

# Housing Strategy 2023 - 2026



**St Albans**  
City & District Council

Hawksley Court-a refurbishment of a former Council sheltered housing scheme



## Introduction

The Strategy has been developed to set out how the Council will respond to the challenges in delivering and managing high quality housing across all tenures in the district in the next 3 years. It is the intention that the Strategy will be an evolving, dynamic, document that will be monitored and reviewed to evaluate whether the Council's objectives are achieved.

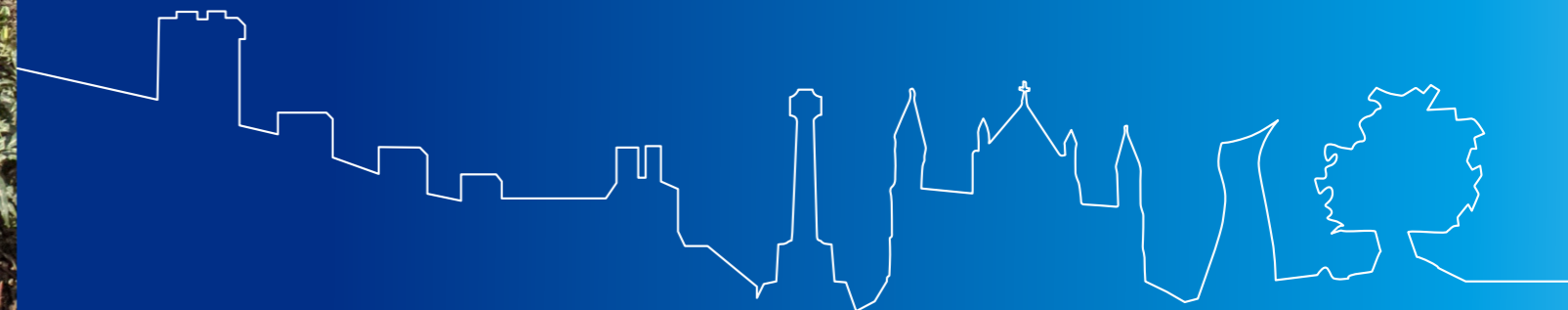
The Council prepares a Housing Business Plan on an annual basis providing projected estimates of the Housing Revenue Account over a 30-year period. This will be an overarching document on how the Council's separate housing related strategies complement the aims of the Council's Corporate Plan and support this Business Plan. This is set within the context of evolving government legislation, both in relation to new housing development, building safety and planning.

The Strategy is a high level overarching document setting out the strategic direction across the 5 pledges outlined below. It brings together into one document the key priorities and actions from the following strategies and policies that will help deliver those pledges:

- Homelessness Strategy
- Tenancy Strategy
- Sustainability and Climate Crisis Strategy
- Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy
- Energy Strategy (Housing Revenue Account)

The Strategy does not seek to replicate information that is already covered in the above. Further information on the priorities and actions can be found in the links provided to those documents.

The Council is responsible for delivering the Strategy, however, the key to success will necessitate working with local providers and stakeholders. Partners have been consulted on the Strategy and will be involved in various elements of achieving the aims and objectives of the Council.



## Local Context

The [Council's Corporate Vision](#) aims to achieve 4 key outcomes:

- A thriving community.
- A great place to live and work.
- A vibrant economy.
- A cost-effective Council.

Underpinning the Corporate Vision are 4 key priorities:

- Combat the climate emergency.
- Deliver more social housing.
- Enhance local business.
- Develop community facilities.

The most recent Housing Strategy (2014-2017) included 3 strategic priorities:

- Making best use of existing stock in all tenures, including improving energy efficiency in homes, and reducing fuel poverty.
- Increasing the supply of affordable homes.
- Meeting the needs of people who require support.

There have been a number of key successes as a result of implementing actions including within the Strategy. These include:

- Introducing a new tenant incentive package to help make best use of stock.
- Development of a private sector lettings scheme (Mosaic Lettings).
- Increase the supply of affordable housing by developing Council-owned sites.



- Partnership working to develop services to those impacted by welfare reform, in particular advice and support.
- Develop profile of existing stock to meet the needs of residents requiring support.

