



Cabinet



www.dacorum.gov.uk

Report for:	Cabinet
Title of report:	Supported Housing Strategy
Date:	28/01/2025
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Simy Dhyani, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Supported Housing strategy Appendix 2 – Supported Housing strategy action plan Appendix 3 – Dacorum standard Appendix 4 – Tenancy engagement report Appendix 5 – Community Impact Assessment
Background papers:	None
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	CIA – Community Impact Assessment HTIP – Housing Transformation and Improvement Programme DBC – Dacorum Borough Council HSLT – Housing Senior Leadership Team PH – Portfolio Holder SLT – Strategic Leadership Team TLC – Tenants & Leaseholders Committee SHTF – Supported Housing Tenant Forum HCC – Hertfordshire County Council HRA – Housing Revenue Account GF – General Fund

<p>Report Author / Responsible Officer</p> <p>Oli Jackson, Head of Housing Operations</p> <p> </p> <p>Oliver.Jackson@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228229 (ext. 2229)</p>

Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement: Engage with residents and partners to have a real say on our services and the borough
-----------------------------	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service improvement and delivery: Running the Council efficiently and putting residents at the heart of everything we do • Clean, safe and green: Provide a clean, safe and green-focussed environment • Homes to be proud of: Enable well-maintained and affordable homes, where people want to live
Wards affected	All
Purpose of the report:	To present the draft Supported Housing Strategy to Cabinet members and seek approval
Recommendation(s) to the decision maker(s):	Cabinet members to review and approve the Supported Housing Strategy and associated appendices.
Period for post policy/project review:	Subject to legislative changes and periodic reviews thereafter, review period 2030

1 Introduction/Background:

The supported housing service provides housing and enhanced housing management services to those over the age of 60 in the borough. The service consists of approximately 1800 properties, making up nearly a fifth of the total council housing stock.

Many of the Council's properties were built from the 1960's onwards, due to this, and the changing demographic needs in the borough, key decisions around investment and long-term viability regarding will need to be made.

The draft Supported Housing strategy, which focuses solely on Council owned designated housing for those over the age of 60, will provide the direction for an in-depth review of the current service and which will align with HTIP and the Strategic Asset Review.

2 Key Issues/proposals/main body of the report:

National demographic projections determine there will be a significant increase in the number of older people in the UK. Within this, it is anticipated there will be a greater increase in those aged 85+, and those living with lifelong health conditions including mobility issues and dementia. This is reflected locally within the borough.

Furthermore, an understanding of the impact of social isolation on older people is growing, and the effect on mortality is now being likened to other risk factors such as smoking and obesity. There is also a clear link between the provision of good quality housing and the ability of older people to access health, social care and wellbeing services.

It is therefore necessary for Dacorum Borough Council to have a housing offer for older people that meets current and future need.

The aim of the Supported Housing Strategy is to provide the direction of travel for the service in terms of the services that are available to meet the needs of our tenants, and the properties in which they live.

Strategic Asset Review:

The strategy will feed into the Supported Housing Review workstream, which is part of the Council's wider Strategic Asset Review (SAR) – a significant programme of work exploring how Council assets can support the development of new homes, secure financial returns for the Council, and contribute to its wider regeneration and placemaking agenda.

The Supported Housing Review workstream will evaluate the Council's current supported housing stock:

- To understand the current condition of its supported housing schemes and how they meet defined industry standards.
- It will assess long-term financial viability of schemes - including rental income against future repair and maintenance liabilities.
- It will provide options for re-development where, if viable, this would better meet the evidenced housing need and/or contribute to the wider aims and objectives of the Strategic Asset Review.

The Council has previously engaged with consultants to review its Supported Housing stock, the findings from those reviews have helped to shape the strategy. Research regarding current and future demand for different types of housing for older people has also influenced the draft strategy.

The strategy:

The commitments contained within the strategy are as follows:

Commitment 1: We will promote independence and tailor our service to ensure it meets the individual needs of our tenants.

