

Improvement Priority 4

Access to suitable homes

The Housing field has a vital role in helping the Council fulfil its ambition. We know that having a suitable, high quality home leads to better health, more resilient communities and a population that can contribute fully to society. It is important that we develop varied, innovative and green housing proposals - houses that people can live in for their whole lives - and also offer early support to those in need.

As a Local Authority, we will intervene to encourage a range of support and accommodation options to respond to the needs of the population today, and for future generations. Alongside this, we must ensure that the steps taken respect the culture of the county's communities.

How will we achieve this?

1. A shortage of suitable homes for the people of Gwynedd: Secure approval for the Housing Plan and begin action

Housing and Property Department

In order to reach the ambition in our Housing Strategy of “Ensuring that the people of Gwynedd have access to a suitable home of a high standard, which is affordable and improves their quality of life”, we have adopted a Housing Action Plan which contains over 30 specific schemes and an investment of £77 million.

These schemes will aim to fulfil the following objectives:

- No one is homeless in Gwynedd
- Social housing available to all who need one
- Everyone's home in Gwynedd is affordable to them
- Gwynedd Housing are environmentally friendly
- Homes having a positive influence on the health and well-being of the people of Gwynedd

During 2021/22, we will start to implement these plans in order to increase the opportunities for local people to have suitable homes within their communities.

The demand on our homelessness service has increased during the past months as a result of the pandemic and we will aim to prioritise a number of the schemes which would increase the supply of housing available to the homelessness service.

This work contributes to the following Well-being Objectives –

- **Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives**
- **Live in quality homes within their communities**
- **Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible.**
- **Live in a natural Welsh society**



2. Easy and clear access to enquiry services and advice on housing issues: Establish 'one front door' and help-desk for the public to help them with housing problems

