

Appendix A Update on Housing Strategy Actions 2025/26

Housing Strategy Action Plan Strategic Priority 1: Deliver more affordable homes

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.

Strategic Objective	Proposed Outcome	Agreed Actions	Update 2025/26
<p>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.</p>	<p>Maximisation of the number of genuinely affordable homes for households in East Herts and reducing the number of households that fail the RP affordability assessments for homes for affordable rent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate data on what constitutes affordability in the East Herts District. • Present statement to the East Herts Housing Forum. • Obtain approval from the Executive member for Neighbourhoods. • Publish Statement. 	<p>Data collated and shared. Understanding of affordability agreed.</p> <p>Statement has been communicated as per action 1.4 via redrafted nominations agreement. This has been shared with registered providers and currently receiving and responding to comments.</p>

	in the East Herts District.		
1.2 To increase the amount of affordable housing at a) social rents or b) affordable rents at or very near to between 50% and 60% of market rents.	More affordable rented properties with lower rents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential to secure lower rents on new build schemes 	<p>The council provided funding to Paradigm HA to enable a lower rent on four new build four bed houses in Bishop' Stortford to be let to tenants from the housing register. The dwellings have been let at the LHA rate for a three-bed house rather than a four-bed house.</p> <p>Paradigm HA secured Homes England funding to change the tenure on 15 new build dwellings in Bishop's Stortford from Affordable Rent to Social Rent. A further 6 units now being considered.</p> <p>With support from the council Anchor HA secured funding from Homes England to deliver 25 x 1 bed older person supported living dwellings for social rent on the East of Stevenage Development. This is in addition to the S.106 affordable housing contribution for the development. 25 social rent and 39 shared ownership units to be ready by March 2026. Anchor</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess feasibility of development for social rent on council owned land. 	<p>currently considering if they can transfer a further 6 of the 39 shared ownership properties to social rent which will all be 2-bed units</p> <p>1-15 Limekiln Lane- 15 units provided at social rent, including gifted white goods.</p> <p>Direct development not feasible due to timescale and LGR. MOU testing principle of contribution of land for greater proportion of social housing which is covered further in 1.3</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</p>	<p>Ability to select the most productive uses of council resources in order to produce genuinely affordable homes for rent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out research into a comprehensive range of uses to which council resources can be put to increase supply and/or the affordability of rent levels. • Publish and consult on options. • Develop policies 	<p>S.106 Payments in lieu are being used for rent reduction from affordable rent to social rent as described in 1.2 In addition this approach has been used to support the conversion of market rate, shared ownership and affordable rent units (15 total) to social rent at Limekiln Lane let April 2026.</p> <p>Work commenced on how the Council can support the increased supply of</p>

<p>commuted sums and land to increase the supply of affordable homes and increase affordability of rent levels.</p>	<p>at or around Social Rent level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with RPs to put into practice and monitor 	<p>affordable homes through a joint endeavour. A memorandum of understanding is being developed to provide guiding principles.</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</p>	<p>Minimising the number of affordable homes for rent which are not genuinely affordable to low-income households in East Herts. Providing greater clarity to developers and registered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse recent problems encountered with Section 106 agreements. • Identify sections within recent Section 106 agreements which require improvement and standardisation. 	<p>Analysis and work to identify necessary changes complete .</p> <p>New s.106 template drafted but delays in completing this work due to legal resource which have now been resolved.</p> <p>Nominations Agreement has been redrafted and final version now with registered providers for comment. Draft includes affordable level being at LHA rate as this is a published figure. Few comments have been received to date and responses to these returned. Go live Autumn 2026.</p>

nominations agreements.	providers on the expectations of East Herts Council in terms of the affordability and quality of housing.		
-------------------------	---	--	--

Improve the focus on housing needs in our rural communities

Strategic Objective	Proposed Outcome	Agreed Actions	Update Q3 2025/26
1.5 To research the need for smaller affordable homes in rural areas to estimate the level of need among	Support development of Rural Exception sites and other rural sites under Policy HOU4 and guidance for registered providers who wish to develop/acquire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Community Development Action (CDA) Herts' bid for external funding to employ a Rural Enabler to work with parish councils on rural exception sites. 	<p>Action complete- CDA have funding to work with Parish Councils to identify rural housing needs. CDA currently in the process of consulting with Parish Councils.</p> <p>CDA have been contacted seeking a meeting to discuss their work and views on anything more which can be done to support them increase rural housing provision.</p>

<p>younger people/first time buyers using a variety of desktop evidence sources to inform future development expectations.</p>	<p>affordable homes in rural areas.</p>		
--	---	--	--

