



Northern Ireland  
Executive

[www.northernireland.gov.uk](http://www.northernireland.gov.uk)



# Housing Supply Strategy

## A Home for Everyone

2024 - 2039

December 2024

# Contents

Ministerial Foreword	3
Acknowledgements	4
Endorsements	5
Executive Summary	6
Strategic Context	11
How we will get to where we need to be	18
Objective 1: Creating Affordable Options	22
Objective 2: Prevention and Intervention	26
Objective 3: Quality and Safety	29
Objective 4: Better Places	31
Objective 5: A Fair Path to Low Carbon Housing	34
Delivering the Strategy	36
Annex A – Key Trends Impacting on the Housing Market	38
Annex B – Long Term Policy Commitments – How they Contribute to Objectives	39

# Ministerial Foreword

Access to safe, warm and affordable housing is one of the top priorities for the Executive. For too long, we have not had a joined-up cross-departmental approach to tackle this issue. That changes now. I am determined that we adopt a new approach which will challenge us all to think differently about how we deliver the supply of good quality, affordable and sustainable homes that we need in Northern Ireland.

The housing challenges we face here are significant. Nearly 48,000 households are currently on the social housing waiting list, of which over 36,000 are in housing stress. With numbers increasing, it is clear this trend is not sustainable.

Housing affordability is a growing problem. Construction costs continue to increase, borrowing rates are as high as they have been in over ten years, the private rented sector is under pressure and home energy costs are placing a disproportionate burden on household budgets.

We need to take a new approach and that is what this strategy does. I want to provide a 15-year framework for the whole system change needed to deliver this supply across all tenures. My ambition is to create a housing system that can deliver at least 100,000 homes and more, if needed. One third of these will be social homes, alongside an increased supply of intermediate homes delivered throughout the strategy lifetime.

But delivery of homes is about more than simply numbers. This is about creating places and good quality homes which meet a range of diverse needs and where people and families can thrive.



We know that living in a good quality, affordable home reduces risk of poverty and inequality, delivers better health outcomes and improves educational opportunities. People are living longer, and many have specific requirements and additional needs which are not currently being met. We must ensure that the homes we have, and the new homes we build, can support our people.

The vision for the strategy has been developed in partnership with all our stakeholders. Their honest and thoughtful participation emphasised not only what housing means to people here, but that there is a real need to change our approach to how we do things.

Central to this was the need for a whole system approach to housing supply. There isn't one single challenge impacting on housing and throughout all stages of the development of this strategy it was clear that the issues impacting on housing reach right across Government.

At a structural level, issues such as water infrastructure constraints, land-use planning, construction skills and land availability must be addressed. It is significant therefore that this strategy is being published now, as an Executive one.

Transforming housing supply will require a collective and committed response from the Executive, collaboration across Government, the voluntary & community sector and private sectors. But most importantly, the whole system approach must put people, places and communities at its heart.

The scale of this challenge is significant and will require innovative and creative solutions, but I am pleased that bringing this important strategy forward is the vital first step in starting to make the changes we need.

To support the strategy framework, shorter-term detailed action plans will be developed in partnership with our stakeholders. Work is already underway on the first of these. I have met with Ministerial colleagues of Departments with a key remit on issues impacting on housing supply and I have been encouraged by their commitment to change.

I continue to take forward transformative action in my own Department. I am working to reform

the private rented sector, so it can work best for those who live in it. I am pushing forward efforts to revitalise the Housing Executive so it can provide good quality homes for generations to come. I am also developing innovative ways to increase supply by providing Government loans to acquire move on accommodation as a means to helping people move out of homelessness.

These and other actions will continue to be developed, but I reiterate that our supply issues will only fully be addressed with cross-Executive commitment to do so. This Strategy is recognition of that commitment.

There is much more to be done as we start to move towards realising my vision for housing. I would like to thank you all for your continued support and I would urge you to contribute and help shape the action plans that will be developed to deliver this Strategy.

**Gordon Lyons**  
**Minister for Communities**

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the wide range of individuals who contributed to the development of this Strategy. That includes the Housing Supply Strategy Project Board and the Virtual Housing Panel, colleagues from other departments, the Housing Executive and the Strategic Investment Board, representatives from the Housing

Associations, Local Government and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sectors, professional bodies and the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence and, of course, those individuals and organisations<sup>1</sup> who responded to the public consultation and participated in parallel engagement events.

---

<sup>1</sup> Details are provided in the Call for Evidence Summary Report which is published alongside this Strategy at: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-new-housing-supply-strategy>

## Endorsements

“We support the Housing Supply Strategy’s ambition to transform housing in Northern Ireland. By prioritising affordability, sustainability and quality, this strategy addresses urgent housing needs while fostering thriving, inclusive communities. We look forward to collaborating with government and stakeholders to ensure its successful implementation and delivery.”

**Justin Cartwright, National Director,  
Chartered Institute of Housing  
Northern Ireland**

“As the strategic housing authority, the NIHE endorses the ‘whole system’ approach, to drive a focus on housing supply across government, and the primacy given to prevention and early intervention. Housing targets are key to delivery; we welcome the ambition for 33,000 social homes in 15 years, such is the scale and nature of housing need. We are ready to deliver on the strategy’s objectives.”

**Grainia Long, Chief Executive, Northern  
Ireland Housing Executive**

“A whole system and long-term approach to housing supply has the potential to bring about the transformative change needed for current and future generations and, if properly resourced and implemented, this strategy will make a genuine difference to the lives of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.”

**Nicola McCrudden, Chief Executive  
of Homeless Connect.**

“We are pleased to see a housing supply strategy that matches our ambitions. A whole system approach built on partnership and collaboration is key to the strategy succeeding. As a trusted and reliable partner in the delivery of social and affordable homes for nearly 50 years, Housing Associations stand ready to deliver on the ambitions of the housing supply strategy over the next 15 years and beyond.”

**Seamus Leheny, Chief Executive, Northern  
Ireland Federation of Housing Associations**

“This cross-Executive Strategy, aligned with the draft Programme for Government commitment to provide more social, affordable, and sustainable housing, is welcomed as a pathway to meeting ever-growing demand whilst recognising the need for sustainable funding of water and wastewater, and reform of any obstacles to housing and economic development across Northern Ireland.”

**Mark Spence, Chief Executive,  
Construction Employers Federation**

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

New Decade New Approach<sup>2</sup> and the draft Programme for Government Outcomes Framework,<sup>3</sup> both recognised the importance of housing in achieving social cohesion, economic development, political stability, supporting our people to live prosperous and fulfilling lives and a new focus on addressing housing stress<sup>4</sup> and homelessness. The need to tackle these issues, through increasing social and intermediate housing supply and, more specifically, the delivery of this Housing Supply Strategy, were priority activities in the Executive's Covid-19 Recovery Plan.<sup>5</sup>

The aim of this 15 year strategy is to create a housing system that can deliver on our housing needs and demands. This includes an ambition to deliver at least 100,000 homes and more, if needed, with one third of these being social homes.

Our housing supply challenges are substantial and deep rooted. This is illustrated by increasing levels of housing stress and homelessness, the widening gap between housing requirements and new housing supply and the growing affordability and accessibility problems facing both first time buyers and renters. The Housing Supply Strategy is a long-term framework for the transformational change needed to tackle these challenges.

## Strategy Development

Pre-development work to progress a Housing Supply Strategy commenced in 2019. The work was interrupted by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, beginning again in earnest at the

end of 2020 and culminating in a Call for Evidence being launched by the Department for Communities in May 2021. This was followed by a period of substantial information gathering and assessment, including extensive stakeholder engagement with delivery partners, wider stakeholders and service users.

The Call for Evidence Summary Report can be found at this [link](#).

This and other evidence informed the development of the Strategy and sets out a direction of travel from 2024 - 2039. The rest of this report sets out the key components of the Strategy in terms of:

- **Strategic Context** - where we are now in terms of housing supply, where we need to be and how we are going to get there. This covers the Whole System Approach, the Strategy vision and objectives and potential indicators that will be used to measure our progress.
- **Creating Affordable Options** - how we will supply the right number and type of affordable homes in the right places to meet our housing needs and demands. This section deals with key issues, including how we: address our infrastructure constraints, including wastewater capacity, optimise funding opportunities and create the right policy and legislative framework to support housing supply.

<sup>2</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/856998/2020-01-08\\_a\\_new\\_decade\\_\\_a\\_new\\_approach.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/856998/2020-01-08_a_new_decade__a_new_approach.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-programme-government-draft-outcomes-framework-2021>

<sup>4</sup> Housing stress is defined as those who are awarded 30 points or more within the Housing Selection Scheme. Points are awarded under four categories (1) intimidation (2) insecurity of tenure (3) housing conditions (4) and health and social wellbeing issues.

<sup>5</sup> Building Forward: Consolidated Covid-19 Recovery Plan | The Executive Office ([executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk](http://executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk))

<sup>6</sup> Please note that the NIHE provides a 'Housing Solutions' service that is separate to this definition'.

- **Prevention and Intervention** - how we can prevent homelessness and reduce housing stress, as well as providing the right housing solutions<sup>6</sup> and support for those most in need. This section focuses on providing more diverse housing types and alternative models of housing to meet different housing needs and recognising the importance of a holistic approach to housing.
- **Quality and Safety** - how we will improve the quality, efficiency and design of both new and existing homes, to ensure a high standard for everyone regardless of the type of home. Consideration is given to a diverse range of areas, including building regulation, work to improve the private rented sector and protect our social housing.
- **Better Places** - how we will build and maintain thriving and inclusive communities and places with community wealth building at the heart, which prioritises a people-centred approach to rebuilding our local areas into places that support the wellbeing of those who live there. The section considers options around mixed tenure, place-shaping and the role of Local Development Plans in achieving this.

- **A Fair Path to Low Carbon Housing** - Ensure that the construction of new housing and retrofitting of existing homes enables people to afford to heat their homes as well as allowing us to meet our greenhouse emission targets.
- **Delivering the Strategy** - how we will deliver the Strategy over its lifetime, including a focus on doing things differently and the role of action plans in achieving our objectives.

### Our Strategic Framework

A summary of our Strategic Housing Supply Framework is outlined in the diagram overleaf (Figure 1). It reflects the partnership approach taken in its development. It also outlines the vision for the Strategy, the enabling principle that will drive the transformation of housing supply, the long-term timeframe against which we will deliver on the vision and the five interconnected objectives which detail the key areas of work needed to address the challenges to housing supply. We have also a series of indicators which demonstrate how we will measure progress. Finally, the Framework recognises the core enabling elements required to achieve all of this as reflected in our delivery section.



