundaries

Change and improve the perception of social housing

Maximise Welsh Government subsidy for affordable housing

Change and improve the perception of social housing

● 1.2 Increase housing supply

The demand for additional housing in the Vale of Glamorgan has continued to grow and the latest Welsh Government population growth prediction confirms that this will be the case over the coming years. The demographic changes predicted show a notable aging population and a large increase in the number of single person and lone parent households. These factors along with inward migration provide the basis for housing demand in the Vale of Glamorgan.



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

The Vale of Glamorgan's Adopted Local Development Plan (LDP) 2011-2026 sets out the Council's strategic land use plan and makes provision for the use of land for housing. It contributes to the need for affordable housing by securing contributions from market housing site via legal agreements (section 106 contributions), rural exception sites and the development of sites by social housing landlords, including the Council. To accommodate the level of growth identified in the Vale of Glamorgan, the LDP identifies a range of development opportunities to meet this residential requirement Policy MG1 – Housing Supply in the Vale of Glamorgan outlines 10,408 dwellings which is broken down as in Figure 16, following:

Figure 16

Type of Delivery	Number of Residential Units
Development of Sites with extant planning permissions (10 or more dwellings) at April 2011	182
Allocations within the Plan	8,525
Development of unallocated windfall sites (10 or more dwellings)	840
Development of small sites (less than 10 dwellings)	861
Total Dwelling Supply 2011-2026	10,408



In terms of delivery, as of 1st April 2020, the LDP had delivered 4,534 additional dwellings, which included 1,393 additional affordable homes. It is the Council's intention to commence its formal review of the LDP in June 2021 and anticipate that a replacement LDP will be adopted by March 2025. The review represents an opportunity for Housing and RSL partners to work in collaboration with the planning colleagues in order to maximise opportunities for the delivery of affordable housing during next plan period 2021 to 2036 to reflect the need within the LHMA and meet the objectives of the LHS.

Welsh Government also aims to increase the number of affordable homes built in Wales with more open market development, more affordable housing development and more direct development by local authorities. This aim is reflected in the revised Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 11, which sets out the planning policy framework for Wales. PPW directs Local Planning Authorities to make provision for affordable housing led residential schemes within development plans. These allocated residential sites must include a minimum of 50% affordable housing based on criteria that reflects the local circumstances of the Local Authority.

4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Welsh Government have also increased the amount of SHG available to LAs to build affordable housing, with the commitment to extend the additional funding for a period of 3 years. This additional money will enable the Vale Council to bring forward schemes already in the programme as well as those on the reserve and potential list, and is very welcome. This will go some way towards meeting the increasing need for social housing in the area.

Previously PPW made an exemption for small affordable housing sites allowing Local Planning Authorities to allow these developments as exception sites to planning policies where it is required to meet an identified need. This is addressed under LDP Policy MG10 – Affordable Housing Developments Outside Settlement Boundaries which allows small scale affordable housing development outside settlement boundaries where they have a distinct physical or visual relationship with an existing settlement. The policy defines small scale as generally meaning 10 or fewer dwellings. However, PPW has removed the reference to small scale meaning exception sites are not restricted in size but would still need to reflect the context of the area and meet all other criteria against which a housing development would be judged such as the national sustainable placemaking outcomes.

This change represents an opportunity to increase the delivery of affordable housing on appropriate sites throughout the Vale of Glamorgan. Helping to meet affordable housing need within rural areas where it has previously been difficult to develop sufficient stock to meet the need.



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

In urban areas, the Future Wales: National Development Plan under Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking states “To support the economic and social success of our towns and cities, including sustaining public transport and facilities, urban growth and regeneration should increase the population density of our towns and cities. New developments in urban areas should aim to have a density of at least 50 dwellings per hectare (net), with higher densities in more central and accessible locations.” (WG, p.66, 2021). This represents an opportunity to increase the delivery of affordable housing by allowing higher densities, this is particularly important within the area of Barry which has the highest need for affordable housing in the Local Authority.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council supports innovative solutions to increase the supply of housing and will make the most of all opportunities to work with others to achieve this increase including:

- Co-operative housing
- Self-build opportunities
- Open Market Housing Developments
- Planning gain
- Partnership working

ACTIONS

Develop housing for intermediate rent or assisted sale

Collaborate and provide strategic support to locally zoned RSLs and other key partners

Use the planning system to deliver affordable housing i.e. S106 agreements, Rural Exception Sites (RES) in order to assist local communities to remain sustainable and provide homes for local people

Maximise funding e.g. Social Housing Grant and any other subsidies that Welsh Government make available

Build more affordable homes including council homes

4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

● 1.3 Develop the supply of private rented accommodation and improve access

Homes which are owned, managed or let by private landlords are part of the private rented sector (PRS). The sector is diverse, catering for many sections of the housing market. It varies considerably between the extremes from very poor quality at one end of the scale to luxurious at the other.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council will continue to work with landlords and tenants to ensure there is enough supply of good quality, well managed private rented properties, and to promote the sector positively to the public.

ACTIONS

Work with PRS to increase the supply of good quality PR accommodation available i.e. bonds/Vale Assisted Tenancy Scheme (VATS)

Provide support to individual landlords and tenants to help to maintain tenancies

Assist individuals with Bonds/Rent in advance when appropriate and put in place procedures to facilitate their repayment

● 1.4 Provide housing solutions for the rural Vale

The Vale of Glamorgan is estimated to be 85% rural and whilst poverty and housing need is concentrated in urban areas there are also pockets of deprivation in the rural Vale. The high price of homes in most rural areas mean that there is pressure on affordable housing in some communities.



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

The average house price in the Vale of Glamorgan is £219,284 whilst the average over the rural Vale is £302,678¹⁵. This is a significant difference and the lack of one and two bedroom homes in the rural Vale exacerbates the problem in terms of affordability.

