

# Public Document Pack

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of East Hertfordshire District Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Wallfields, Hertford on Wednesday 20th October, 2021 at 7.00 pm, for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the Agenda below, and you are hereby summoned to attend.

12 October 2021

*James Ellis*  
Head of Legal and  
Democratic Services

*Note: Prayers will be said before the meeting commences. Those Members who do not wish to participate will be invited to enter the Chamber at their conclusion*

### **AGENDA**

1. Chairman's Announcements

*To receive any announcements.*

2. Apologies for Absence

*To receive any Members' apologies for absence.*

3. Minutes - 28 July 2021 (Pages 7 - 42)

*To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 28 July 2021.*

4. Declarations of Interest

*To receive any Members' declarations of interest.*

5. Petitions

*To receive any petitions.*

6. Public Questions

*To receive any public questions.*

7. Members' questions (Pages 43 - 44)

*To receive any Members' questions.*

8. Executive Report - 28 September 2021 (Pages 45 - 100)

*To receive a report from the Leader of the Council and to consider recommendations on the matters below:*

(A) Council Tax Long Term Empty Premium

(B) Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23

(C) Tenancy Strategy

9. Motions on Notice (Pages 101 - 102)

*To receive Motions on Notice.*

## **DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

1. A Member, present at a meeting of the Authority, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Authority, with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in any matter to be considered or being considered at a meeting:
  - must not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting;
  - must not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;
  - must disclose the interest to the meeting, whether registered or not, subject to the provisions of section 32 of the Localism Act 2011;
  - if the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days;
  - must leave the room while any discussion or voting takes place.
2. A DPI is an interest of a Member or their partner (which means spouse or civil partner, a person with whom they are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom they are living as if they were civil partners) within the descriptions as defined in the Localism Act 2011.
3. The Authority may grant a Member dispensation, but only in limited circumstances, to enable him/her to participate and vote on a matter in which they have a DPI.
4. It is a criminal offence to:

- fail to disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest at a meeting if it is not on the register;
- fail to notify the Monitoring Officer, within 28 days, of a DPI that is not on the register that a Member disclosed to a meeting;
- participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which a Member has a DPI;
- knowingly or recklessly provide information that is false or misleading in notifying the Monitoring Officer of a DPI or in disclosing such interest to a meeting.

(Note: The criminal penalties available to a court are to impose a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale and disqualification from being a councillor for up to 5 years.)

### **Public Attendance**

East Herts Council provides for public attendance at its virtual meetings and will livestream and record this meeting. The livestream will be available during the meeting on the East Herts District website at this link:

<http://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=158&MIId=3915&J=1>

If you would like further information, email [democratic.services@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@eastherts.gov.uk) or call the Council on 01279 655261 and ask to speak to Democratic Services.

## **Accessing the Agenda Pack**

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Implementing paperless meetings will save East Herts Council approximately £50,000 each year in printing and distribution costs of agenda packs for Councillors and Officers.

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Visit <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/article/35542/Political-Structure> for details.

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, PEGS LANE,  
HERTFORD, SG13 8DQ ON WEDNESDAY 28  
JULY 2021, AT 7.00 PM

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PRESENT: Councillor K Crofton (Chairman).  
Councillors A Alder, T Beckett, S Bell,  
R Buckmaster, R Bolton, P Boylan, M Brady,  
E Buckmaster, S Bull, J Burmicz, A Curtis,  
G Cutting, B Deering, H Drake, R Fernando,  
M Goldspink, J Goodeve, L Haysey, J Jones,  
I Kemp, G McAndrew, S Newton, T Page,  
M Pope, C Redfern, S Reed, P Ruffles,  
M Stevenson, T Stowe, N Symonds,  
R Townsend, G Williamson, C Wilson and  
J Wyllie.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Richard Cassidy	- Chief Executive
James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Steven Linnett	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive

Ben Wood

- Head of  
Communications,  
Strategy and  
Policy

109 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting and said that the meeting was being recorded.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor R Townsend to the Council following his successful election in May 2021. The Chairman also thanked Councillor Jones for assisting him at the meeting as the Vice-Chairman had given his apologies.

He outlined the civic events he had recently attended, including the Armed Forces flag raising ceremony in Hertford, the Herts Scouts Annual General Meeting, a fete in Ardeley and the presentation awards for recipients of British Empire Medals at Hatfield House.

The Chairman announced the sad passing of Councillor Rutland-Barsby's husband Paul. The Leader of the Council paid tribute to Paul who was an enormous support to Councillor Rutland-Barsby in her role as Chairman of the Council and in life as her husband. Councillor Haysey said she counted Paul as a friend and always had a story to tell and his friendship would be sorely missed.

The Chairman announced that five East Herts residents had been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours



2021 and he read out a list of their achievements for each recipient:

- Richard Beazley – awarded an MBE for services to the community in Hertfordshire
- Ben Davies-Levinson – awarded an OBE for services to education
- Elizabeth Franklin-Jones – awarded an MBE for services to Nursing and Mental Health Services in Hertfordshire
- Elizabeth Anne Finlay Gardiner – awarded a DCB for services to the Government and the Legislative Process
- Darryl Keen – awarded the Queen’s Fire Services Medal for Distinguished Service.

Ben Davies-Levinson, Elizabeth Franklin-Jones and Darryl Keen were in attendance and thanked the Council for recognising their achievements.

#### 110 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrews, Crystall, Devonshire, Dumont, Frecknall, Hall, Hollebon, Huggins, Kaye, McMullen, Rutland-Barsby, Snowdon and Ward-Booth.

#### 111 MINUTES - 29 APRIL 2021

Councillor Fernando proposed, and Councillor Wyllie seconded, a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The motion to approve the Minutes having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting, and upon a vote taken, it was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

112 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

113 PETITIONS

There were no petitions to consider.

114 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Jill Goldsmith was unable to attend the meeting so the Chairman read out her question on her behalf.

Jill Goldsmith asked the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability the following question:

“The Council has been holding Environmental and Climate Forum meetings in line with its commitment in its June 2019 Climate Motion. These are an important opportunity for the Council and interested members of the Community to hear from independent experts and to discuss progress and ideas for changes to planned actions or additional actions.

“How well does the Council consider these meetings are going? In particular:

- what attendance has there been at the meetings?
- are the meetings providing useful feedback to the Council?
- which of the ideas generated has the Council actioned?
- what plans are there for future meetings?"

Councillor McAndrew responded as follows:

"I would like to thank Jill Goldsmith for her question.

"After a short break last year due to Covid, since September 2020 the Forum has been meeting every two months. It is making such a significant contribution to climate change planning in the district that I can only touch on the highlights, so please visit the environmental sustainability pages on the council's website for the full details.

"At each meeting, there are typically around 40 attendees, with broadly 75% of these being representatives of local community groups, stakeholder organisations, town and parish councils and individual residents. The rest are East Herts Officers and Members of all political parties on East Herts Council.

"We have had a wide range of experts present to the Forum, going far beyond the 'usual suspects', including the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, the Heal Rewilding charity, a local resident talking through how to encourage walking instead of short car trips, Affinity Water covering how to reduce water demand and the

Garden Organic group discussing food waste. This is resulting in network between groups, for example, at our most recent meeting a community group asked one of speakers to present to their members; he willingly agreed.

“The council has a ‘live’ action plan, with over 100 individual actions, which is monitored and updated on a monthly basis. This is available on our website as are details of the actions already completed. The action plan includes a number of actions and projects suggested by the Forum, including:

- looking into the possibility of digital signage in towns or other technology-based alerts to promote behaviour change such as reducing engine idling and lower water use. Officers are currently exploring a range of options
- making more pro-active use of social media. We followed this up for Clean Air Day and I’m very pleased to say that our messaging reached 11,700 people with over six times more reactions than any other recent social media posts by the council
- working more closely with farmers and land owners. We have established a ‘rural roundtable’ group with local farmers and land owners, the Soil Association and the National Farmers Union.

“With regard to future plans, the dates and topics for Forum meetings until January 2022 are listed on our website with renewable energy and the wider greening of the economy among upcoming subjects for discussion.

"I hope I have been able to demonstrate that the East Herts Environmental and Climate Forum is now firmly embedded as a key way in which the council and partners are working together towards carbon neutrality by 2030."

115 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Councillor Alexander Curtis asked the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability the following question:

"Can the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability confirm what is being done to prevent fly-tipping in our District, and hold perpetrators of fly tipping responsible for their actions?"

Councillor Graham McAndrew responded as follows:

"Thank you Councillor Curtis for your question about this important issue. Please let me explain the council's preventative and enforcement approaches.

"Our preventative approach includes conducting anti-fly tipping campaigns and providing advice, all backed up with the use of mobile CCTV cameras and signage at fly-tipping hotspots. This approach can work. In 2018, a combined campaign across the county led to the second lowest annual total of fly tips in Hertfordshire since 2012. Unfortunately during 2020/21 and the pandemic levels have risen again and so our work continues.

"The council cannot, of course, deal with fly tipping

alone. We are a member of the Hertfordshire Fly Tipping Group, a multi-agency taskforce with other councils, the police, the Environment Agency and the National Farmers Union among others. This has had tangible results including securing funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner to work with the National Farmers Union to clear fly-tips on farmers' land and increase target hardening.

"At the same time, we will take enforcement action when needed. This includes issuing community protection warnings and notices and, for more serious or persistent offences, fixed penalty notices and prosecutions. Indeed, the council has a strong track record in prosecuting offenders. In the five years to 2020/21, the council secured 17 court prosecutions and issued 79 fixed penalty notices.

"So far in 2021/22, the council has successfully prosecuted four individuals. Three cases were heard at Stevenage Magistrates Court; the offenders were fined and ordered to pay costs. In the fourth case, a man from Hoddesdon was fined by the council after he deposited a sizable boat in a layby near to Pearce's Farm Shop causing obstruction in late 2020.

"The council gained good publicity in the local press about these actions. That said, we and other authorities see a case for strengthening sanctions nationally. We are joining others to ask the Sentencing Council to review the Environmental Offences Definitive Guideline 2014 so as to address inconsistencies in court judgements.

“The FTG is also leading national lobbying efforts to address what it sees as significant deficiencies in the current legislative framework relevant to fly tipping and is about to launch a major new lobbying effort targeting the Sentencing Council with a view to securing a review of the Environmental Offences Definitive Guideline 2014 to address what the FTG believes are serious inconsistencies in typical court judgements rendered in response to successful prosecutions and the alternative fixed penalty regime implemented in 2016. This latest effort, which is about to launch, is being supported by 124 local authorities across the UK and 10 professional bodies.

“Finally, all Members have a role to play. It is hoped that our enforcement actions, along with our continued campaigns and joint working, will discourage people from fly-tipping in our district. So, if colleagues are able to publicise the things I’ve mentioned through their own networks and social media, this will amplify the council’s strong anti-fly tipping message.”

Councillor Curtis thanked the Executive Member for his response and asked as a supplemental question, if East Herts could continue to look at what other local authorities are doing across the country to deal with fly tipping.

Councillor McAndrew said that East Herts continue to work with the Fly Tipping Group who network with councils across the country. East Herts will continue to look at best practice but often other councils look to us as a great example.

Councillor Mark Pope asked the Executive Member for Planning and Growth;

“Can the Executive Member for Planning and Growth provide an update regarding the *Shop Safe Shop Local* campaign and other measures that are being taken to support local start-up businesses?”

Councillor Goodeve responded as follows;

“The Shop Safe, Shop Local campaign is going well and of course has been ramped up in recent months as more operating restrictions on businesses have been lifted. The messages have actually shifted from shop safe to “welcome back” to emphasise the importance of supporting your local businesses as well as being safe. Members may have seen the various messages that have come out over social media, newspapers and indeed on ivans in recent months.

“On Facebook the campaign had 27,000 impressions over 2 weeks in May and then a little over that again in the middle of June. On Spotify it reached just over 27,000 people.

“Alongside this various editorials were taken out in the Mercury and Bishop’s Stortford Independent encouraging residents to make a pledge and support a local business. This work will continue over the coming weeks and more content will be released under the Welcome Back campaign publicising events that are happening this summer in our towns including the food and drink festival in Hertford and the outdoor



cinema in Bishop's Stortford for August. This will be followed by more communications about events in early September including the classic car display in Buntingford and Rock in the Priory in Ware. If any Members are aware of local events that you want publicising then please let myself and the Executive Member for Corporate Services know.