We will

- Ensure that promoting independent living is the primary focus of the service.
- Regularly assess the level of service that our tenants need and work with our tenants to co-design the service moving forwards.
- Regularly complete 'outcome star' assessments to identify areas that our tenants need help with and to demonstrate what progress is being made.
- Support the delivery of regular activities to combat the impact of loneliness and social isolation. This will be done through activities that will allow people of all ages to socialise together, working alongside external agencies to provide as many activities as possible.
- Work with tenants to remove obstacles that prevent them from getting involved in activities, such as transport, cost and lack of support.
- Signpost tenants and support them to access appropriate services, including those that support tenancy sustainment.

Commitment 2: We will provide accommodation that meets the needs of our supported housing tenants both now and in the future.

We will

- Work with tenants to identify opportunities for local groups to use our properties for activity that will benefit our tenants, such as community and faith groups.
- Ensure that all properties meet EPC 'C' rating by 2050.
- Continue to carry out the renewal of our community alarm replacement programme in all supported housing properties.
- Work with others to ensure that our tenants' adaptive needs are met, including, through Mutual Exchanges.
- Where appropriate, support our tenants to move to a more suitable property.
- Consider design principles with our current tenants when investing in our properties.
- Continue to ensure all Supported Housing is affordable and within local housing allowance.
- Continue to refurbish internal communal areas of our buildings.

Commitment 3: We will review the suitability of our supported housing stock.

We will

- Include our Supported Housing stock in the strategic asset review.
- Review our properties' locations in terms of access to local service and public transport links.
- Assess our properties against industry-defined design principles.
- Work in conjunction with our Property and Development teams to consider the long-term viability of schemes.
- Consider whether any of the accommodation would be better suited for another use.
- Work with others to identify opportunities to enhance the accommodation.

Commitment 4: We will enhance our partnership working to deliver the best services possible.

We will

- Continue to work with Hertfordshire County Council to consider the opportunity to increase the number of flexi care units within the borough.
- Continue to provide regular engagement opportunities for tenants to work with us to shape services.
- Continue to develop relationships with the voluntary sector to ensure that tenants are aware of the services available.
- Continue to work closely with statutory services to signpost and support tenants to access specialist services including Adult Care Services and Mental Health support.
- Continue to work with our Tenancy Management and Anti-social Behaviour teams to reduce the impact of ASB on our tenants

- Continue to reduce the carbon output from communal areas of Supported Housing schemes by installing hybrid communal heating systems which incorporate air source heat pumps.
- So far, ten of our Supported Housing Schemes have Solar PV installed and six have Hybrid Heat. We will continue to integrate these measures to help reduce our carbon outputs.

Supported Housing strategy action plan (appendix 2)

To deliver the strategy, a draft action plan has been developed that will provide the opportunity to monitor delivery against agreed timescales. The action plan will be reviewed at regular points to ensure that it reflects workstreams required to deliver the strategy.

Dacorum supported housing standard (appendix 3)

The assessment of schemes against a defined standard is crucial to the delivery of the supported housing strategy. Appendix 3 is a draft Dacorum Supported Housing standard.

The Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) principles are a set of core design principles that are recognised by the industry for new build accommodation as meeting the needs of older people. Alongside this there are some recognised design principles for those living with Dementia.

The Dacorum Supported Housing Standard brings together a number of these principles and has been developed alongside teams within the Council. It is anticipated that this could be the key tool for assessing our schemes against the standard to contribute to discussions about long term viability.

Engagement with tenants (appendix 4)

To develop the strategy, a series of in person events were held at schemes throughout the borough. Further to this, tenants were sent a survey to complete asking their opinion on some key areas.

As a result of this engagement, the following areas were developed:

- Greater focus on social activities.
- Commitment to take a scheme-by-scheme approach to refurbishment.
- Commitment to completing replacement programme for community alarm equipment.
- Focus on communal areas and the benefit they can have on tenants' wellbeing.

