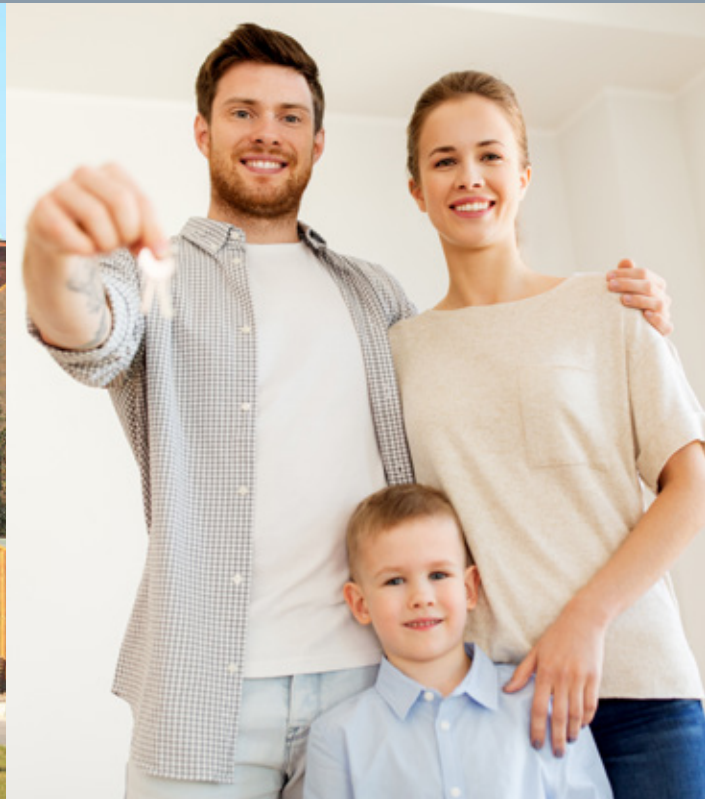




South Staffordshire Council

South Staffordshire Council
**Housing and Homelessness
Strategy**
2023-2027



www.sstaffs.gov.uk



Foreword

Councillor Terry Mason
Cabinet Member for Planning
and Business Enterprise



Councillor Robert Reade
Cabinet Member for
Welfare Services



In current times when increasing numbers of households are facing difficulties with the rising cost of living, it has become all the more important to ensure everyone in the district can afford a home that will keep them warm, safe and healthy. This refreshed strategy confirms the Council's significant enabling role in providing housing and ensuring individuals in need of assistance with their housing options or facing homelessness receive timely and practical advice. The district's housing stock also has a wider part to play in the climate change agenda. Residents of existing homes must be assisted in making their properties more energy efficient, and the Council will be exploring ways to substantially reduce carbon emissions from new housing developments.

We aim to achieve this by focusing on four priorities:

- 1. Ensure the right types of housing are provided in the right locations to meet local need.**
- 2. Strengthen the role of both the district's existing and new housing stock in addressing the Climate Change Emergency.**
- 3. Adapt existing homes and futureproof new homes to positively contribute to the health, wellbeing and independence of residents.**
- 4. Prevent and alleviate homelessness.**

Through our previous strategy, the Council has worked closely with partners to deliver a number of key outcomes. We will continue to place great importance on working in partnership with housing providers, stakeholders, statutory bodies and residents to achieve positive housing and related outcomes for South Staffordshire.

Links to Council Plan 2020-2024

Vibrant Communities

- Work with our communities and developers to bring forward new housing opportunities.
- Right houses in the right places.

Working with our communities

- Local Plan.
- Wellbeing of our residents.
- Maintaining a rural and sustainable environment.

Providing a special place to live

- Developing our Local Plan with a range of partners.
- Working with our housing partners to build homes that meet local needs.

Caring for the Environment

- Responding to the Climate Change Emergency declared by the Council.

Key Outcomes from the Previous Strategy

- 470 affordable homes completed.
- Over 100 bungalows secured on sites allocated in the Local Plan, with more to come.
- More than 400 properties adapted through the Disabled Facilities Grant programme, amounting to in excess of £1m in grant funding.
- Over 1,100 residents supported through the Warmer Homes South Staffordshire Advice Line.
- Three specialist schemes completed, providing 124 homes, with a mixture of market and affordable tenures.

Introduction

Sitting on the northwestern edge of the West Midlands conurbation, South Staffordshire is predominantly of rural nature, with 80% of the district lying within the West Midlands Green Belt. The settlement pattern is made up of numerous villages varying in size and character, which altogether accommodate a population of approximately 110,000 residents, almost a quarter of which being aged 65 and over¹.

The appeal of residing in this more rural setting has made South Staffordshire a desirable place to live, and over the years this has pushed house prices up and caused affordability issues. There remains a need to balance preservation of the character of the district with increasing housing need in the local area and the wider region. The Council has also now declared a Climate Change Emergency and developed an overarching strategy to confirm what local action will be taken, including through the district's housing stock.