"I'm glad the second part of your question asks about start up support. You may have seen that just 2 weeks ago we launched a new grant scheme offering £5,000 for any new or existing businesses in the district that are interested in opening up new premises. This grant be used to cover some of the costs of doing so such as rent or fitting out making it much more affordable for businesses to expand or for entrepreneurs to test out a new product or service on the high street. This sits alongside the over £30m we have given out in grants to businesses over the past 12 months and is another good example of where we are supporting businesses."

There was no supplementary question from Councillor Pope.

Councillor Carolyn Redfern asked the Executive Member for Wellbeing the following question;

"Figures up to March 2020, raised in a motion by Labour Councillors to Hertfordshire County Council, show that East Herts has seen the second highest increase in rates of child poverty in the county.

"We know that the long-term costs of children living in

poverty place a huge amount of strain on public services. Early prevention and support can result in dramatic savings later on and ensure all of our children receive a good start in life.

“Can I ask what action the Executive on East Herts District Council plans to take to tackle rising child poverty in our district, and whether they will impress upon their colleagues on Hertfordshire County Council the importance of this?”

Councillor Buckmaster responded as follows;

“I’d like to thank Councillor Redfern for her question. Just a word of caution in that increases can be relative, because on looking at County Data and National Data East Herts is not an area with very high levels of child poverty but there are what we would call pockets of deprivation.

“East Herts Health and Wellbeing Strategy has two main priorities that can relate to the question.

1. Help all children to start off well
2. Empower children, young people and adults to achieve their life potential

“One of the ways we can achieve these is in our criteria for grant giving to meet Health and Wellbeing objectives particularly in certain areas, and of course through the affordable housing supply where since 2017 768 family sized homes have been let to those with limited means and where the household is in receipt of means tested benefits.

“Community grants have enabled the new Network

Homes Sele Farm development *support a scheme* that enables families accessing affordable housing to encourage good healthy food preparation and meet children's dietary health needs.

"Another community grant has been recently awarded to Buntingford Homestart who support families and young children with their health and wellbeing needs.

"Herts Sports Partnership and County are currently running the HAPPY programme of food and activities this summer which is targeted at those who normally access free school meals – this is in addition to the £50 per child offered during the school holidays

"A range of Healthy Hub East Herts partners also provide direct support around the areas of providing domestic abuse support for families and children, mental wellbeing, job employment and skills assistance, and money management.

"The much broader range of Childrens Services is of course provided by County. Families First is but one example of how families are supported. These are services that work together for early help to create a package of support. They can help with issues in common with those available from the Healthy Hubs. There is also the Herts Help, helpline which can enable people to find the support they need.

"Hertfordshire Council is absolutely committed to supporting families and children. In terms of influence that East Herts Members have at County, well it is considerable. Of the 8 Conservative dual Members we have 2 full cabinet Members, 2 deputies, plus the

chairman and other Members of Overview and scrutiny. Councillor Deering as Executive Member for Resources recently announced a Covid Recovery package of £9.6million including a £2m joint 'Building Life Chances' package from Adult Care, Children's, and Public Health services, to tackle some of the impacts on families. Including, crisis intervention funding, community projects and financial advice to support families in, or at risk, of poverty. There is also two-year funding package includes £3m for Children's Services to finance initiatives such as the 'Coming Back Stronger' programme of educational recovery, including mental health support for pupils, and mentoring delivered by Herts for Learning. As mentioned we are all absolutely committed to helping those in need."

There was no supplementary question from Councillor Redfern.

Councillor Mione Goldspink asked the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability the following question;

"Does the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability agree with me that it would be an excellent idea for East Herts Council to take part in the Queen's Green Canopy project? This project is designed to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022, and every person across the whole of the UK is invited to plant a tree. Planting needs to be done between October 2021 and March 2022. If the Executive Member does agree with me, would he be willing to set up a Working Party to look at the practicalities of taking

part in this project?"

Councillor McAndrew responded as follows;

"I would like to thank Councillor Goldspink for her question. I share her enthusiasm for the Queen's Green Canopy project and I'm pleased that encouraging participated has been listed in the council's Sustainability Action Plan for some time.

"A project like this is all about collectively doing something for which the outcome is greater than the sum of the parts. Therefore, as proactive members of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership, we are already liaising with Hertfordshire County Council's dedicated officer for this project.

"The primary emphasis of this important national project is, however, for communities and individual residents to take up the challenge to increase green cover and so I'd like to assure Members that publicity and opportunities to get involved will shortly be promoted by the council. Mostly notably, we aim to highlight initiatives such as that at The Woodlands Trust, which is providing tree packs free of charge for schools and community groups, and provide information on species and site choice to ensure truly sustainable benefits.

"Importantly, we in East Herts are particularly keen to use this opportunity to not simply promote an increase the number of trees but to encourage residents and local groups to strengthen or reintroduce indigenous species of trees and shrubs. We haven't waited until

October to start this and I'm very pleased to say that on 24<sup>th</sup> May this year the council showed what can be done when a number of residents, Members and Officers came together at Northgate End in Bishop's Stortford to plant 336 native trees and 288 native shrubs.

"At the same time, we'd like to see tree planting that preserves and indeed increases biodiversity through planting in appropriate locations. We have an enviable track record of demonstrating what can be done and have just declared Pishiobury Park as a local nature reserve given the quality of its biological, geological and historical interest.

"Given the vital importance of residents and community groups taking up the challenge to increase the Queen's Green Canopy, I would like to invite all Members to promote the project and share the council's publicity which will be issued in the next few weeks."

Councillor Goldspink sought clarification as a supplemental question about whether there would be a specific project that East Herts District Council would be running or just supporting local groups?

Councillor McAndrew said that there would be a social media campaign highlighting local community groups who are planting trees and to encourage others.

Councillor Alastair Ward-Booth asked the Executive Member for Wellbeing the following question;

“Our Parks and Open Spaces have proven to be invaluable to the health and wellbeing of our residents, especially during the past year. Could you please update Members as to any projects underway or completed in our parks and any ideas for the future?”

Councillor Buckmaster responded as follows;

“During the last year we have certainly seen more of our residents enjoy our parks and open spaces more frequently.

Two key projects we have delivered recently include the Trinity Close play area in Bishop’s Stortford and Hartham Play area in Hertford.

“Our new facility at Hartham was developed from a shared vision between ourselves and local residents, and funded through a combination of crowd funding and section 106 money, enabling us to create an inclusive and attractive play area for our residents to enjoy.

“Trinity Close is a much smaller park which was ready for a makeover. The site had some access issues that were not going to be easy to resolve owing to the lie of the land. When funds became available through planning contributions from an adjacent development, we were able to launch a quite visionary project which included re landscaping to assist those with mobility issues. The resultant play space, now with an area in which the local community will be able to hold events, has been warmly received.

“Members will also be aware that this week is Love

Parks week and we are celebrating by encouraging residents to enjoy our parks and open spaces through picnics, walks and exercise. But please, I urge residents to take their litter home. Details on a number of organised activities can be found on our website. In addition, we have now launched our parks and open spaces strategy consultation. We encourage Members and residents to provide us feedback to help shape the future priorities for our parks and open spaces in the district. The consultation closes on 24 September 2021.

“A snapshot of our beautiful parks and open spaces can be seen in our consultation video which is also available on the website with some beautiful drone footage, so please all take a look.”

Councillor Ward-Booth gave his apologies for this meeting so there was no supplementary question.

Councillor Chris Wilson asked the Executive Member for Planning and Growth the following question;

“Uttlesford District Council is in the process of producing a new local plan. Given their proximity to Bishop's Stortford, any developments on the edge of the town, but over the border in Uttlesford, have the potential to place an even greater burden on the already overstretched infrastructure. Can the Executive Member for Planning and Growth advise what meetings she is planning to have with Uttlesford and what she is doing to safeguard the interests of the residents of East Herts in this regard?”

Councillor Goodeve responded as follows;



“The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that public bodies, including local planning authorities, have a duty to co-operate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries.

“As part of the Council's ongoing commitment to meet the requirements of the NPPF and to engage constructively with a range of bodies, a Co-operation for Sustainable Development Board was established in 2014, comprising the West Essex/East Herts housing market area partners, which includes Uttlesford Council. The Board is now well-established and has previously undertaken comprehensive work on strategic cross-boundary issues, including housing, transport infrastructure, employment and environmental impact. It is through this forum that key issues such as infrastructure have been, and will be continue to be discussed.

“Furthermore Uttlesford Council has also established a Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Group to identify strategically significant development proposals, infrastructure requirements and other matters where cross boundary collaboration is required. Councillor Haysey recently attended a meeting of this group (28 June 2021), specifically to discuss transport infrastructure proposals to support sustainable growth.

“As you would expect officers will continue to engage constructively with colleagues at Uttlesford Council during the formative stages of their Plan-making process, with a view to arranging a Member level duty

to co-operate meeting once their spatial strategy is clear. At this meeting the Council will be seeking to ensure that any growth proposals put forward have been properly assessed by Uttlesford Council, particularly those in the vicinity of Bishop's Stortford, and that future infrastructure needs are identified."

There was no supplementary question from Councillor Wilson.

116 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 6 JULY 2021

The Leader of the Council thanked Hertfordshire County Council for allowing the Council to use their Council Chamber as a number of councillors felt uncomfortable meeting at Wallfields. She also thanked the Democratic Services team for organising the meeting at the new venue at short notice.

Councillor Haysey said there were a number of Members having to self-isolate after being 'pinged' by Track and Trace or had contracted Covid-19 so she wished those Members a speedy recovery.

Councillor Haysey congratulated the residents who had received honours from the Queen which demonstrated the extraordinary range of talented residents in the district.

The Leader then presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 6 July 2021.

116 REFRESHED CORPORATE PLAN FOR 2021/22

The Leader presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 6 July 2021, regarding the Refreshed Corporate Plan for 2021/22. She asked Members to note that the text at 2.1 in the report was incorrect and said it should read “the Executive were asked to review and comment on the refreshed priorities for 2021/22 onwards”. She said that the Corporate Plan guided the Council in all its interactions and its ambitions for the future. The refreshed plan followed the SEED principles but had been refreshed due to the impact of Covid-19.

Councillor Haysey proposed that the recommendations in the Executive report be supported. Councillor Pope seconded the proposal.

Councillor Goldspink confirmed that the Liberal Democrat group were supportive of this recommendation.

Councillor Wilson noted that the funding for two of the initiatives, the Launch Pad and ‘Welcome Back’, were funded by the EU. He asked where the funding would come from in the next few years.

Councillor Goodeve said the Launch Pad funding had been guaranteed for two years.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the refreshed Corporate Plan

be adopted.

116 DRAFT EQUALITIES, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY FOR EAST HERTS

Councillor Drake proposed that the recommendations in the Executive report be supported. Councillor Curtis seconded the recommendations.

Councillor Curtis said that a lot of work had gone into the strategy and Members had had the opportunity to feed into it through a Members briefing session and a report was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Goldspink confirmed that the Liberal Democrat group were in support of the recommendation. She said that the group were delighted to see the strategy as it was important that all residents were treated equally and was pleased to see clear recommendations for action.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy be adopted.

116 APPROVAL OF THE STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY 2021 - 26 UNDER THE LICENSING ACT 2003

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the

Executive report of 6 July 2021, regarding the approval of the Statement of Licensing Policy 2021-26. He explained that, as a Licensing Authority, the Council must adopt and publish a Statement of Licensing Policy every five years which sets out the principles when carrying out its licensing functions. The consultation engaged with a wide range of stakeholders including the police and elected Members. Councillor Boylan said that the policy included a focus on health and wellbeing when applications were determined and the introduction of a sensitive licensing area. The policy had been endorsed by the Licensing Committee and the Executive with no further amendments.

Councillor Boylan proposed that the recommendation in the Executive report be supported. Councillor Bolton seconded the recommendation.

Councillor Goldspink confirmed that the Liberal Democrat group were happy to support the recommendation.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - That the Statement of Licensing Policy 2021-26 be approved with affect from 29<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

116 ADOPTION OF BENGEO NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA PLAN FOLLOWING REFERENDUM

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 6 July 2021. Councillor Goodeve proposed that the recommendations in the Executive report be supported. Councillor Ruffles seconded the recommendation.

Councillor Goldspink confirmed that the Liberal Democrat group were happy to support the recommendation.

Councillor Newton spoke as the local ward member and said she was delighted with the plan and was a true representation of the community coming together.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - That the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Development Plan 2019-2033 be formally 'made'.

116 ADOPTION OF SELE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA PLAN  
FOLLOWING REFERENDUM

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 6 July 2021. Councillor Goodeve proposed that the recommendations in the Executive report be supported. Councillor Deering seconded the recommendation.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – That the Sele Neighbourhood Area Development Plan 2018-2033 be formally ‘made’.

