

Draft Housing Strategy 2025-2030

Public Engagement

A Housing Strategy is a key strategic document for a local authority and this one will be the first for Westmorland and Furness Council.

It will outline our vision and aims for housing across the area, our priorities and the actions we will take to deliver our strategic housing role. It links to our Council Plan and will enable us to demonstrate to residents, partners, funding bodies and Government our strategic planning and organisational governance.

Your feedback will be valuable in helping to ensure the strategy is relevant, ambitious, and deliverable, and that the challenges and actions meet the needs of all stakeholders.

This is our first Housing Strategy for Westmorland and Furness.

It outlines our vision for housing across Westmorland and Furness, our priorities and the actions we will take and provides a framework for the housing policies and projects we will deliver over the next five years.

Our draft key objectives:

Our people

- **Preventing and tackling homelessness**
- **Meeting the needs of our ageing population**
- **Meeting supported housing needs and the needs of specific groups**

Our place

- **Growing the supply of affordable and available housing**
- **Addressing the rural housing crisis**
- **Supporting communities through neighbourhood renewal and regeneration**

Our homes

- **Decarbonising the housing stock, including our Council homes, making them more energy efficient and affordable to live in, reducing fuel poverty**
- **Ensuring that new housing supply of all tenures contributes to our net zero ambitions**
- **Addressing stock condition issues, improving poor quality housing in all tenures**

THEME 1: Our People

Preventing and Tackling Homelessness

Homelessness is a growing problem across Westmorland and Furness, exacerbated by the pandemic, and the on-going cost of living crisis. In addition, the supply of affordable housing in both the private rented and social rented sectors has significantly declined in the last three years. Despite these challenges we have achieved some successes in preventing homelessness, by taking proactive approaches to prevention and seeking innovative accommodation solutions.

As significant pressure remains, with sharp rises in the number of homeless assessments.

By far the biggest impact has been on the increased use of temporary accommodation for homeless households and the consequent increase in spending.

The use and cost of temporary accommodation is likely to continue to rise, as more households are threatened with homelessness and a reduced supply of “move-on” accommodation in both the private and social rented sectors.

We will meet these challenges by:

- Homelessness is a growing problem across Westmorland and Furness, exacerbated by the pandemic, and the on-going cost of living crisis. In addition, the supply of affordable housing in both the private rented and social rented sectors has significantly declined in the last three years. Despite these challenges we have achieved some successes in preventing homelessness, by taking proactive approaches to prevention and seeking innovative accommodation solutions.
- As significant pressure remains, with sharp rises in the number of homeless assessments.
- By far the biggest impact has been on the increased use of temporary accommodation for homeless households and the consequent increase in spending.
- The use and cost of temporary accommodation is likely to continue to rise, as more households are threatened with homelessness and a reduced supply of “move-on” accommodation in both the private and social rented sectors.

Meeting the needs of our ageing population

Currently one in four of our residents is aged 65 and over. The proportion of over 65s is predicted to increase further, with one in three of our residents expected to be 65 and over by 2043. Crucially, the number of over 85-year-olds, who are more likely to use our services, is expected to grow by over 50% during the same period. We will need to develop our housing offer to ensure that it meets the needs of our growing older population.

It is estimated that the proportion of the population residing within the Westmorland and Furness area aged 65 and over who need help with at least one self-care activity is anticipated to increase by 27.4% between 2023 and 2040 (POPPI).

We need to look at new models of Extra Care and other specialised housing for older people. We recognise that we cannot meet all needs through the provision of new specialist accommodation and many older households will choose to remain living in their own home. Our [Healthy Homes project](#) and Furness (HIAs) will be essential ensuring that as many older residents as possible are supported to live independently.

We will focus on our Council housing stock, which was developed specifically for older people. We will update this stock as part of our Asset Management Strategy to ensure that it meets the needs of our older households.

We will meet these challenges by:

- Updating our extra care offer to meet changing needs, including developing new models of extra care to accommodate smaller schemes in rural areas, supporting those with complex needs, including working age people with learning and physical disabilities, as well as people with dementia.
- Working with Health and Social Care colleagues to ensure a holistic approach to meeting the needs of older people,
- Updating our own homes to provide improved specialist and adaptable housing for older people.
- Working with housing providers and residents to ensure that housing supports health and wellbeing, such as facilitating active travel and implementing smoke free homes.
- Working with housing providers to ensure that the housing environment maximizes opportunities for social inclusion.
- Developing a Technical Research paper on ageing well to support the development of Council housing stock.

