

Newry, Mourne and  
Down Community  
Planning Partnership



**LIVING  
WELL  
TOGETHER**

# NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN HOUSING NEEDS ACTION PLAN 2024





LIVING  
WELL  
TOGETHER

# INTRODUCTION

Access to quality, affordable housing is fundamental to the positive health and wellbeing of all our citizens. Addressing housing need in Newry, Mourne and Down has been identified as a key priority of our **'Living Well Together'** Community Plan.

Following on from a successful conference in 2019, a Housing Needs Action Plan was produced. In order to assess progress and to see if our priorities for housing had changed the Community Planning Partners held a follow up conference in November 2021.

The Community Planning Partnership recognises the role everyone plays in shaping the places in which we live and the importance of providing housing that is affordable, of high

quality and sustainable. The conference was attended by a number of key stakeholders including representatives from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, housing associations, independent property developers, the community and voluntary sector and statutory bodies. All delegates met with local Councillors, MLAs and MPs.

The Housing Needs Conference 2021 Priorities were to:

- ▶ Assemble key stakeholders and decision makers to listen / engage / debate on the housing issues that impact the district.
- ▶ Consider the actions from the 2019 conference.
- ▶ Identify how we can work together, with the assistance of the Community Planning Partnership, to develop solutions.

# UPDATED ACTIONS

The table below shows the actions that were developed as an outcome of the 2019 Conference and included in the 2019 Housing Needs Action Plan and the progress made to date.

## 2019 ACTION PLAN

Assess local demand through review and interrogation of Waiting Lists, Latent Demand Testing and DEA Housing Action Plans.

## 2024 APRIL UPDATE

Social housing need is reviewed annually by the Housing Executive and published in the Commissioning Prospectus to assist Registered Housing Associations in targeting new build activity in areas of unmet need. The Commissioning Prospectus details the current five-year projected housing need for urban and rural settlements across Newry, Mourne and Down along with actions taken by the Housing Executive to identify latent housing need in rural areas or to identify sites for housing development.

The five-year social housing new build requirement across Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area covering the period 2023–2028 is 2,234 units. Newry DEA continues to show the highest new build requirement (558) followed by The Mournes DEA (347) and Crotlieve DEA (333). See Appendix 1 for further details.

Significantly, since 2019, there have been 422 social housing units completed across Newry, Mourne & Down, 305 within urban locations and 117 within rural areas. Currently there are 528 units on-site, the majority (519 units) are within urban locations. A further 415 units are programmed for delivery 2024/25–2026/27, of which 232 are within urban settlements and 183 across rural areas. See Appendices 2–4 for further details.

Since 2019, the Housing Executive has undertaken rural housing need tests in Drumaroad, Raholp/Saul, Ballyalton, Darragh Cross and Leitrim. A ten unit scheme completed in Darragh Cross in August 2020, developed by Ark Housing Association.

Meetings were also held in each of the seven DEAs across the district to discuss housing need and the potential for new housing development. As a result, Site Identification Studies were progressed for a number of settlements. Currently, studies for Rostrevor, Warrenpoint, Forkhill and Bessbrook are with nominated Housing Associations who continue to liaise with landowners. Two schemes are included in the Social Housing Development Programme (2024/25–2026/27) for Forkhill for a total of 22 units. See Appendix 5 for further details.

## 2019 ACTION PLAN

Examine new opportunities for mixed use development to include town centre housing solutions.

Identify suitable public land for housing in the district.

Promote improved understanding of housing need in an inclusive society.

Promote mixed tenure developments.

## 2024 APRIL UPDATE

The Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) will bring forward planning policy to facilitate the conversion or change of use of existing buildings to residential accommodation (including living over the shop) and the development of vacant/brownfield sites in town centres for housing or as part of mixed use development provided that such development creates a quality and sustainable residential environment. All town centre housing proposals will be required to meet relevant planning policy provisions.

The Housing Executive is currently working in partnership with the Department for Communities (DfC) and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to plan the redevelopment of the prominent City centre site at North Street in Newry. It is proposed that this will include new social housing.

The Housing Executive consider the development potential of all surplus public sector sites across the Council area. Since 2019, an interest has been declared in 10 sites and Housing Associations nominated to further examine the potential for new build social housing. While the majority of these have not progressed for housing due to constraints and financial viability, the Housing Executive continue to closely monitor the trawl.