Enabling people to remain or return to living where they grew up, where they have family and a connection, enables communities to support each other by providing care, support and childcare to family members. It also supports local facilities e.g. shops, schools and pubs and helps the community to remain sustainable.

There are obstacles to developing new housing in the rural Vale, including a lack of understanding, funding, land suitability and availability. The adopted LDP attempts to redress the imbalance by including housing allocations with affordable housing requirements in the rural Vale in identified minor rural settlements. Under LDP Policy MD10 – Affordable Housing Developments Outside Settlement Boundaries supports the development of small-scale affordable housing outside of settlement boundaries in rural areas, where there is evidence of housing need and where the site has a distinct physical or visual relationship with an existing settlement.

There continues to be a need for sensitive affordable development to keep our rural communities vibrant and sustainable. Developing affordable housing in the rural Vale will continue to be based on a few good practice principles:

- Building to meet identified need and working with communities to identify exactly what type of housing they need, and where.
- Close community engagement from initial consultation, through to design, planning and lifetime management of the homes. By developing strong relationships with our communities to inform development we will gain continued support for future housing developments
- Sympathetic design and materials to fit in with the surrounding area; schemes need to complement the surrounding architecture; they should also be sensitive to environmental and conservation issues.
- Recognising local connection, affordable housing should meet the area's needs and lettings are prioritised for people with a local connection



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

The Council remains part of the Welsh Government's Rural Housing project and in partnership with the local RSL's a full time Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) is employed to proactively identify housing need in rural areas and engage with communities to develop housing solutions designed specifically with the needs of rural communities in mind. The RHE develops local lettings and sales policies in partnership with RSL's and the relevant community council to ensure new affordable homes are prioritised for local people.

ACTIONS

Promote the use of rural exception sites

Focus on rural Vale i.e. RHE, local lettings and Sales policies, and work more with community councils

Consider a rural housing register

Ensure all Elected Members are aware of the Rural Housing Pledge

Support the delivery of more homes for older people and better links to transport in rural areas to assist with downsizing

Work with Planning colleagues to ensure adopted planning policies remain relevant to rural areas of the Vale



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

● 1.5 Develop appropriate housing to meet specific needs within the community

The need for additional housing is clear and whilst most of the new homes required are for 'general needs' purposes, there is also a need for appropriate housing which is designed to meet the needs of specific groups within the community to include:

Housing for older people

Like many areas, the Vale of Glamorgan Council's older population is projected to increase considerably over the next 20 years. In considering accommodation for older persons, this Strategy looks at those aged 50 and over, with a focus on the older age ranges and people with specific needs.

A strategy for 'Older Persons Accommodation' will be developed separately which will bring together the response required from a range of partners to address the challenges and achieve a suitable supply and balance of accommodation types to enable older people to live independently for as long as possible with access to appropriate services and support. Collaboration between Housing, Social Care and Planning within the Vale of Glamorgan Council and with external key partners including health services, RSLs and developers is essential to make this work and to deliver the best outcomes for older people in the Vale.

Specialist and supported housing

This is designed to meet the needs of vulnerable people in the community who may need support to live independently either in the short or long term.

Specialist accommodation is required within the County to meet the needs of vulnerable people and enable people to develop and maintain their independence. Developing sufficient specialist accommodation for client groups involved with statutory social services also helps to minimise the use of expensive residential and out of county placements.



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

The priorities for supported housing development are identified through the Housing Support Grant Programme and set out in the Housing Support Grant Delivery Plan 2021-2022. They have been in part driven by the response to the covid-19 pandemic, and the resulting increase in homeless presentations.

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Living/Housing/Public%20Sector/Supporting%20People/Housing-Support-Grant-HSG-Delivery-Plan-2020-21.docx>

Accessible and adapted housing

Individuals may require accessible, level access or adapted properties for several reasons, including physical disability, mobility issues and illness. Greater consideration must be given to the tenure options available for adapted and particularly purpose-built properties.

The Council works with RSLs and private house builders to develop a supply of new adapted, accessible and purpose-built homes and aims to provide at least two adapted, accessible or purpose-built properties on each development of affordable housing where subsidy such as Social Housing Grant is included.

To ensure equality of access to housing an Accessible Housing Panel was introduced in autumn 2020. The panel, made up of Housing and Health professionals, considers each property on its suitability for the individual applicant who has successfully bid for it through Homes4U.

Following both an individual and a property assessment, any adaptations which are viable are carried out based on the applicant's individual circumstances.

ACTIONS

Develop an Older Persons Accommodation Strategy and Action Plan

Assess the suitability and financial viability of adapting each general needs social rented property if the successful applicant has specialist requirements

Promote the types of development identified as needed by older people in the Housing LIN review

Plan and develop affordable housing for older people and consider mixed age schemes

Review the eligibility criteria for assisted home ownership to include people currently excluded who have affordability issues especially older persons

Build more homes that meet DQR and the Lifetime Homes Standard and accessible housing

Promote mixed tenure developments and links with existing communities

4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

To improve homes and communities; by ensuring housing is maintained and fit for purpose, increasing the supply of good quality, energy efficient homes in vibrant and sustainable communities.