116 ADOPTION OF THUNDRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOLLOWING REFERENDUM

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 6 July 2021. Councillor Goodeve proposed that the recommendations in the Executive report be supported. Councillor Boylan seconded the recommendation.

The Chairman read out a statement from Councillor Andrews, the local ward member, who had given his apologies for the meeting:

Councillor Andrews felt it was an excellent Neighbourhood Plan and demonstrated the hard work that had gone into it over many years. He acknowledged the support from officers at East Herts, especially George Pavey. The plan was a wonderful exercise in community engagement and it was a good foundation and marker for the future of the community in Thundridge Parish.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - That the Thundridge Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2033 be formally 'made'.

116 ADOPTION OF GILSTON AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOLLOWING REFERENDUM

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 6 July 2021. Councillor Goodeve proposed that the recommendations in the Executive report be supported. Councillor E Buckmaster seconded the recommendation.

Councillor E Buckmaster wanted to show his appreciation for the local community group that assisted in the development of the plan. He said that this was the largest development area in the District, the plan went through a tough public examination and received 97% support in the referendum. He gave thanks to George Pavey who had worked on the plan.

Councillor Haysey said that East Herts had a good reputation for producing fantastic Neighbourhood Plans which had brought communities together. The Gilston area would be subject to major planning applications for development and this plan would help developers understand what was expected and what the local area was about.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.



**RESOLVED** – that the Gilston Area Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2033, as detailed at Appendix A to this report, be formally 'made'.

#### 117 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Leader of the Council presented the report which set out a number of changes to the Council's Committees since the Annual Council meeting in April 2021. Councillor Haysey said that some of the changes had been a result of a change in the Executive where Councillor Kaye had replaced Councillor Rutland-Barsby as Executive Member for Communities. She gave her thanks to Councillor Rutland-Barsby for her work in community engagement. Councillor Haysey announced that Councillor Goodeve would be responsible for Licensing, moving from the Neighbourhoods remit into Planning and Growth as licensing had a strong relationship with planning.

Councillor Haysey proposed that the recommendations in the report be noted. Councillor Alder seconded the proposal.

Councillor Goldspink noted the changes and asked the Leader to pass on her and her Group's sincere condolences to Councillor Rutland-Barsby.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – That the membership of the Council's Executive and Committees as set out in Appendix A and B of the report, be noted.

118 LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION COUNCIL SIZE SUBMISSION

The Leader of the Council submitted a report relating to the Local Government Boundary Commission Council Size Submission. She said that East Herts last had a boundary review in 1998 and the report was the first step in the current boundary review process. The review was necessary as the population had increased and some wards were out of step with the Commission's requirements. Councillor Haysey said that Councillor Snowdon had worked with the opposition groups to get an agreement to keep the 50 seats on the Council.

Councillor Haysey proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. The recommendations were seconded by Councillor Bolton.

Councillor Goldspink proposed an amendment to the recommendations and was seconded by Councillor Redfern. The amendment was as follows:

"Delete Recommendation (B) completely, and then replace it with a new (B) which states "However, if the Head of Legal and Democratic Services considers that changes should be made to the Council's Submission, he must refer the matter back to the Full Council and ask for a further vote."

Councillor Haysey said that she could not accept the proposed amendment. She said that the timeline for the review was laid out in the report on page 554 and Council would not be meeting again until October 2021. The dates were set by the Local Government Boundary Commission and the approval of the report was an important part of the process.

Councillor Goldspink explained her reasons for the amendment and highlighted that Council could hold an extraordinary meeting if necessary to approve any amendments to the submission. She felt that recommendation (B) in the report was undemocratic and any alterations should be agreed by Council, not delegated to two people.

Councillor Redfern supported the points raised by Councillor Goldspink. She said there was consultation with all political groups when the submission was in development and had reached an agreement on 50 seats on the Council. She said that by delegating to the Leader and Head of Legal and Democratic Services, it would ignore the democracy of the Council.

The motion to amend recommendation (B) in the report, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting, and upon a vote being taken, it was declared LOST.

Councillor Bell proposed and Councillor Redfern seconded another amendment to recommendation (B). The amendment was as follows:

“That Council agree cross party delegation to the Leader and Head of Legal and Democratic Services”

Councillor Haysey thanked Councillor Bell for her suggestion but said that decisions like in the report were often delegated if any minor amendments needed to be made. She said she was more than happy to stick with the recommendations as written in the report.

Councillor Townsend said it was a minor amendment and would only go to support, encourage and convince residents that most things are considered.

The motion to amend recommendation (B) in the report, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting, and upon a vote being taken, it was declared LOST.

The motion to support the recommendations in the report, having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting, and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that (A) the submission on Council Size, as set out in Appendix A be approved;

(B) Council agree a delegation to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any final changes to the Council Size Submission as may be necessary; and

(C) authorisation be given to the Chief

Executive to submit the Council's Submission on Council Size to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

119 ACQUISITION OF WARE PROPERTY FOR CONVERSION TO TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION - 34 QUEENS ROAD, WARE

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods submitted a report in respect of the acquisition of a property for conversion to temporary accommodation. He informed Members that the accommodation would be suitable for families with children and would provide more settled and secure accommodation. Councillor Boylan explained that homelessness was on the increase and the council had 31 temporary housing units and in the first quarter in 2020, there were 178 homeless households and by the last quarter, this had risen to 235. The council used bed and breakfast accommodation when the temporary units are full which was far from ideal and represented a huge cost to the council. The unit that the council had acquired had planning permission in place and had been stripped back ready for work to begin. The Executive Member said the benefits were clear and the extra units proposed would save the council £26,000 a year.

Councillor Boylan proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Kemp seconded the proposal.

Councillor Wilson said he supported the recommendation and felt it was a sensible move. He regretted that homelessness was on the rise and felt this was due to the Council's previous decision to sell

off their housing to housing associations.

Councillor Bell said she was happy to see the proposal and welcomed the shift into other parts of the district.

Councillor Symonds said she was thrilled to see the proposal. She said that putting people into bed and breakfast was not good for their mental health and was pleased to see that the council would be changing lives.

Councillor Goldspink welcomed this report and wished more could be done. She was pleased that a way had been found to finance the project without adding any financial pressure.

Councillor Curtis thanked the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and the officers involved. He said it was important for homeless families to remain in the local community.

Councillor Beckett asked if Councillor Boylan could confirm whether these units would be provided at social rent.

Councillor Boylan said the temporary accommodation came from homelessness grants.

Councillor Kemp said some of the bed and breakfast units were situated in Harlow so was pleased to see further provision in the east of the district. He praised the choice of building as it would allow for a mix of units.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, it was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - That the residential property known as 34 Queens Road, Ware be acquired by the council and converted to two self-contained units for use by East Herts Council as temporary accommodation for homeless households by means of an addition the council's capital programme and utilisation of commuted sums held by the council for affordable housing as detailed in the EXEMPT Appendix A.

## 120 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Councillor Deering proposed a motion on the planning reforms set out by the Government in the 2020 White Paper "Planning for the Future". Councillor Goodeve seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Goldspink supported the motion. She said that the government consulted on their plans last year and the Council had worked hard on sending a response. She trusted the government to listen to the responses of the consultation but they had ignored them. She said that if further lobbying was needed to get the government to listen, she would be supportive.

Councillor Deering said he was satisfied that the government was in the right place but had just pitched their proposals wrong. He said that in 2010, the government inherited the lowest house building levels since the 1920s and the Labour led Croydon Council

established a group “Brick by Brick” to focus on house building but did not build a single house. The government was investing in housing market and built 243,000 homes last year and 1.8 million since 2010.

Councillor Haysey felt the wrong language was being used, she said that the government was listening and she had had many conversations with Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government but local authorities just needed to be heard. She said that there needed to be a ‘carrot and stick’ approach so developers produce what they promise.

Councillor Wilson said the government had promised 200,000 starter homes in 2010 and none had been built.

Councillor Goodeve highlighted that the district was currently overachieving in its housing targets. The district had a District Plan in place and felt the Planning Inspectorate should have more respect for it. She said the Council would be lobbying the MP to be listened too.

Councillor Bell said that there was more than one MP in East Herts and asked if all three MPs could be lobbied.

The substantive motion being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, it was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - The Council notes the announcement in the recent Queen’s Speech



that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is to proceed with the reforms to the planning system set out in the 2020 White Paper "*Planning for the Future*".

The Council responded to the Government's consultation in October 2020, and regrets that the Government is pushing ahead with some reforms with which the Council previously expressed concerns, including:

- the proposal to grant automatic outline permission in certain circumstances;
- more centralised decision making, which would reduce local democratic input to planning decisions; and
- failure to acknowledge important local contexts.

The Council is concerned that the White Paper as published last year would lead to less local control and less accountability about planning decisions which fundamentally affect the lives of local residents and hopes that the Government will listen to the responses of this Council and others to the White Paper when forming its new legislation.

The Council urges the Leader and the Executive Member for Planning and Growth to work with stakeholders including the Town and Country Planning Association to continue to lobby Government to listen to the responses to the White Paper consultation and alter the reforms

before they appear on the statute book.

The meeting closed at Time Not Specified

Chairman .....
Date .....

COUNCIL – 20 OCTOBER 2021

## MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

<p><b>Question 1</b></p>	<p><b>Cllr Ben Crystall to ask Cllr Graham McAndrew, Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability:</b></p>
<p>In September, the World Health Organisation slashed its recommended air quality limits for six pollutants including particulate matter PM10 and PM2.5, and nitrogen dioxide. For example, the annual average recommended limit for PM2.5 has been halved, and the annual limit for nitrogen dioxide has been reduced by three quarters. This change is a response to the huge, and growing, body of evidence showing that air pollution causes serious harm at much lower levels than previously thought.</p> <p>Given that these pollutants are known to cause lung and cardiovascular disease, and play a major role in a host of other illnesses including diabetes, cancers and dementia, and given that the latest available air pollution data for a number of roads in East Hertfordshire's AQMAs shows that they breached <u>current limits</u>, what action will EHC take to cut the levels of damaging air pollution that our residents are exposed to?</p>	
<p><b>Question 2</b></p>	<p><b>Cllr Ben Crystall to ask Cllr Graham McAndrew, Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability:</b></p>
<p>EHC's Sustainability Action Plan is an excellent document offering many key steps towards a lower carbon district. It includes the recommended action: "Explore a pilot to incentivise EPC A properties through the council tax system". EPC is an Energy Performance Certificate and grade A is the most sustainable rating. The plan states this action is "COMPLETE - Reviewed and concluded not to take forward. Will retain for review. Determined other methods to incentivise domestic energy efficiency."</p> <p>Poorly insulated homes are one of the district's most significant</p>	

sources of carbon emissions, and contribute significantly to fuel poverty and ill health in many residents. Why has the decision been made not to take this action forward, given it has considerable potential for helping to tackle climate change in East Herts and improving housing stock, as well as resident's health and wellbeing?

**Question 3**

**Cllr Angela Alder to ask Cllr Jonathan Kaye, Executive Member for Communities:**

As the newly appointed Executive Member for Community Engagement what initiatives are you hoping to develop in order to improve Council/resident relationships to enhance the listening role of council?

## Council

**Date of Meeting:** 20 October 2021

**Report by:** Councillor Linda Haysey, Leader of the Council

**Report title:** Executive Report – 28 September 2021

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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## Summary

- This report details the recommendations to Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 28 September 2021.

### 1.0 Item considered and recommended to Council

1.1 Since the last Council meeting, the Executive met on 28 September 2021. At that meeting the Executive considered and supported a number of recommendations for Council on the following items:

- 1.1.1 Council Tax Long Term Empty Premium
- 1.1.2 Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23
- 1.1.3 Tenancy Strategy

1.2 This report sets out the recommendation for the above items. The full report, including the Appendix, may be viewed at Executive [28 September 2021](#).

1.3 The Minutes of the meeting are attached as **Appendix A**.

1.4 This report excludes items also considered by the Executive where those reports are separate agenda items on the Council agenda.

## **2 Council Tax Long Term Empty Premium**

2.1 The Executive was asked to consider changes to the Council Tax Long Term Empty Premium from April 2022 and recommend to Council that Option D in the Executive report is adopted.

