



Basingstoke
and Deane

Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2023 to 2027





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Foreword by Cabinet Member for Residents' Services and Housing Cllr Laura James

This Housing and Homelessness Strategy has many strands to it. It is a thorough and comprehensive approach to tackling the challenges we face. This new Housing and Homelessness Strategy seeks to build on the success of previous strategies and hard work that officers, partners and councillors have put in over many years. A lot has been achieved and we have a good story to tell but we cannot rest. We must always strive to be better and review and reform our approach to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our residents.

Regeneration is high up on our agenda. We want to work with our partners to unlock the potential of renewal in existing communities in the borough. In Buckskin and South Ham, we will focus on collaborating with residents and councillors, empowering them to work alongside our key partners in the transformation of communities through regeneration.

We want to focus on the places in which we live, not just bricks and mortar, but the social and community fabric

as well as the environment. This strategy is a recognition that good regeneration and development doesn't just come from good collaboration, but effective master planning of the whole place. We will develop a liveability standard to support the review of the Local Plan and our aim is to work with partners to drive up standards.

Partnership working underpins everything we do, building effective relationships that deliver for the benefit of everyone in our borough. By building better relationships between councillors, housing associations and communities, we know we will achieve more if we can bring people around the table.

The success of the Social Inclusion Partnership and rough sleeping agenda shows us what can be achieved. We continue to prioritise tackling domestic abuse and preventing homelessness. This council remains committed to the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance and the White Ribbon principles and actions, supporting residents that need our help.

We must also recognise the backdrop that this strategy is being written against. The cost of living crisis continues to affect us and life is hard for so many of our residents. The number of people joining the housing register is increasing as the economic reality of high interest rates and rents, alongside high inflation and the loss of private sector housing options compound an already complicated housing picture. The increasing gap between local housing allowances and prices is seeing people left behind and trapped in unaffordable accommodation. The situation is further complicated by the continued roll out of welfare changes.

To achieve our strategy we will place a greater emphasis on working with partners, bringing together all available opportunities to deliver more social rented and accessible housing, as well as improving housing services.

We plan to invest in our strong Housing team to ensure it has the capacity and resources needed to deliver this strategy and its actions, working closely with our partners.

We know that climate change and the ecological emergency sit at the heart of shaping all that we want to do as a council and this strategy presents an opportunity to ensure our homes are sustainable for the future.

I want to thank our partners and our officer teams for their continued resilience, support and commitment in these increasingly challenging times and the work they do to support our Housing and Homelessness Strategy.



Introduction and strategic fit

By law, local authorities are required to have a Homelessness Strategy and the council's Homelessness Strategy sits within this broader Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2023 to 2027. This is a crucial document which sets out the priorities and the direction of travel that the council, in partnership with its key stakeholders, aims to achieve to deliver the best outcomes for those in housing need across the borough, in the current challenging and difficult economic climate.

The unprecedented emergence of COVID-19 had a local, national and international impact. We are still recovering from the pandemic and the economic impact has been significant for many people across our communities. We know we face a cost of living crisis that results in many social pressures that reflect upon the importance of this strategy.

The strategic objectives of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy are a key priority of the council and working together with our partners, we aim to deliver our objectives for the residents of the borough. Partnership working is at the heart of this strategy. The priorities that the council has identified are displayed on page seven and detailed throughout the document.

The council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy feeds into the overarching Council Plan 2023 to 2027 which has been recently adopted and has three priorities:

- A place where people can have pride in their communities and the borough
- A borough where we protect, restore, reconnect and enhance our natural environment
- A council that delivers high-quality services for our residents.

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2023 to 2027 will play a key role in delivering the priorities set out within the Council Plan 2023 to 2027.

Alongside the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2023 to 2027 sit other corporate strategies and plans, including the Local Plan 2011 to 2029. The current Local Plan includes a requirement for delivering 850 dwellings a year, and 40% affordable housing on threshold sites. The Local Plan is undergoing an update and themes highlighted within this strategy sets the framework for the aims of the affordable housing policies within the Local Plan Update.

A number of the council's business service plans support delivery of this strategy, as well as shared plans with partners, for example the Social Inclusion Partnership's Rough Sleeping Plan.

On a national level, housing remains a significant part of the government's agenda and housing-related legislation has recently been passed which we have considered in determining our key priorities. These are set out on page six.