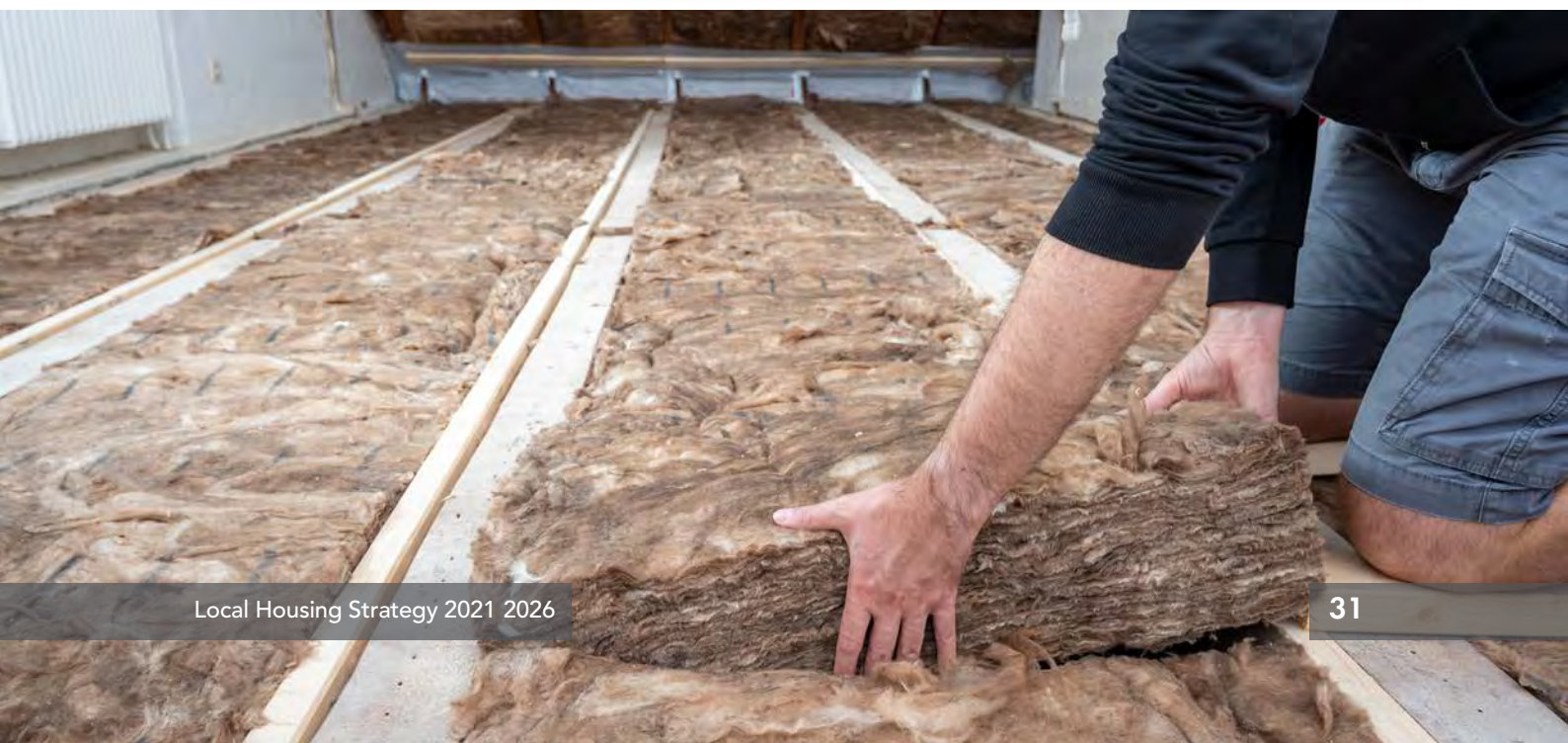
Health and housing are intrinsically linked as poor housing can exacerbate health issues. Housing is particularly relevant to the ageing population with good quality suitable housing often seen as a solution to health and social care issues. Homes may not always be poor quality to be unsuitable and adapting someone's home to meet their needs can enable them to continue living independently in their own home, relieving pressure on already stretched waiting lists.

The Council and its partners remain committed to sustaining vibrant communities and breaking the cycle of deprivation. Housing is an important aspect of regeneration and investing in housing is also an investment in communities. Maximising and making the best use of investment in housing continues to contribute to wider benefits of sustainable, vibrant and prosperous communities.

The Vale of Glamorgan's aim to improve homes and communities will be achieved by continuing to work towards the following key objectives:

● 2.1 **Improve the quality of housing across all tenures**

The introduction of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard in 2002 provided a minimum standard for social housing and all the social landlords in the Vale including the Council have achieved 100% compliance. To maintain stock at the WHQS a significant investment in planned maintenance programmes is in place, both within the VoG housing stock and that of the RSLs.



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

● 2.2 Enable homeowners to access financial help, by way of loans, to help with repairs, improvements and housing adaptations

Whilst homeowners are responsible for maintaining their homes the Council is committed to improving the quality of housing across all tenures and accepts that many homeowners especially the elderly may not have the resources needed to keep their homes in a good state of repair. The Council has a role to provide help in these circumstances and access to capital funding from Welsh Government enables the Council provide loans to private sector property owners.

As well as repairs and household improvements, over time some homes need adapting to meet their occupier's changing physical needs. Adaptations can be required due to a person's physical mobility reducing with age or through medical conditions. This demand is likely to increase as the population of older people increases and medical advances improve life chances.

Help for adaptations is provided through a range of capital grant programmes:

- Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)
- Major Adaptations Grant
- Relocation Assistance
- Council homes adaptations funding
- Physical Adaptations Grants (RSLs)

The DFG programme is a Welsh Government priority as it reduces the need for care packages, enables community rehabilitation and reduces admissions to hospital. The Council prioritises funding to the most vulnerable residents so support can be given to as many private sector residents as possible and to maximise funding.



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

The Council has also experienced an increase in the number of major adaptations being identified and continuously seeks the most cost-effective way(s) of delivering adaptations, assessing and prioritising funds to the most vulnerable tenants and so maximising the identified annual capital budget. This supports delivery of minor and major adaptations and promotes independent living in council homes.

The Council has within its stock holding, some older, larger properties which may no longer be needed as demands for family housing have changed, options to convert these large properties into smaller units will be explored.