During the lifetime of the last Housing Strategy the Council continued its work on the sheltered housing redevelopment programme. The programme, which commenced in 2007, completed in March 2021. Throughout this period the Council, in partnership with local housing providers, has:

- Delivered 3 new affordable flexi care schemes (113 properties).
- Delivered 98 new general needs rental properties.
- Delivered 93 new general needs rental properties for older persons.
- Refurbished its 2 sheltered housing schemes (45 properties).
- Obtained over £7.5 million in government funding.

In considering the future priorities of the Housing Strategy it is necessary to consider the local market and conditions. The district of St Albans is a desirable place to live. This has an impact on the affordability of housing in the area with both house prices and rental values exceeding the national average.

The table below highlights the average price of a property to buy and rent in the district as well as the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) figures. The LHA is used to calculate the maximum amount people renting from a private landlord can claim in Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit.

Size of property	Property Price*	Rental Cost (per month)*	LHA (per month)
1-bedroom	£268,752	£1,217	£798
2-bedroom	£428,728	£1,547	£997
3-bedroom	£676,322	£2,186	£1,296
4-bedroom	£1,046,930	£3,243	£1,695

\*Source: [Home.co.uk](https://www.home.co.uk) May 2022

The district has a high level of homeownership and therefore lower proportions of social and private rented housing available to rent. The quality of the accommodation in the private rental sector is generally good with a low level of enforcement action required as shown by the table below:

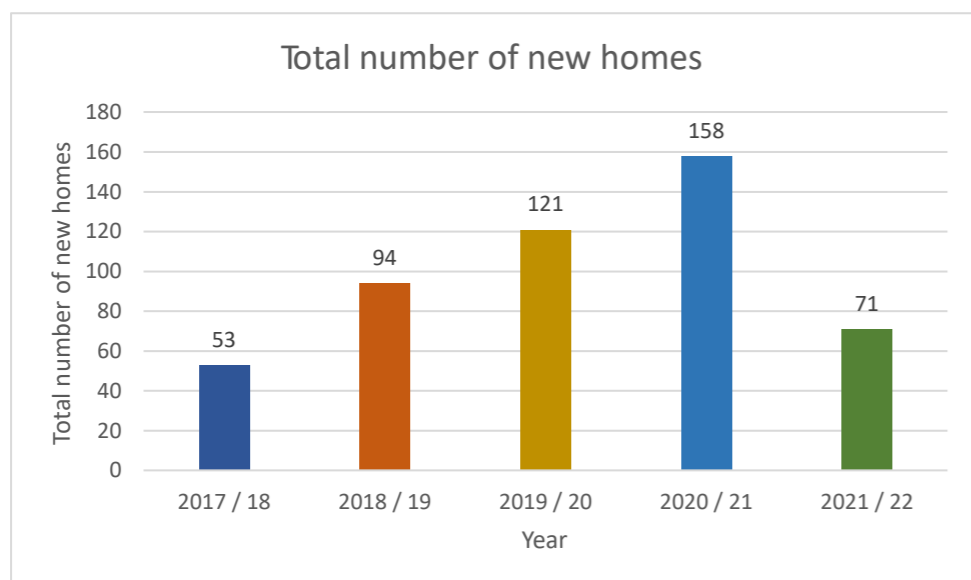
	2018 / 19	2019 / 20	2020 / 21	2021 / 22
<b>Number of Notices Served</b>	5	4	2	8

The breakdown of the type of Notice served is:

Type of Notice	Total
Prohibition Notice	6
Smoke Detector Remedial	4
Section 59 Building Act	3
Hazard Awareness	2
Electrical Safety Regulations	2
Removal of Waste	1
Other	1

Landlords do work with the Council's private sector housing team to address any repair issues relating to their properties. The physical condition of the private rented stock is not a key pledge for this Housing Strategy. However, it is recognised that there is work to be done relating to energy efficiency and sustainability.

The district is also surrounded by Green Belt. This presents a challenge when it comes to boosting the long term supply of housing to meet the needs of the residents of the district. The number of new affordable housing properties delivered across the district in the past 5 years is detailed below:



Across this period the Council has delivered 92 new build properties on brownfield sites. These homes have all been at social rent levels.

In addition, there has been £6.985 million of Homes England grant funding for new properties in the district. This includes £1.38 million directly to the Council to support the provision of social rented properties.

The Council also works with other Registered Providers who deliver affordable housing / social housing on Section 106 sites for which the Council has nomination rights for those on the Housing Register.

