

## Appendix 1: East Herts Housing Strategy – Strategic Priority 1 Action Plan 2022 to 2025

Version completed: 6 September 2022

This action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis.

### Strategic Priority 1: Deliver more affordable homes

<b>Increase the supply of new homes offered with (a) social rents or (b) affordable rents at or very near to between 50 per cent and 60 per cent of market rents</b>				
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Proposed outcome</b>
1.1 To produce a Statement of Housing Affordability to support the aims of the Tenancy Strategy and improve affordability of the Social Housing being developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collate data on what constitutes affordability in the East Herts district.</li> <li>Present statement to East Herts Housing Forum (<i>The role of the Forum is to oversee the development and operation of the East Herts Council's affordable housing policies and programme</i>).</li> <li>Obtain approval from the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods.</li> <li>Publish statement.</li> <li>Work with RPs and Monitor</li> </ul>	31 March 2023	Housing Development and Strategy Manager	Maximisation of the number of genuinely affordable homes for households in East Herts, reducing the number of households who fail affordability checks/assessments for homes for affordable rent in the East Herts district.
1.2 To produce a set of options for increasing the amount affordable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify options within East Herts and other local authority areas.</li> </ul>	31 December 2022	Housing Development	Assessment of which options could feasibly be adopted in East Herts and

<p>housing at (a) social rents or (b) affordable rents at or very near to between 50 per cent and 60 per cent of market rents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce an options appraisal for the consideration of members and approval of the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods.</li> <li>• Consider which options could be included in further editions of the action plan for Strategic Priority 1.</li> </ul>		<p>and Strategy Manager</p>	<p>implement in line with the report</p>
<p>1.3 To produce and publish a statement/policy on the use of the council's capital contributions to affordable housing development, including commuted sums and land, to increase the supply of affordable homes and increase affordability of the rent levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out research into a comprehensive range of uses to which council resources can be put in order to increase supply and/or the affordability of rent levels.</li> <li>• Publish and consult on options</li> <li>• Develop policies</li> <li>• Work with RPs to put into practice and monitor</li> </ul>	<p>31 March 2023</p> <p>April 2024 – lifetime of the Strategy</p>	<p>Housing Development and Strategy Manager</p>	<p>Ability to select the most productive uses of council resources in order to produce genuinely affordable homes for rent at or around Social Rent level.</p>
<p>1.4 To review the Section 106 agreement template and standardise the document for housing development to provide clarity to RPs on key expectations for development including rent levels and nominations agreements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse recent problems encountered with Section 106 agreements.</li> <li>• Identify the sections within recent Section 106 agreements which require improvement and standardisation.</li> </ul>	<p>30 June 2023</p>	<p>Housing Development and Strategy Manager, Housing Strategy Officer</p>	<p>Minimising the number of affordable homes for rent which are not genuinely affordable to low income households in East Herts.</p> <p>Providing greater clarity to developers and registered providers on the</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in partnership with EHDC Legal Team to improve the Section 106 agreement.</li> </ul>			expectations of East Herts Council in terms of the affordability and quality of housing.
1.5 To explore with partners opportunities for developments using Modern Methods of Construction, with the aim of providing homes at a lower cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued attendance at the Hertfordshire Off-Site Manufacture Consortium to monitor construction methods and good practice examples in other local authority areas.</li> <li>• Monitor the availability of grant from Homes England for developments using Modern Methods of Construction.</li> </ul>	31 March 2024	Housing Development and Strategy Manager	Possible provision of homes at a lower cost which attract grant funding from Homes England.