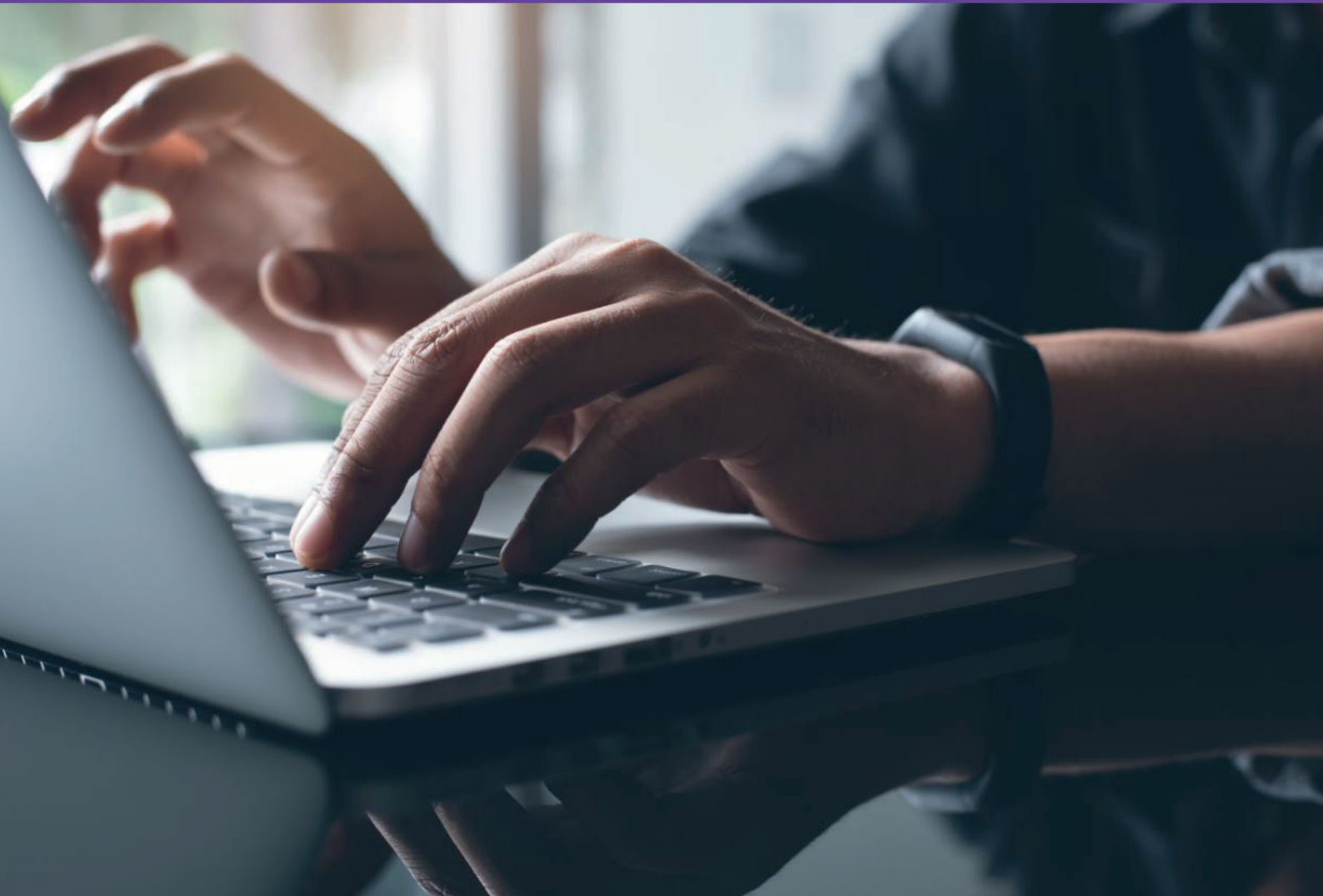
Housing and Property Department

Currently, there are many points of contact within the Department for the public to be able to access various services within Housing and Property. Our Housing Action Plan includes a project for establishing a single point of contact by creating a Housing Help Desk.

During 2021/22 we will research different models of providing a help desk and commence the work of establishing some sort of Housing Help Desk that can advise the public on how best to resolve their housing needs.

This work contributes to the following Well-being Objectives –

- Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives
- Live in quality homes within their communities
- Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible.
- Live in a natural Welsh society



3. Letting social housing to local people: Create a new allocation policy for the county which will give greater priority to local people

Housing and Property Department

We have introduced a new Housing Allocation Policy which has been in operation since the summer of 2020. This policy prioritises local people, and replaces the old points system for allocating housing.

The new system means that applications for social housing are put into one of four 'bands' depending on their housing needs and their connection with Gwynedd or not.

During 2021/22, we will need to ensure that there are effective arrangements for implementing the new allocations policy, and establish a procedure for monitoring that this policy is being implemented throughout the County to ensure the best opportunities for the people of Gwynedd.

This work contributes to the following Well-being Objectives –

- **Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives**
- **Live in quality homes within their communities**
- **Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible.**
- **Live in a natural Welsh society**



4. The transfer of holiday units from Council Tax to Business Rates

Finance and Information Technology Department

The Council is investing the income generated from the Council Tax premium in our Housing Action Plan in an attempt to alleviate the detrimental impact that second homes are having on the availability of housing for local people. We have concerns around losing resources due to holiday units being transferred from Council Tax to business rates. Gwynedd Council has been pressing continuously the Welsh Government for a review of this form of local taxation, in order to ensure that any property that is a dwelling-house pays Council Tax, whatever its use may be.

Work has been done to try to demonstrate to the Government the need for a change in legislation, but the response to date from the Government has been disappointing and has focused more on the alleged harmful effect on tourism rather than the actual harmful effect on the residents of Gwynedd.

Towards the future, we will aim to secure a meeting with the Minister in order to press the Government to change the legislation relating to holiday homes, and we will conduct a wider campaign to promote this.

This work contributes to the following Well-being Objectives –

- **Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives**
- **Live in quality homes within their communities**
- **Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible.**
- **Live in a natural Welsh society**