The Council is preparing a new Local Plan 2020-2038. This will affect what can be built and where. The Plan will focus on climate change and sustainability and earmark land for future housing and commercial building,

as well as the infrastructure to support existing and new developments.

The Council has approved a timetable and is currently drafting the Plan with a view to carrying out Regulation 18 consultation in summer 2023. A provisional date of December 2025 has been given for adoption of a new Local Plan.

Increasingly the Council is looking at its own land for development opportunities to deliver modern, high quality, new social housing to meet the needs of applicants in housing need. A pipeline of sites is being assessed for viability of delivering family sized accommodation.

There is a consistent demand for social housing in the district and the tables overleaf highlight the level of housing need as of September 2022.

Breakdown of current housing waiting list:

Bedroom need	Housing Register	Transfer*	Total
1-bedroom	107	89	<b>196</b>
2-bedroom	69	77	<b>146</b>
3-bedroom	66	154	<b>220</b>
4-bedroom	10	36	<b>46</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>608</b>

Bedroom need	Band A^	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Total
1-bedroom	22	67	7	46	54	<b>196</b>
2-bedroom	30	40	7	69	0	<b>146</b>
3-bedroom	5	36	28	151	0	<b>220</b>
4+-bedroom	1	8	16	21	0	<b>46</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>608</b>

\*Applicants on the transfer list may be looking to move to smaller or larger accommodation depending on their household need.

^Band A is the highest priority an applicant on the Housing Register may have. All applications are assessed in line with the Council's [Allocation Policy](#).

The figures indicate that the greatest need for housing is for households needing 3-bedroom accommodation, especially those who need to transfer from smaller properties. This is one reason why the Council is committed to supporting the delivery of larger, family-sized housing.

## National Context

There have been a number of new national policies and legislation introduced since the Council's last Housing Strategy 2014-2017 (the Action Plan of which was updated in [2018](#).) These have been introduced to address the well documented national housing and homelessness challenges. These are set out at the end of this strategy document.

The most significant shift in focus in government policy since the last Strategy has been the introduction of building safety and compliance following the Grenfell Tower fire. The Building Safety Act 2022 includes many regulatory changes that will impact on the Council's work in the district. The Act sets out a new regulatory regime aimed at ensuring the safety of residents in residential buildings. It establishes a national Building Safety Regulator sitting within the Health and Safety Executive. It also establishes the role of the Accountable Person who will legally be responsible for higher risk buildings. The Council has one tower block and following a consultation exercise with residents, the Council has decided to de-commission the block and surrounding maisonettes and to redevelop the site. The Council will still need to meet the requirements of the Act.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill has been introduced to Parliament with the intention of 'levelling up' the country. Reducing inequality and closing the gap in productivity, health, income, and opportunities between the Southeast and the rest of the country are the key objectives of the Bill. The Bill also includes reference to a new Infrastructure Levy to replace the current system for obtaining developer contributions for infrastructure and affordable housing.

The Bill also includes a raft of Planning changes. Pertinent to the provision of housing is the proposal to give local plans more weight in the decision-making process. There are several measures to speed up the process of implementing a Local Plan. The Council having an adopted Local Plan would enable the delivery of a more consistent policy to the provision of affordable housing.

The renewed Government policy commitments in relation to affordable housing have been matched by monetary investment through Homes England's Affordable Housing Programme. The current programme (2021-26) includes £11.5 billion to fund social and affordable rented housing supported accommodation and a commitment to deliver homes using modern methods of construction. The programme aims to deliver 180,000 new homes with 50% covering affordable rent and social rent in high affordability areas.

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) includes a definition of affordable housing.

The St Albans district is an area of high house prices and rental values. Consequently, the emphasis is on supporting properties being developed at social rent levels (as opposed to affordable rent) by all registered housing providers. The Council engages regularly with representatives from Homes England to discuss funding opportunities and keep them abreast of its development programme. The lifting of the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap and the extension of time to use Right to Buy receipts has allowed the Council the opportunity to increase the rate of new housing development.

The Future Homes Standard complements the Council's commitment to be 'Net Zero' by 2030. The Standard will support the delivery of homes that are zero carbon ready. The new build homes currently under construction and at planning stage are designed to not have a gas supply to them. The development meets zero carbon emission standards or a minimum of 30% reduction against Building Regulations.