The Community Planning led Housing Symposium held in November 2021 provided a platform to promote with sectoral stakeholders, the need to increase the supply of housing which is affordable, accessible and inclusive and the value of the partnership approach in helping to achieve this.

Since 2019, in line with the Executive Office's 'Together: Building United Communities Strategy', five 'Housing for all' schemes have commenced on-site across Newry, Mourne and Down of which three have now completed and two schemes are currently on-site. See Appendix 6 for further details.

Mixed tenure is residential development which aims to combine a range of tenure options, which can include owner-occupier housing, shared ownership housing and rental properties (social, intermediate and private). The focus of mixed tenure development is fostering greater social, economic and community mix housing to support thriving and sustainable communities.

The LDP will bring forward planning policy to secure a high quality of design, layout and landscaping in all new housing developments to ensure more attractive and sustainable residential environments. This includes the promotion of mixed tenure developments. A range of housing in terms of dwelling size, type, tenure and affordability is central to achieving mixed communities.

Policies have been drafted in relation to 'Quality in Residential Developments', 'Affordable Housing' and 'Housing Type and Size'.

These policies aim to achieve balanced and sustainable communities by requiring an appropriate mix of house type, size and tenure on all new residential developments over a certain threshold.

A mixed tenure development on the site of the former St. Clare's Convent in Newry commenced on-site in March 2023. The development on this prominent, City centre site comprises 88 units including 70 social 2, 3 and 4 bed houses, apartments, wheelchair accessible bungalows and 12 units which are planned to be offered for private sale.

## 2019 ACTION PLAN

Consider the issue of Developer Contributions within the Local Development Plan.

## 2024 APRIL UPDATE

The LDP will bring forward a Strategic Policy for 'Developer Contributions and Agreements'.

Developer contributions may be sought from all types of development where proposals individually or in combination result in a need for new, extended, or improved public services, community facilities and infrastructure.

Contributions may be financial or in-kind and will be proportionate in scale to the proposed development.

Where contributions cannot be secured through a planning condition, a Section 76 Planning Agreement or other legal agreement may be required.

Such developer contributions and agreements may include for the provision of affordable housing.

The LDP's 'Affordable Housing' policy will also include provision for securing the delivery of affordable housing by way of condition or Section 76 Planning Agreement.

Support the implementation of the recommendations of the Review Common Selection Scheme.

The Fundamental Review of Allocations Project began in 2022 and will be implemented within four key delivery stages over the next three years to Mid-2025.

The first group of changes to the Housing Selection Scheme took effect on 30th January 2023. These included greater areas of choice and a reduction from three reasonable offers to two reasonable offers. Each customer will be provided with advice through established Housing Solution and Support Teams (HSST).

The timeline for delivery of the remaining three stages will be agreed once Departmental and Ministerial approval has been achieved for Group 2 stages and subject to budget.

Further information on the Fundamental Review of Allocations Project and all of its Proposals is available on the FRA Project webpage:

**[nihe.gov.uk/housing-help/apply-for-a-home/fundamental-review-of-allocations](https://nihe.gov.uk/housing-help/apply-for-a-home/fundamental-review-of-allocations)**

Ensure all partners are actively engaged with the NMD Age-Friendly Strategy and that the local seniors forums are engaged and contribute to the development of sustainable housing policies.

Age-Friendly, a framework established by the World Health Organisation (WHO), serves as a blueprint for fostering Age-Friendly Communities. The Age Friendly role is to cultivate communities that empower ageing individuals to maintain independence, good health, community engagement, social inclusion, and physical activity as they grow older.

The Age-Friendly Coordinator spearheads the development of Newry Mourne and Down's Age Friendly Strategy and is actively engaged in executing the three year Action Plan. Serving as a vital link between community members over 50 and the Age-Friendly Alliance.

## 2019 ACTION PLAN

Implement Homelessness Action Plan.

## 2024 APRIL UPDATE

The South Down Inter-agency Homelessness Action Plan 2022-2027 includes 11 actions under three objectives aligned to the NIHE Homelessness Strategy 2022-2027, 'Ending Homeless Together':

1. Prioritise Homelessness Prevention.
2. Address homelessness by providing settled, appropriate accommodation and support.
3. Support customers to transition from homelessness into settled accommodation.

The Action Plan is implemented, monitored and reviewed by the South Down Homelessness Local Area Group which includes partners from statutory, community and voluntary agencies. The group report to the Central Homelessness Forum and the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group to ensure a top down/bottom up approach in addressing homelessness across South Down NIHE area which is co-terminus with the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area.