### **RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

- (a) That there be an increase in the Long Term Empty Premium from April 2022, including the discretion to remove the premium for up to 12 months when new owners occupy within 12 months of purchase.**

## **3 Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23**

3.1 The Executive was asked to consider the latest available information around the current local Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme at East Herts and support the recommendation that no change is made for 2022/23

### **RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

- (a) That there be no changes to the local Council Tax Support scheme for April 2022.**

## **4.0 Tenancy Strategy**

4.1 The Executive was asked to consider the new Tenancy Strategy for 2021 to 2026 which has been drafted to respond to new legislation, changing market conditions and evolving housing need trends

## **RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

- a) **That the East Herts Tenancy Strategy for 2021-2026 be adopted.**

### **5.0 Executive Decisions**

- 5.1 Other matters determined by the Executive are detailed in the Minutes of the meeting, at Appendix A to this report.

### **6.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

6.1 Appendix A - Minutes of the Executive meeting 28 September 2021

6.2 Appendix B, Bi –Tenancy Strategy 2021-26 and Equality Impact Assessment

#### **Contact Member**

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#### **Contact Officer**

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
TUESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2021, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor L Haysey (Leader)  
Councillors L Haysey, P Boylan,  
E Buckmaster, J Goodeve, J Kaye,  
G McAndrew and G Williamson.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors M Pope, P Ruffles and  
N Symonds.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Richard Cassidy	- Chief Executive
James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Steven Linnett	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Su Tarran	- Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service

169 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Cutting.

170 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader said the Council were aware of the perceived petrol shortage across the country and gave her thanks to the crews from Urbaser who collected the District's refuse, and have done an amazing job in the last few days. She acknowledged that they have had an extraordinarily difficult job over the last few months and placed on record her thanks to the crews.

The Leader asked Councillor Kaye to make an announcement about the council's grant policies and the amount of money that had been provided to local charities and communities.

Councillor Kaye announced that East Herts Council had put in a bid for £150,000 from the Herts Health Protection Board which was successful. The money had been given to local charities and communities who kept operating through the pandemic, helping and supporting individuals. Councillor Kaye said he visited a care home in Bishop's Stortford who had a visit from 'AceHounds', a charity that have been supported by the grants. The charity took dogs round to visit residents as they had a beneficial effect on their wellbeing.

Other charities such as 'Always Be You' in Ware who work with adults with learning difficulties received funding. They would normally meet once or twice a

week but could not in the pandemic so provided kits and delivered to people on the door. The next grants programme will be launched in the next few weeks and Councillor Kaye encouraged people to apply for grants up to £8,000.

Councillor Haysey said it was encouraging to see that the council could provide grants to communities to recognise their extraordinary work.

Councillor Haysey said the order of the agenda would be amended so after item 6, the order would be heard as follows: item 11, 12, 10, 7, 8 and 9.

171 MINUTES - 6 JULY 2021

Councillor Kaye proposed, and Councillor Goodeve seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2021 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Leader. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by Leader.

172 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

173 UPDATE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Haysey said the report from the committee

was included in the supplementary agenda and thanked the Chairman for working with the Scrutiny Officer in producing the report. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed the Tenancy Strategy and supported it.

174 UPDATE FROM AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Councillor Pope had nothing to add to the committee report.

Councillor Haysey said there were some good discussions at the Audit and Governance Committee and thanked the Members involved.

175 COUNCIL TAX LONG TERM EMPTY PREMIUM

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on the Council Tax Long Term Empty Premium. He said that the Council had decided to charge premiums on long term empty homes as they were encouraged to do so by the government. The charge was not designed to create revenue but as an incentive for owners to bring the house back into use. As a further incentive, the proposal was to bring in higher rates as follows: properties that have been empty for over two years but under five at 100%, over five years but under ten years at 200% and ten years plus at 300%. Alongside this, the other change to the policy was that once a long term empty property has been sold, the new owners can have liability of the premium deferred for 12 months if they are not able to move in straightaway, but occupy the property within 12 months.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Kaye seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - to recommend to Council the increase of the Long Term Empty Premium from April 2022, including the discretion to remove the premium for up to 12 months when new owners occupy within 12 months of purchase.

#### 176 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The report was reviewed every year and the full details were in the report.

The Leader gave her thanks to the Head of Shared Revenues and Benefits and her team for their hard work in difficult circumstances over the pandemic.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Buckmaster seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - to recommend to Council that there be no changes to the local Council Tax Support scheme for April 2022.

177 TENANCY STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods presented a report on the draft Tenancy Strategy 2021-26. He explained that each Local Authority responsible for housing is required under the Localism Act to produce and review a tenancy strategy. The Act was clear about what the strategy should cover and the Tenancy Strategy provided detail on what kind of tenancies should be offered as well as giving guidance on rent levels the council would like to see. There was an emphasis on social rather than affordable rents. The Tenancy Strategy was not concerned with affordable housing supply as this was the remit of the District Plan and the Housing Strategy which would be on the agenda for the November meeting. East Herts' planning policies have meant there has been a 10.2% increase in the number of affordable homes in the ten years to 2020, compared to 2.9% across Hertfordshire and 3.4% across England in the same period. Councillor Boylan stressed that the Tenancy Strategy was only guidance but Registered Providers had been consulted and it was pleasing to see they were predominantly offering lifetime tenancies. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered the strategy and whilst Members expressed disappointment that the council could not set rent levels, they endorsed the aspirations of the strategy.

Councillor Goodeve said it was pleasing to hear that the planning policies were delivering positive outcomes.

Councillor Haysey said that it was important to express

what the council could and could not do within the Tenancy Strategy. The council cannot enforce but can encourage.

Councillor Boylan proposed and Councillor Goodeve seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - to recommend to Council the adoption of the East Herts Tenancy Strategy for 2021-2026.

#### 178 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2020/21

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on the council's provisional outturn at the close of the last financial year. He explained the figure was provisional as it was subject to verification by the external auditors. The outturn has shown an overspend of £116,000 which had been funded by general reserves. Councillor Williamson said the pandemic had an effect on revenue and the government grants did not cover the council's full losses and whilst that level of overspend would be considered high in a normal year, in the current circumstances, it was to be expected.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability said that £414,000 would be carried forward to the 2021/22 budget to fund IT projects and £4.27 million would be carried forward to 2021/22 budget to fund ongoing capital schemes.

Councillor Haysey said the Council were aware that the financial situation was not going to get any easier and Members were conscious of the work being done by Officers to stay within budget and to be a financially prudent council.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Buckmaster seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that (A) the funding of the General Fund revenue outturn of £116k overspend from the general reserve be approved;

(B) That the revenue budgets of £414k be carried forward from 2020/21 to 2021/22; and

(C) That the capital budgets of £4.271m be carried forward to 2021/22 to fund ongoing capital schemes.

179 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2021/22 – QUARTER 1  
FORECAST TO YEAR END

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on Quarter 1 of the current financial year. The current predicted outturn was an £82,000 overspend and the details of the under and



overspends in each service was provided in the report. Councillor Williamson said the country was still in a partial lockdown in the first half of quarter one and it was not unusual for the forecast to show an overspend at an early stage in the year.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Boylan seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that (A) the net revenue budget forecast over spend of £0.082 million in 2021/22 be noted; and

(B) the revised capital budget for 2021/22 of £50.039million, which includes £4.171m carried forward from 2020/21 to be approved as part of the Provisional Outturn report, and the forecast zero variance to that budget be noted.

180 BUDGET 2022/23 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022 – 2025 PREPARATION

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on the Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-25 preparations. He said the purpose of the report was to set the scene for Members and for the Executive to give Officers a steer and approve the recommendation and assumptions to provide a basis for Officers to work from. There were a range of emerging factors with both positive and

negative impacts on the budget and the forecast had been updated in light of these factors, for example the earlier assumptions of an increase in council tax support did not happen as the economy had opened up.

Councillor Williamson said that finding savings remained a challenge and they would have to be found through efficiencies and new sources of income, such as the introduction of charging for garden waste collection. A number of savings had been built into the budget from the previously agreed three year saving plan. Additionally, the Transformation Programme was underway and would not have a significant impact until 2023/24.

Councillor Haysey commented that the council was in a better position than had first been thought. East Herts was a prudent and cautious council and Members would continue to ensure that their ambitious plans for residents are fundable and available, and that services are maintained.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Haysey seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that (A) agree, as guidance to Officers, that the budget proposals should be based on a Council Tax increase of £5, contract inflation up to 4%, no inflation in other goods and services budgets and that the provision for the national pay award will be up to 3%

(effectively 2.75% as 0.25% of the pay provision this year will be carried forward as a result of the 1.75% final pay offer from the employer's side);

(B) Note the comprehensive spending review savings to be implemented in 2022/23 and 2023/24 as agreed by Council in March 2021 and acknowledge the requirement of Council that compensating savings, delivered to the same timescales, have to be put in place and reported to the next Council meeting should the Executive decide that any savings proposals should not proceed, or are reduced by 10% or more;

(C) Welcome the Collection Fund updated estimate that the Business Rates deficit, being spread over 3 years, will be met in full by changes to the appeals provision, removing a £0.900 million pressure on the General Fund, and that the forecast increase in Local Council Tax Support cases has not materialised and the Council Tax Base is now forecast to increase in future years;

(D) Note the assumption that the Transforming East Herts Programme will not start to result in revenue savings until the latter half of 2022/23 and into 2023/24;

(E) Agree: the re-phasing of the capital programme and revenue impacts of capital financing; that existing minor projects should be

subject to a full value for money test before proceeding; and that no new projects may come forward for the capital programme unless they are able to cover the capital financing costs in full or mitigate significant increases in revenue costs;

(F) Note the revised savings requirements of £0.967 million in 2022/23, £1.520 million in 2023/24 – 2025/26 rising to £1.901 million in 2026/27; and

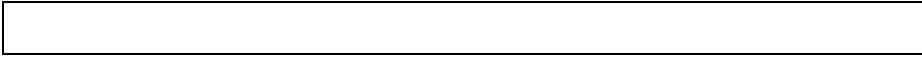
(G) Agree that all service areas should review fees and charges and ensure that, where the council has discretion to set the charge, that charges should be set so as to: recover full costs; concessions should be explicitly linked to an Equalities Impact Assessment; and that services which are not currently charged for the introduction of a charge should be considered unless the service is provided generally under a statutory provision.

181 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm

Chairman .....
Date .....



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# **EAST HERTFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **TENANCY STRATEGY**

**2021 to 2026**



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## Foreword by the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

A home we can afford in a neighbourhood in which we wish to put down roots and establish support networks is essential to the wellbeing of us all. East Herts Council is committed to making an affordable housing offer to the residents of our district.

East Herts Council values its partnerships with the registered providers who develop and manage the district's affordable homes. They have created developments of attractive housing, transformed neighbourhoods by replacing out-of-date dwellings with well-designed and sustainable houses and flats, and participated in local initiatives to improve the district's environment and the health of its residents.

Yet we live in a rapidly changing world. East Hertfordshire is an increasingly popular place to live, and was named as the UK's Best Place to Live in the Halifax Quality of Life Survey 2020. At the same time, the need for affordable housing is growing in our district. The number of households on the housing register has increased; we have seen more applications for assistance from homeless persons, particularly from those with support needs; more families are living in temporary accommodation; the number of individuals who are sleeping rough remains consistent. The causes of this trend of rising housing need includes more households in receipt of low incomes, a widening gap between household earnings and housing costs, and more people being asked to leave by friends or family or not being able to afford accommodation in the private sector.

Every local authority is obliged to produce a Tenancy Strategy under the Localism Act 2011. The new Tenancy Strategy for 2021 to 2026 gives East Herts Council an opportunity to give guidance to our registered provider partners on what we expect in terms of affordable and sustainable tenancies. We expect that rents should be set at a level which households on a lower household income can afford, and that the tenancies which are offered allow households to settle and thrive on their local area.

We look forward to continuing to work with our registered provider partners to ensure that East Hertfordshire is a welcoming and affordable place to live for our residents.



Cllr Peter Boylan

Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

## **Tenancy Strategy 2021 to 2026 – Executive Summary**

### **The Aims of the East Hertfordshire Tenancy Strategy 2021-2026 are:**

1. To outline the approach of East Hertfordshire Council to working with local registered providers to ensure that residents have access to affordable and safe housing.
2. To set out East Hertfordshire Council's requirements and expectations of Registered Providers operating within the district, to ensure that housing is built to meet local housing needs.
3. To ensure that the Tenancy Strategy is taken into account when Registered Providers and other social housing providers, who own and manage homes in the East Hertfordshire area, adopt or review their own tenancy policies and operating procedures.

The Tenancy Strategy sets out the matters that Registered Providers of affordable housing in the district must have regard to when they develop policies relating to:

- The kinds of tenancies they grant.
- The circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind.
- The length of the tenancies.