¹ Office for National Statistics, 2015 Mid-year population estimates



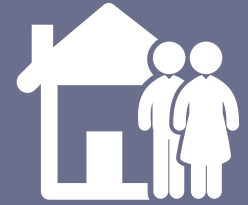
Local Context

Demographics and the Local Economy

- By 2038, the district's population is expected to increase by roughly 16%².
- The 2021 Census confirmed nearly a third of all residents (32%) are aged 60 and over - this is expected to rise to approximately 35% up to 2038², representing a rapidly ageing population.
- The average household size is decreasing, estimated to be 2.34 in 2016².
- The local economy is focused around small and medium sized enterprises, along with high levels of self-employment.
- Overall rates of unemployment have increased in the last five years, but began to fall again in the last 12 months. The mean gross household income of residents is over £42,000².
- Hotspots of deprivation do exist where attainment, skills and employment levels are lower.



Housing Stock



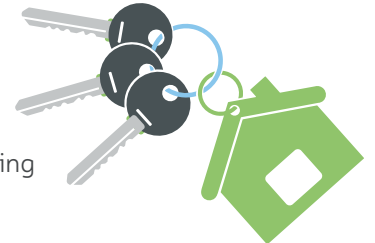
- High proportion of larger three/four-bedroom homes and detached/semi-detached properties², with high rates of under-occupation.
- Three quarters of all housing is owner-occupied, with fewer affordable homes and private rented properties².
- Approximately 10% of homes are located in off gas areas³ and a number of park home sites also exist across the district, often occupied by older residents.
- Most properties are in good condition, but some pockets of poor-quality housing do exist in certain areas⁴.
- Compounded by incidences of fuel poverty (approximately 13% of households⁵), with a tendency for older residents to be asset rich, but cash poor.



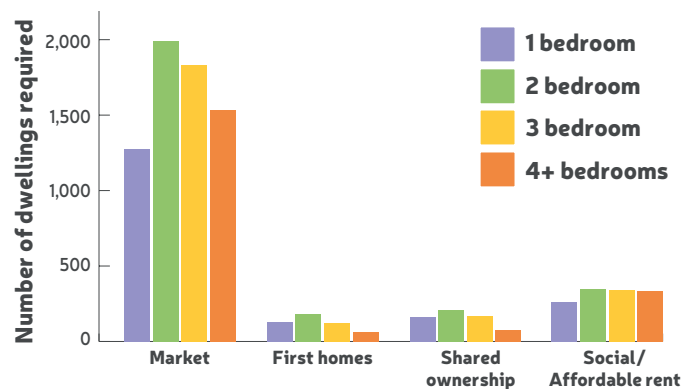
Local Housing Market

- Continues to strengthen, with house prices rising by approximately 23% over the life of the last strategy⁶.
- House prices currently average at £324,000, with the average lower quartile priced property costing over 10 times the average lower quartile income⁶, leaving home ownership out of reach for many.
- The private rental sector, historically forming a fairly insignificant part of the market, is beginning to grow, with rental levels for two- and three-bedroom homes reaching £693 and £845 per month respectively⁶.
- Relatively low incidences of homelessness, the most common cause being the ending of Assured Shorthold Tenancies, with this forming 44% of all acceptances in 2021.

Housing Need



- The Council must plan to meet the following levels of housing need for the period up to 2038²:



- 568 additional specialist homes are also required to meet the needs of the district's ageing population and other vulnerable groups².

² South Staffordshire Housing Market Assessment 2021.

³ LSOA estimates of households not connected to the gas network, 2020, Dept. for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

⁴ BRE Housing Stock Models Update for the West Midlands Kick Start Partnership, May 2011.

⁵ Sub-regional fuel poverty data 2022 (updated to 2020), Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

⁶ Hometrack.

National Context

Housing Policy

- The Planning White Paper of 2020 proposed the introduction of an overarching Infrastructure Levy which would replace the system of securing affordable housing through Section 106. The government have since further confirmed their intention to introduce the levy shortly.
- A Social Housing White Paper was published later in 2020, setting out plans for tighter regulation of housing providers and greater engagement with residents.
- A Written Ministerial Statement of 2021 introduced a new national policy around First Homes. This requires 25% of all affordable housing secured through developer contributions to be provided as First Homes.
- The same statement also introduced a new model for Shared Ownership. This allows purchasers to obtain an initial equity share of 10%, and staircase up in increments of as little as 1%. It also placed additional repairs obligations on Registered Providers.

Welfare

- Universal Credit continues to be rolled out for working age people on a managed migration, with the intention that everyone on a legacy benefit will be moved onto Universal Credit by 2024.
- This staggered process will continue throughout the introduction of the strategy, potentially increasing demand for housing advice and support, and homelessness prevention. The cost of living crisis is also placing additional pressure on residents, although more support may be available through grants and other funding.
- Local Housing Allowance rates have been frozen despite rising rents and living costs, reducing access to affordable rented properties even further for those in receipt of benefits.



Health & Housing

- Following consultation in 2019 and 2020 on the Future Homes Standard, the government have now introduced changes to building regulations to require enhanced energy efficiency of new homes.
- The government have also confirmed through the Planning Practice Guidance that where a need exists, Councils should make use of the optional technical housing standards, to bring forward accessible housing. The Council must therefore explore whether Parts M4(2) and M4(3) of Building Regulations should be applied to new development going forward.