Currently within the South Down homelessness team, there is dedicated temporary accommodation resource to help provide support and placement of homeless presenters.

Identify the impact and plan for the end of mitigation of 'bedroom tax'.

The Mitigation Scheme was introduced in 2016 for a 4-year period ending on the 31 March 2020. The New Decade, New Approach Deal included a commitment to extend the mitigation scheme beyond March 2020.

On the 8 February 2022, the Northern Ireland Executive approved an extension to the scheme. This now means the payment of mitigations will now continue indefinitely. This action is now closed

Support local poverty relief initiatives eg food banks.

Strategic Stakeholder Forum (SSF) reps (via Community Coordination Hub) have provided ongoing support to food banks, SVP and others. Funding was provided by DfC via Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. The DfC "Hardship Fund" ended on 31 March 2024 and there is currently no indication of any further funding to address the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

The Social Supermarket (SSM) was set up by the Strategic Stakeholder Forum and lead by Clanrye Group to provide food and a wraparound service to give support to 250 people over a 12-week period in exchange for a nominal weekly membership fee. Wraparound support included Community Nutrition, cooking on a Budget, Benefits advice, Budgeting, Health and Wellbeing and Training and employability skills. It was aimed at Participants who declared themselves as experiencing hardship and at risk of experiencing food poverty. DfC has confirmed continuation funding for the 2024/25 period. However reduced funding will impact on the number of people supported (likely to reduce to 200) and restrictions in the delivery model (likely to reduce to two physical sites and a mixture of in-person and on-line wrap around service provision).

## 2019 ACTION PLAN

Consider housing options for those who need more complex housing requirements, and research best practice solutions.

## 2024 APRIL UPDATE

The LDP will bring forward a number of planning policies to help address other more complex housing needs e.g., to assist in the delivery of adaptable and accessible homes, specialist residential accommodation, and accommodation for the travelling community.

Lifetime Home Standards or Wheelchair Standards, as set out in the DfC housing association guides, seek to support the delivery of adaptable and accessible homes in Northern Ireland. These standards are already in place for social housing developments, and it is the aim of the 'Adaptable and Accessible Homes' policy to incorporate lifetime homes design features into housing stock across all tenures throughout the district. Bringing lifetime homes design features into the general housing stock should, over time, allow people to stay in their homes longer, reduce the need for home adaptations and give greater choice to people who cannot achieve independent living due to lack of suitable housing.

Specialist residential accommodation includes sheltered accommodation, residential or nursing care accommodation, retirement villages and other care-related facilities. Specialist housing is provided for people with specific housing needs, particularly in relation to impaired physical and mental health, and old age. The need for specialist housing within the district is likely to increase over the lifetime of the Plan. NISRA projections suggest that the age profile within the District is likely to change with the largest projected growth in population concentrated mainly in the 65 plus age group.

The aim of the 'Specialist Residential Accommodation' policy is to ensure that the needs of this section of the age demographic along with others whose specialist needs cannot be readily met through the provisions of general housing is provided for. Since 2019, 22 social wheelchair accessible units have been completed in Newry, Mourne & Down Council area, 55 are currently under construction and a further 10 units are included in the 2024/25-2026/27 Social Housing Development Programme.

The Housing Executive also administers Disabled Facilities Grant-Aid (DFGs), on behalf of the Department for Communities, to enable adaptations to be made to the privately owned home of a person with a disability. DFGs are demand led and can only be initiated through the recommendation of a Health Trust Occupational Therapist (OT). Based on the OT's report, the Housing Executive determines what work is needed and the amount of grant aid that can be awarded to enable this work to be carried out.

Between April 2019 and March 2023, 346 DFGs have been approved for owner occupiers in the NMD area with an approval value of £5.4m. In addition, the Housing Executive, through the Supporting People Grant, funds 72 Housing Support Services across Newry, Mourne and Down including 59 accommodation based services for 942 service users and 13 floating support schemes for 496 service users (at March 2023).

Social housing need is reviewed annually by the Housing Executive and published in the Commissioning Prospectus to assist Registered Housing Associations in targeting new build activity in areas of unmet need. The Commissioning Prospectus details the current five-year projected housing need for urban and rural settlements across Newry, Mourne and Down along with actions taken by the Housing Executive to identify latent housing need in rural areas or to identify sites for housing development.



## 2021 HOUSING NEEDS CONFERENCE

As a result of the 2021 Housing Needs Conference a new action was produced, and a commitment garnered from the housing needs working group to progress.