Gather and publish up to date housing need and supply data

Strategic Objective	Proposed Outcome	Agreed Actions	Update Q3 2025/26
<p>1.6 To contribute to the review of the council's District Plan with a view to maximising opportunities for</p>	<p>Detailed, up-to-date guidance is provided to maximise affordable housing outputs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in data gathering and drafting in line with Planning timescales. 	<p>Work on-going. Completed redrafting of nominations agreement in terms of the definition of affordable contributing to this work.</p>

affordable housing development			
--------------------------------	--	--	--

Housing Strategy Action Plan Strategic Priority 2: Enable a wider range of accommodation and support for our most vulnerable residents

Work collaboratively with partners to maximise housing and support for rough sleepers

Strategic Objective	Proposed Outcome	Agreed Actions	Update 2025/26
2.1 Devise, consult and adopt a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy and associated Action Plan 2024-2029	Strategy and monitoring plan in place to ensure actions are managed and the council has a high-quality response to homelessness across the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a review of homelessness trends using a wide range of sources • Carry out a consultation exercise with stakeholders in East Herts in order to devise a set of actions to meet existing and future challenges 	Review of trends and data complete. Strategy in draft and to be shared with Executive Lead Member February 2026. Proposed timetable is for this to be considered by Council in July 2026 which will allow time for fuller partnership consultation including inclusion of lived experience.

	district and with partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a new homelessness action plan and monitoring framework 	
2.2 Relaunch the Homelessness Reduction Board for the East Herts District to monitor joint working, develop initiatives and monitor outcomes for homeless households	A multi-Agency Forum in place to play an effective advisory role in developing initiatives, devising action plans and monitoring outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree and terms of Reference for the Board • Develop an agreed set of priorities for the Board • The Board participates in the development and monitor of the Homelessness Action plan 	To be established following adoption of the strategy.
2.3 Maximise temporary accommodation options for all homelessness households, in	Provision of more self-contained council owned or leased temporary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter private sector lease arrangement for properties in Hertford • Redevelop the council's property at Queens Road, 	5 units of leased self-contained accommodation in Hertford operational since Q2 2025/26. 3 more units through the same supplier in progress.

<p>preference to using bed and breakfast</p>	<p>accommodation to reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation homeless households</p>	<p>Ware as two units of temporary accommodation</p>	<p>Queens Rd sold and commuted sums being considered for refurbishment of a larger council asset. This is more suitable for temporary accommodation as would provide around 10-12 units.</p> <p>LAHF4 funding expression of interest submitted for the provision of at least 2 temporary accommodation units to be supplied through an identified registered provider partner.</p>
--	---	---	--

Explore the provision of supported accommodation for single people with complex needs

Strategic Objective	Proposed Outcome	Agreed Actions	Update 2025/26
<p>2.3 Work with Hertfordshire County Council and Homes England to review the aims and outcomes for Cedar Cottage to ensure accommodation meets the needs of rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping in East Herts</p>	<p>Effective and resilient support delivered to residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Housing Benefit Service and Hertfordshire County Council Commissioning Team to maximise the support provision available to residents • Review the model of support provision commissioned considering the needs of residents and resilience of service • Remodel and deliver model of support agreed 	<p>Work on-going with HCC and One YMCA about pathway. Model reviewed and more capacity identified as required. Identified location to provide a more intensive supported housing option and on-going work with partners to explore the feasibility of this.</p>

Further develop services for households affected by domestic abuse

Strategic Objective	Proposed Outcome	Agreed Actions	Update 2025/26
<p>2.4 Participate and input into the monitoring of Hertfordshire County Council's Housing Navigators pilot project providing support to households experiencing or survivors of Domestic Abuse</p>	<p>Pilot evaluated and outcomes agreed. Actions for post pilot phased are agreed between HCC and East Herts</p> <p>The needs of East Herts residents are reflected in the procurement of services and accommodation for residents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with HCC in the review and evaluation of the Navigator project • Identify findings and actions for East Herts Council as part of the post pilot phase 	<p>Completed. Following evaluation of the pilot and consultation with key agencies, a revised service specification was put out to tender, and a provider appointed. The Housing Advocacy Service is now up and running supported by funding from all Hertfordshire local authorities.</p> <p>Advocacy staff and homeless staff to start co-location to further build relationships and offer improved services to customers from March 2026.</p>

	affected by Domestic Abuse		
--	----------------------------	--	--

Housing Strategy Action Plan Strategic Priority 3: Enable high quality housing options for older people, better suited to their needs

Work with partners to bring forward high quality downsizing options

Strategic Objective	Proposed Outcome	Agreed Actions	Update 2025/26
3.1 To work with registered providers in East Herts on planning accommodation options for older people who wish to	A wider range of affordable, suitable, and accessible accommodation options for older people to meet their changing needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the research and consultation exercise being carried out by Network Homes into housing aspirations among older people 	Scope and purpose of the consultation agreed with council. Non-personal data from housing register shared with SNG (previously Network Homes) to inform consultation and engagement strategy. SNG have commissioned a specialist consultant to commence work. Scheduled completion summer 2026.