ACTIONS

Explore alternative use of larger social housing stock

Promote the availability of loans

Promote the availability of grants for adaptations

● 2.3 Support for Town Centres

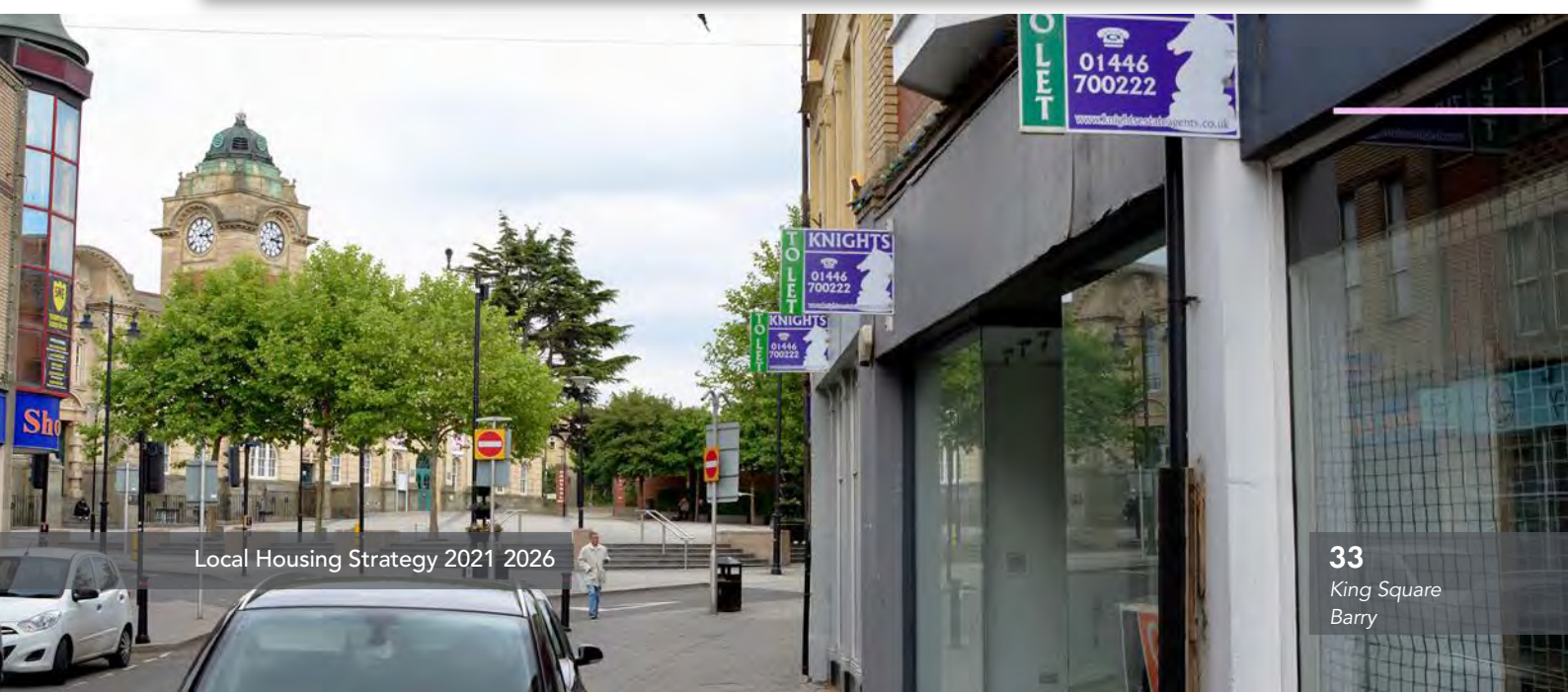
Building on the regeneration work to date, and the need for a direct and urgent response to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council is prioritising schemes that reduce the number of vacant, underutilised and redundant sites or premises in town centres.

The Council will support town centre diversification by encouraging more sustainable uses for empty sites and premises, such as residential, leisure and for key services. As outlined in the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns agenda the outcomes of this approach should focus on supporting job creation and economic growth, tackling poverty, increasing the supply and quality of the housing offer, and supporting targeted training and recruitment during construction.

ACTIONS

Improve environmental works and invest in existing areas and estates

Consider the need for wider mixed-use regeneration opportunities in areas/communities



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

● 2.4 Return empty homes to use

Empty homes represent a wasted resource and a lost opportunity. The Vale of Glamorgan has a significant need for additional market and affordable housing and yet there are over 800 empty homes across the County that could be brought back into use.

Empty homes pose problems for the Council; it is recognised that a proactive and corporate approach is required. The Council's Empty Homes Strategy 2019-24 sets out the aim to reduce, and return to use, the many long-term empty properties within the Vale.

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Living/Housing/Empty-Homes/Empty-Homes-Strategy-2019-2024-English.pdf>

The Council's Empty Homes and Loans Officer (EHLO) informs property owners of the assistance available and encourages engagement i.e. interest free loans, reduced VAT on renovation work as well as providing selling and letting options. In addition, the EHLO helps to coordinate action in relation to problem empty homes and refers cases onto relevant enforcement departments, as required.

ACTIONS

Bring back empty homes into use and consider Compulsory Purchase Orders when appropriate

Assemble, maintain and improve empty homes data

Provide advice, assistance and financial incentives to reduce the number of long-term empty properties

Prioritise empty homes for enforcement action

Raise awareness of the empty homes issue

● 2.5 Increase the energy efficiency of homes and reduce poverty

The Council has continued to improve the energy efficiency of its housing stock to meet the requirements of Welsh Government legislation in relation to decarbonisation and the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS). With original decarbonisation targets being set to reduce the carbon footprint by 80% by 2030, this has now been revised to a target of EPC* A by 2030 for all social homes following the recommendations of the "Better Homes, Better Wales, Better World" report in July 2019.

In July 2019, the Vale of Glamorgan Council declared its commitment to deliver its well-being goals as set out in its Corporate Plan 'Strong Communities with a Bright Future' and the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and the progress of initiatives in support of the existing Carbon Management Plan.