### 2021 NEW ACTION

Engage with housing associations to encourage the provision of affordable housing in rural settlements across Newry, Mourne and Down.

### 2024 APRIL UPDATE

There is a high unmet housing need in many rural settlements across Newry, Mourne and Down and limited opportunities to deliver the required new build social housing. In order to encourage, facilitate and support the increased supply of affordable rural homes, the Housing Executive will focus on:

- ▶ assessment and analysis of rural housing need
- ▶ identification of sites within rural settlements
- ▶ increased engagement with housing associations
- ▶ increased engagement with community and elected representatives at DEA level.

## PRIORITIES FOR 2024 ONWARDS

We also are continuing to work on priorities for the district such as:

- ▶ Continue to engage with the Homelessness working group
- ▶ Engage with housing associations to encourage the provision of affordable housing in rural settlements across Newry, Mourne and Down

## NEXT STEPS

The Sub-Group will continue to focus on the agreed priorities and continue to deliver on the actions identified in this document. The subgroup will report regularly on progress to the Community Planning Partnership Board. Members of the subgroup will include Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Department for Communities, Health and Social Care Trusts Housing Associations and the Community Voluntary Sector.

▶ For more information contact [communityplanning@nmandd.org](mailto:communityplanning@nmandd.org)

▶ or keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates [/nmdcouncil](https://www.facebook.com/nmdcouncil)

▶ A copy of this report can be found online at [newrymournedown.org/living-well-together](https://newrymournedown.org/living-well-together)

# BACKGROUND DATA

## HOUSING NEED

The Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs), issued in 2019, cover a 15 year period 2016-2030 and identify a need for 10,000 dwellings in the district.

Published in 2022 the NIHE Strategic Housing Market Analysis Reports cover each of Northern Ireland's 11 Housing Market Areas. These provide housing requirement projections over a 15 year period 2020-2035 and identify a need for 10,630<sup>1</sup> dwellings in the district.

The Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Local Development Plan (LDP) covers a 15 year period 2020-2035. Housing need as identified by the Dfi HGIs and NIHE SHMA provides a broad indicator of the district's overall housing need over the LDP period and forms part of the LDP housing evidence base.

## AVAILABLE HOUSING LAND

HOUSING PROVISION	AREA REMAINING (HECTARES)	FULL REMAINING POTENTIAL (UNITS)	ADJUSTED REMAINING POTENTIAL (UNITS)
Zoned housing sites, sites with live planning approval and previously approved sites (Urban Housing Monitor 2022/23).	500.15	9,941	—
Zoned sites and/or sites with live planning approval only. (Urban Housing Monitor 2022/23).	367.78	—	7,005
Estimated provision through rural planning policy for period 2020-2035*	—	1,768	1,768
<b>Total potential housing provision</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>11,709</b>	<b>8,773</b>

\*Based on the average number of rural planning approvals for single dwellings over the period 2016 (see table opposite)

<sup>1</sup>New dwelling requirements 2020-2035, net stock model with backlog, medium household growth scenario

## URBAN HOUSING COMPLETIONS 2016–2022

	2016/17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	AVERAGE
Dwellings in Settlements (LDP Housing Monitor)	395	553	1,243	466	355	510	<b>587</b>

*Figures based on HM recording period 1 April–31 March  
 Note 2018/19 reporting period ended 1/10/2019 & 2019/20 reporting period ended 01/08/2020*

## RURAL HOUSING APPROVALS 2016–2022

	2016/17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	AVERAGE
Dwellings in Countryside (Full or RM) approval granted	177	166	94	105	36	129	<b>118</b>

*Excludes approvals for replacement dwellings. Figures based on recording period 1 April–31 March*



# APPENDIX 1

## NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN SOCIAL HOUSING NEED BY DEA (2023-2028)

DEA	HNA	UNITS
CROTLIEVE	Burren	2
	Granite View	1
	Hilltown	40
	Lurganare / Barnmeen	7
	Mayobridge	14
	Rostrevor / Killowen	44
	The Commons / Ballyholland	14
	Warrenpoint	211
	<b>Total</b>	<b>333</b>
DOWNPATRICK	Ardglass (inc Ballyhornan / Dunsford)	38
	Ballykinler / Tyrella	3
	Downpatrick	222
	Killough	16
	Strangford (inc Kilclief)	22
	<b>Total</b>	<b>301</b>
NEWRY	Newry City	508
	Newtowncloghoge	22
	Meigh	24
	Killeen	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>558</b>
ROWALLANE	Ballynahinch (Dunmore)	95
	Crossgar / Annacloy	64
	Killyleagh	44
	Kilmore / Loughisland	1
	Saintfield	58
	Shrigley	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>263</b>