<b>Enable a range of low cost home ownership products in the district</b>				
<b>Objectives:</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Proposed outcome</b>
1.4 To draw up and publish a technical note for First Homes for the East Herts district to ensure developers are aware of the council's expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the affordability of the First Homes model in East Herts using income and house price data. Compare with other low cost home ownership products including Shared Ownership.</li> <li>• Obtain approval from Elected Members.</li> </ul>	31 October 2022	Housing Strategy and Development Manager	Clarification of the position of East Herts Council on First Homes, and to give guidance to developers and registered providers on the preferred low cost home ownership products for the district.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult and publish</li> </ul>			
<b>Improve the focus on housing needs in our rural communities</b>				
<b>Objectives:</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Proposed outcome</b>
1.5 To research the need for smaller affordable homes in rural areas to estimate the level of need among younger people/first time buyers using a variety of desktop evidence sources to inform future development expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the supply of affordable homes (new and existing) in rural areas in East Herts, as defined by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2021-2033 in terms of overall numbers and property type. Focus on overall numbers and availability (turnover).</li> <li>• Produce an information database.</li> <li>• Use of the recommendations from the analysis of the research findings for development in rural parts of the district.</li> <li>• Incorporate affordable housing recommendations from Neighbourhood Plans in the rural areas.</li> <li>• Produce a report on the feasibility of pilot affordable housing schemes in rural areas for young people and/or first time buyers.</li> </ul>	31 March 2023 and ongoing	Housing Strategy and Development Manager	Evidence to support development of Rural Exception sites and other rural sites under Policy HOU4, and guidance for registered providers who wish to develop/acquire affordable homes in rural areas.

<b>Assist households in accessing the private housing market</b>				
<b>Objectives:</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Proposed outcome</b>
1.6 To review and expand the Housing Options pages of the council's web site in partnership with the Communications Team to improve self-service options and better enable households to seek advice on-line.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set out the aims and objectives for the review of the webpages with the Housing Options Team.</li> <li>• Note good practice from other local authorities and organisations.</li> <li>• Work with the Communications Team and Housing Options team to provide more comprehensive housing options including a Homeless Portal .</li> </ul>	31 March 2023 and ongoing	Housing Strategy and Development Manager, EHDC Communications Team	A wider range of housing options is advertised on the East Herts housing website, enabling customers to more easily self-serve and publicising housing options more extensive to local residents.
1.7 To review and update the Housing Service's Rent Deposit Scheme to ensure it is supportive and relevant for maximising homelessness prevention outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review information on the private rented sector in East Herts: rents, locations, property types.</li> <li>• Identify the barriers to the full effectiveness of the Rent Deposit scheme in homelessness prevention.</li> <li>• Draw up a list of recommendations for changes to the scheme.</li> <li>• Consult with Homelessness Forum/partners members regarding proposed changes</li> </ul>	31 December 2022	Homeless Services Manager and Senior Housing Options Officer.	An increase in the number of households whose housing need is prevented by facilitating greater access to suitable and affordable homes in the private rented sector.



<b>Gather and publish up to date housing need and supply data</b>				
<b>Objectives:</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Proposed outcome</b>
1.8 To review the published Census 2021 data as it relates to housing and publish on council's web site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw down housing-related data from the Census 2021 as soon as it becomes available, at district, ward and lower super output level. To include: population, household types age groups, tenures, ethnicity, illness and disability, heating types.</li> <li>• Produce analysis to compare data with Census 2011 information and produce conclusions on housing-related trends in East Herts.</li> <li>• Produce a set of recommendations for housing development in the district based on the data, for use in future housing strategy action plan.</li> </ul>	31 December 2022	Housing Strategy and Development Manager	<p>An information database to inform priorities within future housing strategy action plans.</p> <p>Production of information which will contribute to future reviews of the East Herts Council District Plan.</p>
1.9 Publish key housing performance indicators each quarter on the council's web pages on housing supply and demand This will include the .Housing Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Communications Team on ways of publicising the briefings to maximise use of the data.</li> </ul>	31 December 2022 and ongoing	Housing Strategy Officer, EHDC Communications Team	Information on housing needs and housing options provided, on a regular basis, to Elected Members, interested partners and residents. To

<p>Quarterly Monitoring Briefing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update the briefing with new categories of data if requested by Elected Members.</li> </ul>			<p>inform on housing need trends.</p> <p>Production of information which will contribute to future reviews of the East Herts Council District Plan.</p>
<p>1.10 To contribute to the review of the Council's District Plan with a view to maximising opportunities for affordable housing development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in data gathering and drafting in line with Planning timescales</li> </ul>	<p>As determined by the District Plan review process</p>	<p>Service Manager – Housing Services</p>	<p>Detailed, up-to-date guidance is provided to maximise affordable housing outputs.</p>