Figure 1 – Housing Supply Strategy – Strategic Framework

Strategic Framework – Investing and Building to Transform our Housing Supply							
Long term outcomes	Vision	“Everybody has access to a good quality, affordable and sustainable home that is appropriate for their needs and is located within a thriving and inclusive community.” <sup>7</sup>					
	Enabling Principle	Adopting a whole system approach, collaborate with central and local government, Arms Length Bodies and the third and private sectors to inclusively transform supply. This will include working collaboratively to manage the dependencies between the key central government strategies, local government development and community plans, as well as the Regional Development Strategy 2035 and any new Programme for Government (PfG).					
	Timeframes	The Strategy will set out long term policy commitments over a 15 year period to 2039 but will be divided into enabling action plans over 1-3 year periods.					
2039 Objectives	Objectives	<b>Objective 1</b> - Increase housing supply and affordable options across all tenures to meet housing need and demand	<b>Objective 2</b> - Prevent homelessness and reduce housing stress and improve and prioritise housing solutions for those who are most in need	<b>Objective 3</b> - Improve housing quality across all tenures	<b>Objective 4</b> - Ensure the provision of housing options that contribute to the building and maintenance of thriving, inclusive communities and places	<b>Objective 5</b> - Ensure that the construction of new housing and retrofitting of existing homes enables people to afford to heat their homes as well as allowing us to meet our greenhouse emission targets.	
Primary Indicators	Indicators we will use to monitor progress	<b>Stress and Supply</b>  Number of households in housing stress.  Housing Stock figures.	<b>Homelessness</b>  Number of households who are homeless (presentations and acceptances)	<b>Affordability</b>  Proportion of households spending 30% or more of their household income on housing costs	<b>Satisfaction</b>  Proportion of households who report being either “very satisfied” or “fairly satisfied” with their house or flat	<b>Community &amp; Place</b>  Indicator(s) in development  Initial considerations include: Proportion of adults who feel: • a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood; • safe living in their area; • there is a strong sense of community in their area; and • they have an influence when it comes to local decisions made in their neighbourhood	<b>Quality and Energy Efficiency</b>  Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) ratings  Percentage of homes that meet the Fitness Standard

<sup>7</sup> A thriving and inclusive community is one where people feel safe and respected; a place where people share a common vision and sense of belonging with other members; where communities connect with, understand and support one another; where diversity is appreciated and celebrated; which includes open, welcoming, accessible and inclusive places and spaces; where everyone is enabled to live fulfilled lives and enjoy similar life opportunities. It is home.



Strategic Framework – Investing and Building to Transform our Housing Supply		
Delivery	Principles	Provide leadership across central government, local government, voluntary, community and private sector in relation to housing supply
		Underpinned by the principles of equality, fairness and good relations and engaging with those most affected by poor housing
		Review and implement necessary legislative and regulatory changes to support housing supply and deliver the Strategy
		Provide governance and oversight arrangements to support the delivery of the Strategy
		Monitor evidence to support policy development
		Maximise the availability of public finance to deliver housing
		Co-production of action plans informed by lived experience, delivering housing solutions for our people who are most in need, recognising the inequalities experienced by Section 75 groups and children and young people

Programme for Government

The strategic framework evidences that housing is central to the achievement of the Executive’s social, economic and environmental objectives. In this context, the Strategy has been developed to be responsive to new Programmes for Government that may emerge during the lifetime of the Strategy.

In addition, the Strategy will make a significant contribution to the delivery of other current and proposed strategies including the Green Growth Strategy, the Energy Strategy, 10X Economy, the Anti-Poverty Strategy, the Children and Young People’s Strategy 2020-2030 and the Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031.

Our Commitment to Delivery

We have developed this Strategy in the context of persistently increasing numbers of people living in housing stress and the growing waiting list. It has been progressed with a partnership approach and we have engaged through a range of mechanisms with a wide variety of stakeholders across the public, private and third sectors. This approach is built on the principle that those who are most affected by poor housing are best placed to be advocates for better housing and can help us design and redesign our housing.

While this Strategy sets out the direction of travel to transform supply, we will also bring forward more detailed policy proposals which will be subject to consultation and engagement in their own right. Work to develop the first of these proposals has already commenced. The Strategy will be subject to ongoing review and we will report on progress on an annual basis.

We will provide the necessary leadership and coordination across all levels of government. Key to our success will be the establishment of a “joined up” response unlocking the combined skills and resources of central government, local government, the housing sector, wider public sector and the third sector to transform supply.

We will also explore how current mechanisms can be harnessed to support collaboration and pooling of resources to deliver on our housing needs.

Investing in our Supply

We know that achieving the ambitions in this Strategy will need significant investment. Whether that is investment in our Social Housing Stock, improving quality in our Private Rented Sector or constructing new homes for private sale, we will need to be creative and learn to think and act differently.

Some of this investment will of course need to come from the Executive, however public funding on its own will not be enough. The Call for Evidence highlighted issues around sources and constraints in accessing finance. Some potential financial solutions were also identified, most notably, capital markets financing (bonds) for affordable housing and increase in demand for Environmental Social Governance (ESG) investments. Alongside significant annual investment in the Social Housing Development Programme, the Department will continue to explore new approaches to financing the housing market through, for example, routes providing incentives to Registered Housing Associations and changes in Financial Transactions Capital (FTC) funding.

If we are to achieve our objectives, it is likely that a wider range of sources for financing will be needed such as charitable trusts and foundations, Credit Union Loans, Capital markets: from the sale of long-term bonds and developer contributions. The benefits of housing co-operatives, community-led housing and self-build initiatives will also need to be explored further and the move towards an energy system based on low carbon networks, technologies, buildings, vehicles, industry and infrastructure will also require major investment and skilled personnel.

In the face of constrained public finances and international economic uncertainty the investment challenge is substantial. Difficult decisions will need to be made. However through active collaboration between public, private and charitable partners, maximising current policy levers and developing new ones, we can find solutions and create opportunities.

# Strategic Context

## Where we need to be

Our vision for the Strategy encapsulates the future picture of housing supply, one that delivers on our housing needs and demands and contributes to better outcomes for all our people but, most notably, those in most housing need.

**“Everybody has access to a good quality, affordable and sustainable home that is appropriate for their needs and is located within a thriving and inclusive community.”**

This vision recognises that good housing is about more than bricks and mortar: they are homes, not just houses. It encompasses issues such as affordability, accessibility, sustainability, quality and security of tenure – all of which can apply differently to people and at different times in their lives. Crucially, this vision seeks to put people at the centre of housing supply and sustainable places, with a focus on delivering on objective need, underpinned by principles of fairness, equality and good relations.

The aim for this Strategy is to create a housing system that can deliver on our housing needs and demands. This will involve the delivery of at least 33,000 social homes and a significant number of intermediate homes over the 15 year lifespan of this Strategy.

Our overall housing requirements have been the subject of considerable debate in recent years with a range of models and calculations producing different housing supply requirements. These differences essentially emerge from the challenges of estimating the effect of a complex

web of factors driving the housing market and the reciprocal relationship between housing need and demand in the context of increasing economic uncertainty. The challenges of making such projections have been thrown into sharp focus, with the Covid-19 pandemic, the cost of living crisis and recent housing commitments made by the new UK Government, illustrating how much things can change, even within a few years.

Existing models of housing requirement include the Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs) as set out in the Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) and Strategic Housing Market Analysis (SHMA), and they have been useful sources of information in setting an indicative baseline for the Strategy of 100,000 homes and beyond if necessary. These models are however policy neutral, whereas the Strategy is designed to be policy positive and is intended to help the Executive achieve its wider social, economic and environmental objectives. Importantly, none of these projections should be seen as targets, particularly over the medium to longer terms. We will continue to work to develop a more nuanced picture of our housing supply requirements over the 15-year lifespan of the Strategy.

This, along with regular reviews and updates, will help ensure that the Strategy is agile and adaptable. It will also be able to respond to emerging challenges and changing contexts and, ultimately, provide the framework for delivering our actual housing needs and demands.

Beyond the requirement for new homes, we will also need to do more to ensure our stock of existing homes across all tenures is fit for purpose, to keep them in the housing system. In this context, it is

important to note that the majority of the existing housing stock here is more than 40 years old.

It is also important to emphasise that the Strategy is not just about numbers but it is whether, or by how much, over the next 15 years, we have turned the curve on the Strategy indicators. That will be key to ascertaining if we have succeeded in creating a robust and strong housing system that provides for our people and communities and promotes fairness and equality in our housing policy and delivery.

We also need to improve our understanding of what this means in terms of the design and specification of our homes and how many homes of different types we require. We have committed to achieving this in the Strategy. We also know that we may have to update our thinking on this and other issues across the lifespan of the Strategy. This is why the Strategy will be a living document.

The strategic framework is aimed at unlocking, with immediate effect, the conditions required to transform supply for current and future generations. This will be achieved through a series of detailed action plans, starting in 2024/25, which will build further upon the actions already outlined in the Strategy. More granular level detail in relation to these and other actions, including timeframe and responsibilities for their delivery, resourcing and performance data will be detailed in these action plans.

## Where we are now

Housing here in the past twenty years has been characterised by three key underlying trends:

- a steady increase in the need and demand for housing in response to population change and the growth in the number of households;

- affordability issues linked to a significant increase in the number and proportion of households, individuals, families, workers and students renting privately.
- a widening gap between the overall requirement for new housing (private and social) and the annual rate of construction.

There are a number of wider trends which have and will continue to impact on housing and other policies. These key trends are summarised at Annex A. The Housing Supply Strategy will also evolve to respond to other social and economic trends, such as, cost of living increases as driven by increasing energy costs, rising inflation and increases in build costs.