<p>downsize. Explore with partners what makes a property attractive to existing tenants to downsize during the planning and re development of new affordable homes</p>			
--	--	--	--

Work with Hertfordshire County Council and other partners on expanding the range of housing options for older residents

Strategic Objective	Proposed Outcome	Agreed Actions	Update 2025/26
3.2 To explore the feasibility of an affordable home	Assessment of whether affordable home ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research the range of older persons' affordable home ownership options 	39 x 2 bed supported living Older Persons Shared Ownership dwellings delivered on the East of Stevenage development. Currently reviewing

<p>ownership option for older people in East Herts and whether it is an option we wish to support</p>	<p>options would have a market among, and meet needs and aspirations among, older people</p>	<p>available across the country</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the feasibility and desirability of options in the East Herts context 	<p>interest with the registered provider which will inform future strategies around affordable home ownership options, as interest has been limited. Provider considering transferring some of these units to affordable housing to match demand.</p> <p>SNG commissioned specialist consultation with older residents to be concluded September 2026 to identify housing aspirations and inform future housing strategy.</p>
---	--	---	---

Housing Strategy Action Plan Strategic Priority 4: Improve the sustainability and quality of homes

Promote maintenance, insulation and energy efficiency of homes of all tenures

Strategic Objective	Proposed Outcome	Agreed Actions	Update 2025/26
<p>4.1 Work with local registered providers to maximise the energy</p>	<p>Improved energy efficiency across the social housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor RPs' use of social housing decarbonisation grant and other resources to improve energy efficiency of their stock 	<p>Achieved visibility of Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund allocation amounts to RPs in the District and their subsequent approach to and priorities for spending these funds. The Local Area</p>

<p>efficiency of their properties</p>	<p>stock and demonstrate domestic energy efficiency options available across tenures</p>		<p>Retrofit Accelerator (LARA) Strategy working well to drive the retrofit agenda.</p> <p>Opportunities for individual social housing tenant grant funding will continue to be shared through partnership and communications.</p>
<p>4.2 Work with partners, including the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership, to maximise the energy efficiency of private sector dwellings</p>	<p>Improved domestic energy efficiency and reduced carbon emissions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted promotion to accelerate uptake of HUG2 • Engage the National Energy Foundation to maximise domestic energy efficiency scheme uptake and provide advice to residents 	<p>Considerable activity including, but not limited to, the creation of Energy Hubs (energy saving signposting at local events run by volunteers) the creation and publication of the Hertfordshire retrofit guide, information on planning considerations on our website, East Herts specific and regional/central government grant promotion (HERO decarbonisation plans, solar and battery storage match funding, Solar Together, HUG2, ECO4), provision of the East Herts Energy Advice Helpline, active feedback on approach and opportunities via the Sustainability Forum, creation of a local communications network via Town and</p>

			Parish Councils and Sustainability Groups and active participation in the LARA pilot.
--	--	--	---

Promote sustainable construction of new homes

Strategic Objective	Proposed Outcome	Agreed Actions	Update 2025/26
4.3 To explore the development of a Passivhaus standard scheme/enhanced sustainable housing model in East Herts by publicising and promoting the council's support for schemes	Promotion of Passivhaus as a viable means of development in the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise the council's interest in such schemes being developed through for example the Housing Forum Work with registered providers on Passivhaus development as opportunities arise 	<p>Work on-going and being promoted with partners in terms of new development discussions.</p> <p>Redevelopment using Passivhaus principals completed by registered provider on 6 homes which will be used to promote further interest in this approach.</p>

--	--	--	--

Promote good quality accommodation and standards of management in the private rented sector

Strategic Objective	Proposed Outcome	Agreed Actions	Update 2025/26
4.4 To explore comparable local authority best practice and guidance for private landlords including experience of Landlord Accreditation Schemes	Report on options for improving standards in the private Rented Sector in East Herts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research successful examples of good practice from other comparable local authorities in considering the setting quality standards, including, if appropriate, options for a Landlord Accreditation Scheme 	Previously put on hold pending outcome of Renters' Rights Bill, now Act. Majority of duties under new legislation come into force on 1 May 2026. Currently reviewing information, advice and guidance for tenants and landlords and ensuring staff are trained and ready for new legislation. New legislation includes increased fines which are anticipated to improve standards with multiple breaches leading to landlord banning orders.

Encourage owners to bring their empty homes back into use

Strategic Objective	Proposed Outcome	Agreed Actions	Update 2025/26

<p>4.5 To review the Council Tax records for the changing numbers of empty homes and the reasons why they are empty homes and analyse the impact of applying the Council Tax disincentives to inform policy</p>	<p>Reduction in empty properties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To obtain from the Revenues Team a list of East Herts homes which have been empty for more than 2 years since April 2019 • To produce a profile of the number, types, and locations of empty homes in East Herts to which Council Tax disincentives have applied • Consider options for reviewing the council tax regime for empty properties 	<p>Comparison of empty homes rates compared for 2024/25 and 2025/26 do not show any variance in rate.</p>
---	--------------------------------------	---	---