The Council's Corporate Plan highlights the need to prioritise climate emergency by ensuring that all homes, including new properties, are warm, dry and energy efficient. Sustainability measures include the installation of solar panels and installing the infrastructure for electric car charging. The Government is also reviewing the Decent Homes Standard that applies to social housing. This is likely to include measures that cover the communal areas in blocks of flats, damp and mould, and energy efficiency / sustainability.

In April 2021 the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy was launched. This scheme supported locally employed staff in Afghanistan who supported UK forces since 2013. The wider Afghan Resettlement Scheme was opened in January 2022 to provide up to 20,000 Afghan citizens with a safe and legal route to settle in UK over next 5 years. The Council agreed a motion in October 2021 to match the numbers accommodated under the previous Syrian Refugee Scheme. A total of 3 properties have been offered to date with accommodation being sought in the private rented sector.

Due to the war in Ukraine, 2 further schemes were launched by the Government during 2021 / 22. The Family and Friends scheme allows applicants to join family members in the UK for a period of 3 years. The Homes for Ukraine scheme was launched in March 2022. This is a sponsorship scheme allowing Ukrainian applicants to have named people or be matched to a sponsor who will provide

accommodation in their own property in UK. This is a different scheme and local authorities are not being asked to provide accommodation.

The Council is responsible for carrying out accommodation checks and Herts County Council are responsible for other checks. Applicants do have the right to social housing and homelessness services and there are likely to be approaches to local authorities. Applicants have the right to remain for 3 years, and the sponsor is required to provide accommodation for at least 6 months as a minimum.

The Government has completed an informal consultation on a wider asylum dispersal plan. All local authorities are now dispersal areas for dispersed asylum accommodation in the private rented sector. Each region will need to produce a regional plan including local authority allocation of numbers. Regional allocations have been made by the Home Office and the plan is expected to be finalised later this year. There is Government funding available to local authorities for each additional placement to provide support.

In addition to the above the Government created a new visa for people from Hong Kong with British National (Overseas). This was launched on 31 January 2021. It enables those who qualify to come and live and work in the UK for up to 5 years. They will then be able to apply for permanent settlement status. Those arriving have no recourse to public funds and are expected to have sufficient financial resources.

The Council has seen a high number of arrivals seeking accommodation in the district in St Albans and Harpenden. This in turn has reduced supply for housing particularly in the private rented sector.



## Vision

This Strategy has been prepared with the intention that it will shape how the Community and Place Delivery directorate will deliver its service in partnership with local stakeholders and organisations.

The local and national context sets the scene for the need for the Council to continue to deliver high quality sustainable accommodation that meets the needs of those who cannot access the private market. There is an increased pressure for all types of affordable housing, and this includes temporary accommodation for homeless households.

We have outlined the priorities below to address the high profile issues facing the Council. Listed below each commitment is a series of actions the Council, alongside its partners, will take to ensure the Council delivers on these pledges.



### Pledge 1 - Deliver new housing on Council owned sites that meets the needs of the housing register

Aim	Measure
Make best use of existing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review void properties in line with the Council's Disposal and Asset Management Strategy.</li> <li>Identify opportunities to increase the provision of adapted accommodation.</li> </ul>
Work with Planning department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with Planning department to discuss any development opportunities on Council owned sites to maximise new housing delivery.</li> </ul>
Maximise funding opportunities to increase new house building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular meetings with Homes England to review funding streams to support social rented housing development.</li> <li>Monthly review of the Housing Business Plan to monitor future expenditure and borrowing capacity.</li> </ul>

Regularly assess housing need in the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly reports on the needs of applicants on the Housing Register.</li> </ul>
Work in partnership to deliver new housing projects in the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly Project Board meetings held internally to review project progress.</li> <li>Quarterly meetings of the St Albans Strategic Accommodation Board with Hertfordshire County Council.</li> </ul>
Implement a Housing Development Pipeline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and review a 5 year pipeline of garage sites to be developed (subject to viability).</li> <li>Redevelopment of Telford Court site when building fully vacant.</li> </ul>
To get the best value from our assets and develop modern new homes for the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete an Energy Net Present Value exercise on Council stock to identify the viability of each dwelling.</li> <li>Identify existing stock which could be repurposed to address housing need.</li> </ul>
Implement a Garage Management Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver a clear strategy that identifies future use of Council owned garage sites in the district.</li> <li>Garage sites identified for redevelopment, refurbishment, or disposal.</li> </ul>
Deliver an increased amount of family sized accommodation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximise the number of 2 and 3 bedroom houses on Council owned sites.</li> </ul>
Explore innovative means to address the housing crisis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and identify any local and national trends and respond to any relevant government consultation.</li> </ul>