Meeting the supported housing needs and the needs of specific groups

Supported housing needs vary across Westmorland and Furness and include the needs of those with physical and learning disabilities, and residents with mental health issues. 18.7% of residents in Westmorland and Furness were limited in some way by a health or disability. Whilst some residents with support needs will seek some form of specialist accommodation, many will want to remain living in their own homes.

For those with physical disabilities the Council's Home Improvement Agencies (HIA) in conjunction with Health and Social Care are well placed to support people living independently, including through the use of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). Better integration with Health and Social Care is key to ensuring that we meet other

supported housing needs, including learning difficulties and mental health needs, as well as families with children with disabilities. The Council now has a great opportunity to marry up its resources to meet all supported housing needs. The retention of a structured housing pathway for care leavers through a joint partnership with Children and Young Peoples Services is a priority; ensuring that this is resourced effectively going forward.

We will continue to meet the housing needs of our Gypsy and Traveller communities, through the provision of both high quality and easily accessible sites and support services.

A more recent challenge has been the resettlement of refugees and asylum seekers across Westmorland and Furness. In parts of Westmorland and Furness, refugees and asylum seekers have been located in hotels and other temporary accommodation. As these communities begin to settle in local neighbourhoods, there is a need to support them to secure more permanent accommodation and provide on-going support services.

Veterans and Armed Forces Families

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) Veteran Survey 2022 indicates that the majority of veterans (78.9%) live in an owner-occupied or shared ownership house or flat. This is higher than the general population. A further 8.9% lived in privately rented accommodation and 6% lived in a socially rented house or flat, with 2.3% living with family or friends. Around 1 in 400 veterans said they were homeless, rough sleeping or living in a refuge for domestic abuse.

Data from the 2021 Census shows the proportion of veterans residing in Westmorland and Furness is low - however numbers are above the national average. The shared social housing allocation scheme 'Cumbria Choice Based Lettings' reflects Westmorland and Furness' commitment to Veterans, by including provision under the Qualification Rules in relation to Local Connection and Financial Resources and by giving additional preference to meet the relevant criteria.

We will meet these challenges by:

- Encouraging/ensuring that new homes are built to Homes for Life standard
- Ensuring better integration of health and social care
- Enhancing home improvement services to ensure that homes can be adapted to meet the needs of residents.
- Working together to deliver a more efficient and effective Young Peoples Housing Pathway.
- Helping residents to live independently with the aid of assistive technology, including undertaking an options appraisal of all available service delivery models.
- Supporting refugee resettlement pathways and support services via a dedicated refugee resettlement team.

- Ensuring that the housing needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities are met.
- Strengthening links with health services to ensure access to preventative healthcare is maximized
- Working with residents to implement Smoke Free Homes

Temporary Accommodation Strategy

Our key objectives are to:

- Provide sufficient compliant temporary accommodation to meet demand and homelessness duties.
- Reduce time spent in temporary accommodation.
- Standardise our temporary accommodation offer.

Our key challenges are:

- Shortage of temporary accommodation with demand outstripping supply.
- Taking units from stock reduces units for move on/settled accommodation.
- People presenting with more complex needs, making it harder to source settled accommodation.
- Households spending longer in temporary accommodation due to shortage of affordable accommodation.
- Increased number of households with children.
- High costs associated with Bed and Breakfast accommodation (cost per night plus restrictions on housing benefit income)

We will meet these challenges by focusing on:

- Activities which prevent people needing to access temporary accommodation.
- Increasing effective use of existing temporary accommodation (reducing voids, supporting households in temporary accommodation).
- Sourcing additional units of temporary accommodation (moribund properties, hard to let units).
- Better understanding all costs associated with the provision of different forms of temporary accommodation.
- Reshaping services to provide a consistent offer of self-contained accommodation and appropriate support.
- Working with partners to provide support for households with complex needs.
- Improving data use and case management monitoring.

Theme 2: OUR PLACES

Growing the supply of affordable and available housing

Parts of Westmorland and Furness have some of the least affordable housing outside the South East of England, with average property prices in Westmorland & Furness being 7.3 times the average household income (© Experian 2023 - All rights reserved).