Homelessness & Rough Sleeping

- The Homelessness Reduction Act has placed additional duties on all local authorities.
- There is a requirement to intervene at an earlier stage to prevent homelessness, and widen the availability of assistance to anyone affected, whether they are in 'priority need'.
- Those already homeless will also be entitled to assistance for a longer period of time.
- This has increased the pressure on South Staffordshire Council's resources as there is a lack of affordable privately rented properties.
- Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness and in South Staffordshire it is a relatively small occurrence. The estimate of rough sleeping in the district, required annually by Government, found 1 person rough sleeping on a given night in November 2021 which is consistent with previous years reporting between 0 and 1. The proactive work of the Housing Options team endeavours to keep the level of homelessness and rough sleeping at a comparably low level.

Priorities

Priority 1:

Ensure the right types of housing are provided in the right locations to meet local need

Background and Challenges

South Staffordshire is a diverse district with varying levels and types of housing need in each locality. In order to sufficiently support all our residents in housing need, this priority recognises these differences, ensuring we have evidence to demonstrate them, and using this to deliver a range of housing solutions across the district. By ensuring all residents can access a home that they can afford within their own villages, local shops and services will also continue to be supported, maintaining sustainable and thriving communities.

It is important that we achieve maximum benefit from any new housing and related funding secured for the district, by ensuring it provides the types of homes that people really need. The Council's adopted Site Allocations Document has already delivered a range of new homes to meet local need. The remaining sites to come forward will deliver homes in the short to medium term and this priority will influence negotiations and decision-making in relation to the detailed plans for these sites. There will also be opportunities over the life of the strategy to finalise new housing policies and guidance as part of the Local Plan Review process, to ensure that in the longer term, we continue to secure mixed and sustainable developments which meet a range of housing needs.

First Homes will soon begin to be delivered in the district in line with the government's national policy. Whilst the government's focus on home ownership will help many residents of South Staffordshire join the housing ladder, there is also a substantial need for social rented properties for those that cannot afford to own their own home. The 2021 Housing Market Assessment² highlighted that First Homes will be unobtainable for a notable number of households.

Maximising use of existing housing is also important to ensure an efficient use of stock in the district. Empty properties not only prevent this but often will also cause a number of other issues for the local area. By addressing those most problematic empty homes that require the Council to exercise its statutory powers (e.g. planning enforcement and environmental health), solutions can be found to these issues and at the same time, free up additional homes to meet the needs of local families.



Objectives

- 1. Increase affordable housing provision**, maintaining a good supply of rented and shared ownership homes, alongside the compulsory provision of First Homes, and ensuring they become a fully integrated part of the local community.
- 2. Deliver a balanced housing market**, providing a range of market and affordable housing options to residents, particularly a greater number of smaller, two- and three-bedroom properties for young families and to reduce under occupation.
- 3. Improve the housing offer for older people and other vulnerable groups**, promoting choice through a variety of options, to include specialist homes, age restricted and other general needs housing, particularly bungalows.
- 4. Make use of the district's existing housing stock**, reducing pressure on new build development and encouraging better flow through the stock to meet some of the arising housing need.

Extra Care (Affordable)