Context, evidence base and refreshing the strategy

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2020 to 2024 was adopted at Council in 2020, and key elements of the strategy remain pertinent and continue to feature within this updated Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2023 to 2027.

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2020 to 2024 generated significant levels of success. This refreshed Strategy looks to build on these areas of success where they are still relevant. However, a number of changes and emerging themes, locally and nationally, since the adoption of the previous strategy has led to the development of a new Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2023 to 2027. These include:

- The development and adoption of a new Council Plan;
- The council's Wellbeing Strategy 2022 to 2025 and Strengthening Communities Strategy 2022 to 2027;
- Increased emphasis placed on tackling the climate change emergency, including the Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy 2021 to 2030;
- Outcomes of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge;
- Affordability issues and cost of living crisis;
- The introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021;
- The introduction of First Homes, a new low cost home ownership product;
- Housing standards issues – particularly around damp and mould through the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 and the introduction of the Fire Safety Act 2021 for high rise flats;

- International crises and supporting Afghan and Ukrainian refugees.

It is important that the strategy is fluid and adaptable to ensure relevance throughout its duration. Following an ongoing and informed process of reviewing evidence and local context, including collaboration with an internal working group, priorities for the Strategy were identified and are set out in a concise strategic framework within this document.

A key stakeholder consultation was also conducted and responses were received from a range of partners including parish councils, local housing associations, supported housing providers, neighbouring local authorities, key voluntary sector organisations including Social Inclusion Partners, health partners, Department for Work and Pensions and Hampshire County Council. All council members were also consulted as part of this process, and members had the opportunity to comment on the refreshed strategy updates at Economic, Housing and Planning Committee on 2 March 2023.

The consultation process showed that between 91 and 100% of responders agreed (or did not disagree) with each of the proposed updated priorities, and similarly between 91 and 100% of responders felt the updated priorities aligned with their own organisational priorities. Housing-related comments from the Council Plan consultation which ran prior to were also analysed and incorporated into the strategy.



Our priorities:

Tackling Climate Change

Our vision:

We recognise the current climate and ecological emergency and our aspiration is for homes within the borough to be of the highest possible eco standards, with homes being energy efficient and cost-effective to run. We will consider the wider sense of 'place', so residents have access to quality green spaces through enabling, supporting and proactively influencing local housing providers, planning policies and working with the Climate Emergency team. We value the benefits that biodiversity offers towards health and wellbeing. How new housing is designed and built, and existing housing is adapted is core to tackling climate change. We want to ensure sites and buildings are resilient to future climate change impacts to optimise health and wellbeing of occupiers as well as the surrounding environment.

Ending Rough Sleeping

Our vision:

Rough sleeping is a distinct, complex and harmful form of homelessness affecting the most vulnerable in our community. We want to build on the progressive work of the Social Inclusion Partnership to support those who experience rough sleeping into safe, suitable accommodation through the homelessness pathway, ensuring psychologically informed approaches which underpin our work on homelessness and rough sleeping. We will optimise our working relationships with partners and the community to help deliver our Rough Sleeping Plan.

Preventing Homelessness

Our vision:

As a council we have primary legal responsibilities for preventing homelessness. We want to build on our successful and proactive approach to homelessness prevention to ensure the most vulnerable in the community receive the services and support they need, whilst remaining flexible and responsive to emerging pressures such as the cost of living crisis. We are also responding proactively to tackle domestic abuse.



Our priorities continued:

Affordable Housing Supply, Quality and Standards

Our vision:

Residents should have access to a wide variety of affordable housing options, prioritising social rented homes, that are of a safe and high standard. They need to be designed to be liveable throughout key stages of people's lives, including adaptations where required to enable people to live independently, and larger houses being of a sufficient size to accommodate appropriate bedroom needs. We will link directly to the proposed liveability standard that is being developed as part of the Local Plan Update.

We want to ensure that appropriate, sustainable new affordable housing is delivered for social rent and for affordable home ownership that meets the range of identified household needs. We want to shape planning policies to support delivery of social rented homes and protect and enhance affordable housing in rural areas.



Regeneration and Place

Our vision:

People's perception and feelings about their homes are largely influenced by the place and environment in which they live. We want to ensure that we actively encourage and enable the delivery of strategic regeneration areas at Winklebury and Buckskin and South Ham. We will support the Neighbourhood Improvement Programme, whilst seizing all opportunities to regenerate smaller sites when they arise, including delivering significant improvements to the existing hostel facility at May Place House.