**Pledge 2 - Promote sustainability and energy efficiency in housing stock of all Tenures**

Aim	Measure
<p>Incorporate the aims and objectives included within the Council's Corporate Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt an energy strategy for Council housing stock using Government grant funding and funding from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).</li> <li>• Upgrade the Council's Housing stock including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ New Grade A boilers in 280 properties</li> <li>✓ New windows and doors in 100 properties</li> <li>✓ New bathrooms and kitchens in 180 properties</li> <li>✓ Loft insulation, solar panels and cavity wall insulation in 150 properties identified from the Council's stock condition survey and energy pilot studies.</li> <li>✓ Consider and plan for major national revision of 'Decent Homes Standard'</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Incorporate the aims and objectives included within the Council's Sustainability and Climate Crisis Strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all lights are replaced with LED (preferably sensor operated) as and when they reach the end of their life.</li> <li>• Develop a Council-wide construction standard for Council housing to ensure that high standards of energy efficiency and sustainability are incorporated to building design and construction to achieve appropriate zero carbon buildings standard.</li> <li>• Undertake an ongoing programme to improve energy efficiency of Council-owned housing incorporating the advice in the energy audits.</li> <li>• Installing A-rated boilers, insulate lofts and cavity walls, install double glazing and energy efficient lighting to interior and exterior of Council-owned housing.</li> <li>• Undertake a programme to raise the energy performance of Council-owned housing to meet EPC B by 2030.</li> </ul>

<p>Promote Energy Efficiency in the Private Rented Sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve promotion of the Home Repairs Assistance Grant providing support for vulnerable households who are experiencing serious disrepair in their properties, by improving visibility on the website and through a specific leaflet.</li> <li>• Support the delivery of the Sustainable Warmth and St Albans Warmer Homes Scheme by accessing funding to carry out works to improve the energy efficiency in private homes.</li> <li>• In response to complaints from tenants in private rented housing, we will enforce the requirements of the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme (HHSRS) and the minimum energy efficiency standards, to reduce the hazard of excess cold.</li> <li>• Attend Landlord Forums and work with lettings agents and private landlords to raise awareness of Landlords' duties to meet minimum standards and to provide advice on the assistance available.</li> <li>• Establish how the Council might more proactively monitor and enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards given the existing resources to do so.</li> </ul>
<p>Develop and implement the Energy Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy works to be carried out to 136 dwellings in 2022 / 23 under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.</li> <li>• Submit a bid for funding for 925 dwellings in 2022 / 23 under Phase 2 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.</li> <li>• Complete an Energy Net Present Value on the Council's housing stock to identify the viability of each dwelling.</li> <li>• Working with the development team to ensure new homes are low maintenance, carbon neutral and contain modern components. This includes alternatives to gas heating, electric charging points, solar panels, and modern methods of construction.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying and developing HRA assets that have potential for carbon neutral district heating systems that would be available for private and Council tenants.</li> <li>Promotion of the Council's Energy Strategy at estate open days, Housing Times and through press releases.</li> </ul>
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**Pledge 3 - Ensure a sufficient supply of temporary accommodation**

Aim	Measure
Minimise the use of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the supply of temporary accommodation is managed to minimise the use of hotel accommodation.</li> <li>Hotel accommodation is approved by 2 senior managers and used only in exceptional circumstances.</li> <li>Proactively exercise discharge of duty into private rented sector through Mosaic Lettings.</li> </ul>
Deliver high quality self-contained temporary accommodation stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of Ridgeview development.</li> <li>Phase out the use of mobile homes and shared accommodation.</li> <li>Consider future use of temporary accommodation at Grosvenor Road and whether asset disposal can fund improved quality of temporary accommodation.</li> </ul>
Make best use of existing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify any Council-owned properties that become empty to identify if suitable for conversion to temporary accommodation.</li> <li>Redevelop vacant shop units for adapted units of temporary accommodation.</li> </ul>

