Stockport Housing Vision

Stockport Council’s vision is to create a Borough where:

• People will be satisfied with their local area as a place to live.
• There will be more housing, with growth across all types and tenures to meet current and future housing needs.

The Council is acutely aware that good quality housing is vital to achieving both economic growth and improving the health and wellbeing of its residents.

The provision of good quality housing that people can afford is key to achieving sustainable communities making Stockport a good place to live and contributes to sustainable economic regeneration and growth.

The Council’s Housing Strategy 2016 - 2021 is set around these principles and outlines the key housing issues and sets objectives for how, with our partners, Stockport can remain a preferred place to live.

To achieve our housing vision we will work through the Council’s recently set up Housing Development Company and with housing developers and partner Registered Providers (RPs) to develop new delivery mechanisms which increase choice across all types and tenures in the Borough and create a greater mix of housing to meet the diverse needs of local communities in the Borough.

The Borough’s vision also acknowledges that peoples’ socio-economic situation is both determined by, and can determine, their life chances including their access to housing.

Our housing vision is therefore based on strengthening our communities not just through building the homes we need, but ensuring these provide quality, affordability, choice and independence. Our vision is also centred on developing housing and regeneration projects which contribute to a growing economy; tackling poverty and inequality; aligning our housing vision with the wider place agenda and Borough vision for Stockport.
Meeting the Borough’s housing need with the supply of quality affordable homes

Stockport remains one of the most desirable places to live in Greater Manchester. The diversity of the Borough means that Stockport is home to a range of vibrant local communities with their own unique identities and sense of civic pride.

The strength of Stockport’s local centres ensures that the Borough has broad appeal. The attractiveness of Stockport as a place to live means that the local housing market is strong with prices well above the Greater Manchester and regional average.

There are in excess of 7000 people on the Council’s Housing Register and demand for private housing is high. Significant housing growth therefore, is required in and around the Borough to provide sufficient homes for people to live in and for businesses and local services to continue to thrive.

To maximise the supply of housing in the Borough, the Council will:

- Develop new housing delivery mechanisms, including a new housing development company, to drive the delivery of housing and increase the supply of affordable, and in particular, affordable rented accommodation.
- Contribute to and support the emerging Stockport Local Plan and associated planning policy documents.
- Ensure that the issues of affordable housing, allocations, land availability and housing policies are reflected adequately and prioritised in the emerging Local Plan.
- Work with RPs and private developers to ensure the right housing is built in the right place at the right time.
- Look to increase the supply of first time and family sized accommodation.
- Work with partners on the joint delivery of new housing under Greater Manchester Combined Authorities initiatives such as the Spatial Framework and the Investment Fund.
- Improve our understanding of the housing needs of older people and those with other specialist housing needs and promote delivery of housing to meet those needs.
- Scope funding opportunities to increase affordable housing delivery.
- Monitor the profile of homes built and residents moving in and use this information to inform future developments.
- Develop appropriate methods to integrate new and existing communities ensuring the infrastructure is in place to support new housing.
Regenerating Neighbourhoods and Supporting Economic Development

The Council recognises that we need to improve our housing, neighbourhoods and supporting infrastructure so that Stockport’s people have the stability that will allow them to benefit from, and contribute to, a growing economy. We need to ensure that there is a range of new homes to suit the diverse needs of our residents in line with the economic aspirations of the Borough with particular emphasis on affordable housing.

Regeneration activity is taking place in a number of neighbourhoods, providing new and better homes across the town as well as contributing to the growth of local economies. A balanced and well-functioning housing market across the borough is vital to achieve the aims of the Housing Strategy and Stockport Council is investing not just in new developments, but also in a number of regeneration projects in the borough aimed not only in physical changes and enhanced area image, but also improved social and economic outcomes. The projects are aimed at improving and increasing the provision of housing across the town, either through the redevelopment of existing estates, building new homes or, bringing empty properties back into use.

To achieve our objectives we will:

- Identify sites and work with landowners and developers to bring forward developments.
- Work with partners to bring forward development sites in the Town Centre.
- Use interventionist powers where appropriate to facilitate new developments.
- Identify funding opportunities and work with wider investors and partners.
- Develop new appropriate market housing to support economic growth and regeneration initiatives.

Brinnington Regeneration Masterplan
Enable vulnerable people access to good quality housing and to live independently

Over the next few decades, there will be a marked increase in the number and proportion of residents aged 65 and over, which is expected to increase by 43.6% from 56,700 in 2015 to 81,400 in 2037.

People generally prefer to stay in their own homes as long as possible and we need to ensure a range of housing options are available. Partnership working with other agencies, such as Social Services and the NHS are key to enabling vulnerable people to live in safe and secure environments and retain independence.

To support independent living, we will:
• Develop new models of housing across a range of tenures from renting through shared ownership to outright sale for older and vulnerable people.
• Focus on developing ownership models in the short to medium term to match needs and demographic indicators.
• Extra care housing development which includes housing based provision for people with dementia living alone or with their partner.
• Review, amend and add as appropriate, housing information and advice in a variety of formats.
• Work in partnership to consider extending housing options for young people in transition and to support independent living.
• Focus on preventing homelessness through mediation and work with the private rented sector including bringing empty homes back into use.

Improving the quality of housing in the Private Sector

The Council has a duty to tackle properties with serious health and safety hazards and to reduce fuel poverty amongst the residents of the Borough. Privately owned property and in particular private rented properties are more prone to being in poor condition and being less energy efficient.

To improve the growth of energy efficient and sustainable homes which are free from serious hazards the Council will:
• Support owners and landlords in making private homes more energy efficient and in providing safe and healthy living environments.
• Support private landlords in managing and maintaining their homes and effectively tackle poor and illegal practices by landlords and letting agencies.
• Review relevant private sector policy to inform enforcement, regulate activity and target information.
• Improve monitoring of PRS complaints received by the Council to highlight problem areas and to target resources adequately.
• Bring empty homes back into use by targeting and supporting landlords and owners and by the robust use of enforcement where necessary.
Make better use of the existing social housing stock

Stockport Homes manages the Councils housing stock of just over 11,500 properties across the Borough as well as the Homelessness Service and the Allocation of social housing. Stockport Homes is a top performing Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) and the Council's commitment to providing an excellent service to its tenants was underpinned by the renewal of the Management agreement with Stockport Homes for a further 27 years. All of the Council owned homes meet the Decent Homes Standard and the Council aims to ensure that the properties are maintained at and beyond this level.

The Allocations and Lettings service is also operated by Stockport Homes and the Council has recently reviewed the Allocation Policy to ensure that focus remains on meeting housing need in an open and transparent way, while ensuring sustainable communities and meeting the requirements of those the authority has a particular obligation towards such as care leavers and armed forces veterans.

Homelessness is rising nationally and Stockport is no exception. The Councils’ engagement in preventative interventions has delivered excellent results in tackling the issue. We are committed to preventing homelessness for all groups, reflected in decreasing levels of non-priority homelessness and rising levels of ‘homelessness relief’ – rehousing 460 people over the last five years despite there not being a statutory duty to do so.

The Council will:

- Use its Housing Company to increase the number of affordable homes for rent.
- Work with Stockport Homes and partner Registered Providers to provide homes and communities that people want and can afford to live in, tackling poverty, homelessness, inequality and social exclusion.
- Work with Stockport homes to manage and maintain the council’s homes and estates in a cost effective way, balancing business needs with customers’ needs and expectations.
- Ensure that social housing provision in the Borough meets and exceeds customer expectations.