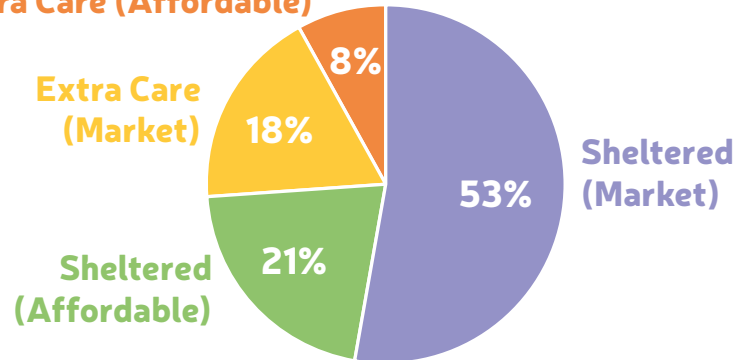


Figure 2: Specialist housing need (Housing Market Assessment 2021)²

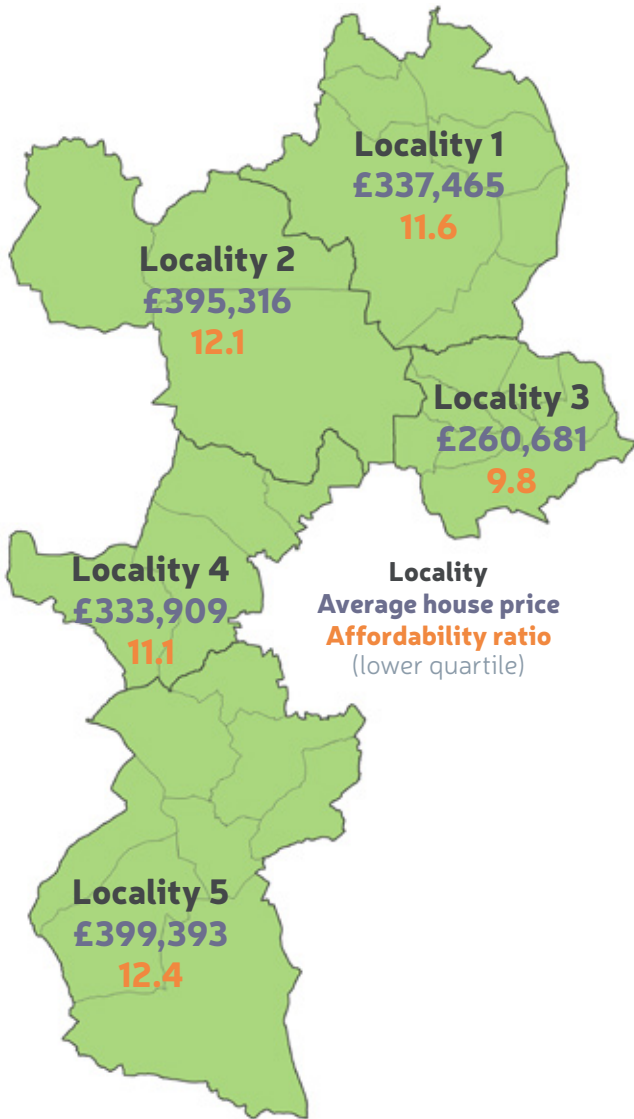


Figure 1: Housing Market April 2022 (Hometrack)⁶

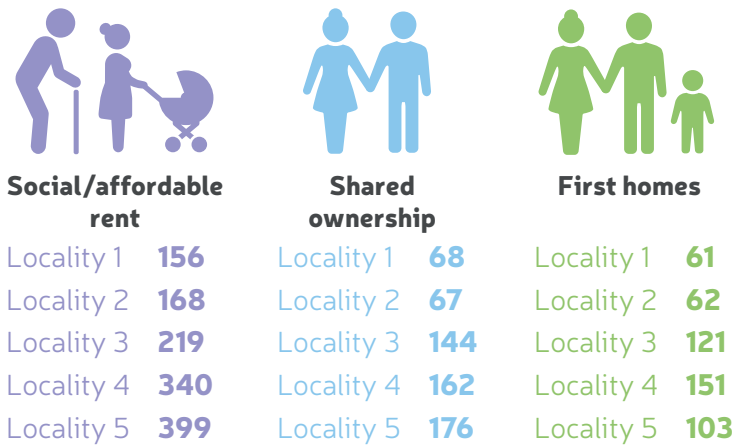


Figure 3: Affordable housing need by locality (Housing Market Assessment 2021)²

Locality	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed
1	275	367	283	215
2	191	296	264	281
3	424	562	428	511
4	459	768	743	611
5	469	736	744	441

Figure 4: Housing mix need by bedroom (Housing Market Assessment 2021)²

Action plan

Maximise strategic housing benefits achieved through the Local Plan and the Development Management process

- Secure policy compliant schemes for affordable housing, housing mix and homes for older people on remaining developments to come forward through the Site Allocations Document, new allocations through the Local Plan Review and windfall sites.
- Devise overarching Housing topic paper to support the Local Plan Review and strengthen housing policies relating to affordable housing, homes for older people and other housing matters.
- Draft, consult on and adopt Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to support newly adopted housing policies.

Maintain commitment to partnership working with Staffordshire County Council, local Registered Providers, Parish Councils and Homes England, in order to deliver affordable housing and specialist schemes in the district

- Work with Homes England and Registered Providers to secure funding for schemes in district, with particular emphasis on social rent (as an area of high affordability challenge) and shared ownership.
- Award Section 106 commuted sums to Registered Providers through a competitive bidding process, for suitable schemes in the district to deliver affordable and specialist homes.
- Work with Parish Councils that wish to explore local affordable housing need through Parish Need Surveys and potential for delivery of rural exception sites.

Maintain the importance of providing homes for older people and other vulnerable groups

- Explore options for making site allocations for specialist housing through the Local Plan Review process to secure delivery upfront.
- Maintain the good track record of bungalow delivery across the district through the Development Management process and working in partnership with Registered Providers.
- Engage with partners in Health and Social Care to maintain an up-to-date picture of need and explore opportunities to address this.

Bring problematic empty residential properties back into use

- Monitor the level of vacant residential properties across the district and the length of vacancies
- Where empty homes are in disrepair, causing issues that require a statutory response from the Council, support the property owner to bring it back into use and/or take appropriate action making use of the Council's legal powers where appropriate and agreed by Members.

Milestones & Outcomes

2023	Consult on revised Housing SPD to support new Local Plan in early 2023.
2024	Complete Housing topic paper to support submission and examination of new Local Plan in 2023.
2025	Adopt revised Housing SPD alongside adoption of new Local Plan in 2024.
2026	Begin implementation of new Local Plan housing policies and delivery of specialist housing scheme allocations.
2027	Maximise funding opportunities on an ongoing basis before close of Homes England Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme in 2026.

- **300 affordable homes delivered.**
- **100 bungalows completed.**

Priority 2:

Ensure both the district's existing and new housing stock play a key role in addressing the Climate Change Emergency

Background and Challenges

The location, type and quality of housing can have a significant impact on quality of life, and evidence particularly highlights the links with health, wellbeing and independence. These connections are particularly pertinent in South Staffordshire, with both an ageing housing stock and an increasingly ageing population. The quality of the district's housing also has a significant environmental impact.

The majority of homes within the district were constructed before 1980, with new build properties only contributing a small proportion to the overall stock. Whilst a large quantity of housing in South Staffordshire is of a high value and generally in good condition, some properties are particularly vulnerable to deterioration. Many existing rural homes in the district are not connected to mains gas, making them hard to heat and expensive to keep warm. Such properties often require costly and complex heating and insulation systems, which some households can struggle to fund and maintain.