Affordability is exacerbated by Westmorland and Furness's low wage economy; approximately 37.8% of Westmorland and Furness' residents have gross household incomes below £30,000 per annum. This means that fewer local households can afford to purchase a home on the open market and are reliant on other forms of tenure.

We understand that a lack of access to affordable housing acts as a barrier to economic growth, as well as putting pressure on the delivery of essential services as those on lower income struggle to access housing within our high value constrained housing market and we are committed to increasing the availability of affordable housing.

Home ownership levels are high in Westmorland and Furness with 71.6% of households owning their own home (compared to England: 63.75%). By contrast social rented housing accounts for less than 11% of our households (England: 16.6%). In some localities (such as the Bowness and Lyth Ward or Dalton North) it is less than 10%. As a result, we have a chronic lack of affordable housing, particularly in some of our most expensive places to live.

"Our Places" are also affected by growing shortages of affordable private rented housing. The attractive nature of Westmorland and Furness makes it a popular holiday destination. Since the Covid pandemic the demand for 'staycations' has risen, which has resulted in an increase in the levels of short-term holiday lets.

Decreasing numbers of private rentals result in higher demand and rising rents, making private rented homes less affordable to would be renters on low incomes. It is also severely affects residential housing in each of our Lake District National Parks. As a result, we urgently need to increase the supply of affordable housing.

We will meet these challenges by:

- Facilitating the delivery of 200 affordable homes through affordable housing grant allocation
- Securing 1500 affordable homes through S106 agreements over the next five years
- Establishing strategic partnerships with registered providers and house builders to increase the pace of delivery
- Developing an ambitious Council Housing (Housing Revenue Account) Business Plan, which will include growing the Council's housing stock.

- Maximising all sources of funding to support affordable housing viability and boost delivery.
- Reviewing all our land assets to identify land that could be used for new housing (affordable and market homes).
- Developing our affordable housing delivery model, ensuring that we capture the best delivery models and develop them further to enhance affordable housing supply.
- Working with partners, to better understand the need for key worker accommodation across Westmorland and Furness.

Addressing the rural housing crisis

Westmorland and Furness covers 3,760 square kilometres of predominantly rural terrain, where 55% of our population live. There are only three towns in Westmorland & Furness with a population in excess of 10,000 people and these are: Barrow, Penrith and Kendal.

Sparsely and super-sparsely populated communities present a challenge in terms of inclusion and community sustainability, as well as service delivery. In sparsely populated rural areas people can experience physical and digital isolation with difficulty accessing services, jobs and transport links.

Housing is more expensive within these areas, both to rent and to buy and affordable housing supply is limited.

We know that rural poverty is often hidden and the financially vulnerable are dealing with higher cost of living increases, fuel poverty and insecure employment.

More rural affordable housing with better connectivity is essential to ensuring inclusion and the sustainability of our rural communities.

We will meet these challenges by:

- Supporting the Rural Housing Partner Led Housing groups – to ensure a supply of housing is maintained, of the right quality, type and tenure in rural areas.
- Keeping sufficient focus on affordable housing supply in our rural communities affordable housing supply is limited.
- Bringing empty homes back into use.
- Targeting rural properties with Category 1 hazards

Supporting communities through neighbourhood renewal

Whilst some areas of Westmorland and Furness are relatively affluent with low levels of deprivation, there are some very high concentrations of deprivation.

The 2019 Indices of Deprivation (IoD) published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) classified 12 of the Westmorland and Furness' 144 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) being within the 10% most

deprived areas of England. These localities were all located within the Furness Locality area. Additionally, 17.9% of children in Westmorland and Furness live in relative low-income families, however the levels of child poverty fluctuate across the unitary area. For example, the figure for the Old Barrow and Hindpool Ward is 40.7%, twice the national average (19.8%) A significant part of Barrow-in-Furness is within the most 10% deprived neighbourhoods in the country and 85% of Westmorland and Furness's most deprived residents reside in Barrow-in-Furness. However, it is important to note that not all socially and economically disadvantaged people will be living in the most deprived areas of Westmorland and Furness and that they may reside in more affluent areas, therefore consideration still needs to be given to all.

- Contributing to the levels of deprivation are:
- A low wage economy.
- High levels of households reliant on benefits.
- Low educational and skill levels.
- A poorer physical environment.
- Significantly high concentrations of private rented properties

There is a need to develop a holistic neighbourhood renewal approach to address these issues in partnership with other key service areas (Planning, Economic Development, Environmental services, Health) and external partners.

