

GOOD HOMES FOR ALL

Winchester City Council Housing
Development Strategy 2025 - 2032

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Welcome

Welcome to our Housing Development Strategy that aims to create *Good Homes for All*.

Winchester is a great place to live and work, however, we recognise that finding a suitable and affordable home can be a real challenge.

This strategy is our commitment to change that. It's about ensuring that everyone — regardless of age, income, or background — has access to high-quality, secure, and sustainable housing. Our 2024 Residents' Survey made it clear: affordable housing is the top priority for our community, and we're listening.

The Winchester and South Downs National Park Local Plans are delivering housing in significant numbers. Through this strategy, we will support the delivery of the right homes in the right places. We'll focus on building more affordable homes, providing long-term market rental options, and ensuring that new developments meet high environmental standards — helping to reduce energy bills and tackle climate change.

We're building on strong foundations. In the three years to 2023–24, over 1,250 new affordable homes were delivered outside the South Downs National Park — making up between 34% and 45% of all new housing each year. Since 2012, we've added more than 500 new council homes, developed Extra Care Housing for older residents, and launched market-rented homes through Venta Living Ltd, our council-owned housing company.

We are ambitious. Our goal is to deliver 1,000 new council homes between 2020 and 2032 — using our assets wisely and creating new opportunities wherever we can.

However, our ambitions go beyond bricks and mortar. We want to build homes that support thriving, inclusive, and connected communities.

We're committed to supporting older people, helping young people stay in the district, and ensuring families and those with specific needs have the homes they need.

And we know we can't do this alone. That's why we're working in partnership — with other affordable housing providers, developers, residents, and government — to make it happen.

As local government evolves, we'll stay agile and ready to seize new opportunities. Together, we can shape a future where everyone in Winchester has a place to call home — and where our district continues to thrive as a great place to live and work.

Cllr Mark Reach

Cabinet Member for Good Homes

Executive Summary

Why we are producing this strategy

Our 2024 **Residents' Survey** identified the **availability of affordable housing** as the most urgent issue facing our communities. Residents also ranked the **provision of more affordable homes** as the top priority for council action over the next five years. This feedback reinforces the council's commitment to the strategic objective of **providing Good Homes for All**, a cornerstone of the Council Plan.

We want to ensure the district's housing circumstances are improved. Housing affordability compromises the ability of large sections of the community to find a home that meets their needs in a place they want to live. Not only does this mean some do not have a suitable roof over their head - inadequate housing is a threat to health and wellbeing, can compromise educational opportunities and hinders the district's chance of thriving; economically, socially and culturally. This means inadequate housing is a problem for the whole community, not just those seeking housing.

This strategy will drive forward an increase in affordable housing supply to help address these challenges.

Our Housing Development Priorities

The priority focus of this strategy is the delivery of **additional** affordable housing.

To do this we will invest in new council homes to meet our 1000 home target and support other Affordable Housing Providers, including Registered Providers, housing and community land trusts, invest in increasing the supply of homes provided by them.

Though the delivery of S106 affordable housing opportunities will underpin supply, **we want to drive an increase in the number of additional homes over and above S106 supply** so we can best meet housing needs.

Housing Strategy Vision

Healthier, greener homes, meeting housing needs within better neighbourhoods.

Housing Development Strategy Vision

To provide and support the provision of more homes and of cohesive, connected neighbourhoods across the district, giving communities a choice of affordable, high quality, green, healthy housing to meet their needs.

Housing Development Strategy Priority Focus

Delivering and supporting the delivery of additional affordable housing by the council and other Affordable Housing Providers.

What we want to see provided

- **A mix of housing and flats**
It is important to provide a range of housing sizes and types that take account of local needs.
- **Social rented housing as the priority rented tenure**
Social rented housing is usually the most affordable of affordable housing types. We see the provision of social rented homes provided as a priority.
- **Shared ownership housing as the priority low-cost home ownership product**
Low-cost home ownership offers the opportunity to buy a home for those who cannot afford open market purchase. Both the council and Affordable Housing Providers (AHPs) have an excellent track record of providing shared ownership housing, a low-cost ownership product that is well understood by the market and readily mortgageable.
- **Energy efficient housing**
To mitigate the environmental impact of new development we will strive to make our new homes as energy efficient as possible.
- **Specialist supported housing for those with care and support needs and at risk of homelessness**
Most households are able to live in mainstream housing. However, some have specific needs that mean they can receive the best housing, care and support in more specialised settings.
- **Housing that meets the needs of those with disabilities or vulnerabilities**
We are planning for enhanced accessibility standards in all new homes and to meet the needs of those with vulnerabilities who may benefit from housing with low level or no accommodation-based care or support needs.