### **Guidance for Registered Providers**

#### **Rent Levels**

East Hertfordshire Council expects Registered Providers to have regard to the following:

- the retention and development of homes for Social Rent
- setting or maintaining Affordable Rent levels at the lower end of the 50 per cent to 80 per cent spectrum or capped at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, so that tenants on low incomes can live in a homes which are both affordable and suitable for their needs.
- providing full details of current Affordability Checks and Financial Assessment procedures to the local authority as required for monitoring purposes, with information on why a household would be turned down for an offer of a home

as a result.

## **Tenancy Types**

Lifetime tenancies should be created as far as possible.

Where flexible (fixed term) tenancies are issued, East Hertfordshire Council recommends that the following basic principles are adopted by Registered Providers as a minimum:

- a minimum of a five year fixed term tenancy
- the fixed term tenancy to be re-issued at the end of the term unless there is a significant change of circumstance for the household.
- the organisation's policy and procedures covering the criteria under which fixed term tenancies would not be renewed is provided to East Herts Council
- a full review of the tenant's circumstances be carried out prior to a fixed term tenancy ending which should at least take account of the likelihood of the household being able to find suitable alternative accommodation.

## **Needs of specific groups**

Families with children of school age or younger – If these households are not offered a lifetime/assured tenancy, East Hertfordshire Council's preferred tenancy term is a minimum of five years.

Households with a disabled member or a member with special needs – If these households are not offered a lifetime/assured tenancy, East Hertfordshire Council's preferred tenancy term is a minimum of ten years.

Older people over the age of 60 – If these households are not offered a lifetime/assured tenancy, East Hertfordshire Council's preferred tenancy term is a minimum of five years for households living in general needs accommodation. Lifetime/assured tenancies should be awarded to older people living in accommodation designed especially for older people.

In deciding on the use of fixed term tenancies, East Hertfordshire Council requests that Registered Providers consider health and wellbeing, the role of friends and relatives in enabling independence and the possibility that insecurity of tenure may add to someone's worries about their future.

# **Tenancy Strategy 2021- 2026**

The Aims of the East Herts Tenancy Strategy 2021-2026 are:

To outline the approach of East Hertfordshire Council to working with local Registered Providers to make sure that the residents have access to affordable and safe housing.

To set out East Hertfordshire Council's requirements and expectations of Registered Providers operating within the district, to ensure that housing is built to meet local housing need.

To ensure that the Tenancy Strategy is taken into account when Registered Providers and other social housing providers, who own and manage homes in the East Hertfordshire area, adopt or review their own tenancy policies and operating procedures.

## **1. Introduction**

### **The Purpose of the East Hertfordshire Tenancy Strategy**

Under the Localism Act 2011 all housing authorities have a duty to produce a Tenancy Strategy. This sets out the objectives to be taken into account by Registered Providers as they make decisions about their own tenancy policies.

It is vital that Registered Providers help local authorities to meet housing need in their areas. The purpose of this document is to provide appropriate guidance at a strategic level to Registered Providers who own and/or manage housing stock in the East Hertfordshire district.

The Tenancy Strategy sets out the matters that Registered Providers of affordable housing in the district must have regard to when they develop policies to be applied in East Herts relating to:

- the kinds of tenancies they grant
  - the circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind
  - the length of those tenancies
- The circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the ending of an existing tenancy.

In addition, this document provides contextual information on local housing markets and housing need across the district. This will further assist Registered Providers in understanding the impacts of their policies and how they can best support East Hertfordshire Council in ensuring:

- local housing need continues to be met with rents being affordable to a wide range of households in housing need
- new tenancies remain sustainable to prevent homelessness
- overall affordable housing stock numbers do not diminish
- an appropriate choice of tenures at a range of rent levels is made available.

East Hertfordshire Council has updated its Tenancy Strategy to take account of changing:

- legislative contexts at the national level
- economic and housing market conditions at the local level.

## **2. National Contexts**

### **2.1 The Localism Act 2011**

The Localism Act Section 150 relates to Tenancy Strategies. It introduced the duty upon housing authorities to provide a Tenancy Strategy. It also specifies that an authority must keep its Tenancy Strategy under review and may modify it from time to time.

### **2.2 Social Housing White Paper**

The Social Housing White Paper, published in November 2020, contained the following section: *Considering how to ensure social housing is allocated fairly.*

The government will publish the results of an evidence gathering exercise which it has carried out into how people access social housing. The government will consider the findings to ensure that housing is allocated in the fairest way possible and achieves the best outcomes for local places and communities. This will include considering how to improve joint working between local authorities and registered providers to ensure that social housing is being allocated efficiently. How to improve *joint working* between local authorities and housing associations to ensure that social housing is being allocated efficiently.

## **3. The Housing Context in East Hertfordshire**

### **3.1 Overview of East Hertfordshire**

East Hertfordshire is an attractive place to live. This is reflected in its high house prices, which are higher than neighbouring local authority areas and have

significantly increased in recent years. Achieving housing development that responds to local needs, while recognising the environmental and other constraints in East Hertfordshire, is a significant challenge. It is also necessary to recognise the specific accommodation and housing needs of different groups in the community.

East Hertfordshire has an ageing population. Meeting the varying needs of older people will be a challenge while still ensuring that the district remains attractive and accessible to young people.

### 3.2 Overall housing stock in the district

The total number of homes in East Hertfordshire rose by 4.4% between 1 April 2015 and 1 April 2020, from 60,338 to 63,011,

Tenure	1 April 2020	
Local authority	16	
Registered provider (Housing Association), both for rent and low cost home ownership	8,327	13.0%
Other public sector	30	
Private sector (including both owner-occupation and the private rented sector).	55,593	87.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>63,011</b>	

Source: MHCLG

### 3.3 Affordable Housing New build in East Hertfordshire (completions 2015-2016 to 2020-2021)

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	Total
Social Rent	-	-	-	2 (0.5%)	-	-	2 (0.2%)
Affordable Rent	71 (68.6%)	130 (72.6%)	40 (62.5%)	279 (68.5%)	98 (56.3%)	104 (43.5%)	722 (62.0%)
Intermediate Rent	--	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shared Ownership	31 (30.4%)	49 (27.3%)	24 (37.5%)	126 (31.0%)	50 (28.7%)	135 (56.5%)	415 (35.6%)
Affordable Home Ownership	--	-	-	-	26 (14.9%)	-	26 (2.2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>1,165</b>

Source: MHCLG Housing Starts and Completion tables

This table shows that Affordable Rent has remained consistently around two thirds of overall new affordable housing provision since 2015. Social Rent now features very little in new affordable housing development.

### 3.4 Registered providers in East Hertfordshire

In 2002 East Hertfordshire transferred its housing stock to two housing associations, now Network Homes and Clarion Housing. By 2020 there is a total of 17 Registered Providers who own and manage affordable housing in the district. These homes are rented at a mix of Social Rent and Affordable Rent.

#### Registered providers in the area – housing stock for rent as on 31 March 2021

	General needs	Sheltered housing	Supported housing	
B3 Living	115			115
Catalyst	302			302
Clarion	2,559	421	30	3,010
English Rural	5	-	-	5
Hastoe	24	-	-	24
Hightown	239	-	-	239
Home Group	20	-	-	20
Housing 21	-	55	-	55
Metropolitan Thames Valley	59	-	24	83
Network	3,183	431	10	3,624
Origin	144	-	-	144
Paradigm	187	-	-	187
Places for People	23	-	-	23
Sage	68	-	-	68
Sanctuary	27	41	-	68
Stonewater/L &G	22	-	-	22
Welwyn Garden City HA	1	-	-	1
Total	6,784	948	64	7,796

This table shows the variation of in the size of the housing stock which Registered Providers own and manage in East Herts. The tenancy strategy applies to all Registered Providers, irrespective of the amount of stock they own in East Herts.

### 3.5 Rent Levels in East Hertfordshire

#### Social and Affordable Rents

Affordable Rent, as a rental product for Registered Providers, was introduced by the government in April 2011. It is rented housing where the rent is up to 80 per cent of the local private market rent. The Affordable Rent charged is re-calculated each time a tenancy is granted or renewed, so will fluctuate in line with local private market



rents. The government introduced Affordable Rent to enable Registered Providers to generate additional rental income from rents. This would enable greater investment by Registered Providers to deliver additional affordable housing in a time of constrained grant budgets.

Social and Affordable Rents are sometimes viewed in two different categories e.g. Social Rents at 50 per cent of local market rent and Affordable Rent at up to 80 per cent of local market rents. However, Social Rents are set using a government formula which creates a formula rent for each property based on its relative value, its size and the relative local incomes in the area in which it is situated. Affordable Rents are set in relation to the market rent rates for the area in which the property is located. From rent and affordability perspectives, it is more useful to view affordable housing for rent as a continuum between typically 50 per cent and 80 per cent of local market rents rather than seeing Social Rents and Affordable Rents in separate categories.

Social and Affordable average weekly rent data in East Hertfordshire has been provided from an analysis of properties which were advertised for letting between 1 April and 10 July 2020. Additional data shows how this compares with private rents in the district as at March 2020 and Local Housing Allowance rates for the district in December 2020. The gaps between social and affordable rents and private rents are very wide. The table also shows the significant gaps between private rent levels and all maximum Local Housing Allowance levels in the district.

	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom
Social Rent	£102.22	£118.03	£143.93
Affordable Rent	£145.68	£183.29	£224.93
Average private rents March 2020*	£200.00	£250.00	£337.50
LHA in Harlow and Stortford Broad Rental Market Area	£165.70	£207.12	£258.90
LHA in South East Herts Broad Rental Market Area	£172.60	£212.88	£276.16
LHA in Stevenage and North Herts Broad Rental Market Area	£155.34	£195.62	£241.64

\*Source: Office for National Statistics

### 3.6 The Housing Register and Allocations

	Total on Housing Register as on 1 April	Total lettings to Registered Providers	Total lettings to non-Registered Providers
2014-2015	2,009	459	10
2015-2016	2,198	524	3
2016-2017	2,025	501	4
2017-2018	2,039	509	1
2018-2019	2,119	562	3

2019-2020	2,125	522	0
2020-2021	2,168	447 (376 general needs)	0

Source: Local Authority Housing Statistics, MHCLG

The Housing Register includes applicants for general needs and sheltered housing.

The number of households on the housing register between 2014/2015 and 2020/2021 rose by 7.9 per cent.

We have seen a significant reduction in the number of lettings during the financial year 2020-2021. A total of 323 homes have been let, of which 263 were homes for general needs. Although this covers 75 per cent of the financial year, this represents only 62 per cent of the total number of lettings (522) which were made during the previous financial year 2019-2020. This could be due to a number of reasons, such as households being unwilling to move due to the Covid19 pandemic.

### 3.7 Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation

Homelessness has increased substantially in East Hertfordshire during the financial year 2020-2021. The table below shows how the number of households assessed as homeless per 1,000 households in the population increased during 2020 and compares with other local authorities:

Hertfordshire local authority/region/country	January to March 2020	July to September 2020
Broxbourne	0.54	1.87
Dacorum	0.82	2.03
East Hertfordshire	0.65	1.28
Hertsmere	0.63	1.49
North Hertfordshire	0.75	1.54
St Albans	1.08	0.51
Stevenage	0.26	2.77
Three Rivers	1.57	0.50
Watford	0.49	1.05
Welwyn Hatfield	0.57	1.83
East of England	0.63	1.60
England	0.69	1.39

Source: MHCLG Live tables on Homelessness

Between 1 July and 30 September 2020 the reasons for homelessness or threats of homelessness among those who approached East Hertfordshire Council for assistance were as follows:

Reason for homelessness or threatened homelessness	Percentage of households homelessness or threatened with homelessness
Family or friends no longer willing to accommodate	34%
End of a privately rented tenancy – assured shorthold or non-assured shorthold	21%
Domestic violence or abuse	9%
Non-violent breakdown of relationship	8%

End of Social Rented tenancy	6%
Evicted from supported accommodation	4%
Left an institution e.g. hospital, armed forces	3%
Non-racially motivated violence	1%
Other	14%

As the below table shows, the number of households in temporary accommodation has increased significantly over the past five years. An increasing number of households have been unable to move into housing association accommodation because they have failed affordability checks and financial assessments.

Date	Number of households placed in temporary accommodation by East Hertfordshire Council (year end snapshot data)
31 March 2015	19
31 March 2016	19
31 March 2017	15
31 March 2018	25
31 March 2019	28
31 March 2020	47
31 March 2021	52

In addition, East Hertfordshire Council is seeing rising numbers of people in housing need who have a high level of support needs, particularly from single person households. Increasingly, the allocation of affordable housing in the district is focused upon the most vulnerable people in the smaller accommodation.