** EPC - Energy Performance Certificate*

4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Carbon reduction work undertaken on existing council housing stock focused on a fabric first approach to reduce the potential adverse effect of fuel poverty on tenants, however with the introduction of PAS 2035, the Council is keen to train staff in the principles of the “Each Home Counts” report.

The Council has reprofiled its entire council house development programme to ensure that its new homes meet the increased expectations of Welsh Government to deliver ‘net zero carbon homes’ and improve the quality of life, health and financial well-being of its residents. The Council has embraced Welsh Governments’ aims and objectives, set out in its new strategic vision for social housing entitled ‘Beautiful Homes and Places’, which will replace the current Development Quality Requirements.

The Council will employ Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) and Off Site Manufacturing (OSM) techniques, meaning that more of the structural components of its new homes will be manufactured in factory settings, which will improve the quality, energy performance and the speed at which new homes can be built. These new homes will be constructed using modular fully finished factory-built units, as well as structurally insulated panels.

The Council will work with partner RSLs and other relevant stakeholders to make MMC/Net Zero Carbon a more viable option by seeking to secure mixed tenure / use opportunities so that access to good quality energy efficient homes are available for all: not just social housing.

ACTIONS

All new council-built homes to be off the gas network, utilising electricity supplied from sustainable sources

All new homes to be EPC ‘A’ rated from 2021, transitioning to net zero carbon as soon as improvements to the National Grid allow

Work collaboratively with WG and other local authorities to standardise a template for a range of zero carbon homes

Work collaboratively with Welsh timber frame and modular home manufacturers to increase the scale and pace of delivery of zero carbon homes

Build more carbon neutral housing

Consider working towards decarbonisation of existing housing

Consider Welsh Government’s 5-year rent policy and the effects of new technology on all household bills, to ensure true affordability

4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

● 2.6 Invest in communities

RSLs are more than just landlords, and their investment in community activities adds value to the economy and aids the development of sustainable communities. The benefits of community investment include:

- Getting people into work or adult learning
- Enabling access to technology
- Money Advice services
- Working with schools
- Targeted recruitment and training opportunities in construction projects
- Helping community groups to access funding

The Council aims to not only be an excellent landlord but also a 'community investor' and to adopt a more than 'bricks and mortar approach'. Its Community Investment Strategy drives a significant investment in improving the quality of tenants' lives via a range of initiatives including employability, health and well-being, digital inclusion and promoting tenant empowerment.

ACTIONS

Invest in community projects

Educate young people about housing

Develop support for tenants around Universal Credit (UC)

Improve communication via social media

Enhance more outside space, trees etc

Review service charges



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

To provide better housing advice and support; ensuring residents have access to the housing and services they need to live independently and plan their housing futures.

Everyone needs a home and some people at certain points in their lives need advice and/or support to either access or to maintain a safe, suitable home in which they can continue to live independently. Whilst there are many public, private and third sector organisations providing a range of good quality services we will always look to improve the help on offer and to ensure it reaches the people who need it.

Homelessness can occur for a multitude of reasons. Homelessness does not mean living on the streets and applies to anyone who does not have access to an affordable, decent, secure dwelling. A proactive approach to preventing homelessness is a vital part of the service provided to ensure there are options for people which meet the different circumstances they face at different stages of their life is crucial.

Some people will need support to enable them to develop their capacity to live independently and remain in their accommodation, either short or long term and delivered in a way which suits the individual. There are some people who are not ready or able to live independently and specialist supported accommodation is commissioned through the Housing Support Grant for people with additional housing related support needs.



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

The Vale of Glamorgan Council's aims to provide better housing advice and support are:

● 3.1 **Ensure the public have access to high quality housing advice**

Many people require housing advice at some point in their lives, whether they are a young person leaving home for the first time, a family looking for a settled home, or an older person looking to move to a more manageable property. People need to be able to access timely, high quality advice and assistance to help them resolve their housing problems well before their situation reaches crisis point.

There are many organisations offering housing advice in the Vale including (but not limited to), the Council's Housing Advice Service, Pobl's One Stop Shop, Llamau's One Stop Shop for Young People, Shelter Cymru, Care and Repair in the Vale, The Citizens Advice Bureau, registered social landlords, support and care providers and numerous private organisations such as letting agents, banks, building societies, mortgage companies and financial advisors and those that provide advice on accessing private sector housing. Often resolving a housing issue will require advice from a range of organisations, not just those directly involved in housing. Of particular relevance are providers who offer advice around financial inclusion and awareness, employment, education and training, physical and mental health, community safety, legal rights and wellbeing of children and young people.

Because the underlying economic climate and changes to the welfare benefits system continue to impact on individuals and families, social landlords regularly find themselves working with households who are in a precarious financial situation. Trained staff and specialist Money Advice teams provide invaluable assistance in more complex situations, helping tenants in a variety of ways. Over the last year the Council's Money Advice team alone, made 955 home visits to clients which resulted in £397,502 in additional money for the tenants. This is in addition to interventions delivered by registered social landlords. Demand on the services continue to grow as people find themselves in financial hardship. As well as increased demand due to the roll out of universal credit and more people being out of work, a growing number of employed people are requesting assistance.

The households seeking housing advice are not limited to those threatened with homelessness, experiencing overcrowding or poor housing conditions. The number of people accessing housing advice has increased year on year, which is likely to reflect the changes in the housing market, such as the shortage of housing across all tenures, the growth of the private rented sector, increasing affordability issues, difficulties for first time buyers and the impact of welfare reform. However, it is anticipated that the Covid-19 pandemic will put unprecedented pressures on all housing advice and support providers, as more people face financial hardships resulting from the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.

4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Many continuing challenges and changes are likely to impact on the demand for housing advice, both in terms of the number of people needing advice and the type of advice and support required. The 2015-2020 Local Housing Strategy identified that the Vale of Glamorgan requires a co-ordinated response between the Council and its partners to future proof advice services to ensure they were fit for purpose going forward. Following consultation with stakeholders, Members, the people who use our services and the people delivering these services, the Vale of Glamorgan commissioned a one stop shop for housing related support in collaboration with Pobl. The service is open to anyone in need of advice or support with housing issues, regardless of personal circumstances or tenure of accommodation and demand for the service is extremely high.