Work in partnership with Hertfordshire Growth Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop forecasting model to monitor trends and predict any likely increase in use of temporary accommodation.</li> <li>Provision of hospital 'step down' accommodation.</li> <li>Provision of accommodation for clients with ultra-high needs.</li> </ul>
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**Pledge 4 - Support the delivery of a local plan to maximise the future delivery of affordable housing**

Aim	Measure
Maximise the delivery of affordable housing on large and / or strategic sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close liaison with Planning Policy team to determine affordable housing policy for Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation.</li> <li>Update policy following consultation to inform Local Plan Regulation 19 publication.</li> </ul>
Deliver housing at a size and tenure mix that meets the need of the Housing Register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased supply of family housing available for rent.</li> <li>Increased supply of supported housing and accommodation for older people.</li> </ul>

Warner House-a Council redevelopment of a former sheltered housing scheme





## Pledge 5 – Meeting the accommodation needs of vulnerable people

Aim	Measure
Plan for future housing need of vulnerable households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly meetings of Accommodation Board with key stakeholders from Hertfordshire County Council.</li> <li>Coordinate work with Planning Policy department in assessing future housing need on strategic sites.</li> <li>Collaborate with Hertfordshire County Council developing a single homeless pathway following roll out of Complex Needs Floating Support Services in October 2022.</li> </ul>
Making best use of existing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration given to joining County-wide Home Improvement Agency to achieve value for money and best practice for disabled adaptations.</li> <li>Annual budget within Housing Revenue Account to carry out adaptations in existing stock.</li> </ul>
To deliver purpose built adapted housing on new developments on Council owned sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessing levels of housing need to inform new build developments.</li> <li>Monthly Housing Project Board meetings to monitor new housing delivery.</li> </ul>
To signpost households to appropriate supported housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivering an effective homelessness triage service.</li> <li>Quarterly Homelessness Forum meetings held attended by key stakeholders and supported housing providers.</li> </ul>

To deliver Housing First for single homeless households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A commissioned specialist domestic abuse service with clear pathways for victims to access specialist domestic abuse support either by self or agency referral.</li> <li>The Council has an established working agreement with local support services to fully assess the level of risk and suitability of approach on the grounds of domestic abuse to the Homelessness Team.</li> </ul>
Align with the priorities within Hertfordshire County Council's Supporting Adults with Complex Needs Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a Single Homeless Pathway.</li> <li>Work in partnership to support the Housing Complex Needs Multi-Disciplinary Team Pilot.</li> <li>Creation of the Prospectus to inform future commissioning of housing related support for single adults.</li> <li>Whole Housing Approach (Pilot).</li> <li>Perpetrator Management.</li> </ul>
Support refugees in the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide accommodation in private rented sector for at least 3 Afghan households.</li> <li>Commission support from the Refugee Council.</li> <li>Attend regular meetings with Hertfordshire County Council and Strategic Migration partnership.</li> <li>Support sponsors and guests for the Homes for Ukraine scheme.</li> <li>Carry out any property checks to ensure they are suitable to accommodate refugees.</li> <li>Provide housing advice and support where necessary.</li> <li>Support the work required to achieve the Council's membership of the 'City of Sanctuary' network.</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

This Strategy has been developed through consultation with Councillors, residents, applicants on the Council's Housing Register and a number of third sector organisations such as Citizens Advice and Emmaus. It sets out the 5 pledges to meet the challenges in delivering and managing high quality housing with a particular emphasis on social rented housing.

The Council is grateful to all its partners and stakeholders who it will engage and work with to achieve the aims and objectives within this strategy:

- Catalyst Housing Group
- Hightown Housing Association
- Settle
- Watford Community Housing Trust

- Emmaus
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Open Door Charity
- Citizens Advice
- Parish Councils
- Council for Voluntary Services
- Districts / Boroughs in Hertfordshire

The Strategy will be monitored by way of an annual update to the Housing and Inclusion Committee. This will set out progress on performance against all the aims and measures set out within the Strategy. This update will be published on the Council's website. It is intended this Strategy will respond to local issues and review best practice nationally to ensure we deliver on our commitments and meet our key priorities. The Strategy has a timescale of 3 years, and it will be refreshed and updated for 2026.