## Increasing Need and Demand

NI's housing stock has continued to grow over the past 20 years (current stock is 828,829 homes). There was steady growth in the number of dwellings between 2012 and 2021 – an annual average rate of growth of almost 6,200. However, this is much lower than the rates of growth experienced in the years leading up to the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). Between 2001 and 2006 the housing stock increased at an annual average rate of 11,500.<sup>8</sup>

## Household projections

The most recent mid-year population estimates showed that there were approximately 1.91 million people living in NI,<sup>9</sup> a figure that had increased at an average annual rate of 0.5% pa over the previous five years. The most recent (2016) household<sup>10</sup> projections estimated there would be 744,754 households in 2021. However, the 2021 census actually recorded 768,810 households, an additional increase of 3.2% and a 9.3% increase compared to the 2011 census showing 703,275 households

<sup>8</sup> Source: Annual Housing Statistics, LPS

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/2022-mid-year-population-estimates-northern-ireland>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-household-projections-2016-based>

A key driver for household formation is that our population continues to age (the proportion of the population aged 65 or more has increased from 13% in mid 1997 to 17.6% in mid 2022 and in contrast, the proportion of the population aged 0 to 15 years has decreased from 24.7% in mid 1997 to 20.4% in mid 2022)<sup>11</sup> and the tendency for the older population to live in either one or two adult households without children. By 2041, these two household types are projected to account for three fifths (60.3 per cent) of all households.<sup>12</sup>

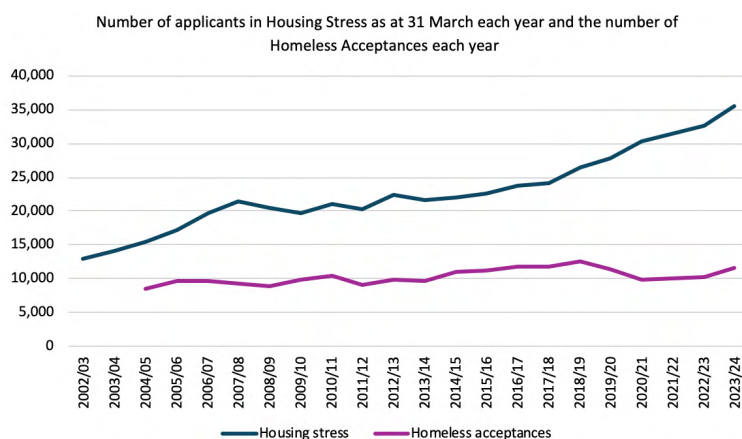
This points to a key issue in relation to housing supply - how we meet the needs and aspirations of an ageing population in the context of a rising dependency ratio (the number of people of working age compared to those who have retired) which

has important economic, and therefore funding, ramifications; and how we work together in partnership with other Departments to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is provided to meet housing needs.

## Increasing Housing Need

The Common Waiting List for social housing also provides a number of key indicators of increasing housing need. Figure 2 provides a graphic illustration of the substantial increase in the number of households in urgent need ('housing stress')<sup>13</sup> since the early 2000s. In March 2003 there were approximately 13,000 in housing stress. This rose to almost 21,000 by March 2011 and reached a new peak of 36,137 by June 2024.

**Figure 2: Number of applicants in Housing Stress as at 31 March each year and the number of Homeless Acceptances each year**



Source: Department for Communities (DfC): Housing Statistics

Figure 2 also illustrates that the number of households accepted as homeless in NI has also risen significantly though on the basis of a more subdued trajectory. In 2004/05 approximately 8,500 households were defined as homeless, a figure which reached a peak of 12,512 in 2018/19 before falling back to 11,323 in 2019/20.

During 2020/21 there was a significant drop to 9889 (13%) in the overall number of homeless households due to the pandemic however the numbers have started to rise again. In 2021/22, 10,135 households were accepted as homeless, this figure has continued to rise with 11,537 households accepted as homeless in 2023/24.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/2022-mid-year-population-estimates-northern-ireland>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-household-projections-2016-based>

<sup>13</sup> Housing stress is defined as those who are awarded 30 points or more within the Housing Selection Scheme. Points are awarded under four categories (1) intimidation (2) insecurity of tenure (3) housing conditions (4) and health and social wellbeing issues.

<sup>14</sup> While 'Accommodation not reasonable' and 'Sharing or Family Breakdown' remain the main reasons for households being accepted as homeless, an increasing number are attributable to the 'Loss of private rented accommodation'. A small proportion of the increase is as a result of the home office addressing their backlog of asylum decisions.

## Affordability

The most striking trend over the last 20 years, has been the rapid rise of the private rented sector.<sup>15</sup> A major part of the explanation for this lies in the increasing difficulties that first time buyers face in relation to accessing owner occupancy.

Over the last decade or so, as the housing market recovered from the effects of the GFC and prices have steadily risen, the proportion of properties transacting at lower price levels has gradually decreased. In practical terms, this has meant that the pool of properties accessible to an average first time buyer, the foundation layer of a healthy and sustainable housing market, has diminished substantially. Furthermore, in a context of rising living costs and interest rates and despite some income growth, most prospective first time buyers have fewer disposable resources and face increased housing costs. As housing and basic living costs consume a greater proportion of net income, households living in the private rented sector may increasingly struggle to meet their current housing costs, let alone save for the

sizeable deposit that might make home ownership relatively affordable.<sup>16</sup> The growing affordability problem is compounded by ongoing increases in rental prices in the private rented sector.

The Ulster University/Housing Executive private rental latest survey findings indicate a rental sector facing mounting affordability pressures with average rents accelerating at an overall rate of 9.3% in 2023,<sup>17</sup> compared with the previous year.

Affordability issues will then have to be a key factor in considering our supply challenges and solutions.

## The widening gap in housing supply

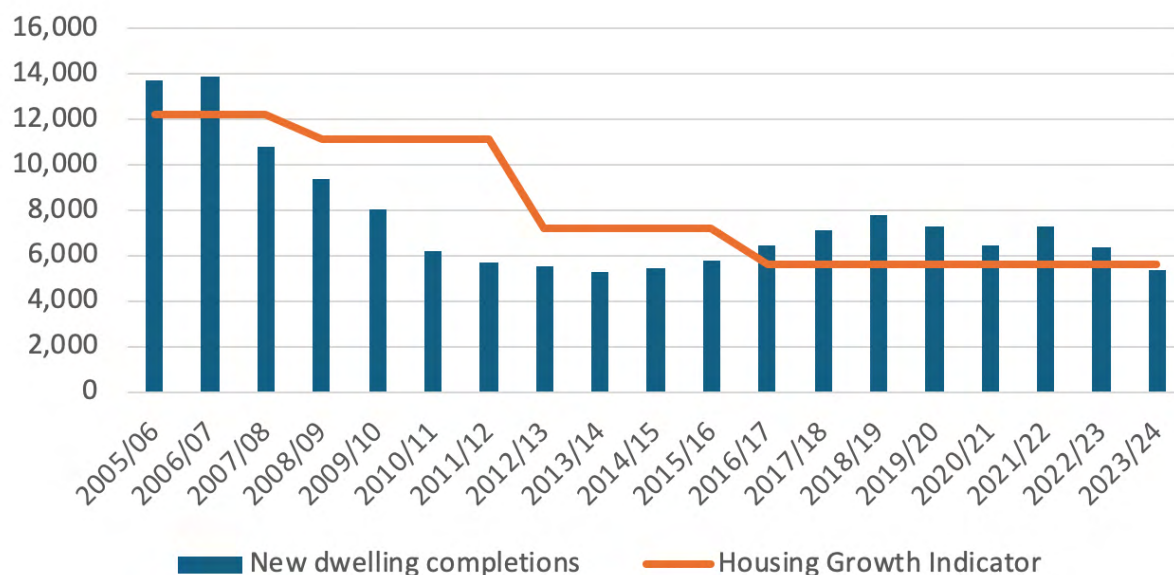
As outlined in the Call for Evidence and in this Strategy, the causes of the widening gap between overall housing requirements and new supply are multi-faceted. Figure 3 illustrates the development of this undersupply over the last 15 years. It shows a substantial gap emerging between new dwelling completions and estimates of future overall requirements in terms of Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs) in the years following the GFC.

<sup>15</sup> Successive House Condition Surveys carried out by the Housing Executive demonstrated the large proportional increase in private renting over a 10-year period: from 12.1% of households in 2006 to 17.5% in 2011 and 18.3% in 2016. These statistics would indicate that most of the rapid growth period was between 2006 and 2011, and the most recent figure available (from the 2021-22 Family Resources Survey) would confirm that the proportion of households has remained fairly stable at around 17%

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.ulster.ac.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/1573829/ULSTER-UNIVERSITY-House-Price-Index-Reports-Q3-2023-web.pdf](https://www.ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1573829/ULSTER-UNIVERSITY-House-Price-Index-Reports-Q3-2023-web.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.ulster.ac.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1619140/3706\\_AHSS\\_At-a-glance-H2-2023\\_NIHE.pdf](https://www.ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1619140/3706_AHSS_At-a-glance-H2-2023_NIHE.pdf)



**Figure 3: The Gap between New Dwelling Completions and HGI's 2005/06 - 2023/24**

Source: DfC Housing Statistics and Regional Development Strategy Housing Growth Indicators

Revised HGI's based on NISRA's 2016 household projections envisaged an annual average of 5,700 from 2016/17 onwards<sup>18</sup>, and since 2016, housing completions had exceeded this revised figure. However, as outlined in Figure 3, housing completions no longer exceed the HGI figure in 2023/24. In 2017, the Department for Communities' Housing Symposium, in recognition of the growing gap between supply and overall requirements, had already recommended an overall delivery target of 8,000 new dwellings per annum – but even this was based on increasingly outdated estimates of the number of households. As such, there is general agreement that a significant increase in new housing completions is required to underpin the strategic priorities of the NI Executive and that a new integrated, transparent model for estimating future

requirements based on scenario planning and integrating demographic, economic and stock information at a strategic level, would be of considerable benefit. This will need to take into account wastewater capacity constraints and how those constraints can be overcome. The Housing Executive has a research project (the Strategic Housing Market Analysis – SHMA) to address this issue, which was published in October 2022. We have also committed to work to better understand the types of housing required to meet the range of housing needs.

Although the housing market here has been characterised primarily by the three trends outlined above, other long-term trends have also developed that are now coming to the forefront of our housing supply considerations.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/2016-based-housing-growth-indicators-hgis>



## Quality and Energy Efficiency of Homes

As emphasised by the vision and objectives, improving housing supply must also factor in issues of quality and contribute to our net zero objectives. The Housing Fitness Standard<sup>19</sup> is the statutory basis for inadequate or unfit housing, which applies across all tenures of housing and sets the legal threshold, below which no one should be expected to live. House Condition Surveys (HCS) have been used to assess dwelling conditions against the statutory fitness standard since 1974<sup>20</sup>. These surveys provide a measurement of the level of unfitness in NI and consequently have demonstrated the substantial progress made in improving housing conditions. However, the relative importance of the Fitness Standard has declined due to the very low proportion of the stock (1.1% of occupied stock) failing on this quality measure. The Call for Evidence also highlighted that for many, its value falls short as a means of dealing with modern housing challenges.

## Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency is a key factor for thermal comfort which impacts on fuel poverty and is a primary issue when we consider housing quality and wider environmental impacts.<sup>21</sup> The 2016 House Condition Survey found that NI housing stock had an average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating of 65.83 out of 100. It also noted that approximately half of all dwellings had an Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) within bands A-C.<sup>22</sup> That said, no dwellings were found in Band A and only 4% in Band B, while more than one-third

(36%) of dwellings were found in Band D and 11% in Band E. The HCS also highlights that older houses (and as might be expected due to this, older households) and dwellings in rural areas were less likely to fall within the three highest bands.

Both the construction of new housing and the retrofitting of existing homes will play a key role in helping to achieve the target of at least a 48% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net zero by 2050.

## Quality of Place

There is also another consideration for which trends are more difficult to measure or establish, but are an important aspect of supply.

It was clear from the Call for Evidence responses that quality should also refer to more than just the build of the home itself. It should also take into account the quality of design and the environs of the home which may then have a potential subsequent impact on wellbeing and health. The provision of good-quality housing is likely to contribute to better health through its indirect impact on other factors which contribute to health. These include improved outcomes in the early years, better job opportunities and with that greater income, as well as strengthened community and individual resilience and wellbeing. Whilst the indicators for quality and efficiency of the building are more straightforward to define, quality of place has a potentially much broader scope that may consider factors such as access to open, attractive and useable blue and green space,

<sup>19</sup> The current Fitness Standard was enshrined in Schedule 5 of the Housing (NI) Order 1992. The Fitness Standard remains the only statutory broad measure of housing quality in NI.

<sup>20</sup> The NI Housing Executive was established by the Housing Executive Act, 1971. One of the legislative requirements was that Housing Executive “regularly examine housing conditions and requirements”. It undertook the first NI House Condition Survey in 1974, a comprehensive survey that estimated that almost 90,000 homes (20%) were statutorily unfit for human habitation (approximately three times the proportion for England at that time). Indeed, approximately 40 per cent of NI’s population lived in dwellings that were unfit, in disrepair or lacked basic amenities.

<sup>21</sup> The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is the Government’s standard method of rating the energy efficiency of a dwelling. It has a range of factors that contribute to energy efficiency, such as, materials used for construction, the efficiency and control of heating systems and fuel used for space and water heating. The rating is between 1-100. The higher the number, the lower the running costs.

<sup>22</sup> The 1-100 SAP energy efficiency rating is also represented in an A-G banding system which is the basis for the production of an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). ‘Band A’ rating represents low energy costs and ‘Band G’ rating represents high energy costs.

(for example, combining sustainable stormwater storage, in the form of rainwater gardens and ponds), feeling of safety, visual amenity or even the attractiveness of an area to existing and potential future residents. With this in mind, work is underway to identify suitable indicators that can measure this.

## Housing Equality

Not all groups experience the same housing challenges and a key objective of the Strategy is to address inequalities by improving and prioritising housing solutions for those who are most in need. For example, the Strategy's Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) suggests different experiences by gender in terms of homelessness with men more likely to be disproportionately affected and the impact of housing costs on those on marginal incomes. An example with age is the fact that older people (75+) are more likely to live in housing that has higher than average basic and urgent repair costs to bring their dwelling into good repair. Under religious belief, there are a higher proportion of lead applicants on the waiting list for social housing that are in housing stress, from the Catholic community, relative to the Protestant community. There remain inequalities in terms of the access to suitable housing for individuals with a learning disability to live independently and many individuals with a disability still live in homes that are unsuited to their disability-related needs.

However, as covered in more detail in the draft EQIA, there can be intersections between different equality categories that have a bearing on housing

outcomes. For instance, the complexity of the relationship between gender and housing. The updated data shows that more women than men experience poverty both before and after their housing costs are accounted for. Within this there are likely to be intersectional issues at play, with for example dependents/ caring responsibilities and marital status influencing these trends. This underlines the importance of not looking at gender in isolation. Further data disaggregation and related research is required to gain a better understanding of the causality of many of the key inequalities that appear to exist (when looking at housing experiences through the lens of a single equality category).

Similarly, there are structural complexities in terms of housing provision for those from ethnically diverse backgrounds following implementation of UK Government immigration policies. Labour market practices and problematic access to benefits make it particularly hard for ethnically diverse groups to afford housing.<sup>23</sup>

Some of the key inequalities identified are already being actioned through existing initiatives that will be further developed through this Strategy, including the Housing Executive's Irish Traveller Accommodation Strategy 2020-25 and 'Ending Homelessness Together 2022-2027' Strategy and Reset Plan. Moreover, the EQIA is only the first stage in an evolving focus on the inequalities that may be experienced by section 75 groups in respect of housing outcomes and evidence from ongoing monitoring will help shape actions to mitigate negative impacts throughout the Strategy.

---

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.jrf.org.uk/race-and-ethnicity/poverty-and-ethnicity-in-northern-ireland>

# How we will get to where we need to be

## Whole System Approach

As the 'where are we now' summary illustrates, not one single overarching challenge (or problem) is affecting housing supply. When we look at the drivers of need and demand and the levers adopted to address need and demand, it is

apparent that housing supply is a complex and multifaceted issue. Moreover, many of these facets are interrelated, as summarised in Figure 4. For this reason, a 'whole system' approach, which has not been attempted in the past, can help unlock new solutions.

**Figure 4 Housing Supply as 'Whole System' approach**



Levers adopted to meet demand include finance, provision of land, the planning system, innovation and skills, but without the necessary infrastructure in place, this will be in vain. The Call for Evidence highlighted the potential for more options and flexibility around design standards/regulations to open opportunities to improve the quality of supply and accessibility for a range of individuals. The opportunity to adapt, recycle and re-use existing buildings to increase supply and create thriving communities was also flagged by numerous respondents. The benefits of innovative delivery methods, construction techniques and the skills required to utilise these have equally been identified as missed opportunities. And, most significantly, the opportunities associated with working collaboratively across the systems of central and local government as well as the third

sector and private sector to transform supply, have been highlighted repeatedly.

Utilising a 'whole system' lens also illustrates the central role of people, places and communities. Creating sustainable, high quality and affordable places where people wish to live, work and play can help tackle inequalities and enable communities to thrive. Whilst this new Strategy will naturally focus on supply, we must not lose sight of the importance of understanding the needs of people, places and communities when implementing the Strategy. We will make sure that communities have a greater say in the supply process, through community planning and stronger engagement in planning and regeneration processes.

## The Enabling Principle

Our Enabling Principle outlines how we wish to work with others, recognising that the range of housing supply “whole system challenges” require “whole system solutions”, so working collaboratively across central and local government and with the private and voluntary and community sectors will be crucial in making a difference to the challenges facing the housing supply system. The lived experiences of those “in the system” need to help us shape solutions.

**“Adopting a whole system approach, collaborate across central and local government and the third and private sectors to inclusively transform supply.”**

## Our Objectives

The Housing Supply Strategy is centred on delivering **five key objectives** all of which will draw from and improve upon people’s lived experience of housing:

- 1) Creating Affordable Options:** Increase housing supply and affordable options across all tenures to meet housing need and demand;
- 2) Prevention and Intervention:** Prevent homelessness, reduce housing stress and improve and prioritise housing solutions for those most in need;
- 3) Quality and Safety:** Improve housing quality;
- 4) Better Places:** Ensure the provision of housing options that contribute to the building and maintenance of thriving, inclusive communities and places; and
- 5) A Fair Path to Low Carbon Housing:** Ensure that the construction of new housing and retrofitting of existing homes enables people to afford to heat their homes as well as allowing us to meet our greenhouse gas emission targets.

The Housing Supply Strategy is a 15-year policy framework in recognition that many of the transformations required are complex in nature, with some requiring a longer timeline to deliver on, than others. These policies must also be resilient to longer term issues such as demographic, economic and environmental change and technological advances. The Strategy must also be flexible enough to accommodate emerging issues. This will be achieved by keeping the Strategy under review and throughout the action planning process.

More about the framework and the proposed work under each of our specific objectives is detailed later in the document, including a more detailed outline of our long term policy commitments, which set out the direction of travel and provide the context for development of action plans. Also detailed, under the banner of initial enabling activities, are actions we are already progressing or are committed to progressing, which we consider will make an important contribution to delivering our objectives by helping to create new sustainable housing options and better outcomes for our people.

As previously highlighted, the five key objectives are interconnected. As such, the policies and actions underneath each will actually have a much broader impact in achieving the Strategy vision. We have mapped these linkages at **Annex B**.

## Data and Evidence

We are committed to developing an on-going housing evidence programme to support and inform all aspects of the Strategy. We will work with others to improve the data quality, availability and coverage to improve our understanding and measurement of the impact of our actions in helping to achieve our vision.

We will monitor and report on this Strategy on an annual basis. An initial progress report will be published in due course.

## Indicators

It is proposed that the Housing Supply Strategy and progress against achieving the vision will be monitored and reported upon with reference to a basket of population level indicators<sup>24</sup>. Initial indicators include:

- Housing Stock figures (Source: Land and Property Services, DoF). We will be examining if and how we can get a more nuanced picture of the supply picture against housing need;
- Number of households in housing stress (Source: Housing Executive);
- Number of households who are homeless both presentations and acceptances (Source: Housing Executive);
- Proportion of households spending 30% or more of their household income on housing costs (Source: Family Resources Survey);
- Proportion of households who report being either “very satisfied” or “fairly satisfied” with their house or flat (source: Continuous Household Survey);<sup>25</sup>
- Percentage of homes that meet the Fitness Standard (Source: House Condition Survey). This will be more relevant post completion of work to review the standard;

- Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) ratings - this is the measure for assessing energy ratings for homes (These are currently collected through the House Condition Survey and are used to form the Energy Performance Certificates);<sup>26</sup>
- Proportion of adults who feel:
  - a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood;
  - safe living in their area;
  - there is a strong sense of community in their area. (Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey)
  - they have an influence when it comes to local decisions made in their neighbourhood

We will also factor in indicators included in other relevant Strategies, for instance, those outlined in the Energy Strategy options consultation in relation to household energy expenditure relative to all expenditure,<sup>27</sup> households in fuel poverty<sup>28</sup> and greenhouse gas emissions from energy related sectors (specifically residential properties)<sup>29</sup>. We will also continue to develop our evaluation framework as we progress our housing evidence programme. This work will include expanding the range and nature of the indicators collated and analysed as we work to address the series of complex issues, which impede supply.

In accordance with the Outcomes Based Accountability, individual interventions or programmes will be monitored using report cards which detail performance measures or metrics with reference to the quantity of work done;

<sup>24</sup> Outcomes Based Accountability has two levels of accountability. Population Based Accountability is about the wellbeing of whole populations, groups or communities. This kind of accountability is bigger than one agency, service or department and requires collaboration and collective responsibility as a way to achieve the conditions we hope to deliver. Conditions of well - being are called outcomes, and these outcomes should be a statement of ambition or aspiration.