ACTIONS

All social housing partners (Council and RSLs) set up and maintain a database of adapted properties

Continue the Discharge Solutions Service to help reduce delays in hospital discharge, minimise hospital admissions and provide a seamless service

Review the eligibility criteria for assisted home ownership properties for

- a) older people who are homeowners but are unable to afford to downsize or access suitable accommodation
- b) homeowners who have a specific need for an adapted/accessible home

Review and update the Aspire2Own (A2O) and Homes4U Schemes to ensure they remain fit for purpose

Promote the drop-in support services available

Maximise the use of social media

Develop a set of Customer Service Standards with relevant policies and procedures

Implement a method of obtaining regular feedback on customer services



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

● 3.2 Prevent homelessness wherever possible and provide sustainable solutions

Part 2 of The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 became legislation on 27th April 2015, replacing Part 2 of the Housing Act 1996 as the primary legislation for local authorities to meet their duties to anyone presenting with a housing need. The Act introduced several new duties to help anyone seeking housing advice and assistance from the local authority. These new duties included:

- providing assistance to everyone who is threatened with homelessness regardless of whether they fall into a priority need category or have a local connection to the authority.
- an emphasis on prevention and early intervention by placing a duty on local authorities to work with people who are at risk of losing their home within 56 days to help find a solution to their problems.
- the ability for local authorities to discharge their homeless duty into the private rented sector.
- the removal of the automatic priority previously given to prison leavers.
- The need for all local authorities to publish a four-year Homelessness Strategy for the period 2018-2022.

The Vale of Glamorgan was the highest performing Welsh local authority in 2018 and 2019 and has continued to maintain a high rate of prevention successes over the last year despite significant challenges created by the pandemic.

To date 3988 households have been assisted through the new legislation with 2462 achieving a positive outcome. Of these cases 1384 households were prevented from becoming homeless and 1078 households were successfully rehoused.

There has been an increasing recognition of the need to provide effective housing options for people who are non-statutorily homeless in recent years, and the Council has implemented a range of measures to improve the services it can offer to these clients. These include a frontline comprehensive housing advice service, including direct help where necessary to mediate/ negotiate with landlords, and the provision of bonds and rent in advance to help secure privately rented accommodation.



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

The Service has made significant progress over the past 5 years. Collaborative working has become embedded in the Service allowing access to specialist advice and support offered by partner agencies. A Shelter Cymru advice worker has been seconded to the team to assist with the transition period between the old and new legislative framework as well as providing advice to the team to ensure that they are adhering to the legislation. In addition, the Housing Solutions Team has continued to work very closely with the Supporting People Team to identify and develop complementary support services to assist clients more effectively. The homelessness assessment process has been enhanced by the introduction of support workers onsite from Pobl and Platform. These workers assist clients in crisis, at the time of presentation, and have proved an invaluable tool in preventing homelessness and assisting clients to maintain their accommodation.

The Covid-19 pandemic put extraordinary pressure on Homelessness Services with Welsh Government instructed authorities in Wales that if someone was roofless or sofa surfing, they should be treated as vulnerable due to the dangers of the pandemic and must be provided with temporary accommodation. Welsh Government has made it clear that they are committed to ensuring that this new way of working is embedded in the way local authorities assess homeless applicants going forward. This will therefore continue to put pressure on the service to find new and innovative solutions to meet the needs of all citizens with a housing need, including those with high support needs and chaotic lifestyles.

In response to this challenge additional funding was made available to local authorities through the Covid Recovery Fund, enabling the Vale of Glamorgan to deliver 11 additional units of temporary accommodation utilising modern methods of construction (MMC). However, Welsh Government have made a clear commitment to ensure that no one is returned to homelessness following the pandemic, which will continue to put pressure on the service to find innovative ways to address the housing needs of anyone affected by homelessness. The Vale of Glamorgan Housing Solutions Service has however embedded rapid rehousing into its ethos for many years and helps anyone experiencing homelessness whether they fit into the traditional priority groups or not.



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has recognised that to meet the needs of vulnerable households with complex issues, it needs to use supported housing in the most effective way for clients experiencing or at risk of homelessness. To achieve this, a single point of access was introduced in 2018 for all Housing Support Grant funded services to ensure that the most vulnerable clients are prioritised.

In addition, the Supporting People Team assessed the needs of all households in emergency accommodation as part of its needs mapping for 2021-2022, and will continue to assess these needs as part of their annual needs mapping process going forward to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are included in future service provision and development.

ACTIONS

Prevent and reduce homelessness

Ensure the appropriate allocation of sensitive let properties

Develop a Youth Homelessness Prevention Service

Develop a hospital discharge process to include homelessness clients who do not meet the Discharge Solutions Service criteria

Explore the need to develop a direct access hostel

● 3.3 Enable access to the right type of housing

It is important that people in the Vale of Glamorgan can access the right type of accommodation, that is affordable and suitable for their circumstances.

Households sometimes find it difficult to find and access suitable affordable housing in their preferred neighbourhoods, which meet their individual needs. At different points in people's lives, different types of housing might be needed as personal, work and family situations change.

Improving access to suitable housing for all households contributes to an effective housing system; creating more sustainable housing solutions and enabling people to live independently for longer in their own communities. The Council works closely with its partners to make the best use of the available housing stock and make it easier for people to find suitable housing solutions.

Homes4U

Through the Homes4U Scheme, the Council and RSL's in the Vale of Glamorgan advertise and allocate social rented housing. The Homes4U policy has been agreed between all social landlords operating in the county; the Council, Newydd, Wales & West, Hafod and United Welsh Housing Associations.