**Viking Close - brand new development delivering four 3-bedroom houses on a former garage site for social rent and six homes for private sale.**



## Government legislation 2017-2022

Title	Summary
The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	The major change in the legislation is the integration of prevention and relief into a local authority's statutory duty. Prevention and relief are available to any household vulnerable to homelessness in 56 days rather than 28 days' time.
2017 White Paper: Fixing our Broken Housing Market	This White Paper set out the Government's plans to boost the supply of new homes in England. It included measures to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for the right homes in the right places</li> <li>• Build homes faster</li> <li>• Diversity in the housing market</li> <li>• Help people now</li> </ul>
Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018	This sets out how rough sleeping would be eliminated by 2027. There are 3 key themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention</li> <li>• Intervention</li> <li>• Recovery</li> </ul>
Homes Fitness for Human Habitation Act 2018	Gives tenants the right to take their landlord to court in cases where their rented property poses serious health risks. The legislation applies to all tenancies created after 20 March 2019 and existing tenancies from 20 March 2020.
HRA Borrowing Cap 2018	This was lifted in 2018 to allow house building Councils more flexibility to build. The Government has also extended the time period to spend additional Right To Buy Receipts from 3 to 5 years.
Homes England Strategic Plan 2018-2023	This plan set out 6 guiding principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlocking and enabling land</li> <li>• Providing investment products, including for major infrastructure</li> <li>• Supporting the affordable housing market</li> <li>• Supporting modern methods of construction</li> <li>• Addressing the barriers facing smaller builders</li> <li>• Providing expert support to priority locations</li> </ul>

The Future Homes Standard	Building regulations will change so that from 2025 the Future Homes Standard will deliver homes that are zero carbon ready. Homes build under this standard should produce 75-80% less carbon emissions compared with current levels and become net zero as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise.
Fire Safety Act April 2021	This now requires Fire Risk Assessments to include an assessment of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any fire hazard associated with the external structure and walls including windows, balconies, and cladding</li> <li>• Entrance doors to individual flats that open into communal areas</li> </ul> The Act also designated those in control of premises as the 'Responsible Person'.
National Planning Policy Framework Revised July 2021	The Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The most notable addition is inclusion of Starter Homes and other housing for Discounted Market Sale within the traditional definition of Affordable Housing.  It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.
Building Safety Act 2022	The bill features major changes to the regulatory regime for building safety. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An independent Building Safety Regulator established in the Health and Safety Executive</li> <li>• A new 'Gateway' regime to ensure that building safety risks are considered at each stage of a building's planning and design, construction, and pre-occupation stages</li> <li>• New roles to include an Accountable Person as a duty holder of a building during its occupation</li> </ul> The Bill has major implications for all social landlords, private landlords and developers and sets out a clear framework for compliance.

Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill 2022	This Bill will introduce a locally set, non-negotiable levy to harness more of the financial value created by development and to deliver vital infrastructure. It also includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplification and standardisation of the process for Local Plans</li> <li>• Digitalising the planning process</li> <li>• Strengthening neighbourhood planning</li> <li>• Giving residents more say over changing street names</li> <li>• Right to vote for residents on proposed property extensions and other developments in their area</li> <li>• Design codes about the layout of new developments and materials which could be used</li> </ul>
Renters Reform Bill 2022	The main aim of the Bill is to remove the Section 21 no fault eviction under 1988 Housing Act. It also includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new property portal where landlords can access information about their obligations and tenants can get performance information and hold their landlord to account</li> <li>• Strengthening the rights of private renters by applying the legally binding Decent Homes Standard to the sector</li> </ul>
Social Housing Regulation Bill 2022	The Bill aims to increase social housing tenants' rights to better homes and enhance their ability to hold landlords to account. It will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the power of the English Regulator of Social Housing</li> <li>• Introduce new performance measures</li> <li>• Provide the Regulator with the power to inspect on consumer issues and there are harsher penalties for landlords who do not meet the standards including unlimited fines.</li> </ul>



This Strategy is a live, working, document that will inform the work of the Housing department in the next 3 years. It will be monitored on a regular basis and annual updates will be provided to the Housing and Inclusion Committee.

If you have any comments on the Housing Strategy please click on link below or scan the QR code:

[St Albans City and District Housing Strategy 2023-2026: Have your say](#)

Housing Strategy 2023-2026: Have your say



If you are not able to access the online link or QR code and require a paper form to give feedback, please contact the Council Customer Service team on 01727 866100.

**New Council houses in Sandridge built on a former garage site.**





**St Albans**  
City & District Council

[www.stalbans.gov.uk/housing](http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/housing)