Regeneration is about well-designed places that meet the holistic relationship between people, homes, spaces, facilities and infrastructure. Good planning flows from engagement with communities about how their area can change for the better.

Measuring success, monitoring and review

The progress and success of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy will be regularly monitored and a review of the performance targets for the strategy as identified will be published on an annual basis. These targets are as follows:

Tackling Climate Change:

- We will proactively support work on the climate change emergency including influencing housing association partners' strategies on design of new housing stock and their retrofit programmes for existing properties;
- We will work collaboratively with housing providers to deliver improvements to reduce emissions in a co-ordinated approach through the development control process and through exploring grant funding opportunities;
- We will support the work and actions as set out within the Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy and the actions within the associated action plan;
- We will influence Local Plan policies to seek to achieve sustainable and efficient housing, with access to green space, in order to deal with future climate change and to enable lower-carbon lifestyles as appropriate, for example through the inclusion of electric vehicle charging;

- We will support new schemes which will address multiple additional issues, with better designed housing more resilient to future climate change alleviating fuel poverty and health issues;
- We will support the Climate Emergency team to raise resident and tenant awareness on how to improve sustainability in their homes and how to reduce carbon emissions.



Preventing Homelessness:

- There will be nil use of bed and breakfast for homeless 16/17 year olds;
- No homeless family with children (or pregnant family member) will have to occupy bed and breakfast for longer than six weeks and we will aim to place in emergency accommodation within the borough where safe and available;
- We will prevent homelessness through private sector and Joshua Tree placements for at least 100 households each year;
- We will secure Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation by the end of the 2024/25 financial year, providing a framework for good practice across key areas within the council;
 - We will continue our hands-on approach to support international government work regarding refugees and those seeking asylum;
 - We will adapt and continuously review our homelessness prevention options in light of wider housing market pressures including welfare reform and the cost-of-living crisis.



Ending Rough Sleeping:

- We will regenerate May Place House – commencing in 2023/24;
- We will drive forward our ambition to end rough sleeping in the borough through the success of the Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP), ensuring that any occurrence of rough sleeping is prevented where possible, and where it does take place it is rare, brief and non-recurring;
- We will continue to develop and monitor the range of suitable supported housing and shared schemes for single homeless and vulnerable households in order to meet the specific needs of individuals;
- We will make best use of the accommodation available within the homelessness pathway to ensure that individuals are in the most appropriate environment for their specific needs to enable a positive transition into more settled accommodation;
- We will explore options for emergency provision over the winter periods in partnership with the SIP, local churches and the voluntary sector.



Affordable Housing Supply, Quality and Standards:

- We will deliver new affordable housing in line with Local Plan targets and enhance and accelerate further delivery of affordable housing for social rent through to low cost home ownership;
- We will map the land in council ownership that could enable the delivery of affordable homes (prioritising social rented homes). We will look at different options to enable the effective delivery of these homes;
- We will focus any section 106 contributions designated for affordable housing to enable new affordable housing delivery or improvements to existing or proposed affordable stock;
- We will require 100% nomination arrangements on new affordable housing delivered for rent;
- We will actively support the delivery of new social rented opportunities and feed these aspirations into emerging Local Plan Update policies;
- We will ensure that the affordable housing delivery meets a range of household needs by size, type, tenure and location to ensure that where possible, it is liveable throughout key stages of people's lives;
- We will maintain a single point of access housing register for all social housing rented vacancies and deliver annual lettings reviews to Scrutiny Committee;
- We will ensure robust enforcement of housing safety and standards across all tenures – including fire safety, high rise flats and damp and mould management;
- We will deliver a risk-based HMO inspection regime incorporating licensed and non-licensable HMOs across the borough to ensure safety;
- We will deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant service which achieves minimum 95% customer satisfaction, supporting the strategic aim of enabling people to live independently in their homes for as long as possible;
- We will investigate the implementation of a preferred housing association partner process;



- We will aim to bring long-term (over six months) empty homes back into use for rented opportunities where possible and achievable, whilst ensuring that the number of long-term empty homes within the borough remains under the national average;
- We will maintain our enhanced low cost home ownership offer for residents by delivering low cost home ownership events at least twice a year, maintaining the new innovative low cost home ownership register, enabling purchases through the Own Home Loan scheme and support the delivery of new low cost home ownership products such as First Homes.
- We will encourage and enable the delivery of regeneration projects by housing associations and other partners which enhances both the quality and quantity of affordable housing opportunities and 'place making' in the borough, which also meets our climate priorities;
- We will collaborate proactively with partners to support regeneration of smaller sites as and when these opportunities arise.