DEA	HNA	UNITS
SLIEVE CROOB	Annsborough	0
	Ballyward	3
	Castlewellan (inc Drumaroad)	115
	Drumaness	18
	Dundrum / Seaforde / Clough	33
	Spa / Ballymacarn	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>
SLIEVE GULLION	Belleek	6
	Bessbrook / Derramore	100
	Camlough	26
	Creggan	0
	Crossmaglen	63
	Culloville	13
	Cullyhanna	4
	Drumintee	2
	Forkhill	19
	Jonesborough	8
	Mullaghbawn	12
	Mullaghglass	0
	Newtownhamilton	2
	Silverbridge	3
	Whitecross	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>262</b>	
THE MOURNES	Annalong / Longstone / Glassdrumman	18
	Attical	0
	Ballymartin	2
	Burrenbridge	0
	Kilcoo	5
	Kilkeel	78
	Newcastle	244
<b>Total</b>	<b>347</b>	
<b>NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA TOTAL</b>		<b>2,234</b>

# APPENDIX 2

## SOCIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME COMPLETIONS (APRIL 2019–MARCH 2024)

DEA	URBAN	RURAL	TOTAL UNITS
CROTLIEVE	18	15	33
DOWNPATRICK	39		39
NEWRY	208	10	218
ROWALLANE	2	38	40
SLIEVE CROOB	0	35	35
SLIEVE GULLION	1	15	16
THE MOURNES	37	4	41
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>422</b>



# APPENDIX 3

## SOCIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME SCHEMES ON-SITE AT MARCH 2024

DEA	URBAN	RURAL	TOTAL UNITS
CROTLIEVE	0	0	0
DOWNPATRICK	67	0	67
NEWRY	406	0	406
ROWALLANE	0	0	0
SLIEVE CROOB	0	0	0
SLIEVE GULLION	0	9	9
THE MOURNES	46	0	46
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>528</b>

# APPENDIX 4

## SOCIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2024/25-2026/27

DEA	URBAN	RURAL	TOTAL UNITS
CROTLIEVE	16	14	30
DOWNPATRICK	15	13	28
NEWRY	201	0	201
ROWALLANE	0	24	24
SLIEVE CROOB	0	1	1
SLIEVE GULLION	0	131	131
THE MOURNES	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>415</b>



# APPENDIX 5

## NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN SITE IDENTIFICATION STUDY PROGRAMME AT MARCH 2024

SIS LOCATION	STATUS	DEA
Warrenpoint	Complete – Shared with nominated Housing Association 2022/23	Crotlieve
Ardglass	Study Underway	Downpatrick
Killough	Study Underway	Downpatrick
Crossgar	Study Underway	Rowallane
Crossmaglen	Study Underway	Slieve Gullion
Rostrevor	Complete – Shared with nominated Housing Association 2022/23	Crotlieve
Strangford	Update of previous study programmed	Downpatrick
Newtowncloghue	Study Underway	Newry
Mayobridge	Study Underway	Newry
Hilltown	Study Underway	Newry
Ballyholland	Study Underway	Newry
Bessbrook	Complete – Shared with nominated Housing Association 2022/23	Slieve Gullion
Camlough	Study Underway	Slieve Gullion
Meigh	Study Underway	Newry
Newcastle	Study Underway	The Mournes
Forkhill	Complete – Shared with nominated Housing Association 2022/23	Slieve Gullion
Castlewellan	Desktop complete – Investigation of NIHE lands underway	Slieve Croob
Downpatrick	Study Underway	Downpatrick

# APPENDIX 6

## NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN "HOUSING FOR ALL" SCHEMES 2019-2024

HOUSING ASSOCIATION	SCHEME NAME	UNITS	ON-SITE
Ark	Causeway Road, Newcastle	10	July 2020
Arbour	Belfast Road, Newry	21	October 2020
Clanmil	Castlewellan Road, Newcastle	11	October 2020
Arbour	Dundrum Road, Newcastle	18	July 2021
Radius	The Promenade, Newcastle	19	September 2022
<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>		<b>79</b>	





**Newry, Mourne and Down District Council**

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