### 3.8 The Private Rented Sector

The English Housing Survey 2018-2019 recorded that nationally the number of privately rented homes had doubled since the beginning of the millennium, from 10% of housing stock in 2002 to approximately 19-20% of housing stock in 2018-2019.

In 2011 East Hertfordshire's private rented sector was recorded as consisting of 7,446 homes, 13.2% of the total housing stock in the district. Details of the current size of the sector are awaited from the Census 2021. It is anticipated that, as with national trends, the size of the sector will have increased further.

The median average Private Sector rents in East Hertfordshire were recorded on 30 September 2020 as follows:

Property size	Median average monthly rents
Room	£358
Studio	£650
1 bedroom	£800
2 bedroom	£1,000
3 bedroom	£1,350
4 bedroom	£1,680
All	£995

Source: Office for National Statistics

**Local Housing Allowance rates** – Three Local Housing Allowance areas cover the East Hertfordshire district. The following table shows the difference between the median average weekly rents in the sector in September 2020 and the amount of Local Housing Allowance available in December 2020 to cover the cost of rents:

	Room	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4+ bedroom
Median monthly rent	£358	£800	£1,000	£1,350	£1,680
Median weekly rent	£89.50	£200.00	£250.00	£337.50	£420.00
Harlow & Stortford LHA area	£76.50	£165.70	£207.12	£258.90	£299.18
Difference	£13.00	£34.30	£22.49	£78.60	£120.82
South East Herts LHA area	£82.04	£172.60	£212.88	£276.16	£322.19
Difference	£7.46	£27.40	£16.73	£61.34	£97.81
Stevenage and North Herts LHA area	£78.59	£155.34	£195.62	£241.64	£299.18
Difference	£10.91	£44.66	£33.99	£95.86	£120.82

In all cases, the median market rent exceeds the Local Housing Allowance rent, with the gap expanding as the number of bedrooms increases. This is not unexpected, given that Local Housing Allowance rates were frozen for five years. However, it does demonstrate the problem of finding affordable accommodation for those who are eligible for benefits, with many having to “top up” the rent element of their benefits using money which could be used for food and other day-to-day expenses. Analysis by homelessness charity Shelter has put East Hertfordshire 9<sup>th</sup> in the top ten local authorities outside London with the biggest shortfall between Local Housing Allowance and rents.

Demand from households unable to buy, landlords’ reluctance to let to tenants in receipt of benefits, and the increasing gap between the Local Housing Allowance rate and market rents have contributed to a significant drop in the proportion of private sector tenants who are in receipt of housing-related benefits. Between 2013 and 2017 there was a 22 per cent (346 households) reduction in the number of households in receipt of housing-related benefits in privately rented accommodation in East Hertfordshire.

The Benefit Cap (which includes housing-related costs) for households outside Greater London currently stands at the following levels:

- Single person households - £257.69 per week or £13,400 per year
- Couples and single parents - £384.62 per week or £20,000 per year

These amounts have not increased since 2016, despite rises in the cost of living.

Households who before the Covid19 pandemic may have earned enough to avoid the Benefit Cap may now have seen reduction in the hours they were working, meaning that their incomes have become severely restricted.

The unaffordability and inaccessibility of almost East Hertfordshire’s entire private rented sector increases the pressure on social housing.

The allocation to social housing is playing an ever increasing role in the prevention of homelessness. While the number of households who have had their homelessness prevented has remained fairly constant, the proportion of households having their homelessness prevented through an allocation of social housing increased from 55 per cent in 2014 to 77 per cent in 2017.

The private rented sector no longer plays a significant role in preventing homelessness in East Hertfordshire.

### 3.9 Earnings and Affordability checks

A significant proportion of households in East Hertfordshire are in receipt of low incomes. This is illustrated by the following:

- the East Hertfordshire Housing Strategy 2016-2021 referred to the housing needs survey for the district undertaken in 2015. The survey highlighted the fact that 21 per cent of households in the district earned less than £20,000 per year
- in September 2020 just over half of the households on the council’s housing register were in employment (51%) of whom 45% did not receive any welfare benefits. The maximum qualifying income level for households on the East Hertfordshire Council housing register is £48,000
- in East Hertfordshire the lag between earning and rent inflation was significant between 2011 and 2019. While private rents in the district have increased by 29 per cent, wages have risen by only 4 per cent (based on a two person household with one full-time and one part-time worker)
- the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 showed that 12 East Hertfordshire lower super output areas were ranked in the 50 per cent most deprived in terms of income, compared with all lower super output areas in England, and that 10 East Hertfordshire lower super output areas were ranked in the 50 per cent most deprived in terms of employment across England
- East Hertfordshire has seen a significant rise in the number and percentage of households in receipt of out-of-work benefits during 2020, from 1.2% (1,140 households) in March 2020 to 4.0% (3,450 households) in May 2021. The wards in the district which have been affected most acutely are:

Wards	March 2020 – number of households claiming out-of-work benefits	May 2021 - number of households claiming out-of-work benefits
East Herts district	1,140 (1.2%) of total	3,450 (4.0% of total)
Bishop’s Stortford Central	40 (1.3% of total)	320 (4.4% of total)

Hertford Castle	40 (1.8% of total)	250 (4.0% of total)
Bishop's Stortford All Saints	30 (1.2% of total)	235 (4.2% of total)
Hertford Sele	45 (2.7% of total)	220 (6.2% of total)
Sawbridgeworth	35 (1.4% of total)	200 (3.7% of total)

Employees in these wards may have been disproportionately affected by the impact of the Covid19 pandemic upon certain types of occupations for example hospitality, retail, jobs associated with Stansted Airport.

The table below shows the number of households nominated for an allocation by the council who were subsequently rejected by Registered Providers on the grounds of affordability only. The number of rejections has increased sharply over the past three years. The number for 1 April to 17 July 2020 had already exceeded the total for the whole of the previous year:

Year	Nominations rejected due to affordability	Total number of nominations (can include more than one nomination to one property).	Rejections as a percentage of the total number of nominations
2016-2017	2	490	0.4%
2017-2018	10	512	2.0%
2018-2019	25	576	4.3%
2019-2020	37	555	6.7%
1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020	54	323	16.7%

As previously stated, the levels of the Benefit Cap have not increased in line with the cost of living. This has a particular impact on affordability assessments. If rents are not capped at Local Housing Allowance levels, households find their living costs, including rent, are higher than the Benefit Cap. In consequence, only those in work who earn above a certain level (£604.59) or are in receipt of a Personal Independence Payment (non-means tested) are considered able to afford the accommodation.

The following table, using data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) for the East Herts district in 2020, shows the difficulty of affording accommodation for a significant percentage of households who have just one household member in employment who is working full-time: just under 40 per cent earn below the £604.59 threshold referred to above).

Earnings decile	Weekly median average gross earnings per individual
Lowest 10 per cent	£399.00 (£20,748 per year)
Lowest 20 per cent	£479.10 (£24,913 per year)
Lowest 25 per cent	£506.30 (£26,328 per year)
Lowest 30 per cent	£543.10 (£28,412 per year)
Lowest 40 per cent	£611.20 (£31,782 per year)
Median average	£714.70 (£37,164 per year)

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) for full-time employment in the East Hertfordshire district 2020

### 3.10 Affordability scenarios by household type

Housing Quality Network (HQN) Consulting has carried out research on the affordability housing options in September 2020 for a three household types in East Hertfordshire:

- a Single Person aged over 35 requiring either a room in shared accommodation or 1 bedroom self-contained accommodation
- a lone parent with 1 children requiring 2 bedroom accommodation
- a couple with 2 children requiring 3 bedroom accommodation.

These are household types who often require housing assistance in East Hertfordshire.

The research assesses the housing options which would be affordable to these household types:

- if they were either wholly dependent on benefits for their income or if they were in receipt of the National Minimum Wage and working 40 hours full-time.
- if their housing costs were to not exceed 40 per cent of their gross weekly income (40 per cent is not regarded as a generous percentage of household income to spend on housing costs).

	Unaffordable at or below 40% of weekly income
	Affordable at or below 40% of weekly income

#### Single person aged over 35 requiring a room in shared accommodation or one bedroom self-contained accommodation

Income levels	Affordable/Unaffordable housing options
<b>Benefits only</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total weekly income £214.59</li> <li>• 40% of weekly income <u>£85.84</u></li> </ul>	Social rented accommodation – self-contained at £102.22 per week
	Affordable rented – self contained at 65% Market Rent at £120.00 per week
	Affordable rented – self contained at 72% Market Rent at £132.92 per week
	Affordable rented – self contained at 80% Market Rent at £145.68 per week
	Market rented – self-contained at £184.61 per week
	Market rented – room in shared accommodation at £82.61 per week
<b>National Living Wage only</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £328.24 weekly income.</li> <li>• 40% of weekly income <u>£131.30</u></li> </ul>	Affordable rented – self-contained at 72% of market rent at £132.92 per week
	Affordable rented – 80% of market rent at £145.68 per week
	Market rented accommodation – self-contained. At £184.61 per week
	Social rented accommodation – self-contained at £102.22 per week

	Affordable rented – self-contained at 65% of market rent at £120.00 per week
	Market rented – room in shared accommodation at £82.61 per week

### Lone parent with 1 child requiring two bedroom self-contained accommodation

Income levels	Affordable/Unaffordable housing options
<b>Benefits only</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total weekly income £384.14.</li> <li>40% weekly income <u>£153.66</u></li> </ul>	Affordable rented at 72% of Market Rent at £166.15 per week
	Affordable rented at 80% of Market Rent at £184.62 per week
	Market rented at £230.77 per week
	Social rented accommodation at £118.03 per week
<b>National Living Wage only, working full-time with childcare costs.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total weekly income £428.32</li> <li>40% weekly income <u>£171.33</u></li> </ul>	Affordable rented at 65% of Market Rent at £150.00 per week
	Affordable rented at 80% of Market Rent at £184.62 per week
	Market rented at £230.77 per week
	Social rented accommodation at £118.03 per week
	Affordable rented at 65% of Market Rent at £150.00 per week
	Affordable rented at 72% of Market Rent at £166.15 per week

### Couple with 2 children requiring three bedroom self-contained accommodation

Income levels	Affordable/Unaffordable housing options
<b>Benefits only</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total weekly income £417.34</li> <li>40% weekly income <u>£166.94.</u></li> </ul>	Affordable rented at 65% of Market Rent at £202.50 per week
	Affordable rented at 72% of Market Rent at £224.93 per week
	Affordable rented at 80% of Market Rent at £249.93 per week
	Market rented at £311.54 per week
<b>National Living Wage only, one adult working full-time with no childcare costs.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total weekly income £699.00</li> <li>40% of weekly income <u>£276.60</u></li> </ul>	Social rented accommodation at £143.93 per week
	Market rented at £311.54 per week
	Social rented accommodation at £143.93 per week
	Affordable rented at 65% of Market Rent at £202.50 per week
	Affordable rented at 72% of Market Rent at £224.93 per week
	Affordable rented at 80% of Market Rent at £249.93 per week

Low cost home ownership and market sale is unaffordable to all these groups.

### 3.11 Tenancies offered by Registered Providers

Historically, tenants of social landlords have been offered an assured tenancy which granted them a home for life, provided they did not breach the terms of their tenancy on any specified grounds. Fixed term tenancies were introduced as part of the Localism Act with the aim of assisting Registered Providers to offer more flexible (fixed-term) tenancies. The view was that this would then enable landlords to make



best use of their housing stock and better meet local housing needs with a review of the tenant's situation at the end of the fixed term.

Registered Providers are able to offer fixed term tenancies on a minimum fixed term of five years. However, in exceptional circumstances flexible tenancies can be for as little as two years.

Social landlords have still been able to offer the traditional assured and introductory/starter tenancies. Existing flexible tenancies were introduced in addition to these options, and social landlords do not have to use them.

Existing assured tenants cannot have their tenancies converted to a flexible tenancy, and many are offered special protections if they move to another home.

In recent years a number of Registered Providers who own a large amount of affordable housing have ceased their use of flexible tenancies. Reasons for this include the increased anxiety of tenants, extra work for front-line staff, and to simplify the lettings process. The tenancies most commonly offered in East Hertfordshire indicate that, although the principle of using Starter or Probationary tenancies remains strong, Registered Providers prefer to offer life-time tenancies after these initial tenancies end. This is supported by East Herts Council

### **Types of tenancies offered by Registered Providers in East Hertfordshire October 2020 to May 2021**

Landlord	General/Sheltered	Tenancy type offered
B3 Living	General	One year Starter Tenancy then Assured Tenancy
Catalyst	General	Starter Tenancy then Assured Tenancy
Clarion	General	Twelve month probationary period then Assured Tenancy.
Clarion	Sheltered	Assured Tenancy – Social Rent
Clarion	Sheltered	Starter Tenancy followed by Assured Tenancy.
Hightown	General	Probationary Tenancy then Assured Tenancy
Metropolitan	General	Assured Tenancy
Network	General	Assured Tenancy
Network	Sheltered	Assured Tenancy
Sage	General	Starter tenancy followed by five year Fixed Term Tenancy
Sanctuary/Catalyst	General	One year Starter Tenancy followed by Assured Tenancy.