There is significant investment already committed for Westmorland and Furness, creating the conditions for further investment and supporting our plans for growth in housing and employment.

Government, BAE Systems and Westmorland and Furness Council are now working together as Team Barrow, a dynamic partnership to deliver the Defence Nuclear Enterprise efficiently and securely and ensure Barrow can meet the resultant demands placed on it.

In March 2024 the Barrow Transformation Fund was announced by Government to make Barrow an even more attractive place to live, work, and build a career. This investment of potentially £200m over the next 10 years will include projects to support people towards work, improve health outcomes, build more homes, develop the transport network and support local schools. A further £5 million secured from April 2024 to set up the Barrow Delivery Board and enable Homes England to create a masterplan for Barrow and its surrounding areas. This masterplan will be essential to identify opportunities for growth and regeneration, both in the short and long terms.

These investments and opportunities create a compelling offer that will help to tackle deprivation, transform the town and the wider area for future generations.

Barrow was also one of the first towns in the country to secure investment of £25m from the Government's Towns Fund for seven exciting projects that will help the area

to thrive for generations. These include a new Learning Quarter and University of Cumbria campus, improved active travel infrastructure, housing market renewal and a network of community hubs including a £6 million Outdoor Learning Centre.

This investment has the potential to unlock significant future housing sites including four sites in and around Ulverston and Swarthmoor which will deliver 1,000 new homes. Marina Village, a 25-hectare brownfield site in Barrow owned by the Council, has £30m from Homes England's Brownfield Infrastructure and Land fund and the Getting Building Fund to allow the development of 800 new homes.

A further £16.5m Levelling Up Fund regeneration scheme will reinvigorate Barrow town centre through enhancement of the Market Hall and improvements to the public realm and transport infrastructure.

Kendal and Penrith will also benefit from over £20m from the Levelling Up Fund for projects to regenerate Kendal town centre and create a new enterprise hub.

£10m UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funding will be used to support our local businesses and improving skills and employment opportunities for our residents.

Dalton, Ulverston and Penrith will each benefit from £3m from the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, which provides investment to improve places, support business innovation and skills, enable infrastructure and encourage green growth.

These projects are catalysts, not just for the delivery of housing but generating economic growth and key infrastructure improvements that will benefit the whole of Westmorland and Furness.

Tackling empty homes will also support regeneration in local neighbourhoods and will provide more homes for local households, including more affordable homes.

A new Local Plan is being prepared for Westmorland & Furness, with government proposals to radically increase housing targets, we will be looking for development sites across the area to enable this growth and updating evidence such as our housing need assessment.

We will meet these challenges by:

- Developing an approach to neighbourhood renewal for our most deprived neighbourhoods.
- Working with key partners to support communities through projects that will improve their local environment.
- Working in partnership with Homes England to drive strategic regeneration projects across Westmorland and Furness.
- Developing a new Empty Homes Strategy to bring long term empty properties back into use.
- Implementing renewal projects that consider active travel, access to healthcare and other services such as education, sports and leisure.

- Explore the scope of planning policy to develop healthier food environments

Empty Homes Strategy

This Strategy aims to provide an understanding as to why homes become empty, the issues caused by empty homes within our area and what advice and assistance is available to the owners of empty homes, and the tools we can use.

The Empty Homes Strategy has four main objectives:

Objective 1: Maintain relevant, accurate and current information relating to empty homes in the area, including the development of a GIS mapping system for Empty Homes.

Objective 2: Bring empty homes back into use through extra resource, encouragement, advice and assistance.

Objective 3: Where all other negotiation has failed, consider options for taking the appropriate enforcement action to ensure empty homes are brought back into use

Objective 4: Raise awareness of the Empty Homes Strategy with residents, dwelling owners and town and parish councils.

Key Actions:

- Introduce a web-based GIS system to enable parish councils, community groups and residents to report empty dwellings.
- Continue to receive monthly updates on residential dwellings from Council Tax.
- Draft and implement Empty Homes procedure.
- Ensure all empty dwellings which are empty for over 12 months have completed a scoring matrix.
- Forge links with the Council's Planning department, Lake District National Park (Planning) and Historic England.
- Contact owners of dwellings left vacant for over six months to establish the reason why dwellings are empty and provide education/advice.
- Explore opportunities for grant repair/empty homes loan schemes with the condition the property is brought back into use within 12 months.
- Matchmaker scheme. The Council can help owners of empty homes to try and find potential buyers. The Empty Property Matchmaker Scheme brings together the owners of empty homes within the boundary of Westmorland and Furness and would include private individuals, investors and developers who want to purchase empty homes in the area.
- Establish an Enforced Sales procedure.
- Establish an Empty Dwelling Management Order procedure.
- Establish a Compulsory Purchase Order procedure.