Regeneration:

- We will take a collaborative engagement approach with key partners including VIVID, ward councillors and the community to maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits of the Winklebury regeneration;
- We will take a collaborative engagement approach with key partners including Sovereign, ward councillors and the community to agree a vision on the regeneration of Buckskin and South Ham;
- We will lead a dynamic partnership group to secure vastly improved facilities at May Place House;
- We will support the corporate Neighbourhood Improvement Programme, with progress monitored against the council's capital programme;



Corporate targets

The Council Plan performance targets act as another measure of success, with the high-level scorecard indicators being:

- No use of bed and breakfast for 16/17 year olds
- No use of bed and breakfast exceeding six weeks for families with dependent children
- Minimum 45 advertising cycles for social housing lets available per year
- All new housing register applications assessed within 10 working days following receipt of all relevant information
- Production and publication of annual review in Q1 for preceding year
- At least two LCHO information events delivered per year with a target attendance of minimum 70 per event
- Minimum 80% of homeless approaches resolved and B&B prevented (excluding single homeless pathway and SWEP placements)

The housing team's service plan monitoring, regular reviews and returns to the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) and councillor briefings, updates and workshops as well as reports and briefings to overview and scrutiny committees as appropriate all act as further methods to measure the ongoing success of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2023 to 2027.



How we will deliver the strategy

We will deliver the Strategy in a number of ways:

Direct delivery

The council has a statutory duty to prevent homelessness and as such this priority will be directly delivered within the council's housing team and resources, in collaboration with housing providers, public bodies and the newly-established Domestic Abuse Forum, and assisted by occasional funding streams through Homes England and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The enforcement of housing safety and standards as well as HMO inspections and DFG works are also directly delivered.

Delivery in partnership

Whilst overall responsibility for rough sleeping in the borough lies with the council, the ongoing progressive work of the Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) is crucial to ending rough sleeping within Basingstoke and Deane. The partnership work between the council and local agencies, community links, the voluntary sector as well as supported accommodation providers will support the priority of ending rough sleeping and the SIP's Rough Sleeping Plan.

Enabling

We will ensure delivery of new affordable housing in the borough, working in partnership with key housing associations. The council has an enabling role to support the delivery of new affordable housing opportunities and ensuring that new affordable delivery is appropriate in terms of its location, type, size and tenure. We will be focused on 'place making'.

The council will explore the opportunities that exist for the delivery of affordable housing by direct delivery, mapping and using our land, and by working in partnership with others to ensure that we seize those opportunities and promote and increase the delivery of affordable homes, especially social rented housing.

Influencing and shaping

The work of the housing team through this strategy brings vital context to ensure delivery of other key council priorities and strategies. This includes the issue of tackling climate change, feeding into the Local Plan Update, supporting opportunities for new affordable housing delivery, and small to medium scale regeneration opportunities. Whilst the responsibilities are under the control of other departments, the housing team plays a crucial role in supporting the delivery of these outcomes.

Strategic support and engagement

On a wider scale the team proactively engages with strategic stakeholders such as DLUHC, Homes England, housing associations, Hampshire County Council, and other local district authorities to support and enable the delivery of wider strategic projects, such as the large scale regeneration of Winklebury and Buckskin and South Ham.

Other key stakeholders are involved with large scale regeneration projects such as health partners within the Integrated Care Board (ICB), since there is an intrinsic link between health and housing, with health considerations embedded into any successful housing system.

The housing team will also continue to embrace its safeguarding responsibilities under the Care Act 2014.

Partnership working strongly underpins this document and success of this strategy cannot be achieved working in isolation.



Funding the strategy

The delivery of the strategy has an associated significant revenue income budget comprising of both external and Basingstoke and Deane funding.

The approved annual revenue expenditure budget for homelessness at commencement of this strategy is £3,470,000. The initial forecast income budget is £1,840,000 per year, including £614,000 grants from Hampshire County Council for social inclusion and homeless prevention measures and grants of £1,030,000 from DLUHC for homeless prevention, rough sleeping and domestic abuse initiatives. The net cost to the council of £1,630,000 is met from the council's own resources.