Where we want housing provided

- **Areas of highest need**
These are the areas where most people already live, such as Winchester Town.
- **Areas where opportunities exist**
For instance, major development areas & S106 sites; where there are assets that can be remodelled or re-developed and where additional land is available.
- **Areas where it is important to meet needs close to where it arises**
This includes Winchester Town, market towns, and rural areas where appropriate.
- **Where schemes represent good value for money**
Including capital resources and investment of staff time.

How we expect housing to be provided

- **S106 opportunities**

There is the potential for the bulk of new supply to come from these sites. We will deliver and support other AHPs to deliver affordable homes to meet needs.

- **An increased delivery of land led opportunities to create additional new housing supply**

It is important to maximise affordable housing provision by developing new homes in addition to those homes delivered through S106 sites. We will deliver and support other AHPs to increase supply from this source. In particular, we will work in partnership with AHPs, developers and stakeholders to support affordable housing supply in association with council-led regeneration initiatives and other development opportunities.

- **Utilisation of asset management strategies to make best use of housing stock and land to increase affordable housing supply**

There are 9000 affordable homes in the district. Most are in good condition. However, due to changing needs and the nature of some buildings there is the opportunity to remodel or redevelop some sites. We will develop our own asset management strategy to explore opportunities to increase affordable housing supply on land we already own and work with AHPs to do the same.

- **Increased rural housing to meet village and parish needs**

It is important that we meet needs across the district, close to where it arises. While the bulk of new supply is likely to come from the three major development areas and Winchester Town, we are committed to providing, and working with other AHPs and Action Hampshire, to deliver new affordable housing in market towns and the rural parts of the district. This includes affordable housing to meet village and parish needs on rural exception sites.

Introduction

The local housing market is complex and varied. The council and the South Downs National Park through their planning powers have a specific role to play in facilitating both market and affordable developers. We are fortunate to have a buoyant private sector housing market that developers wish to invest in, and this investment will be led by them and by the planning system.

This strategy will, therefore, focus on two specific areas where the council is able to exert specific influence and to directly intervene.

The priority focus of this strategy is the delivery of additional affordable housing. To do this we will invest in new council homes to meet our 1,000 home target and support other Affordable Housing Providers (AHPs, who meet the definitions contained in the National Planning Policy Framework), including Registered Providers and local housing trusts and community led housing organisations, invest in their own additional supply.

Our development priorities are to deliver ourselves and support other AHPs –

To provide:

- A mix of housing and flats
- Social rented housing as the priority rented tenure
- Shared ownership housing as the priority low-cost home ownership product
- Energy efficient housing
- Specialist supported housing for those with care and support needs and at risk of homelessness
- Housing that meets the needs of those with disabilities or vulnerabilities

In:

- Areas of highest need, such as Winchester Town
- Areas where opportunities exist e.g. major development areas & S106 sites; where there are assets that can be remodelled or re-developed; where additional land is available
- Areas where it is important to meet needs close to where it arises e.g. rural areas
- Where schemes represent a good value for money investment of staff time and financial resources, taking account of other priorities

By:

- Delivering S106 opportunities
- Increasing the delivery of land led opportunities to create additional new housing supply
- Working in partnership with AHPs, developers and stakeholders to support affordable housing supply in association with council-led regeneration initiatives and other development opportunities
- Utilisation of asset management strategies to make best use of housing stock and land to increase affordable housing supply
- Increasing rural housing to meet village and parish needs

- Providing social rented housing as the priority rented tenure and shared ownership housing as the priority low-cost home ownership product
- Providing specialist housing for those with care and support needs and at risk of homelessness

The secondary focus will be to support the provision of homes for high-quality, long-term **market rent**, including through its own local housing company, Venta Living Ltd.