3 Options and alternatives considered

- a) Agree the draft Supported Housing strategy and the associated appendices – recommended.
- b) Continue to provide Supported Housing services without a dedicated strategy – not recommended due to the changing demographic needs of our local communities and the need to review current provision of housing.

4 Consultation

Consultation was undertaken with the Tenants and Leaseholders Committee (TLC) and the Supported Housing Tenant Forum (SHTF), to agree the approach to develop the strategy and how progress would be monitored. This was followed by scheduled consultation with the wider supported housing tenant population through surveys and in person sessions, Appendix 4 captures the responses.

Once our tenants' views had been captured and the strategy had been drafted, the document was taken through the internal approval process which included going back to TLC and SHTF to seek further comments from tenants.

Due to the impact the strategy could potentially have on meeting the projected need for flexi care housing within the borough, consultation was also carried out externally with Hertfordshire County

Council and key stakeholders via the Herts Strategic Supported Housing Board, the Dacorum Supported Housing Strategic Board and the Registered Providers Forum.

5 **Financial and value for money implications:**

A large proportion of the activity needed to deliver the strategy will be undertaken within existing budgets, which will be monitored closely at service level to ensure value for money is achieved.

Additional financial implications will arise when the schemes have been assessed against the standard and longer-term investment needs are established.

6 **Legal Implications**

Legal implications will arise through the strategy if any of the assets were to be permanently transferred from the HRA to GF. This would only occur in circumstances where schemes were ultimately deemed unsuitable for their current use and were not viable to be considered of development purposes or change of use for alternate social housing. Any potential transfer would be subject to significant operational, financial and legal consideration with members.

7 **Risk implications:**

Keys risks of not introducing the strategy include:

- Current provision not meeting future demand.
- Inability to let properties.
- Asset management approach not meeting the investment needs of properties
- Inability to meet the growing adaptive needs of tenants.

8 **Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:**

Equalities and Community Impact

A CIA has been completed and is annexed to this report, please refer to Appendix 5. The CIA identifies predominantly positive to neutral impacts arising from the draft Supported Housing Strategy.

9 **Sustainability implications:**

Introducing the Supported Housing Strategy provides an opportunity to consider several sustainability implications, including those related to climate change and health and wellbeing.

Climate Change

- **Energy Efficiency:** The strategy commits to providing energy efficient properties and to reduce the carbon footprint within the communal areas

Health and Wellbeing

- **Reducing social isolation:** The understanding of the impact of social isolation, especially on older people, is growing, and the strategy provides an opportunity for enhanced focus in this key.
- **Wellbeing:** The commitment to work in partnership with both statutory and voluntary stakeholders will continue to focus on enhancing the wellbeing of our tenants through collaboration.
- **Health and social care:** There is a commitment from DBC to work with HCC to increase the number of flexi care properties within the borough, where those with an identified personal care needs can receive services without the need to move to residential care homes.

10 **Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)**

Officers across multiple teams within housing will be involved in the delivery of the strategy, including Housing Operations, Property and Strategic Housing and Delivery. Corporately, involvement may be required from other team including Finance, Planning and Communities.

11 Statutory Comments

Monitoring Officer:

The Strategy should help to ensure that the Council's supported housing is provided and maintained to the appropriate regulatory standards.

S151:

No further comments to add to the report,

12 Conclusions:

The Supported Housing strategy establishes a strategic framework for the future long-term provision of Supported Housing within the borough and has been developed with tenants and a range of other key stakeholders.

The commitments within the strategy focus on the Council's tenants through the provision of tailored, outcome focused services that will encourage and support independence. Health and wellbeing is central to the strategy and demonstrates our commitment to working with others to enhance older tenants' lives.

Crucially, there is a focus on the Council's assets by committing to develop a long-term approach to investment and by ensuring the schemes are included in the broader SAR, so that opportunities for re-provision and development are not missed.