The Council has declared a Climate Change Emergency, and subsequently developed a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. These documents set out a council-wide commitment to taking local action, and large parts of this relate to housing. Retrofitting homes to improve their energy efficiency is beneficial to both the individual household from a health and financial perspective, but also to the environment and in reducing the district's carbon emissions. A more ambitious approach to new development is also needed, to require enhanced energy standards for new homes, and encourage widespread use of technologies needed to decarbonise South Staffordshire's housing stock.

Objectives

- 1. Improve the energy efficiency of the existing housing stock in the district**, through retrofit, to reduce carbon emissions and increase the thermal comfort of properties.
- 2. Increase the carbon reduction standards for new build properties**, ensuring higher levels of energy efficiency and making use of alternative technologies to decarbonise housing across the district.





Figure 5: Greenhouse gas emissions (Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation: Baseline Report 2020).

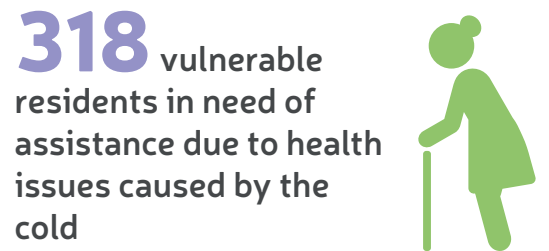
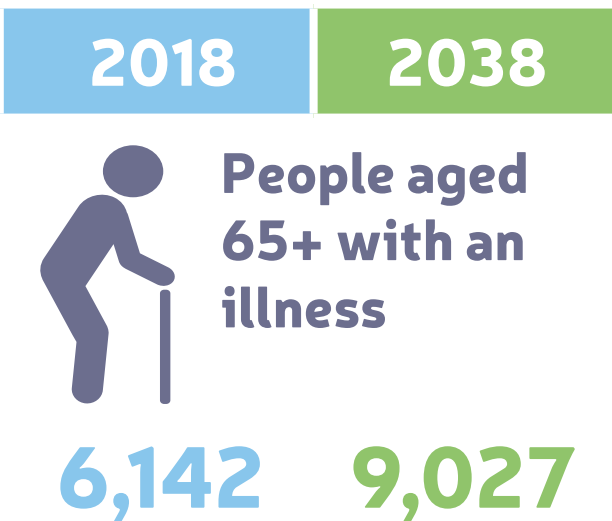
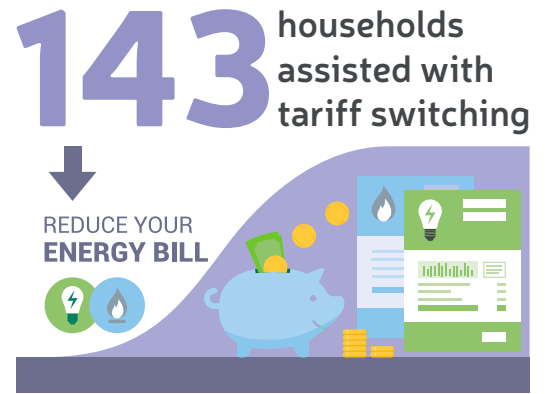


Figure 7: South Staffordshire Warmer Homes 2021-22.

Increase of **2885**

47% increase

Figure 6: People aged 65+ with an illness (Housing Market Assessment 2021)²

	Locality				
	1	2	3	4	5
Number of households in fuel poverty	933	662	1736	1254	1466
Proportion of households fuel poor	14%	13%	14%	11%	12%

Figure 8: Fuel Poverty 2020 (Sub regional fuel poverty data, BEIS, 2022)⁵.

Action plan

Increase the warmth and energy efficiency of existing homes, and reduce fuel poverty, including through promotion and provision of energy efficiency and affordable warmth measures

- Work proactively with other service areas, including Environmental Health and Welfare Services, to assist households, and make use of the Council's housing enforcement powers, where deemed necessary and appropriate, to deal with substandard homes and protect occupants.
- Procure and manage a new contract for the Warmer Homes South Staffordshire service, to continue providing a wide-ranging service for residents to receive advice, support and funding for home energy improvements.
- Explore promotional opportunities with the service provider and Members to raise awareness of funding and measures available to households, including those living in fuel poverty, including through social media, leaflets, roadshows and other means.
- Work with the service provider, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), and Registered Providers to identify and access finance mechanisms for providing funding to households of all tenures for energy efficiency and low carbon installs in properties, including the Sustainable Warmth Competition and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
- Continue to review progress against the Climate Change Action Plan on a quarterly basis, alongside an annual update to the plan.