- Ensure that matrices for dwellings empty for over two years are kept up to date and dwellings prioritised for potential formal action.
- Establish a media campaign to publicise the Empty Homes Strategy including the creation of a W&F Empty Homes website.

Theme 3: OUR HOMES

Decarbonising the housing stock

In Westmorland and Furness over 38.0% of the housing stock was built before 1930 (England: 25.7%). Older housing stock is often less well insulated and less energy efficient due to its construction, making it more difficult to improve.

This in turn is a contributory factor to fuel poverty - over 15% of our households were recorded as being in fuel poverty in 2020. With rising energy costs and wider costs of living increases, the proportion of households experiencing fuel poverty is likely to rise.

In Westmorland and Furness, approximately 17.1% of households privately rent their home, which is just below the national average of around 20.3%.

Privately rented stock tends to be older, has a higher rate of non-decent homes, and a higher proportion of lower income households. There will also be higher rates of less energy efficient privately rented stock and, consequently, higher proportions of households in fuel poverty.

Of all EPC assessments conducted between January 2023 and January 2024 in Westmorland and Furness, where an E, F or G rating was given 14.4% were for properties cited as privately rented.

Work has already started to retrofit the council's housing stock, with work underway in the Barrow-in-Furness locality to retrofit homes with an EPC E or F rating to bring them up to an EPC C. However, a comprehensive plan for all our council homes needs to be developed to ensure all properties meet EPC "C".

We will meet these challenges by:

- Developing a social housing decarbonisation plan, with the aim of getting all our council homes to achieve EPC C.
- Continuing to invest to ensure all of our Council Housing Stock maintains the Decent Homes Standard
- Working with our Registered Provider partners to implement investment plans to make their homes warmer and more affordable to live in.
- Attracting Government funding to improve and decarbonise our private sector housing homes.

Ensuring that the new housing supply of all tenures contributes to our net zero ambitions

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- Attracting Government funding to improve and decarbonise our private sector housing homes.

We will meet these challenges by:

- Implementing new Design Codes to ensure an increase in the quality of new housing, working towards the Future Homes Standard and Nationally Described Space Standards.
- Ensuring that all new Council homes are built to Future Homes Standard and meet EPC C as a minimum with a net zero carbon aim.
- Supporting our Registered Provider partners to meet net zero carbon ambitions in the delivery of new affordable homes.
- Explore options to embed the Healthy Homes Principles within the development of the local plan and design code.
- Developing a Technical Research paper on ageing well to support the development of the Local Plan.

Addressing stock condition issues, improving poor quality housing in all tenures

The English Housing Survey (2021-22) shows 14% of all homes were deemed non-decent. Within the private rented sector the proportion is higher at 23%.

Westmorland and Furness Council carried out a stock condition survey of our Council owned housing stock in 2024, all of our Housing Stock meets Decent Homes Standard.

The level of resources needed to tackle the issue is challenging, especially in the private rented sector.

We have successfully bid for Government funding to set up a Pathfinder project to increase resources in our Private Sector Housing Renewal teams, with special focus on locations where resources have been scarce previously.

Investment from our Growth budget will assist in resourcing our Private Sector enforcement and empty homes team.

We will meet these challenges by:

- Tackling stock condition issues, improving poor quality housing across all tenures.

- Updating homes to provide disabled adaptations through the use of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to meet the needs of those with physical disabilities, linking in with the Council's Home Improvement Agency in conjunction with Health and Social Care to support people living independently.
- Housing Market Renewal Projects.
- Using our legal powers to enforce and raise standards in the private rented sector - taking a consistent and firm approach to raising housing standards, including the further development of selective licensing schemes.

Ensuring the Council housing stock remains decent and continues to improve

Managing 2,600 council homes, we are a major social housing landlord. We want to ensure that all of our residents live in a decent home.

Whilst our stock meets the Decent Homes Standard, we know we must continue to invest to continue to improve and ensure all of our stock achieves EPC C.