Together these priorities will help achieve the **Council Plan** priority of **Good Homes For All**. Good homes are fundamental to a healthy, happy, sustainable community and to the local economy. The objectives and actions in this Strategy will help deliver all the **Council Plan Priorities**.



Council Plan Priorities 2025

This strategy forms part of the council's overarching **Housing Strategy** and provides the strategic framework for investment in new housing that is set out in the council's Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. It supports the delivery of the objectives in the Housing Strategy and its complimentary strategies (already in place and planned), including the Asset Management Strategy and Home Ownership Strategy, The Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy, Sheltered Housing Strategy and Supported Housing Strategy.

Principle Levers to achieve the Housing Development Strategy Vision

- Providing additional council homes for social and affordable rent and for shared ownership
- Supporting other AHPs deliver homes for social and affordable rent and for shared ownership, making it attractive for them to invest in the district
- Use of council financial resources and assets
- Providing homes for long-term market rent, including through Venta Living Ltd
- Use of council financial resources and assets to support delivery
- Homes England and other Government funding
- Planning policies in the Winchester and South Downs Local Plans
- Collaborative working and alignment of strategies, priorities and actions within the council and with stakeholders
- Having a dedicated New Homes Team and working as “One Council” to create a coordinated approach to delivery
- Working with the district’s communities

Winchester District Snapshot



Population

Around 127,500



Households

Around 59,000



Homelessness

+122% increase in approaches (2023/24)

Housing Need



On Housing Register

1,600 households



Homes Let (2024/25)

500+



Low-Cost Home Ownership Demand:

600+ households

Affordable & Council Homes

Council Homes

5,241

90% for rent (95% social rent)

AHP Properties

4,000+

Total Affordable Homes

9,000+ (17% of all housing)

New Council Homes

500+ since 2012

300+ since 2020

Venta Living (Market Rent)

41 homes

Avg age: 27 yrs | 90% work local

Aging & Health

29% of residents have a disability

30% of those aged 65+

100+ households on housing register **include someone 75+**

15% of social renters aged 65+

68% projected rise in 75+ population by 2040 (≈9,000 people)

Housing Affordability

Median Household Income	£55,000
To Buy (entry-level home)	£67,000
To Rent (privately)	£50,000
Affordability Ratio	12.84
Median Property Price	£475,000
Entry-Level Flat	£185,000
Lower Quartile Rent	£1,250 pcm

Our Challenges

Winchester is an expensive place to live with housing affordability amongst the worst in the UK. Demand for council and other affordable housing is high.

Young people who have grown up in the area or have moved here for university find it hard to find somewhere to live and often move away. This impacts on the age balance of the community and on the local economy. It also increases the need to travel for those who still work in the district with consequent environmental impact.

Families find it hard to find a home to meet their needs. Median house incomes are below what is needed to buy even entry level properties. Access to homes in some of the more rural parts of the district is particularly problematic due to affordability and limited supply.

Numbers of older people and those with health limitations and care and support needs are projected to increase. The demand for Extra Care Housing is projected to increase and the council's current schemes for older people are close to full occupancy. In the 20 years to 2040 the population of over 65-year-olds is projected to grow by over 12,000 people, 43% of the overall projected population growth. It will be a challenge to meet demands for their independent living, meet their housing needs and help them avoid nursing and residential care and hospital stays. Meeting these needs reduces pressure on social care (something which will be important for a unitary authority in the event of local government reorganisation, just as it is for Hampshire County Council now) and NHS budgets.

An increasing number of children and younger adults with highly complex needs are surviving into older age. People are generally happy living as independently as possible. To do this some will need adapted and accessible housing, others will have their needs best met in specialist supported housing schemes such as Extra Care Housing for both older people and younger, working age adults.

Council stock is generally of a high quality, however some, in particular some of our sheltered and Extra Care Housing, is now dated and does not meet 21st century needs. This presents an opportunity to better meet needs.

Recent years have seen some very specific pressures emerge. Approaches from households who were homeless or at risk of homelessness increased 122% in 2023/24 alone. Many of those seeking assistance have multiple, complex needs. Temporary accommodation needs are higher than they have been for many years. Some spaces in specialist accommodation for those with support needs are blocked because of the lack of move on housing.