Maximise our ability to futureproof new homes, prevent housing related health issues, and reduce carbon emissions through Planning Policy, Building Regulations and partnership working

- Through the Local Plan Review, seek to adopt policies requiring significantly enhanced energy efficiency standards in new homes, and further confirm the Council's support for renewable energy
- Explore opportunities for the introduction of a Carbon Offsetting Fund, requiring developers to make payments into the fund in lieu of onsite carbon reduction
- Introduce a requirement for new developments to meet the enhanced water efficiency standard set out in Building Regulations

Milestones & Outcomes

2023	Review service specification and procure a provider for the Warmer Homes South Staffordshire service in 2023.
2024	Explore promotional plan with newly appointed Warmer Homes service provider in 2024.
2025	Adopt Local Plan with revised energy and carbon reduction policies in 2024.
2026	Review and update Climate Change Action Plan throughout life of strategy .
2027	

- **Key performance indicators as set out in Warmer Homes South Staffordshire contract.**
- **Outcomes as set out in Climate Change Action Plan on annual basis.**

Priority 3:

Adapt existing homes and futureproof new homes to contribute to the health, wellbeing and independence of residents

Background and Challenges

With a rising number of people aged 65 and over, pressure for adaptations to existing properties is expected to continue to increase. The Council's Housing Market Assessment 2021 indicates the numbers of people struggling with mobility, and domestic and self-care activities will significantly increase over the next 15 years.

The Council is developing an "in house" shared service delivery programme to support independent living, helping disabled and vulnerable people to remain in their own homes where possible. Facilitation of adaptations through the shared service programme, including the Disabled Facilities Grant programme, will allow residents to remain in their own home for longer, relieving pressure on local health and social care services. Improving and adapting existing properties also allows for better use of stock to reduce pressures for new development.

Where new stock is required, there is a pressing need to focus on prevention; futureproofing properties and securing sustainable homes for residents. Wherever possible, adaptability of new housing development should be maximised, through requirements for enhanced accessibility standards in Building Regulations. This will provide occupants with a home that they can modify relatively easily in the future should their personal circumstances change.

Objectives

- 1. Deliver timely adaptations to existing homes**, in order to protect and enhance the health and wellbeing of residents.
- 2. Ensure new homes delivered are of a high quality**, incorporating improved futureproofing and sufficient design standards to meet the needs of the ageing population.





Figure 9: People aged 65+ (Housing Market Assessment 2021)².



Figure 10: Disabled Facilities Grant Completions.

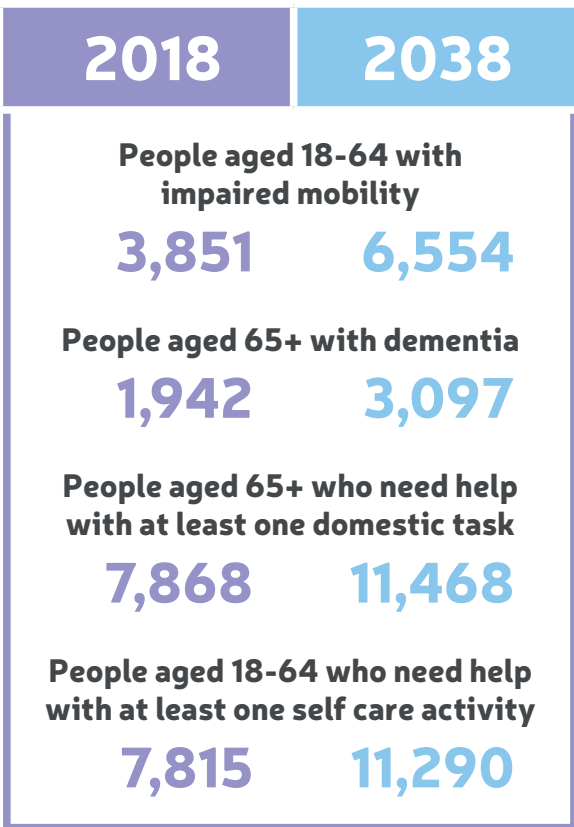


Figure 11: Health and care issues (Housing Market Assessment 2021)².

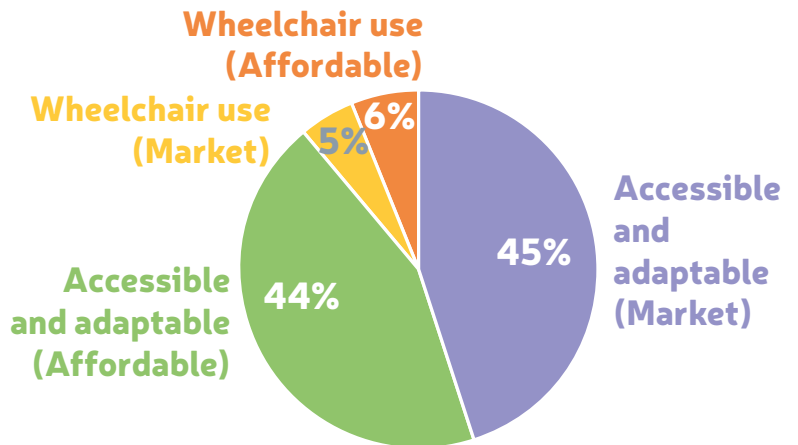


Figure 12: Need for Accessible Homes (Housing Market Assessment 2021)².

Action plan

Assist residents to adapt their properties where necessary through public and other funding sources, allowing them to remain in their own homes for longer

- Monitor the new Disabled Facilities Grant Shared Service contract, encompassing delivery of the Council's Disabled Facilities Grant programme and other home improvements.
- Work proactively with the Disabled Facilities Grant Shared Service project group and Strategic Programme Board to ensure the programme is implemented smoothly and to continuously improve the service delivery to residents.