As well as bringing the properties that are not at EPC C up to this level, we will invest in an improvement programme to ensure that our homes are the highest standard possible.

Awaab's law requires social housing landlords to adhere to strict time limits to address dangerous hazards such as damp and mould in their properties and forms part of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act.

We will tackle any damp and mould issues in our properties effectively and have developed a new 'damp and mould standard' approved by Cabinet to respond to all complaints of damp and mould within set timescales.

We aim to become an exemplar landlord, providing high quality tenancy services.

We will meet the expectations of the Charter for Social Housing Residents and look to develop our key policies in line with this and the new Social Housing Regulations 2022/23.

We will meet these challenges by:

- Implementing a new Asset Management Strategy for housing stock including a five-year Investment Plan for all Council housing stock.
- Putting tenant safety first and fully meeting our regulatory responsibilities, including the eradication of mould and damp issues within set timescales.
- Appraising our Council housing stock and re-purposing where required.
- Working with residents to implement smoke free homes

Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) including Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs)

The Policy details how Westmorland and Furness Council delivers assistance to help private owners and tenants to repair, maintain or adapt their homes.

Enables the Council to use specific DFG funding for wider purposes.

Making a home safe and free from serious hazards can help reduce hospital admissions or re-admissions, reduce reliance on health and social care support from health and social care services.

Private sector housing, be it rented, or privately owned plays a key part in “a great place to live”.

A home which is affordable, clean, safe and warm, from which people can build stable, independent lives with access to schools, work and cultural activities is of utmost importance.

We will do this by:

- Bringing empty homes back into use to improve the number of properties available to our communities.
- Improving standards to the private sector stock, by being pro-active and enforcing legislation when necessary.
- Supporting our residents to live safely by providing relevant advice and assistance.
- Accessing Government funding to deliver measures to our residents to live in warm, affordable, easy to heat homes.

Use our discretionary powers under the RRO to:

- Provide information regarding the provision of financial assistance for Discretionary Housing Assistance Grants, Empty Homes Grants and Housing Renewal Grants.
- Improve the quality of life of elderly, disabled and vulnerable residents by providing assistance with improvements to their homes, where those residents are not in a position to do so.
- Assist occupiers in addressing category 1 hazards, as defined by the Housing Act 2004, which may have a significant impact on their health, safety and wellbeing.
- Provide assistance to those living in areas blighted by poor quality housing, by offering assistance via our Housing Market Renewal Projects.
- Simplify the application process, where appropriate, to speed up delivery of assistance and adaptations.
- Contribute to other funding schemes that benefit our residents.
- Promote and signpost relevant services offered by other organisations.

Addressing our equality objectives

Our simple ambition is to reduce inequalities and discrimination within Westmorland and Furness. We want to be a council that understands and takes account of the varying needs and experiences of the different groups among our community, working hard to ensure all our residents, staff and members are included, supported and celebrated for who they are.

In March 2024, Westmorland and Furness Cabinet agreed the first set of equality objectives for the council. Our objectives reflect the position that, as a new organisation still working to bring together the systems and processes of four legacy councils, we need to focus on putting in place key foundations (for example, structures, data collection, policies etc) that will enhance our focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the years to come. Our objectives are to:

- establish and embed structures and processes that help to ensure an EDI focused approach at all levels of the organization.
- enhance our understanding of our customers and communities, and provide services that reflect the needs of, and are accessible to all.
- strengthen knowledge of our workforce and their experiences in the organisation in order to enable a diverse workforce in which everyone can progress.
- Our objectives are set out in our EDI Position Statement and are supported by our EDI Action Plan

We will meet these objectives through the following actions and approaches:

- We will ensure equality of service to all our tenants, residents, customers and partners, including improving our equality monitoring arrangements.
- We will identify and address the needs of any specific groups including ethnic minorities, the LGBTQ community, Gypsy and Traveller community
- We will identify and address the needs of vulnerable households and groups such as older people, people with physical disabilities, people with learning difficulties and all other people with supported housing needs
- We will ensure that our policies are fair and non-discriminatory and equally accessible to all residents
- We shall meet the requirements of the Armed Forces Covenant and new due-regard duty, with respect to all our Housing Services and ensure that it is reflected within all of our housing policies, with specific regards to the Allocations Policy, Disabled Facilities Grant Policy and Homelessness Rough Sleeping Strategy.