We are proud to have adopted the principles of City of Sanctuary and our ability to accommodate people in crisis from other parts of the world as part of Government resettlement schemes. We have managed to increase housing supply for these households without compromising existing residents' ability to have their needs met, however pressures remain high.

Two critical pressures permeate throughout -

- The climate emergency – the need to reduce carbon emissions and to protect against extreme climate events such as overheating and flooding.
- Economic uncertainty and the rising costs of living – limited financial resources, a smaller council, the need to invest in existing council stock, together with high borrowing costs and the consequences of high inflation in recent years.

Finally, the prospect of local government reorganisation creates some challenges - structural and organisational change, alignment of priorities (while retaining local distinctiveness) and maintaining delivery, and some opportunities – capacity, appeal to investors of a larger programme and alignment of social care and housing priorities (with the potential for cost savings).

This strategy sets out how we, with others, will respond to these challenges and prepare for the future.

Our Financial Resources

Achieving our vision requires investment by the council and by others.

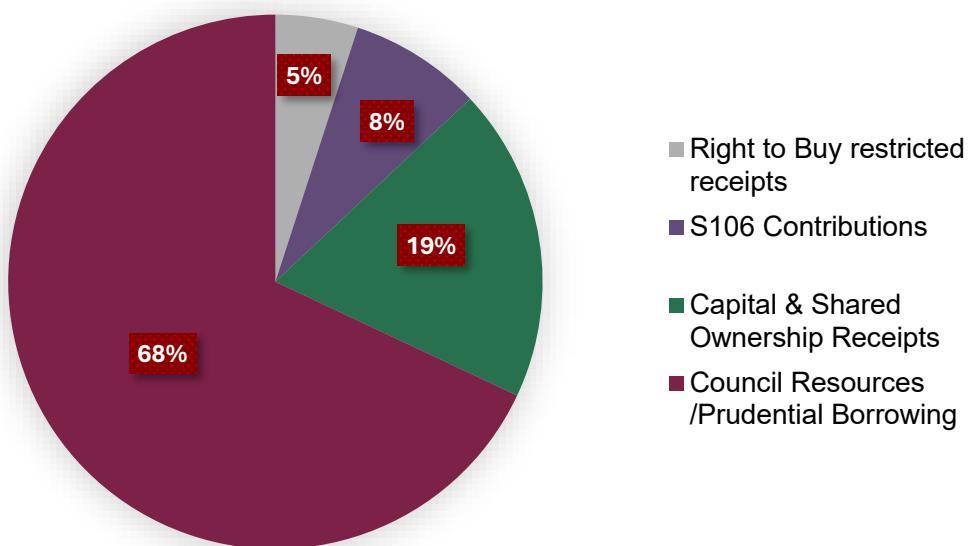
We will commit council financial and staff resources through our dedicated New Homes Team to deliver new council housing as well as support the delivery of new homes by AHPs.

We will work with funders from Government and Homes England to maximise capital grant and loan resources to support delivery. We will also support those undertaking activities that support delivery and work closely with organisations such as Hampshire County Council and Action Hampshire to do this.

Council budgets for new council delivery are largely set out in the annual Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. This looks forward 30 years and makes sure that council investment in its current housing stock is balanced with the ambition for 1,000 new council homes between 2020 and 2032.

The HRA Business Plan agreed in February 2025 allows for capital spend of £230m on New Homes between 2025 and 2032. The likely funding for this spend is demonstrated in the chart below. No assumption has been made for Homes England grant funding but will be built into the HRA Business Plan as and when funding is successfully applied for.

Funding for New Homes Programme



The Business Plan budget is self-funded largely from council rents and appropriate service charges. It is a ring-fenced budget separate from the council's General Fund which is funded by council tax, Government grants and non-housing council income generating activities, such as from commercial property.

New council homes are typically funded from the following sources:

- Council House Rents
- Borrowing from the Public Sector Works Loans Board

- Right to Buy receipts, shared ownership sales proceeds, and receipts from sale of surplus assets
- Homes England and other Government grants
- S106 affordable housing financial contributions

A limited number of housing activities are General Fund activities and so sit outside the Business Plan, for instance homelessness prevention. Some of these activities are funded via Government grants, others through council resources. The council's budget setting process, which runs alongside the Business Plan approval process, sets out priorities and spending plans for these areas.