<sup>25</sup> A recent OECD study (OECD (2021), “Building for a better tomorrow: Policies to make housing more affordable”, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Policy Briefs, OECD, Paris) , highlights the advantages and limitations of a range of metrics to measure affordability (and quality) of housing and suggests that given the limitations of each, it is preferable to use a number of metrics including the perception of individuals. This was a new question added to the CHS in 21/22, Table 6.13 <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/system/files/publications/communities-ni-housing-stats-22-23-tables6.ods>. Respondents to the Call for Evidence also highlighted the somewhat arbitrary nature of ratios with the explanation that they do not provide an adequate understanding of individual affordability.

<sup>26</sup> SAP is assessment of the energy performance rating of a home. The higher the SAP rating, the lower the energy costs and subsequent carbon emissions. SAP calculations are used to form the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). The HSC is a representative sample so therefore can be used to make inferences about all homes in NI. For EPC will only be new homes or homes that have been sold since EPC was introduced (30 December 2008), with the added issue of certificates only being valid for 10 years

<sup>27</sup> Source: Living Costs and Food Survey

<sup>28</sup> Produced using modelling work from the House Condition Survey.

<sup>29</sup> Source: National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (Devolved Administrations - Greenhouse Gas Reports - NAEI, UK ([beis.gov.uk](https://beis.gov.uk)))

the quality of work done; and the impact of this work. Indicators or metrics will take account of suggestions made during the consultation on the draft Housing Supply Strategy.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Performance accountability relates to specific programmes, projects or services.



# Objective 1: Creating Affordable Options

Increase housing supply and affordable options across all tenures to meet housing need and demand.

## Introduction

We need to create new, better and more affordable housing options for our people.

To ensure that we get the right number and types of houses in the right places, we need to improve our understanding and estimation of future housing requirements, including understanding different needs. Furthermore, as highlighted in the Call for Evidence, we need to have a better understanding of our current stock, including tenure, location and condition to establish a more robust picture of the supply gaps. Work is progressing to identify and address our housing data gaps, including the ongoing work on the Strategic Housing Market Analysis model.

We know from the evidence that we have available to us now, that:

- A significant increase in housing completions is necessary (given the widening gap between overall housing requirements and new supply);
- There are increasing affordability challenges for renters and prospective home purchasers; and
- Housing stress continues to increase (despite significant investment in social housing)

Achieving this objective must involve an increase in supply across all tenures and establishing 'new intermediate products' to provide alternative options outside of what is currently available.

Evidence (including that provided through the Call for Evidence process) has confirmed that the key levers we need to unlock to substantially increase supply across tenures are:

- Exploiting existing financial resources (including Financial Transactions Capital) to greater effect and investigating the potential for new sources;
- Addressing infrastructure constraints, most notably, waste water, transport, energy and the digital network. Limitations, such as wastewater capacity, may restrict development or mean that development may not proceed at all. In some areas we need to work closely with infrastructure providers to address these issues;
- Increasing land availability in areas of need and demand, including through improving our knowledge of public land (both central and local government) that may be suitable for housing; and
- Creating the right policy and legislative environment, including better utilising the powers already in place to support new supply and reuse/adapt existing buildings, for example land acquisition, rating and planning powers.

## Long Term Policy Commitments

The long term policy commitments we are proposing to meet this objective and address the needs described include:

- **Work collaboratively and innovatively with the private, public and third sectors to address issues around land availability and considering issues such as: local services, infrastructure constraints, promoting and encouraging sustainable drainage systems, digital connectivity and transport.**



- **Enhance our open data platforms to improve access to housing, land, property and planning data, creating better transparency and unlocking opportunities to transform supply.**
- **Ensure our housing policy and legislative framework enables us to deliver the housing supply to meet our current and future needs and demand patterns.**
- **Support upskilling, reskilling, delivery of apprenticeships and training for both existing workers and new workers in order to underpin a modern integrated housing system. This will include ensuring that public procurement spend contributes to the Executive's objectives, including creating jobs in deprived areas and ensuring security of our wider supply chain.**
- **Work innovatively to optimise access to alternative forms of public and private finance such as Financial Transactions Capital (FTC) and institutional funding to develop and deliver new and affordable housing products.**
- **Ensure that the rental sector offers a range of affordable homes with rents that are fair for tenants, as well as landlords.**

### **Existing and New Enabling Activities**

As outlined in the Strategic Context, more granular level detail in relation to this and other activities/ actions will be provided in underpinning delivery plans, including timeframe and responsibilities for their delivery, resourcing and performance indicators.

### **We will:**

- Build more social homes in line with the Housing Executive's Strategic Guidelines, and support housing development working closely with NI water to help inform their future investment plans and facilitate housing growth.
- Commission work aimed at critically evaluating current measures of affordability with reference to best practice in other jurisdictions and, if appropriate, recommending a measure or measures best suited to the NI context;
- Work with the NIHE to deliver an agreed rent policy which is affordable to current and future tenants, is sustainable for the Landlord and provides long term certainty to support investment in homes.
- Commence the 2nd phase of work aimed at bringing forward improvements in the private rented sector. We have already commissioned research into Letting Agent Regulation, including the charging of fees (both pre-tenancy and those incurred during the tenancy).
- Work collaboratively to extend the scope of the Government Land and Property Register (GLPR) Programme to digitally map all land and property holdings for both Central Government and Local Government in NI. This will support efforts to identify land for social, affordable, and private new build, along with existing buildings suited to adaptive reuse, which can contribute towards supply. This development will underpin a Geographic Information System (GIS) enabled dataset which will in due course support a whole system based approach.

- Support the development of options for establishment of an Infrastructure Commission for an expert led, strategic and public engagement approach to long term infrastructure planning; and the establishment of a cross-departmental working group to determine the best organisational classification for the Commission, its cost, including remuneration, the appointment process of its members and its reporting arrangements;
- Undertake an assessment of Registered Housing Associations' powers, alongside the review of the legislative framework to ensure that Associations can fully participate in creating and delivering new housing options and mainstreaming mixed tenure;
- Support the work of the Planning Improvement Programme – a number of issues were raised in the Call for Evidence around the planning system mainly to do with timescales for application decisions and Local Development Plan preparation. A DfI review of the Implementation of the Planning Act (NI) 2011<sup>31</sup> made a number of key recommendations/actions to improve the planning system.
- Support the work of the Planning Forum in the implementation of recommendations made in the independent report on the role of statutory consultees in the planning process, with a focus on improving processes and timeframes for determining major and economically significant planning applications. The role of statutory consultees and timeliness of their responses was an issue that was raised throughout the Call for Evidence.
- Examine options for ensuring the ratings system responds over time to a range of emerging strategic opportunities and challenges, including for example decarbonisation, making better use of underused assets for domestic use and preventing buildings from becoming dilapidated.
- Support the Department of Finance procurement policy which implemented the mandatory scoring of social value within public procurement contracts, in all applicable publically funded housing development schemes to ensure opportunities to maximise the use of social clauses.
- Consider how existing powers can be used better to achieve housing and regeneration and examine how statute and legislation might better support the release of land and buildings for the delivery of housing.
- Continue to deliver current intermediate shared ownership housing to help those on lower incomes meet their aspirations to home ownership. This includes the delivery of a shared ownership scheme aimed at assisting those who are over 55 to move to a home more suitable for their needs.

---

<sup>31</sup> The Planning Act (NI) 2011 provided the legislative basis for the reform of the NI planning system. The reforms were comprehensive, impacting on every aspect of planning, including how development plans are drawn up, how development proposals and applications are managed and the way in which these functions are delivered. DfI issued a Call for Evidence to help inform a review of the implementation of the Planning Act and a report on the Review of the Implementation of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 was published on 27 January 2022. This resulted in a number of key recommendations/actions covering aspects of the Planning Act governing development planning; development management; planning enforcement and additional planning control aimed at improving the efficiency of the planning system as a whole. Many of these recommendations are now incorporated into the DfI's Planning Improvement Programme (PIP) which has been developed and is being delivered in partnership between central and local government and partners, with the objective of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the planning system.

- Implement the Intermediate Rent policy by making available funding to an Intermediate Rent Operator to deliver a supply of Intermediate homes for rent.<sup>32</sup> Intermediate Rent seeks to provide high quality, well managed, affordable homes for rent for tenants who cannot or do not wish to access home ownership and would be unlikely to attain sufficient points to have a realistic chance of accessing social housing in an area of choice.
- Commence a research project to determine the housing data we need that will establish a 'whole system' view of housing supply, including a more granular picture of the different types of homes we need to meet the different needs of our people. This will build on the Housing Executive's Strategic Housing Market Analysis.
- Work collaboratively with NI Water to help identify how best to facilitate housing growth and encourage Housing Associations / developers to engage early with NI Water, to identify and try to resolve any wastewater capacity issues.

---

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/intermediate-rent-policy-and-homes-intermediate-rent-design-standards>

## Objective 2: Prevention and Intervention

Prevent homelessness, reduce housing stress and improve and prioritise housing solutions for those most in need.

### Introduction

This objective recognises that housing issues are a major contributor to inequality and insecurity in our society and the strong link between good housing and good mental and physical health.

Access to affordable housing is also fundamental to employment and employability, with proximity to places of work being a key factor to equality of opportunity for employment. As such, equality and human rights considerations are fundamental to achieving the vision for the Strategy and require a “whole system” approach.

Prevention of homelessness and reducing housing stress is the focus for this work. Work to increase housing supply and affordable options will make a substantial contribution to achieving this objective but success is also about ensuring improved affordable housing solutions for a wider diversity of needs including those of older people, those with disabilities (which in itself covers a wide spectrum of needs including physical, mental and developmental disabilities; each with their own particular circumstances and needs to consider) and for other vulnerable people, including children in care, those individuals leaving the criminal justice system and those who are victims of domestic violence. Consequently, this objective also recognises the inextricable link between housing, health and social care and support system and the need to have a

continuum of support from temporary to permanent accommodation.

This objective also reflects what we heard in the Call for Evidence, including the need for us to:

- Focus on homelessness prevention;
- Learn lessons from elsewhere on approaches to increase stability and security for people in poverty, such as the Housing First model;<sup>33</sup>
- Build on existing positive developments including interdepartmental working through the Covid -19 pandemic;
- Progress an holistic approach to housing provision, recognising the importance of wraparound and support services in the development and provision of housing solutions for those who have different needs;
- Protect our current social housing stock; and
- Future proof our homes so they are more easily adaptable to meet changing needs. Changing demographics means that people are living longer and as they get older, the likelihood of developing long term health conditions rises (this links closely with quality and design, which is more explicitly covered under Objective 3).