4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Operating one single allocations scheme provides benefits to residents as they only have to register once to be eligible for properties available from five landlords. Homes4U was the first 'choice based' scheme in Wales, and aims to provide greater opportunity for applicants to decide where they wish to live by allowing them to bid for homes in areas, they prefer to live in.

Over 6000 households are registered with Homes4U and as there are on average 300 lets per year, many households have no realistic prospect of being housed. In these cases, it is more customer focused to provide advice about alternative housing and ensure people have a realistic understanding of their options. In addition, for those in higher bands and likely to be housed, 'choice' is limited due to the limited supply of housing:

- Most of the social housing is in Barry, outside of Barry the supply is limited.
- Demand for 1-bedroom properties significantly outweighs the number of properties available.
- Older persons housing stock is primarily flats in sheltered housing complexes. Very few bungalows are advertised for general lets.

The Homes4U scheme and allocations policy will be reviewed during 2021-2022 to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose and fits within the wider housing solutions service.

Aspire2Own

Aspire2Own is a shared equity scheme run in partnership with registered social landlords, to help people who are financially stable but unable to buy a home without assistance at open market prices, usually first-time buyers. The scheme gives buyers an opportunity to purchase a property for a percentage of the open market value, and the housing association retains an equity share. The equity share does not attract interest and no rent is payable, thus making the property more affordable. Buyers can also staircase up to full ownership at any time.



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Vale Assisted Tenancy Scheme

The Vale Assisted Tenancy Scheme (VATS) provides greater housing options for households at risk of homelessness or those who are financially unable to access private rented accommodation without financial assistance. Essentially it is a private rented sector access scheme, in which a dedicated team within the Council's Housing Solutions Service work with tenants and landlords to secure properties for households in need.

Financial support is provided, in the form of bonds and rent in advance. Landlords can receive direct payment of Housing Benefit if their property is let by the Council, as well as ongoing advice and support for both the landlord and tenants for the life of the tenancy. The scheme continues to develop and grow, most recently with the commissioning of a dedicated support service for people accommodated through the VATS scheme and the introduction of a quarterly landlord forum, attended by the VATS Team and the Private Rented Support Team. This is open to all private rented sector landlords, whether they are working with the VATS scheme or not.

ACTIONS

Support hospital discharges for those with complex needs

Develop specialist housing e.g. homelessness hostels for street homeless, female only accommodation, hostels for women escaping DV, ex-offenders, people with LD/
Physical disabilities, accessible supported housing

Ensure better integration of housing, health and social care services

Assist people downsizing to release larger properties

● 3.4 Provide support to enable people to develop and maintain their capacity to live independently

The Housing Support Grant (HSG) is an amalgamation of three existing grants; the Supporting People Programme Grant, the Homelessness Prevention Grant and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement Grant. The HSG is an early intervention grant programme to support activity, which prevents people from becoming homeless, stabilises their housing situation, or helps potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation. The HSG Programme is overseen by the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group (RHSCG) and links closely with the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) through this mechanism, strengthening the links between Housing and Health to ensure the best possible outcomes for vulnerable residents.

Alongside the development of the HSG, Welsh Government established a Children and Communities Grant (CCG), encompassing Flying Start, Families First, the Legacy Fund, Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People, St David's Day Fund, Communities for Work Plus and Childcare and Play. Welsh Government has set clear expectations that the CCG and the HSG should work in a seamless fashion, providing integrated services where appropriate.

4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

ACTIONS

Develop an Older Persons Housing Strategy

Meet the housing and support needs of an aging population

Work with the Safer Vale Team to deliver services in accordance with the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Strategy

Establish a Medical/Accessible Panel, policy & procedure

Aim 4

EQUAL ACCESS TO HOUSING AND HOUSING SERVICES

To provide equal access to housing and housing services; to recognise and respond to the diversity of housing needs of people in the Vale of Glamorgan

Equality is about treating people according to their needs to ensure equal opportunity and equality of outcome. This Strategy aims to provide housing and housing services that respond to people's different needs.

The Equality Act 2010 aims to ensure that everyone has the right to be treated fairly at work and when using public services. The public sector equality duty requires public bodies to pay due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations.

This forms the basis of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's aim to provide equal access to housing and housing services. This aim will be achieved by working towards the following key objectives:

• 4.1 Understand and recognise the needs of residents

To respond to the diverse housing needs of people in the Vale of Glamorgan it is necessary to understand the needs of residents, in particular the people falling within the eight strands of equality and the minority who use the Welsh language. As far as possible, housing and housing related services should monitor the characteristics of people accessing their services to ensure access is equal and that certain groups of people are not disadvantaged or prevented from accessing services.

4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

The Council ensures that organisations who are commissioned to provide services e.g. support providers, advice agencies and contractors also promote equal access to their services. Requirements are detailed in legal contracts and compliance is monitored.

Registered social landlords also have duties to promote and comply with equality duties and are monitored as part of the Welsh Government's Regulatory Framework for RSLs.

Equality monitoring should be a key tool used by providers of housing and housing related services to improve the service they provide. Any gaps in knowledge or understanding of the needs of people from minority groups should then be addressed.

Services are at their best when they are informed, or led, by those who use them. Services should reflect the needs of users; being aware of, and proactive about the diversity of customers to ensure that housing organisations are able to provide the right services to meet the identified needs.

Providers of housing and housing related services should actively promote the involvement of service users and potential service users, in particular with groups of people who may not traditionally engage with consultation and may be considered to be hard to reach.