### **Conclusions**

- East Hertfordshire Council has sustained a good supply of new affordable housing between 2015/16 and 2020/2021, particularly the number of new affordable homes for rent, primarily through planning obligations. However, this has consisted almost wholly of Affordable Rent, while the supply of new properties at Social Rent is now negligible.

- The council has a strong pipeline of new homes being developed through planning agreements but they are all at affordable rent levels and often exceed Local Housing Allowance rates.
- Tenants of affordable housing are offered mainly lifetime tenancies once they have completed Starter or Probationary tenancies as flexible tenancies have become less popular with Registered Providers.

However

- Since the ending of the 2016/2020 rent freeze, Social and Affordable rents will begin to rise again.
- Housing need in the district is undoubtedly increasing, with the number of households on the housing register going up by 5.8 per cent between 2014/2015 and 2020/2021. The total number of households on the housing register between 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2021 rose by 7.9 per cent.
- The number of homes being let has seen a significant decrease between April 2020 and March 2021 and turnover of housing is currently declining. This may be due to households being unwilling to move during the pandemic
- The number of households approaching the local authority for assistance under homelessness legislation has increased. The number of households living in temporary accommodation has also risen. East Hertfordshire Council is also receiving applications for assistance from an expanding number of people in housing need who also have a high level of vulnerability and support need.
- Use of the private rented sector by households on low incomes, and also as a prevention option for households in housing need, is decreasing. This is due to a number of reasons: an increase in the number of households unable to buy a home, landlords' reluctance to let to households in receipt of benefits and the growing gap between market rent levels and local housing allowance levels. In consequence, the reliance on registered provider social housing as a homelessness prevention measure has grown.
- The extent of low incomes in East Hertfordshire has grown and is perhaps likely to increase due to the economic upheaval arising from the Covid19 pandemic. The number of households who are refused accommodation by a registered provider due to failing an affordability check or financial assessment has gone up significantly in recent years.
- The level of Affordable Rents, as a percentage of market rents, can make a significant difference to whether a home is affordable to a household on a low income.
- The larger properties are more unaffordable as a percentage of income for households whose income consists of benefits only. They usually accommodate younger families who are more vulnerable. Since the beginning of the Covid19 pandemic in March 2020 there has been an increase in the number of larger families on the East Herts housing register.

## 4.Guidance for Registered Providers

### Summary:

- East Hertfordshire Council is seeking to work in partnership with registered providers to meet current and future housing needs in the district.

### Rent levels

- For properties currently let at Social Rent levels, conversions to Affordable Rent should be minimised.
- Registered Providers should have due regard to the market and Local Housing Allowance levels in terms of rent setting.
- Affordable Rents should be set towards the lower end of the 50% to 80% of Market Rent spectrum or capped at Local Housing Allowance levels.

### Tenancy Types

- There must be an emphasis on lifetime tenancies.

### 4.1 Rent Levels

East Hertfordshire Council expects registered providers to have regard to the following:

- The retention and development of homes for Social Rent.
- To set or maintain Affordable Rent levels at the lower end of the 50% to 80% spectrum or capped at LHA rates.
- To be proactive in both setting and re-evaluating Affordable Rent levels locally so that tenants on low incomes can afford to live in a home which is affordable and suitable for their needs.
- To provide full details of current Affordability Checks and Financial Assessment procedures to the local authority, with information on why a household would be turned down for an offer of a home as a result.

### 4.2 Flexible (fixed-term)Tenancies

Where flexible (fixed term) tenancies are issued, East Hertfordshire Council suggests that the following basic principles are adopted as a minimum:

- A minimum of a five year fixed term tenancy for most households.
- For fixed term tenancies to be re-issued at the end of the team unless there is a significant change of circumstance for the household.
- To provide clear policy and procedures to East Hertfordshire Council of the criteria under which fixed term tenancies would end.

- For a full review to be carried out prior to a fixed term tenancy ending. This review should take account of the likelihood of the household being able to find suitable alternative accommodation.

East Hertfordshire Council recognises that there may be situations where it may not be appropriate to re-issue a fixed term tenancy. This includes where:

- the home is under-occupied by more than one bedroom
- the home is significantly overcrowded
- the financial circumstances of the tenant have changed to such an extent that other housing options are available and appropriate
- the tenant comes into legal ownership of another home or property
- breaches of tenancy or tenancy fraud are identified during the fixed term tenancy review process
- the tenant's behaviour during the fixed term of the tenancy has been unacceptable. This behaviour has been sustained and has been documented.

### **4.3 Mutual Exchanges**

Mutual exchange is a useful tool for meeting housing need and making good use of a Registered Provider's housing stock. East Hertfordshire Council would not like to see fixed term tenancies or higher rent levels to impact upon the effectiveness of mutual exchange. Although there are protections for existing tenants in certain circumstances, these are not universal. East Hertfordshire Council would like to encourage registered providers to set out in their tenancy policies the implications to a tenant's security of tenure and rent level if they mutually exchange their home and, in general, adopt policies which promote the continued use of mutual exchange for all tenants.

### **4.4 Needs of specific groups**

There are some groups for whom the type of tenancy with which they are issued will have more of an impact. East Hertfordshire Council has set out below the groups for which it believes that special consideration for a suitable tenancy would be beneficial, and for whom guidance on the types of appropriate tenancies that it would prefer registered providers to consider.

#### **a) Victims of domestic abuse**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 became law on 5 July 2021. The Act:

- places a duty on local authorities in England to provide accommodation based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation.
- provides that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance.
- ensures that where a local authority, for reasons connected with domestic abuse, grants a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who had or has a

secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an assured shorthold tenancy) this must be a secure lifetime tenancy.

East Herts Council requests that registered provider partners take into account the obligations of the local authority under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the needs of victims of domestic abuse.

#### **b) Families with children of school age or younger**

If these households are not offered a lifetime/assured tenancy, East Hertfordshire Council's preferred tenancy term is a minimum of five years. Security and stability during a child's education are both crucial, and families often also rely on nearby friends and relatives to provide care for their children. East Hertfordshire Council expects these factors to be considered by providers when reaching a decision about the use of fixed term tenancies for this household group.

#### **c) Households with a disabled member or a member with special needs**

If these households are not offered a lifetime/assured tenancy, East Hertfordshire Council's preferred tenancy term is that a minimum ten year fixed term tenancy is granted where it is likely that the disabled person will remain living in the property for some time and still require the adaptations.

#### **d) Older people over the age of 60**

If these households are not offered a lifetime/assured tenancy, East Hertfordshire Council's preferred tenancy terms are:

- a minimum of a five year fixed term tenancy for older people living in general needs accommodation
- lifetime/assured tenancies for older people living in sheltered housing (accommodation designed especially for older people).

In deciding on the use of fixed term tenancies for this household group, East Hertfordshire Council would like Registered Providers to consider health and wellbeing, the role of friends and relatives in enabling independence and the possibility that insecurity of tenure may add to someone's worries about their future.

#### **e) Other factors**

East Hertfordshire Council requests that Registered Providers give special consideration to the following when developing their tenancy policies:

- households in rural areas with strong family and employment links with their current area of residence
- single households under 35, particularly in relation to those on low incomes and affordability.

## **5. Monitoring and Review**

The tenancy strategy will be monitored through meetings of the East Herts Council Housing Forum.

## Glossary

**Affordable Housing** – Affordable Housing is an umbrella term which cover both homes for rent at below market levels and also homes for low cost home ownership. The National Planning Policy Framework defines Affordable Housing as follows: Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market and which complies with one or more of the following definitions: **Affordable housing for rent** at least 20 per cent below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); **Discounted market sales housing** sold at a discount of at least 20 per cent below local market value; **Other affordable routes to home ownership** that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market, and is at a price equivalent to at least 20 per cent below local market value.

**Affordable Rent** – Affordable Rents were introduced in 2011. Housing let at an Affordable Rent is allocated by a Registered Provider to households who are eligible for social housing at a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the Local Market Rent. This includes service charges where applicable. The usual percentage range of an Affordable Rent is 50 to 80 per cent of full market rent.

**Assured Tenancy** – An Assured Tenancy is the type of tenancy held by most Registered Provider tenants. A tenant holding an Assured Tenancy may not be evicted without a reasonable ground in the Housing Act 1988. The tenancy can only come to an end either by an order of the court or by surrender by the tenant.

**Benefit Cap** is a maximum allowance on the total amount of benefit a household is entitled to receive under the benefits system introduced in April 2013. In March 2021 the benefit cap levels for households outside Greater London were:

- £384.62 per week (£20,000) for a couple
- £384.62 per week (£20,000) for a single parent whose child is living with them.
- £257.69 per week (£13,400) for a single person.

**Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA)** – Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates are used to calculate Housing-related Benefit for tenants renting from private landlords. LHA rates relate to the area in which a person/household makes a claim. These areas are called broad rental market areas (BRMA). A BRMA is where a person/household could reasonably be expected to live taking into account access to facilities and services. LHA rates are based on private market rents being paid in the BRMA. Valuation Office Agency (VOA) Rent Officers collect the rental information from letting agents, landlords and tenants.

**Conversion** – Tenancy conversion occurs when a property owned by a registered provider is let at different terms and conditions than when previously let. The most common type of conversion occurs when a tenancy is relet at an Affordable Rent, whereas it was previously let at a Social Rent.

**Financial Assessment procedure** otherwise known as affordability checks or affordability assessments. These are often carried out by a Registered Provider to ensure a prospective tenant is able to afford to sustain the tenancy which if offered.

**Fixed Term Tenancies/Flexible Tenancies** are types of tenancy introduced under the Localism Act 2011 for the use of Registered Providers. These tenancies have a specified term of not less than 5 years or 2 years in exceptional circumstances.

**Local Housing Allowance (LHA)** – Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates are used to calculate Housing Benefit for tenants renting from private landlords. LHA rates relate to the area in which someone makes a claim. These areas are called Broad Rental Market Areas (BRMA). The amounts of LHA payable are dependent upon the number of bedrooms which a household requires.

The Rent Officer maintains rental information for each category of LHA rates. These are the list of rents. Calculations are applied to the list of rents to determine the LHA rate which is set as the lower of:

- the 30th percentile on a list of rents in the Broad Rental Market Area
- the existing rate of LHA.

**Mutual Exchange** is a facility that enables a tenant to exchange their property and tenancy with another of their own Registered Provider's tenants or with a tenant of a different Registered Provider.

**National Minimum Wage** is the minimum pay per hour to which almost all workers are entitled. The National Living Wage is higher than the National Minimum Wage. From 1 April 2021 the National Living Wage will apply if workers are aged 23 and over.

**Personal Independence Payment** – Personal Independence Payment (PIP) can help a household with some of the extra costs if a household member has a long term ill-health or disability. The payment is non-means tested; a household can receive it in addition to employment and support allowance and income and savings does not affect eligibility.

**Registered Provider** is the term used for housing associations or other private sector developers, local councils or similar who are registered with the Homes England to provide social housing.

**Rent Officer** – The Rent Officer works for the government's Valuation Office Agency. The function of the Rent Officer is to determine an appropriate rent for protected/statutory tenancies. The Rent Officer will maintain a register of fair rents, and determine Local Housing Allowance levels.

**Shared Ownership** - Shared Ownership gives first time buyers and those that do not currently own a home the opportunity to purchase a share in a new build or resale property. The purchaser pays a mortgage on the share they own and pays rent to a Registered Provider on the remaining share. Because the purchaser only needs a mortgage for the share they are purchasing, the amount of money required



for a deposit is usually considerably lower when compared with the amount that would be required when purchasing outright. The purchaser has the option to increase their share during their time in the property via a process known as staircasing and in most cases can staircase all the way to 100 per cent. In exceptional cases, such as in rural areas, the Registered Provider will retain ownership of a percentage of the property.

**Sheltered housing** – Sheltered housing usually consists of accommodation designated for older people or disabled people consisting of self-contained homes, usually flats or bungalows. There is usually support available for residents, either on-site or delivered from an external service.

