

# Overview and Scrutiny – Executive Member Bi-Annual Update

## Councillor Richard Buscombe – Executive Member for Housing and Homelessness

<p>Services and legal responsibilities covered by Executive Member remit:</p>	<p>Housing and Homelessness services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homeless Prevention and Assessment</li> <li>• Homeless Temporary Accommodation</li> <li>• Rough Sleeper Outreach and accommodation provision</li> <li>• Housing Register and Devon Home Choice</li> <li>• Private Sector Housing improvement and enforcement</li> <li>• Disabled Facilities Grants and Adaptations</li> <li>• Affordable Housing Enabling</li> <li>• Council housing development</li> <li>• Housing Management Regulatory compliance</li> <li>• Household Support Fund</li> <li>• Housing Strategy and Homelessness &amp; Rough Sleeping Strategy</li>   <li>• Housing Benefit services</li> </ul>
<p>Strategic Plan objectives</p>	<p>Under the Homes Priority in the One Teignbridge Strategy the overall objective is to: ‘Take action to tackle the housing crisis and strive to give everyone the chance to live in a safe warm home.’ The subsidiary objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate and encourage more affordable housing, in particular social rented and one-bedroom homes.</li> <li>• Improve the standard of housing stock and make them as energy efficient as practical.</li> <li>• Deal with planning applications efficiently to ensure that well-designed homes supported by the Local Plan are delivered.</li> <li>• Facilitate the provision of more housing that meets the needs of older people and people with limited mobility.</li> </ul> <p>The One Teignbridge Action Plan that was approved by Full Council in autumn 2025 agreed the priority actions which are set out below, together with an outline of the current work underway.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work with the private rented sector to improve housing conditions and stabilise the sector – The passage of the Renters’ Rights Act in October 2025 is bringing wide-ranging reforms to private rented housing which will impact on both landlords and tenants. The service has made preparations for these changes which are being introduced in steps, with the tenancy reforms and abolition of no-fault evictions coming into force from 1 May 2026.</li><li>• Bring forward the development of new Extra-Care Housing in Newton Abbot – Feasibility work has begun to examine the potential for Extra-Care and other housing provision on the Bradley Lane and Cattle Market sites which will conclude in August.</li><li>• Facilitate the delivery of Affordable Homes on Council-owned sites – Nine small sites in Council ownership have been identified as potentially suitable for affordable housing development. With the support of government grant feasibility studies have been commissioned across these sites which will be completed by the end of May. It is envisaged that suitable sites would be delivered by Registered Provider partners.</li><li>• Encourage the delivery of Affordable homes in rural areas –. The service is working with Community Land Trusts and Housing Association partners to help develop a delivery pipeline. One of the nine feasibility study sites (above) is in a rural location.</li><li>• Partnership to end Youth Homelessness – The Council is working with Centrepont on a national pilot to end youth homelessness in Teignbridge by 2030.</li><li>• Improve Temporary Accommodation provision and reduce the use of B&amp;Bs – Some progress has been made to reduce the use and cost of B&amp;B in 25/26. An improvement plan is being developed to further reduce B&amp;B reliance and cost. Harewood House was acquired in December to provide a further homeless hostel once refurbished and the Council also leased a HMO for temporary accommodation in December. Further acquisitions and/or leases will be explored as part of the improvement plan.</li><li>• Work with other councils to make transit provision in Devon for the Gypsy and Traveller communities – This has initially been raised with other housing services in Devon and with the County Council with a need to identify potentially suitable sites in the ownership of councils.</li></ul>
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	<p>In addition to the above, work has begun to prepare a new Housing Strategy for Teignbridge to 2030. An informal session was held with the Overview and Scrutiny committee in autumn 2025 and the draft strategy is due to be considered at an informal session in May this year, prior to public consultation.</p>
<p>Service Delivery updates (inc. budget monitoring, performance information, risks, customer feedback)</p>	<p>Homelessness – Since January 2026 there has been a significant increase in the number of households approaching the Council as homeless or at risk of homelessness – this appears to be in part by driven by landlords ending tenancies prior to the government reforms taking effect. Over the last 6 months it has continued to prove difficult to assist households threatened with homelessness to remain in their homes.</p> <p>Temporary Accommodation – The number of households in B&amp;B accommodation has been at a consistently lower level in 2025/26 than in the previous year. There is a risk that the rise in homeless applications will feed through to increased temporary accommodation use and cost in coming months.</p> <p>Devon Home Choice – The number of households registered is rising gradually with a high number of new applications being submitted, some of which are awaiting processing. A new IT system has been jointly procured with other Devon authorities which is due to go live this summer.</p> <p>Household Support Fund – This is being replaced by the new Crisis and Resilience Fund from April. Work is progressing to put in place arrangements for the administration of the fund within a tight timeline. In addition to crisis payments for those experiencing financial shocks the new fund will provide support to households to build longer-term financial resilience and to develop community support.</p> <p>Private Sector Housing – Reports of disrepair and poor housing conditions have not seen an increase to date but these are expected to rise following the tenancy reforms coming in from May. News of additional grant funding for 2026/27 to increase resourcing in the service is currently awaited.</p> <p>Disabled Adaptations – Demand for the service has been lower this year than is usual, and there have in particular been fewer larger complex adaptation projects which has led to an underspend against budget. Targeted promotion of the assistance available will be carried out in Q1.</p> <p>Housing Enabling – The number of new Affordable Homes delivered by Registered Providers and developers this year is expected to be around the</p>

	<p>average for recent years. Some developments have progressed more slowly than expected delaying deliver of new affordable homes until 26/27. There is a risk that the current energy crisis will impact on construction costs and reduce the delivery of new homes.</p> <p>Customer Feedback</p> <p>The service regularly receives compliments from customers with a low level of complaints. Arrangements for measuring customer satisfaction and obtaining feedback need to be improved and this will be taken forward in 2026/27.</p> <p>Budget</p> <p>Prior to year-end it is expected that net expenditure will be within budget. A reduction of c.£75K compared with the previous year is expected in respect of temporary accommodation costs.</p> <p>Key Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private rented sector demand and exit – The level of additional demand for inspection and enforcement to address poor housing conditions is very uncertain. The government reforms may also lead to some landlords exiting the sector.</li> <li>• Homelessness demand – That this continues at a high or rising level, prevention may become more difficult with increased homelessness and upward pressure on temporary accommodation demand.</li> <li>• Cost-of-Living pressures – current challenges for households may worsen as a result of increased energy and other costs and this may impact on homelessness as well as general welfare and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Housing Development – Increased energy costs and supply chain issues may lead to a significant increase in construction costs and delay in the development of new homes.</li> </ul>
<p>Upcoming decisions, how Overview and Scrutiny can support the delivery of the strategic plan or any other information relevant for the Overview and Scrutiny Forward Plan</p>	<p>Executive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June 2026 – Project Endeavour – Partnership to end Youth Homelessness in Teignbridge</li> <li>• July 2026 – Teignbridge Housing Strategy</li> </ul> <p>Housing Strategy – Overview and Scrutiny are due to consider the draft strategy at an informal meeting in May.</p> <p>Crisis and Resilience Fund – Overview and Scrutiny could review the initial period of operation and outcomes from this new fund in Q3/Q4.</p>

	<p>Renters' Rights Act Implementation – A review in Q4 of the early stages of implementation of the reforms could be carried out.</p>
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