It also recognises that an effective and fair social housing allocations system is fundamental to easing housing stress and making sure allocations to social housing are being based on objective need. In this context it is noted that many who responded to the Call for Evidence referenced the points system, which determines an individual's

<sup>33</sup> Housing First is an internationally recognised model of combatting long-term homelessness for people with complex needs. A Housing First service prioritises permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness from the outset. The intention is that housing should be available even if a person experiencing homelessness refuses treatment for their substance use or mental health issues and then a flexible support package covering mental health, substance use, employment and other issues is provided for the service users in their new home by a multi-disciplinary team. This is done with a view to reconnecting them to their community and ensuring stability in their accommodation.

position on the social housing waiting list, highlighting that the award of some points, such as those for intimidation, can result in some individuals getting priority over those who have been on the waiting list for a long time.<sup>34</sup>

Also worth highlighting are the clear linkages between the Housing Supply Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy in supporting some of our most vulnerable households. The Homelessness Strategy outlines three objectives, with Objective 1 (Prioritise homeless prevention) providing a direct link to this objective. There are further links between both strategies with the delivery of the Housing Supply Strategy and the associated increase in the range of accommodation options across NI supporting the Housing Executive in delivering objectives 2 and 3 of the Homelessness Strategy. These objectives are respectively focused on addressing homelessness by: providing settled, appropriate accommodation and support; and supporting customers to transition from Homelessness into settled accommodation.

## Long Term Policy Commitments

The long term policy commitments we are proposing to meet this objective and address the needs described include:

- **Deliver housing solutions for our people who are most in need, recognising the inequalities identified through the Equality Impact Assessment developed to support this Housing Supply Strategy**
- **Work with housing delivery partners to develop and implement plans and policies that will support the delivery of a more diverse range of housing types and alternative models of housing to meet all housing needs, taking account of changing demographics and lifestyles**

- **Prevent homelessness and where it occurs, ensure that it is brief, rare and non-recurrent.**

## Existing and New Enabling Activities

Building on the activities outlined under Objective 1, we will:

- Support the Housing Executive in the delivery of its Ending Homelessness Together 2022-2027 strategy, and subsequent homelessness strategies that are delivered during the lifetime of the Housing Supply Strategy. The focus of the Strategy links strongly to the Call for Evidence responses, most notably the need to prevent homelessness, support exiting into settled accommodation and extend Housing First provision. The Strategy also recognises that services must be tailored to appropriately take account of differences in those individuals and households presenting as homeless. Equality issues are central to the strategy and will also be central to monitoring its delivery.
- Progress the delivery of the Interdepartmental Homelessness Action Plan to provide a cohesive and co-ordinated response to the provision of non-accommodation services to those who are homeless or most at risk of homelessness. Responses to the Call for Evidence included the need for better joined up policy for mental health, drug addiction support and homelessness prevention. This includes groups such as those who are leaving the criminal justice system and those who have a disability. Suggested actions focused on early intervention through teaching children about homelessness, financial capability and wellbeing.

<sup>34</sup> On applying for social housing, an individual's position on the waiting list is determined by the points awarded. Points are awarded under four categories (1) intimidation (2) insecurity of tenure (3) housing conditions (4) and health and social wellbeing issues.

- Assist the Housing Executive in the delivery of its Older People's Housing Strategy 2021/22-2026/27. Delivery of this Strategy includes working with partners to incorporate better design principles into social housing (both new and existing) that is reflective of the needs of older people (recognising that older people are not a homogenous group), encouraging council planners to incorporate the requirement that all new build housing should meet lifetime home standards and exploring the use assistive technology has to play in supporting independent living and sustaining and supporting tenancies.
- Support the Housing Executive to deliver the Irish Travellers Accommodation Strategy<sup>35</sup> to provide access to affordable, good quality, culturally appropriate housing accommodation which fosters a sustainable, vibrant Irish Traveller community and promotes inclusion, a sense of belonging and security. This Strategy proposes a number of key actions, including those designed to better understand Traveller specific accommodation needs and improve fitness standards for caravans (which also links closely to Objective 3) and details an implementation plan laying out the work programme up until 2026.
- Support the development and implementation of a 3-year Strategy for the Supporting People Programme, in partnership with delivery agents and users. As emphasised by many respondents to the Call for Evidence, the Supporting People Programme plays a fundamental role in helping people attain and maintain their independence. The new Strategy is designed to meet the existing and emerging needs of those who are homeless, older people, younger people and those with a disability.
- Examine options for alternative models of supported housing that addresses anticipated and emerging need. The current model of delivery of Supported Housing has not changed since the mid-1990s. This work will include an examination of 'what works' in other jurisdictions, including evidence or learning from or changes to service provision because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Progress work to better understand the housing experiences of Section 75 groups, with reference to multiple identities and intersections between different equality categories. This is a key evidence and data gap identified in the Housing Supply Strategy EQIA.
- Continue to prioritise and improve housing adaptations to both social and private homes. This includes us working with the Housing Executive to examine the adaptations process, including the updating of the adaptations toolkit and identifying any policy gaps.
- Ensure an effective and fair social housing allocations system based on objective need, through implementation of the recommendations of the Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations<sup>36</sup>; and
- Continue to progress the interdepartmental review of Disabled Facilities Grants. This review aims to enhance the flexibilities of the Disabled Facilities Grant mechanism for those requiring home adaptations in relation to a disability. This work will involve assessing current policy and legislation prescribing the operation of the grants regime, to bring forward proposals to improve the experience of end users.

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Irish-Traveller-Strategy/Irish-Travellers-Accommodation-Strategy-2021-2026.aspx>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/fundamental-review-social-housing-allocations>



## Objective 3: Quality and Safety

Improve housing quality across all tenures.

### Introduction

At the most basic level, achieving this objective is about ensuring that nobody has to live in inadequate housing. Our aim is for all homes to be of good quality meaning that everyone can expect the same high standards no matter what kind of home or tenure they live in. Central to this ambition will be our work with the Housing Executive to address its investment challenges in order to improve and maintain its existing social homes.

As confirmed in the Call for Evidence:

- One third of our social homes are already at risk and this position will only deteriorate unless we secure the investment necessary to allow these homes to be maintained and enhanced;
- Our Housing Fitness Standard now lags behind those in other jurisdictions and is, therefore, limited as a tool for addressing our modern housing challenges and complementing the NI Executive's wider policy agenda;
- There are particular issues with the quality, security and safety of our Private Rented Sector; and

It is also about supporting the principles of tenure-neutral standards and requiring housing developers and homeowners to ensure their properties meet current and future fitness standards. It must also necessitate action to ensure our buildings are fit for the future and resilient to the effects of climate change.

Linked to Objective 2, other issues around quality and design also include considerations around whether our homes are designed to best meet our needs. In this respect, stakeholders emphasised the need for good design, so that accessibility does not compromise the attractiveness of their home or demarcate their home as different from surrounding homes.

Of course, issues of quality and safety also include surrounding areas and are directly linked to creating better places (Objective 4). They also require to be closely aligned with Objective 5 - A Fair Path to Low Carbon Housing.

### Long Term Policy Commitments

The long term policy commitments we are proposing to meet this objective and address the needs described include:

- **Update existing policies and develop new policies that will ensure our housing standards support the delivery of higher quality, sustainable homes across all tenures to help improve health & wellbeing**
- **Work collaboratively to ensure the design of our homes support those with care needs to live independently if they wish to do so**
- **Secure agreement to revitalise the NIHE by putting in place a sustainable funding model that will enable increased investment in its homes, improving their energy efficiency measures and contributing to new supply**



## Existing and New Enabling Activities

Building on the activities outlined under Objectives 1 and 2, we will:

- Progress Housing Executive Revitalisation. Revitalisation will focus on options which will enable a revitalised Strategic Housing Authority and sustainable landlord, that can maintain and provide good quality and affordable homes for current tenants and future generations
- Undertake a comprehensive review of fitness standards applicable for all tenures.
- Regularly review the Housing Association Guide to examine if and how we can enhance the design of our social housing to better meet the diversity of housing needs. This work will be informed by a wide range of evidence, including pilot projects.
- Support the timely uplift of building regulations for new homes and, where appropriate, the implementation of features of the Building Safety Bill (developed in the wake of the Grenfell Tower disaster). In relation to the latter, this will include the role of the New Homes Ombudsman to support the delivery of high quality homes.

- Put tenants' needs at the heart of ensuring that the Private Rented Sector (PRS) is suitable for a wider range of households. Specifically we will deliver new legislation that will improve the safety, security and quality of the Private Rented sector. In doing this we will aim to strengthen enforcement powers to uphold standards in the PRS by:
  - introducing a much longer notice to quit period that a landlord must give a tenant
  - making it a mandatory requirement for private landlords to provide smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and to carry out periodic electrical checks; and
  - transferring Landlord Registration to Councils.

We will then take forward further work to address other cross cutting issues, including regulating letting agents.

## Objective 4: Better Places

Ensure the provision of housing options that contribute to the building and maintenance of thriving, inclusive, sustainable communities and places.

### Introduction

Doing things differently through working across departments and sectors can create new solutions to stubborn housing issues and will help achieve better outcomes for our communities. To achieve this, we need to agree a definition of what we mean by ‘sustainable homes and communities’. We will build on the definitions outlined in the DfI Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)<sup>37</sup> on core planning principles and in the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 on sustainable communities and cohesive communities,<sup>38</sup> and note that the location of housing providing convenient access to key services by walking, cycling and public transport are key considerations in reducing the need for motorised transport to access daily services.

Through the strategy we will work with DfI, Councils and the relevant professional bodies to identify the planning policy developments required to unlock transformative supply.

These definitions describe sustainable communities as places where people want to live, work and play, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run and offer equality of opportunity and good services to all.

Building and maintaining thriving and inclusive communities and places can support the wellbeing of those who live there. One of the key ingredients in the creation of such places is the provision of a range of affordable housing options across a mix of tenures that meet people’s needs across all stages of their lives. These places should be located close to employment, recreation, shopping, community facilities and public transport services, and built with the necessary enabling infrastructure that takes account of future growth as well as addressing changes in demography, technology or climate change.

The strategy recognises the need to move forward towards more mixed tenure housing provision. Mixed tenure in new or existing housing developments creates a balanced social mix and as a result, communities are likely to be more diverse resulting in a more cohesive community where relationships between people from different backgrounds are positive and differences are valued. In terms of housing options within tenures, these also have significant potential to help build and sustain diverse communities and places; for example, affordable and accessible housing options for those who are older and/or those who have disabilities or who have other particular housing needs; independent living options; affordable housing in rural settlements to sustain rural communities and to provide young and older people with options to be able to stay close to their families and support networks.