**Social Rent** means housing let at a periodical rent due at intervals of a month or less. Social Rents are set using a government formula. This creates a “formula rent” for each property which is calculated according to the value of the property, the size of the property, and the local income levels in the area in which the property is located. Social Rents are traditionally set at 50 per cent of Market Rent.

**Starter/Introductory/Probationary tenancies** – New tenants of a registered provider may be offered a Starter/Introductory/Probationary tenancy. These normally last 12 months and are like a trial period. Under the terms of this type of tenancy, the process for a Registered Provider to evict a tenant is quicker. A tenant of this type of tenancy will usually move on to a longer-term (assured or fixed term) tenancy after 12 months unless the registered provider has started action to evict them or extend the starter tenancy.

**Supported housing** – Supported housing is any housing scheme where housing and support services are provided as an integrated package. Some schemes are long-term, designed for people who need ongoing support to live independently, others are short-term, designed to help people develop the emotional and practical skills needed to move into more mainstream housing. This can include support with health needs, including mental health, drug and alcohol use, managing benefits and debt, developing daily living skills and accessing education, training and employment.

**Universal Credit** was introduced under the Government’s welfare reforms in 2013. It is an integrated benefit which incorporates the previous separate benefits of Income support, income based job seekers allowance, income related employment and support allowance, housing benefit, child tax credit and working tax credit. Households in receipt of universal credit and not in receipt of specific exempt benefits will be subject to the benefit cap defined above.

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# Equality Impact Analysis Form

## 1. Equality Impact Analysis (EqIA) Form

<b>Title of EqIA (policy/change it relates to)</b>	East Herts Council Tenancy Strategy 2021 to 2026	<b>Date</b>	18 August 2021						
<b>Team/Department</b>	Housing and Health								
<p><b>Focus of EqIA</b></p> <p>What are the aims of the new initiative?                  Who implements it?                  Define the user group impacted?                  How will they be impacted?</p>	<p>Under the Localism Act 2011 each local authority has an obligation to produce a tenancy strategy which sets out the matters to which providers of affordable housing must have regard when they develop their own tenancy policies. The new East Herts Housing Strategy contains a set of recommendations to which registered providers are expected to have regard under each of the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent levels</li> <li>• Tenancy types</li> <li>• The needs of specific groups.</li> </ul> <p>The aim of the East Herts Tenancy Strategy 2021 to 2026 is to ensure that the rents of homes owned by registered providers (housing associations) in the East Hertfordshire District are affordable to households on low incomes, and that the tenancies which are offered provide long-term stability to these households.</p> <p>Registered providers are responsible for ensuring that the recommendations of in the East Herts Tenancy Strategy 2021 to 2026 are implemented. Registered providers were consulted on the strategy in June and July 2021.</p> <p>A profile of East Herts Council affordable housing for rent (September 2020) by the size of property (number of bedrooms) shows that larger households, i.e. containing children, are likely to be disproportionately highly concentrated in the social housing sector (this does not take account of the number of single people or couples who may be under-occupying a home):</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="640 1398 1995 1514"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Number</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Studio or 1 bedroom</td> <td>2,468</td> <td>31.8%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Number	Percentage	Studio or 1 bedroom	2,468	31.8%
	Number	Percentage							
Studio or 1 bedroom	2,468	31.8%							

2 bedroom	2,690	34.6%
3 bedroom	2,480	31.9%
4+ bedroom	126	1.6%
Total	7,764	

Homes with 2, 3 or 4 bedroom compose 68.2% of the affordable housing stock for rent in East Hertfordshire.

Certain protected characteristic groups, as defined under the Equality Act 2010, are more likely to be in need of affordable housing when living in East Hertfordshire. According to a study carried out in July 2021, the following groups, related to Protected Characteristics, are more likely to be represented on the East Herts Council housing register:

- Households headed by a person aged between 18 and 44
- Households headed by a female.
- Households headed by a lone parent or consisting of a single person.
- Households with a pregnant member and/or children
- Households with a member who is in poor health and/or has a disability.

Age	Total population of East Hertfordshire – number and percentage of persons aged 18+ (Census 2011)	Housing register – household heads in East Hertfordshire aged 18+, July 2021
Total	106,152	1,627
18 – 25 years	9,166 8.6%	164 10.1%
25 – 44 years	37,779 35.6%	803 49.4%
45 – 59 years	29,608 27.9%	355 21.8%
60+ years	106,152 27.9%	305 18.7%

Gender	Total population of East Hertfordshire – number and percentage of persons aged 18+(Census 2011)	Housing register – persons living in East Hertfordshire aged 18+ ( <i>This includes persons applying as a single person and also persons in a couple</i> ), July 2021
Total	106,152	2,019

Males	51,574	48.6%	800	39.6%
Females	54,578	51.4%	1,219	60.4%

<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>	Total number of households living in East Hertfordshire (Census 2011)	Housing register – households living in East Hertfordshire, July 2021
All households	56,577	1,627
One person household	15,722 27.8%	689 42.3%
Couple (married, same sex, co-habiting)	34,727 61.4%	453 27.8%
Lone parent	4,821 8.5%	478 29.4%
Multi-person household	1,307 2.3%	7 0.4%

<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	Total number of households living in East Hertfordshire (Census 2011)	Housing register – households living in East Hertfordshire, July 2021
All households	56,577	1,627
Households with children and/or a pregnant member as a % of the total number of households	17,569 31.1%	748 46.0%
Married couple with children and/or pregnant	14,389 25.4%	270 16.6%
Same sex couple with children and/or pregnant		
Cohabiting couple with children and/or pregnant		
Lone parent with dependent children	3,180 5.6%	478 29.4%

<b>Disability and Health</b>	Total number of households living in East Hertfordshire (Census 2011)	Housing register – households living in East Hertfordshire, July 2021
Total	137,687	1,627
Very good health	72,332 52.5%	No medical points 914 56.2%

Good health	46,399	33.7%			
Fair health	14,325	10.4%	5 points slight impact on health	115	7.1%
			10 points moderate impact on health	323	19.9%
Bad health	3,678	2.7%	15 points chronic health condition	213	13.1%
			25 points serious detriment to health	59	3.6%
Very bad health	953	0.7%	50 points urgent priority on health grounds	3	0.2%

The following statistics on homeless households for whom the prevention or relief duty was brought to an end between April 2020 and June 2021 shows the high percentage of single person households and households in housing need who were in need of affordable housing:

	1 April to 30 June 2020	1 July to 30 Sept 2020	1 Oct to 31 Dec 2020	1 Jan to 31 March 2021	1 April to 30 June 2021
Single person	58%	55%	61%	58%	53%
Couple no children	7%	5%	5%	3%	5%
Households with children	35%	40%	34%	30%	425

The protected characteristic groups which are disproportionately highly likely to be either a tenant of a registered provider or in need of affordable housing for rent are likely to be impacted by the Tenancy Strategy in the following ways:

- Rents are affordable to them so that they do not exceed 40 per cent of their household income.
- Their tenancies are either long-term or a fixed term of at least five years, to enable them to be settled in their homes and communities.

**2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions**

Please fill in when appropriate to the change. If it does not, please put N/A

<b>Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010</b>	<b>What do you know?</b> Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	<b>What do people tell you?</b> Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	<b>What does this mean?</b> Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	<b>What can you do?</b> All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
<b>Age</b>	Data is from: • Census 2011 • Housing register snapshot • Homelessness application data	A survey of service users was not required.	Positive	The East Herts Tenancy Strategy 2021 to 2026 is relevant to advancing equality of opportunity.
<b>Disability</b>	Data is from: • Census 2011 • Housing register snapshot • Homelessness application data	A survey of service users was not required.	Positive	The East Herts Tenancy Strategy 2021 to 2026 is relevant to advancing equality of opportunity.
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	Information not available			
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Data is from: • Census 2011 • Housing register snapshot • Homelessness	A survey of service users was not required.	Positive	The East Herts Tenancy Strategy 2021 to 2026 is relevant to advancing equality of opportunity.

<b>Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010</b>	<b>What do you know?</b> Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	<b>What do people tell you?</b> Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	<b>What does this mean?</b> Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	<b>What can you do?</b> All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>
	application data Records of affordable housing for rent by ward			
<b>Race</b>	Information not available			
<b>Religion or belief</b>	Information not available			
<b>Sex/Gender</b>	Data is from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Census 2011</li> <li>• Housing register snapshot</li> <li>• Homelessness application data</li> </ul>	A survey of service users was not required.	Positive	The East Herts Tenancy Strategy 2021 to 2026 is relevant to advancing equality of opportunity.
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Information not available			
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	Data is from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Census 2011</li> <li>• Housing register snapshot</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> </ul>	A survey of service users was not required.	Positive	The East Herts Tenancy Strategy 2021 to 2026 is relevant to advancing equality of opportunity.



<b>Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010</b>	<b>What do you know?</b> Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	<b>What do people tell you?</b> Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	<b>What does this mean?</b> Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	<b>What can you do?</b> All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>
	application data			

**Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations**

The section of the Public Sector Equality Duty to which the East Herts Tenancy Strategy has most relevance is:

[Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.](#)

The East Herts Tenancy Strategy will promote the ability of households on low incomes to acquire good quality and affordable housing, therefore promoting their wellbeing and access to opportunities.

**3. List detailed data and/or community feedback which informed your EqIA (If applicable)**

<b>Title</b> (of data, research or engagement)	<b>Date</b>	<b>Gaps in data</b>	<b>Actions to fill these gaps: who else do you need to engage with?</b> (add these to the Action Plan below, with a timeframe)

Census 2011	March 2011	This is the main source of comprehensive data on the population of the East Hertfordshire district. However, the relevance of the data is now lessened although it can still be used for population profile comparisons.	The data from the Census 2021 should be available from early 2022 and will be used for revised equality impact assessments
The East Herts Housing Register snapshot	July 2021	Further information is needed on protected characteristics of households, particularly ethnicity.	To be confirmed
Applications for assistance under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018	April 2020 to July 2021	Further information is needed on protected characteristics of households.	
Housing stock by size (number of bedrooms) by ward	September 2020	To be updated.	

**4. Prioritised Action Plan (If applicable)**

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Timeframe
NB: These actions must now be transferred to service or business plans and monitored to ensure they achieve the outcomes identified.				
All groups	We will continue to monitor rent levels and tenancy types offered by registered providers through the Locata system.	A high level of awareness of rent levels and tenancy types, and knowledge of when to engage if they are not meeting the housing needs of East Herts residents.	A higher level of acceptance of households in housing need for social housing tenancies, and a higher rate of sustaining social housing tenancies.	Ongoing
All groups	We will continue to work in partnership with registered providers through meetings of the East Herts Housing Forum which take place 3 or 4 times each year.	A good level of engagement with registered provider partners on how housing needs in East Hertfordshire can be met by satisfactory rent levels and tenancy types	A higher level of acceptance of households in housing need for social housing tenancies, and a higher rate of sustaining social housing tenancies.	Ongoing

**EqIA sign-off:** (for the EQIA to be final an email must sent from the relevant people agreeing it or this section must be signed)

**Directorate Management Team rep or Head of Service:** Jonathan Geall **Date:** 19 August 2021

**Author of Equality Impact Analysis:** Helen George **Date:** 19 August 2021

## Agenda Item 9

East Herts District Council is already making positive efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to promote renewable energy. Furthermore, the Council recognises:

- 1) that the very large financial set-up and running costs involved in selling locally generated electricity to local customers result in it being impossible for local renewable-electricity generators to do so,
- 2) that making these financial costs proportionate to the scale of a renewable electricity supplier's operation would create significant opportunities for local companies, community groups and councils to be providers of locally generated renewable electricity directly to local people, businesses and organisations if they wished, and
- 3) that revenues received by such local companies, community groups or councils that chose to become local renewable electricity providers could be used to help improve the local economy, local services and facilities and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

This Council also notes that the Parliamentary Environmental Audit committee, as a result of its 2021 Technological Innovations and Climate Change Enquiry, recommended that a Right to Local Supply for local energy suppliers be established to address these issues.

This Council accordingly resolves to support the Local Electricity Bill, currently supported by a cross-party group of 264 MPs, and which, if made law, would establish a Right to Local Supply, which would promote local renewable electricity supply by making the set-up and running costs of selling renewable energy to local customers proportionate to the size of the supply company ; and

This Council further resolves to:

- a) inform the local media of this decision;
- b) write to the local MPs, asking them to support the Bill; and
- c) write to the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, "Power for the People", at 5-7 Buck Street, London NW1 8NJ, expressing its support.

Motion proposed by Councillor Mione Goldspink and seconded by Councillor Terence Beckett.