Require a higher standard of accessibility of new homes to be delivered across the district, to ensure they meet changing needs of households into the future

- Continue to explore the need and viability of M4(2) accessible/adaptable standards of Building Regulations with a view to adopting a Local Plan policy which requires the enhanced standards
- Work in partnership with Building Control colleagues to brief them on any revised standards required from new development and the Strategic Planning team's monitoring requirements for measuring delivery

Milestones & Outcomes

2023	Ensure smooth handover of DFG and home improvement programme to new in-house service in April 2023.
2024	Adopt Local Plan with revised accessibility policies in 2024.
2025	Brief Building Control colleagues on revised accessibility requirements ready for implementation in 2025.
2026	
2027	Review DFG shared service and analysis performance of in-house provision.

Priority 4: Prevent and alleviate homelessness

Background and Challenges

South Staffordshire has relatively low numbers of homelessness across the District compared to other towns and cities, but since the start of the pandemic in 2020 numbers of potential homelessness cases have risen considerably. However, with the introduction of a digital solution, the new method for recording and monitoring homelessness figures has allowed the Council to identify common factors and trends to effectively manage increased pressures and prevent homelessness.

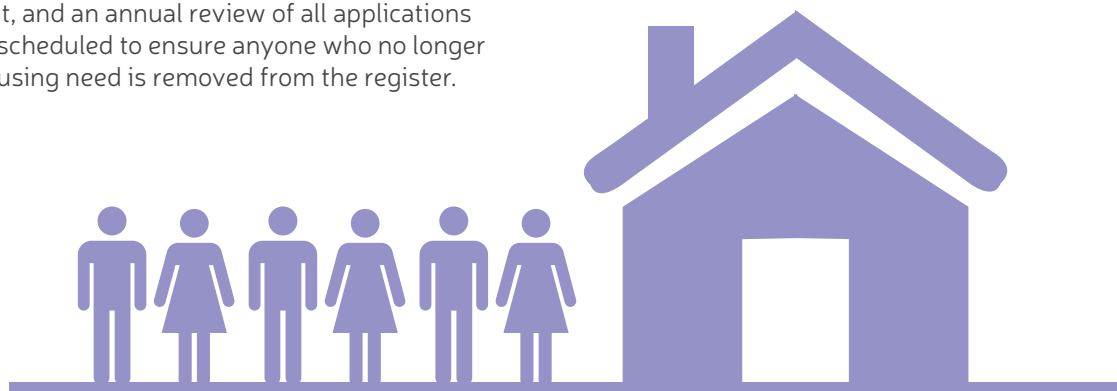
Applicants can approach any local authority for housing advice and assistance; however, the Council has not seen an increase in applicants from outside South Staffordshire. The increased statutory prevention duty requires officers to develop a personal plan with applicants and work with them for up to 56 days to attempt to prevent them from becoming homeless. Following the changes in the legislation, the Council has recognised its Housing Allocations/ Choice Based Lettings Policy needs to be updated to meet current demand. The new policy will be more reactive to the current issues and will be in place by April 2023. The most common cause of homelessness within South Staffordshire, and also nationally, is the Section 21 notice seeking possession of a property. The longer lead time of 56 days allows local authorities more time and flexibility to carry out prevention work. In addition to the above, there is an expectation that the applicant will co-operate with the authority offering them with assistance, in order to prevent the applicant's homelessness. Failure to co-operate can result in the duty being discharged.

It is apparent that the impacts of Covid have led to increased debt and rent arrears, relationship breakups, worsening mental health issues and addiction as well as increases in Domestic Abuse, which can all lead to homelessness or even Rough Sleeping for some. We are now faced with the cost-of-living crisis and for many this is putting an increased strain on paying household bills including rent. Support will be needed for vulnerable people struggling with budgeting and increased debt.

Affordable housing only accounts for a small proportion of stock in South Staffordshire, and in the main privately rented properties are not affordable for those on a low income and therefore accommodation out of area is often secured. A Homelessness Prevention fund has been created to allow those who are on low income but not in receipt of housing related benefits to apply for support with rent in advance or rent deposits.

Building and sustaining positive relationships with local Registered Providers and private landlords is vital in order to effectively meet the authority's Homelessness duties. Due to the Covid pandemic, the Private Landlord forums have not taken place, however the Housing team are looking at how these can be reintroduced. Relationships with Registered Providers in the area remain strong, often working together to resolve issues.

The Council's Housing Register has seen a large increase in applications, partly due to the increase in new builds across the district, but also the way that applications are now received. In May 2021 the online application and customer portal was launched, allowing customers to apply for housing, securely upload their evidence and bid for properties that are advertised weekly. This has enabled the Housing Team to concentrate on supporting those who are more vulnerable or unable to access the internet. However, the self-serve method also means that anyone without a local connection has been able to apply for housing, despite not meeting the conditions of our policy. The Housing Team have developed a process to identify these and not accept the application, which is being rolled out, and an annual review of all applications is being scheduled to ensure anyone who no longer has a housing need is removed from the register.