ACTIONS

Consider accessible homes for younger people, who do not meet the age requirements for traditional step down and care/supported housing options

Promote the use of Welsh language when appropriate

Analyse current equality data collected and fill gaps in collection

Use the data collected to inform service improvement

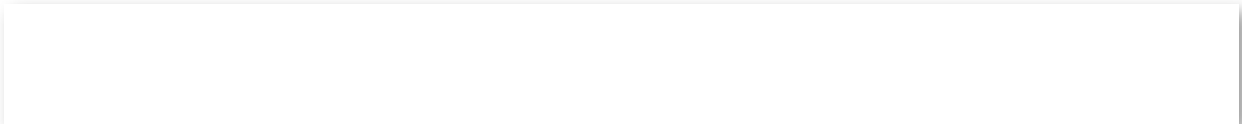
Ensure service delivery complies with the set standards

4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

● 4.2 Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Housing organisations play a key role in eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Working within communities, housing providers can promote a positive approach to diversity, promote understanding and good relations between people who have different backgrounds and experiences. In turn this contributes to enhancing and improving the quality of life in local areas.



● 4.3 Respond to the diverse needs of people in the Vale of Glamorgan

All residents in the Vale of Glamorgan should have equal access to housing and housing services. In promoting this aim, it is acknowledged that some groups of people within the population require particular attention. The Council will actively seek to plan and meet the need for housing and housing related services for:

- The Black and Minority Ethnic Populations
- People who use the Welsh language
- Gypsy and Travellers
- Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Migrant Workers
- Households with disabilities
- LGBT service users



4 Our Aims (continued)

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Regarding Gypsies and Travellers, the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 requires local authorities to undertake Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA) and includes a duty on local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers where a need has been identified in those Assessments. Where the need for sites has been identified, but not met, there is a power which enables Welsh Ministers to compel local authorities to provide sites for Gypsy and Traveller communities. Sites will need planning permission in the same way as any other development.

The most recent GTAA for the Vale of Glamorgan Council was undertaken in 2016. It estimated additional pitch provision needed for Gypsies and Travellers in the Vale of Glamorgan for the 5 years of the GTAA and for the next 5 years of the Development Plan period to be 2 additional pitches, and for the remainder of the Development Plan period to 2026 there is a need for a further 18 pitches. This gives a total need for the whole Development Plan period of 20 additional pitches. These figures should be seen as the projected amount of provision which is necessary to meet the statutory obligations towards identifiable needs of the population arising in the area. Regarding transit sites the GTAA recommended that there is not a need for the Council to provide a transit site in the Vale of Glamorgan. However, recent discussions within the South East Wales Region have highlighted that the transit need should be addressed on a regional basis, with the relevant Local Authorities collaborating to identify a regional site.

The Council's next GTAA is required to be produced by 2021 in line with the requirements of 'Undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (May 2015).

A Strategic Housing Board was established in 2019 which is responsible for working to meet the needs of gypsies and travellers in the Vale. This supersedes the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Board established in 2016. It was decided in May 2019, by the Strategic Housing Board that a new site selection process would be undertaken. A 'call' for gypsy and traveller sites was undertaken between 17th February and 30th March 2020, however no sites were submitted. Work is ongoing to identify a site to address the long term need for gypsy and traveller accommodation in the Vale of Glamorgan.

ACTIONS

Identify a suitable site for gypsies and travellers in the Vale to meet the accommodation needs identified in the Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2016 (GTAA)

5 Consultation and Feedback

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

This Local Housing Strategy has been developed in partnership with a wide range of public, private and third sector partners.

- A consultation event was held on 14th February 2020 where evidence was gathered.
- Consultation has taken place with the many housing and landlord forums as well as the cell meetings set up during the Covid Pandemic.

Local Housing Strategy Consultation Event

A consultation event was organised for partners to inform the development of the Local Housing Strategy. The event saw presentations and workshops, with feedback collated on four areas at the forefront of housing. These were delivering more:

- Low Carbon Housing
- Affordable Housing
- Sustainable Communities
- Specialist Housing

A wide range of partners attended the event and a full list is available in the appendices, with detailed feedback available on request.

Ongoing Consultation

Following the event at which the Local Housing Strategy was developed, ongoing consultation has taken place throughout 2020 despite the Covid 19 Global Pandemic. The Pandemic changed the way everyone lives their lives on a day-to-day basis and has affected the way people work, with priority now being given to public health matters and with new legislation implemented to ensure safety. This has led to new ways of working and new and improved priorities as well as additional funding sources to deal with Homelessness and Housing Support Services.



6 Implementation, Monitoring and Review

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Implementation

The implementation and delivery of the aims and objectives within this strategy rely strongly on the strong working relationships with partners and stakeholders that already exist. The strategy will build on these partnerships and existing links, ensuring all partners understand the aims of the strategy and the part they play in achieving the strategic objectives.

The aims and objectives in this strategy will form the basis of a five year action plan, to be developed with partners. The action plan will provide details of the key activities to be carried out and identify clear outcomes, along with the lead responsible officers and/or organisations. Implementation will be closely monitored by the Council's Overarching Housing Forum and reviewed and updated as necessary. The Council cannot deliver the strategy in isolation and partnership working will be essential to ensure that the best outcomes and solutions can be achieved.

Monitoring and Review

In its role as strategic housing enabler, the Council will monitor, review and report on the progress made against the action plan. A summary and an up-to-date copy of the action plan will be provided annually to the relevant Scrutiny Committee.



7 References

Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

- ¹ The Vale of Glamorgan Local Housing Strategy 2015 – 20
- ² valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/planning_and_building_control/planning/planning_policy/planning-policy.aspx
- ³ valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-structure/minutes,_agendas_and_reports/agendas/cabinet/2019/19-07-15.aspx
- ⁴ statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Housing/New-House-Building
- ⁵ statswales.gov.wales
- ⁶ gov.wales/affordable-housing-provision
- ⁷ Census 2011
- ⁸ Welsh Government Local Authority Household Projections for Wales
- ⁹ Vale of Glamorgan LDP
- ¹⁰ Vale of Glamorgan Local Housing Market Assessment 2019
- ¹¹ Index of Multiple Deprivation for Wales
- ¹² Hometrack House Prices
- ¹³ Hometrack Rental Costs
- ¹⁴ UK House Price Index 2020