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/SPPS.pdf> - Pg 12 para 3.6 and section 4.5 under core planning principles.

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/regional-development-strategy-2035.pdf>. Pg 40 para 3.9 and 3.11.

The strategy recognises the importance and value of local neighbourhoods with good accessibility to services, as well as demonstrating the additional benefits provided by working from home including opportunities for recreation, exercise, community interaction, more time with family and a greater appreciation of the natural environment.

The qualities of the built environment can promote active living and healthier lifestyles, particularly among children and young people. Sustainable neighbourhoods need to encompass a variety of accessible, welcoming and safe blue and green spaces. Making neighbourhoods cleaner, greener and healthier is an important aspect of this Strategy as is making green space accessible to all in our communities.

Our Strategy recognises the variety of urban, suburban and rural places that exist here and the myriad of challenges faced by different target groups within communities in these places. A one size fits all approach to housing supply and place shaping will not work. Our approach will be more nuanced and dovetail with local Council led Community Plans and their Local Development Plans. Supporting people to help design and access a range of housing options in the places and communities where they want to live, is a cornerstone of this Strategy. We also recognise that the benefit of providing options that allow communities and places to thrive will have a potential concurrent effect of reducing stress on other parts of the public sector, for example the health and social care systems, and wastewater infrastructure.

The Strategy recognises the need not just to build new homes and to protect existing supply but also to build and maintain the inclusive and cohesive places where homes are located. This means taking a more integrated, person and community-focussed approach to the creation of sustainable and thriving places, where the voices of local people have a say and where they can take responsibility with others in how their areas are developed and maintained.

Community wealth building is one such community-focussed approach. This is a new people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people. Activity encompasses embedding social value in procurement (as referenced in Objective 1) and Community Asset Transfer.

The Strategy also understands the impact of poverty and low-incomes in relation to housing affordability and sustainability and the differential impacts on Section 75 groups. That said, as previously highlighted, further data disaggregation and related research is required to gain a better understanding of the causality of many of the key inequalities that appear to exist when looking at housing experiences. There is a commitment to progress work to help achieve this understanding under Objective 2.

Working with communities to hear the lived experiences of those affected by different equality based challenges will be a key part of the action planning process.

The Strategy also recognises the wider social and economic impacts and consequences of the segregation of housing here and the lack of integration across our communities and the benefits of creating more shared housing areas.

## Long Term Policy Commitments

The long term policy commitments we are proposing to meet this objective and address the needs described include:

- **Delivery of mixed tenure by putting place-shaping at the heart of our actions by developing policies that will support delivery of housing led regeneration, encourage mixed tenure and promote shared housing**
- **Ensure the planning system, including Local Development Plans, help support the delivery of the appropriate supply of housing, reflecting the changing nature of need and demand with consideration to wider policy influences including adaptive reuse and climate change.**
- **Work in new and different ways with local Councils and Community Planning Partnerships to realise opportunities to increase and maintain housing supply and help create sustainable and inclusive urban and rural places. This will include capturing the lived experiences of those affected by different life challenges.**
- Work with the Housing Executive, local government and housing delivery partners to mainstream mixed tenure in both social and private housing developments;
- Develop a housing-led regeneration policy to focus on the reversal of physical, social and economic decline in areas of social deprivation and which takes account of the changing use of our villages, towns and city centres;
- Contribute to the implementation of the Housing Executive's 'Reaching Rural' 2021-2025 Strategy. The Strategy contains a key theme of 'Enabling the provision of affordable rural homes' and explicitly acknowledges many of the issues raised through the Call for Evidence, including hidden housing need, higher occurrence of less energy efficient homes and fuel poverty and infrastructure constraints. Also of direct relevance to the Call for Evidence, the Strategy commits to examine how community led housing can help address housing supply issues faced by rural communities.<sup>39</sup>
- Explore the potential for Community Wealth Building approaches, including Community Asset Transfers to assist in the delivery of affordable housing which responds to local housing needs. This will include consideration of, if and how we can measure social value in the disposal of public land and property.

## Existing and New Enabling Activities

Building on the activities outlined under Objectives 1 -3, we will:

- Continue to progress and support the delivery of the Shared Housing Programme;
- Support the development of town and city centre waiting lists to provide improved housing options supported by accompanying soft and hard infrastructure, sustainable urban drainage systems that creates attractive and cohesive blue and green spaces in which people wish to live;

<sup>39</sup> [https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Consultation-Draft-Rural-Strategy-2021/Draft-Rural-Strategy-2021-2025-\(PDF-1-5MB\).aspx](https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Consultation-Draft-Rural-Strategy-2021/Draft-Rural-Strategy-2021-2025-(PDF-1-5MB).aspx)

## Objective 5: A Fair Path to Low Carbon Housing

Ensure that the construction of new housing and retrofitting of existing homes enables people to afford to heat their homes as well as allowing us to meet our greenhouse emission targets.

### Introduction:

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (the 'Act')<sup>40</sup> sets a statutory target of at least a 48% reduction in Northern Ireland's overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (within the timeframe of this strategy) and to achieve Net Zero by 2050. It requires five-yearly carbon budgets to be set with policies and proposals for meeting these budgets contained within climate action plans.

Residential dwellings are a component within the Buildings Sector (residential and public) of the Climate Action Plans required under the Act. The Act also requires that all Northern Ireland Departments exercise their functions, so far as possible, in a manner that is consistent with the achievement of the Act's objectives and targets.

In general, maintaining our current practices, technologies and building standards, constructing new homes using traditional practices and materials will not sufficiently reduce carbon emissions. Similarly, many of us still rely on heating our existing, less thermally/energy-efficient homes by burning fossil fuels using outdated heating systems, thereby producing large amounts of greenhouse gases, and leaving homeowners susceptible to the volatile price of imported energy sources.

Future policy direction will be required to set out how we will reduce energy consumption, develop

and use low carbon options for heating and raise building standards, including factoring solar energy into options for decarbonising homes. Making homes more sustainable and easier to heat will support a just transition which will help alleviate fuel poverty and have a positive impact on both mental and physical health, especially for more vulnerable populations.

People are concerned about the impacts of the energy transition, particularly how it may change their everyday lives as well as the associated costs. It is government's responsibility to help by clearly setting out the changes that are required and implementing mechanisms to support people through the transition, including behavioural change. Affordability and fairness will therefore be key considerations in our policy decisions. Careful consideration (and tailored support) must be given to those most in need, including those disadvantaged and/or marginalised groups. It is also vital that we continue to engage with people throughout the transition to lower carbon homes.

This Strategy recognises the key roles that the retrofitting of existing homes, the construction of new housing and the direction of future policies will play in helping to achieve ambitious decarbonisation targets. Measures to improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock are undoubtedly a cost-effective intervention over the long-term that will help reduce emissions and address fuel poverty. It will also be important to ensure climate adaptation is considered in the design and location of new housing so that homes are resilient to the effects of climate change. This links to Objective 4.

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2022/31/enacted/data.pdf>

## Long Term Policy Commitments

The long term policy commitments to support a just transition and an equitable decarbonisation of both new and existing supply are to:

- **Deliver on obligations in the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 to reduce emissions in the residential sector in line with the carbon budgets, ensuring a just transition to decarbonised solutions.**
  - **Make sure our homes are resilient to the impacts of climate change, including flooding and extremes of weather in line with the NI Climate Change Adaption Programme.<sup>41</sup>**
  - **Contribute to the development of the third Northern Ireland climate change adaptation programme (NICCAP3).**
  - **Work with social and affordable intermediate housing providers to advance decarbonisation, including through retrofit interventions, in existing homes, to meet our climate change targets, improve the quality of homes and reduce heating costs for tenants.**
- Deliver on the policies, proposals and enabling actions for residential buildings in the draft Climate Action Plan (2023-2027) to reduce energy consumption, use low carbon heating options and raise standards while ensuring a just transition.
  - Ensure that green growth is central to all our supply policy and budgetary decisions and support the new Green Growth test proposed under the Executive's draft Green Growth Strategy which seeks to ensure delivering Green Growth is a budgetary priority across the public sector.
  - Put in place minimum standards for the PRS, as part of a wider Executive policy to set MEES for all domestic tenure types (this also links to Objective 3 in relation to actions to improving quality and addressing affordability challenges in this sector).
  - Review Decent Homes Standard and Fitness Standard to improve energy efficiency, reduce fuel poverty and make homes climate resilient.
  - Support Housing Associations to innovate and develop homes to a higher energy standard than Building Regulations require. This will reduce heating costs for tenants, remove the need for expensive retrofitting, and increase expertise and knowledge of low energy housing in the sector in advance of future clarification on Net Zero requirements and uplifts in building regulations.
  - Deliver a scheme to help people on lower incomes, living in private accommodation, with the costs of installing energy efficiency improvement measures.

## Existing and New Enabling Activities

Many of the activities under this objective are also key policies, proposals and enabling actions that will contribute to the 2030, 2040 and 2050 carbon reduction targets through the development of Climate Actions Plans as required by the Act. Given the considerable long-term challenge of the climate change targets, these are strategic activities which build on the activities outlined under Objectives 1 - 4. We will:

<sup>41</sup> Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019-2024 Final-Laid.PDF (daera-ni.gov.uk)



# Delivering the Strategy

## Definition of Success

The aim for this Strategy is to create a housing system that can deliver on our housing needs and demands. This will include an ambition to deliver at least 33,000 social homes and a significant number of intermediate homes over the 15 year lifespan of this Strategy. Crucially, these will be homes of the right quality, right type, right cost and in the right locations to meet our current and future housing needs and demands.

To this end this Strategy is based on the assumption that as an Executive we will:

- Prioritise housing and deliver for those most in need;
- Ensure this priority is matched by the funding required;
- Grow the economy;
- Address investment in Infrastructure, in particular, wastewater infrastructure which is hindering economic development and the provision of housing;
- Improve our Planning System;
- Release public sector land (both local and central government owned) where appropriate;
- Invest in modernising our skills;
- Secure the necessary funding for our decarbonisation requirements and make heating our homes affordable; and
- Maximise the availability of public and private finance.

## Delivery Roadmap

The Housing Supply Strategy will be delivered through a series of detailed Action Plans, each of which will align with budget periods. By adopting this approach, we will ensure the actions that underpin the Strategy, are aligned to an everchanging social, economic and environmental context. This will ensure the Strategy remains relevant and appropriate and provides a dynamic model for delivery, which is both flexible and focused.