The Homes for Ukraine initiative introduced by the Government has seen a number of families move to South Staffordshire to escape the war. Although the families are initially housed by a Sponsor, this is only mandatory for 6 months, with a maximum requirement of 12 months. This may mean an increase in the number of people who present themselves as homeless, although the Housing team will work with the sponsors and guests to identify anticipated dates when this may occur so that alternative accommodation can be sourced. There is also a risk that relationships may break down between guests and sponsors and alternative accommodation will need to be found. The Homes for Ukraine scheme and the Afghan resettlement and other refugee programmes will put additional demands on the limited housing stock.

It is also anticipated that South Staffordshire will receive some Asylum seekers that are currently housed in temporary accommodation across Great Britain under the Asylum – Full Dispersal scheme. As of June 2022, this is in the consultation phase, however the Home Office have indicated all Local Authorities will be expected to house a number of asylum seekers.

Objectives

- 1. Prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity**, by encouraging applicants/landlords to contact the authority when they first experience difficulties, in order to work with all parties to resolve any issues.
- 2. Provide beneficial and effective welfare and housing advice**, by ensuring staff are kept up to date with changes in legislation, and the information on the Council website and leaflets is clear and accurate.
- 3. Maintain strong working relationships with other partners**, including Registered Providers, the Public Health team, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Citizens Advice Bureau and private landlords, in order to effectively identify and support vulnerable residents through the welfare reform changes.



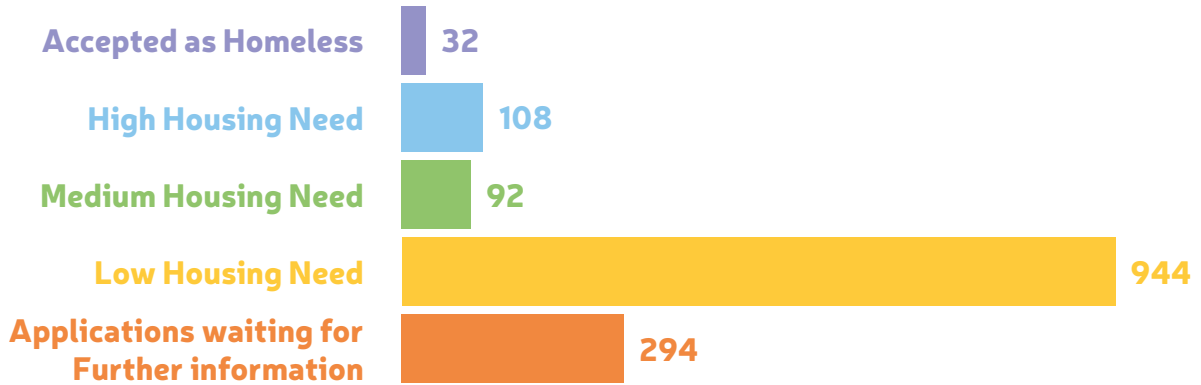


Figure 13: Current Housing Register (June 2022).

2019	2020	2021
Section 21 notice		
30	25	19
Asked to leave by family/friend		
53	33	5
Fleeing domestic abuse		
31	23	7
Relationship breakdown		
20	7	4
Fleeing harassment		
8	4	1
Affordability		
4	6	0
Rent arrears		
7	4	2
Other		
26	19	5

Figure 14: Homeless Acceptances (2019-21).



Figure 15: Homeless Acceptances to date, as of June 2022.

Action plan

Prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity

- Continue with current good practice in prevention to maintain the low homelessness figures in the district.
- Ensure all individuals accepted as homeless are provided with all information regarding their options, and a comprehensive personal plan detailing what actions must be taken by both the individual and the Housing Options team.
- In cases where homelessness is related to rent arrears, work in partnership with and make relevant referrals to other agencies (such as Citizens Advice and Staffordshire Women's Aid), for debt advice, support with budgeting and finding employment.
- Engage and improve relationships with other agencies such as Social Services, Probation Services and Mental Health Teams to ensure vulnerable applicants are supported.
- Ensure guests living under the Homes for Ukraine scheme are supported to move on, if the use of their current accommodation is not extended.

Review the number of individuals on the Council's housing waiting list annually to ensure the number of applications is correct

- Carry out a review with each individual on an annual basis to ensure there is still a housing need.
- Implement the revised Lettings Policy, ensuring it meets the needs of the applicant in matching them with a property that is suitable for their needs.

Deliver targeted Welfare and Financial support to prevent homelessness

- Assess entitlement to Discretionary Housing Payments and Hardship payments.
- Review the applicant's financial situation and signpost to partner agencies where relevant.
- Consider applications for Disabled Facilities Grants where the applicant has difficulty accessing areas of their home.

Maximise funding opportunities for homelessness prevention and housing options

- Ensure ring-fenced funding is allocated for use to provide and improve homelessness prevention methods.
- Explore and consider bidding for further funding streams, either alone as a Council, or in partnership with other bodies.
- Maximise the use of funding sources for Homes for Ukraine and Asylum dispersal schemes.

Milestones & Outcomes

2023

Update Lettings Policy from 2023 onwards.

2024

Provide continued support with families relocating from Ukraine to ensure smooth move into alternative accommodation at the end of the sponsorship.

2025

Review the housing register on an annual basis, removing anyone who no longer has a housing need, so the list remains accurate and up to date.

2026

2027

Review use of system and processes and ensure they remain efficient and meet the needs of the applicants.





South Staffordshire Council



South Staffordshire Council

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