Included in the grant funding shown above, the original budget included a Hampshire County Council grant of £231,000 to provide housing support to Ukrainian refugees and there is now confirmation from DLUHC that the homelessness prevention grant top up is to increase to £311,000 for the first year of the strategy, and additional grant funding may be made available over the life of the strategy.

There is a capital budget of £372,250 over the life of this four-year strategy for the Own Home Loan scheme, funded through section 106 contributions, which offers residents up to £30,000 in the form of an equity loan to bridge the gap between their mortgage offer and property purchase value.

Section 106 contributions must be applied as capital funding for specific affordable housing delivery, with management of these works being met within existing staff resources. There are further unspent/unallocated section 106 developer contributions reserved for affordable housing of £1,248,033.

The council also has a capital budget for mandatory and discretionary disabled facilities grants of approximately £1,676,800 per year – partly funded by government grants which are allocated by Hampshire County Council.

Finally, the council also holds a housing and homeless revenue and capital reserve budget.

Glossary

Affordable housing - housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- (a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
- (b) Starter homes: is as specified in sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the

time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

- (c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
- (d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

B&B – Bed and breakfast accommodation which is used by the council to accommodate households in priority need in an emergency situation where there is no other suitable form of accommodation available.

Council Plan – A corporate council document, annually updated, that sets out the strategic priorities for the council over a four year period.

DAHA – Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation sets the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse in the UK which is awarded to housing providers who represent the accreditation framework and best practice to take a stand to ensure they deliver safe and effective responses to domestic abuse.

DFG – A Disabled Facilities Grant is available from the council to pay for essential housing adaptations to assist disabled people stay in their own homes.

First Homes – A new form of affordable home ownership whereby homes are discounted by at least 30% from their open market value in perpetuity, up to a total post-discount purchase price of £250,000. First Homes must account for 25% of the affordable housing requirement on new developments.

LGA – Local Government Association

Liveability Standard – A proposed series of key principles which represent good quality housing development, such as sufficient space for pushchair storage and lift access in blocks of flats.

Low Cost Home Ownership event - A free event held within the council offices with registered providers, financial advisors, solicitors and building societies present where residents can get advice on accessing low cost home ownership.

Houses in Multiple Occupation – A house in multiple occupation (HMO) is a property occupied by at least three people who are not from one household but share facilities such as the kitchen and bathroom. A large HMO is one which is rented to five or more people who form more than one household, and some or all tenants share toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities.

Housing Register – A register maintained by the council of the households who are eligible to access affordable rented accommodation through a choice based lettings scheme. Households who qualify to join the register must meet the requirements of the Housing Allocation Scheme – a statutory document that sets out the rules by which affordable rented housing is allocated.

Intermediate Housing – A generic term to describe accommodation which is intended to be affordable for working households available for rent, ownership or a combination of rent and ownership. Such households do not usually qualify for affordable rented housing and are not able to afford to access housing on the open market for rent or ownership.

Local Plan – The overarching planning document that identifies where development will take place, how new jobs will be supported and how the precious environment of the borough will be protected and enhanced. It also allocates major sites and locations for development to meet the needs of our growing population.

Neighbourhood Improvement Programme – In collaboration with partners, a borough-wide, co-ordinated programme of improvements to public and community buildings, facilities and open space at a neighbourhood level.

Own Home Loan – An in-house equity loan scheme which offers residents up to £30,000 in the form of a loan to reach a deposit required for a mortgage or to bridge the gap between their maximum mortgage offer and property purchase value.

Registered Providers (RP's) – Housing associations who are registered as providers of affordable housing with the government appointed Regulator of Social Housing.

Rough Sleeping Plan – A plan developed by Basingstoke and Deane's Social Inclusion Partnership to reduce rough sleeping and increase social inclusion.

Service plans – Departmental annual document highlighting pressures, customer base, risks and key projects to deliver corporate priorities as set out in the Council Plan.

Social Inclusion Partnership – A strategic collaborative forum attended by practitioners and organisations whose interest is to reduce homelessness and increase social inclusion.

Social Rent – A rent level at the most affordable level for tenants which complies with guideline target rents which are determined through a formula based on the national rent regime

White Ribbon – The alliance which engages men and boys to end violence against women and girls in the UK.

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