To ensure delivery remains focused on our vision and objectives we will be:

- **Working Collaboratively:** across the system of government to transform supply
- **Thinking Differently:** acknowledge that transforming supply means protecting existing homes as well as providing new homes
- **Promoting Change:** by taking forward new and different solutions with both existing and new delivery partners

## Working Collaboratively

Implementing this Strategy will require coordination across local and central government as well as new and different arrangements with both the third sector and private sector. To provide leadership and co-ordination across both central and local government landscapes, we will implement a new Programme Structure to coordinate delivery of the Strategy and associated policies.



We will contribute to and work alongside wider and related work streams, including the delivery of the Energy Strategy, the future Green Growth and Anti-Poverty Strategies, the Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030, the Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031 and the ambitions of 10X Economy. We will work with delivery partners and stakeholders to map where current capabilities and responsibilities exist and identify gaps or constraints in delivering our vision. We will then set out our plans for delivery of the Strategy.

### **Thinking Differently**

This new approach is about collaborating to provide 'whole system' solutions and capitalising on the different strengths, expertise and experience of partners. Progressing this approach will include the ongoing development and stewardship of action plans.

### **Promoting Change**

Delivering on our supply needs is not just about building more homes, rather it involves ensuring that we have the right types of homes in the right places and we protect and enhance the homes we already have.

It is also about unblocking barriers, while exploring new ways of doing things and working better with both new and existing partners.

### **Review and implement necessary legislative, policy and regulatory changes**

New legislation, policies and procurement protocols are likely to be required to underpin the delivery of the Strategy. We will identify where new powers and policies are needed to enable strategy delivery and set out a framework for implementing these.

### **Produce a comprehensive evidence base to inform policy decisions**

We will publish an outline of the research, modelling and analysis that will support the Strategy moving forward.

### **Equality and Rural Needs**

We will also establish monitoring systems for the EQIA and Rural Needs Impact Assessment which accompanies this Strategy and this information will help shape actions to address identified housing inequalities throughout the Strategy.

### **Monitoring**

We will carry out a strategic review of this Strategy every five years. We will publish annual progress reports on this Strategy and it will be updated as necessary.

Progress reports will:

- Track our identified metrics and monitor progress;
- Refresh and update the action plan, including new actions identified; and
- Provide an overview of strategic developments

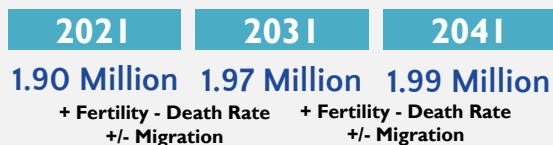
The first progress report will be published a year after the action plan is agreed.

Given the requirements under the Climate Change Act and overlap with Objective 5 – Decarbonisation - we will also consider how best to report on this objective to avoid unnecessary duplication or complexity.

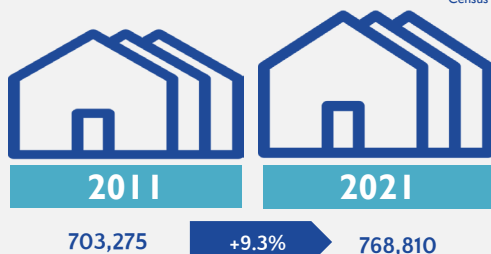
# Annex A – Key Trends Impacting on the Housing Market

## Key Trends Impacting the Housing Market

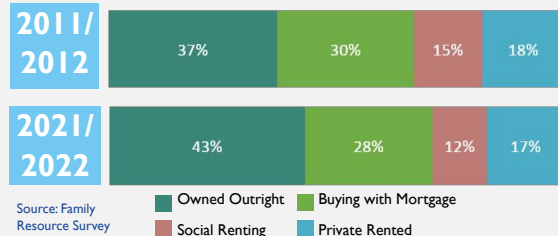
### NI POPULATION PROJECTIONS 2011 - 2031 Source: NISRA



#### NUMBER OF NI HOUSEHOLDS Source: Census



#### TENURE 2011/12 – 2021/22



#### ECONOMIC INACTIVITY\*

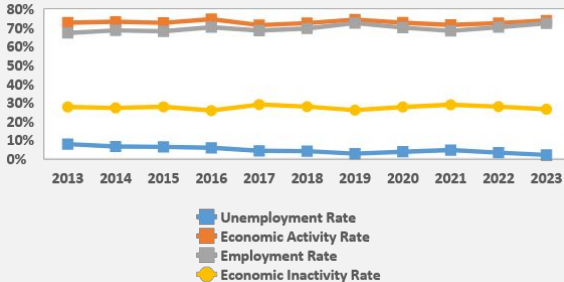
**Northern Ireland** **United Kingdom**  
Sep - Nov 2023 Sep - Nov 2023:

**25.8%**  
of working age people

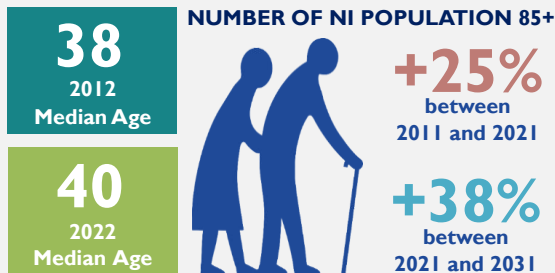
**20.8%**  
of working age people

\*The proportion of people aged from 16 to 64 who were not working and not seeking or available to work

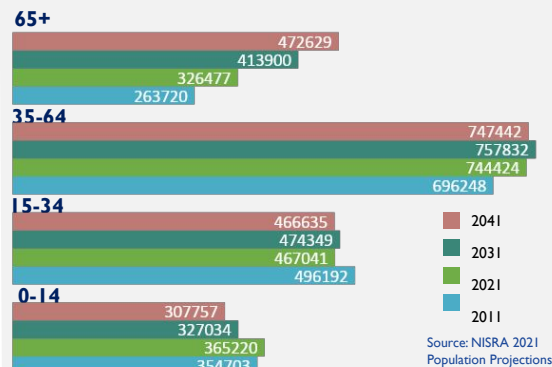
#### NI LABOUR MARKET TRENDS 2013-2023



### NI AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE 2011 - 2021 Source: Census



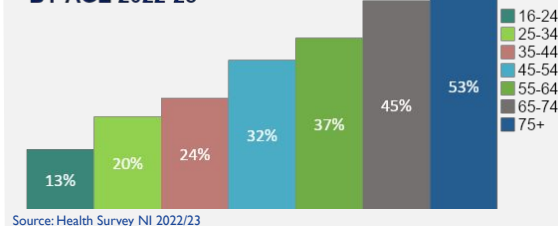
#### POPULATION AGE PROFILE



#### LIMITING LONG STANDING ILLNESS



#### LIMITING LONG STANDING ILLNESS BY AGE 2022-23



**1 in 10**

**Workers in NI are in Low Paid, Insecure Employment\***

\*This includes those earning less than the living wage; and in temporary employment, self-employment or those who report volatile pay and/or hours.

Source: Living Wage Foundation and New Economics Foundation August 2023

## Annex B – Long Term Policy Commitments – How they Contribute to Objectives

Policies Commitments	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5
Work collaboratively and innovatively with the private, public and third sectors to address issues around land availability and considering issues such as: local services, infrastructure constraints, sustainable drainage, digital connectivity and transport.	Primary <sup>43</sup>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Enhance our open data platforms to improve access to housing, land, property and planning data, creating better transparency and unlocking opportunities to transform supply.	Primary	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensure our housing policy and legislative framework enables us to deliver the housing supply to meet our current and future needs and demand patterns.	Primary	✓			
Support upskilling, reskilling, delivery of apprenticeships and training for both existing workers and new workers in order to underpin a modern integrated housing system. This will include ensuring that public procurement spend contributes to the Executive's objectives, including creating jobs in deprived areas and ensuring security of our wider supply chain.	Primary				✓
Work innovatively to optimise access to alternative forms of public and private finance such as Financial Transactions Capital (FTC) and institutional funding to develop and deliver new and affordable housing products.	Primary	✓			
Ensure that the rental sector offers a range of affordable homes with rents that are fair for tenants, as well as landlords.	Primary	✓			
Deliver housing solutions for our people who are most in need, recognising the inequalities identified through the Equality Impact Assessment developed to support this Housing Supply Strategy.		Primary		✓	
Work with housing delivery partners to develop and implement plans and policies that will support the delivery of a more diverse range of housing types and alternative models of housing to meet all housing needs, taking account of changing demographics and lifestyles.		Primary		✓	

<sup>43</sup> The Primary objective is the objective it is captured under within the Strategy.

Policies Commitments	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5
Prevent homelessness and where it occurs, ensure that it is brief, rare and non-recurrent.		Primary			
Update existing policies and develop new policies that will ensure our housing standards support the delivery of higher quality homes across all tenures to help improve health & wellbeing.	✓	✓	Primary	✓	✓
Work collaboratively to ensure the design of our homes support those with care needs to live independently if they wish to do so.		✓	Primary		
Secure agreement to revitalise the NIHE by putting in place a sustainable funding model that will enable increased investment in its homes, improving their energy efficiency measures and contributing to new supply.		✓	Primary	✓	✓
Delivery of mixed tenure by putting place-shaping at the heart of our actions by developing policies that will support delivery of housing led regeneration, encourage mixed tenure and promote shared housing.	✓			Primary	
Ensure the planning system, including Local Development Plans, help support the delivery of the appropriate supply of housing, reflecting the changing nature of need and demand with consideration to wider policy influences including adaptive reuse and climate change.	✓			Primary	✓
Work in new and different ways with local Councils and Community Planning Partnerships to realise opportunities to increase and maintain housing supply and help create sustainable and inclusive urban and rural places. This will include capturing the lived experiences of those affected by different life challenges.	✓	✓		Primary	
Deliver on obligations in the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 to reduce emissions in the residential sector in line with the carbon budgets, ensuring a just transition to decarbonised solutions.			✓		Primary
Make sure our homes are resilient to the impacts of climate change, including flooding and extremes of weather in line with the NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme.			✓		Primary
Contribute to the development of the third Northern Ireland climate change adaptation programme (NICCAP3).					Primary
Work with social and affordable intermediate housing providers to advance decarbonisation, including through retrofit interventions, in existing homes, to meet our climate change targets, improve the quality of homes and reduce heating costs for tenants			✓		Primary

Available in alternative formats.

© Crown Copyright 2024



Department for  
**Communities**  
[www.communities-ni.gov.uk](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk)

