

HOUSING PORTFOLIO 2019 -2021

This report is an introduction to extensive work undertaken in Housing since the last portfolio report two years ago.

In 2019 the Alliance group set corporate priorities that included being a sustainable district, creating an inclusive and prosperous local economy, sustaining happy and healthy communities and ensuring council acted in a cooperative and responsible manner. In addition Sustainable Development Goals were adopted to support decision-making and monitor progress. Housing contributes in particular to SDGs 3 Good Health and Well-Being, 10 Reduced Inequalities, 11 Sustainable cities and communities and 13 Climate action.

This report highlights progress against the ambitious programme set in 2019 acknowledging that Covid 19 has slowed up the extent of action taken in some key areas. All credit must go to staff throughout Housing for the energy, skill and enthusiasm put into creating change under difficult circumstances.

Council Housing

Jo Wilkinson as new Head of Housing has, through Service Improvement Plans and quarterly monitoring of data with key staff, supported extensive improvement in services for tenants, greater tenant involvement and the enhancement of sustainability work through new posts and services.

In particular,

- Mainway engagement creating a community to support greater well-being; Mainway plans will create sustainable, thermally efficient housing
- Mount Avenue retrofit pilots to support reducing carbon footprint of extant housing
- Small redevelopments of existing properties have high EPC ratings
- £175 000 Green Homes Grant to increase EPC ratings on our least efficient properties
- Relaunch of District Wide Tenants Forum to increase tenants voice in Housing decision making
- HIA developed Hospital Discharge service in response to pandemic

Improving Private Housing standards

- LA Trading Company More Homes for the Bay set up – thanks also due to Rephael Walmsley and Kieran Keane
- work required to introduce Selective Landlord Licensing to reduce housing inequality and improve health was seriously affected by Covid: consultation should go ahead autumn 2021.
- Acquisition of Morecambe properties to provide higher standard housing at Local Housing Allowance rate: planned and budgeted for. Awaiting acceptance of its business plan as part of the LA Trading Company

Responding to Housing Need

For health, well-being and inclusion we need more one bed accommodation, more specialised homes for older people, more family homes at affordable rents, settled traveller accommodation

- HRA funded 60+ apartment Extra Care scheme planned for Slyne
- 20 passivhaus standard affordable homes being built now in Halton by Lune Valley Land Trust, supported by council community-led housing funds

- Mainway remodelling plans include increased 1 bed provision
- Acquired Mellishaw traveller site from County in 2020. Refurbishment work starts autumn 2021
- 75 RP led affordable homes supported in Heysham, 32 in Overton

Improved planning in participatory and inclusive ways

All credit to officers Kathy Beaton, Sharon Parkinson and Jo Wilkinson for taking on our commitment to “working in partnership with residents, local organisations and partners”

- KB for creating the Homes Strategy, consulting partly through a successful conference led by Lancaster Vision
- SP for working closely with many partners to create a new Homelessness Strategy and to keep all homeless people housed during the pandemic
- All officers involved for supporting the community voices and projects coming from Homelessness and Housing Advisory groups

Caroline Jackson
Portfolio holder for Housing