The council has been successful in securing grant funding in the past. Since 2015, almost £9m in capital grant from Homes England has helped fund and deliver council affordable housing schemes for those on the Hampshire Homes Choice Register and those seeking shared-ownership housing. A further £8m secured from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government has helped provide additional housing for those who are unable to find settled accommodation on resettlement schemes (e.g. those arriving in the UK from Ukraine and Afghanistan), thus reducing the impact of recent arrivals on existing housing pressures, and in the longer term providing a new and permanent supply of affordable accommodation for local communities.

While the priority for capital investment will be in the council's own new homes programme, at times it may represent better value for money to support or invest in, grant fund or to offer loans to other AHPs where this provides additional housing that would not otherwise be provided or improves tenure balance, and complements their own investment. Resources received from Right to Buy sales and from S106 financial contributions can be used to do this. Generally, subject to any restrictions there may be in S106 obligations, these resources can be used to support the provision of new affordable housing anywhere in the district.

Each potential new housing scheme must be assessed and scrutinised via internal technical and governance processes to ensure it represents value for money, is the right strategic fit with the council's vision and objectives and is affordable within the context of the overall Business Plan, taking account of competing demands for resources.

Recent years have seen challenges and opportunities. Challenges presented by high periods of inflation, borrowing costs, and labour and supply chain problems. Opportunities presented by a growing consensus of the need for more affordable housing, significant council investment in its own new homes, and possibilities for new development.

It is important our approach to investment remains commercial and agile with the ability to respond to changing circumstances and opportunities.

Historically, most new council delivery has been through schemes it has directly commissioned on land it owns or has acquired. Recently, the balance has shifted to an increased proportion of supply from the acquisition of new homes provided by developers on S106 and non-S106 sites. The volume of delivery and the large supply chains that many developers have, together with local planning policies, mean that such opportunities sometimes represent better value for money.

The council will also buy back former council-owned affordable properties when available and appropriate.

The council will, however, continue to invest (and encourage other AHPs to invest) in new development on land-led, non S106 sites, particularly on land they own or are able to acquire (and properties they wish to remodel or redevelop) to increase supply.

In particular, this will be where housing supply is low and housing need high, in rural parts of the district, and in specialist housing provision for households with specific needs, including older people and those with disabilities.

It will also be where partnership opportunities exist to further strategy objectives by working with AHPs, developers and stakeholders in association with council-led regeneration initiatives and other development opportunities.

The aim is to increase supply from these alternative sources to avoid overreliance on S106 sites and so to create additional affordable housing supply.

We will review our investment priorities each year so we can best meet housing needs and achieve our 1000 council home target and support the broader delivery of affordable housing by other AHPs.

Our Rural Housing Strategy

We want to provide homes that give residents choice, where people want to live, and where they can live in cohesive, connected neighbourhoods.

Most opportunities for development will come in the areas where large numbers of people already live such as Winchester, Whiteley and Berewood/West of Waterlooville. This is also where most housing need exists and where most people will choose to live.

However, a large proportion of the district's population live in the rural areas. The sustainability of rural communities depends on the availability of homes people can afford and so **it is important that homes are also provided in smaller settlements and in the rural parts of the district, close to where the need arises**. Only by doing that can we support rural communities be sustainable, help those areas survive and thrive, and support local services.



The Three Pillars of Sustainability

The council has an impressive track record of supporting the delivery of new rural affordable housing, including:

- S106 and non-S106 sites in market towns such as Alresford and Bishops Waltham
- Council land in villages such as Otterbourne and Itchen Abbas
- Rural exception sites to provide affordable homes for local people, including as part of the innovative HARAH partnership that provided affordable homes across Winchester villages such as Martyr Worthy, Soberton and Twyford
- Development of rural affordable homes by Wickham Community Land Trust and Winchester Housing Trust

Lower income levels, high property prices, second home ownership, low property turn over and the loss of homes through Right To Buy all compound housing challenges in rural areas.

Without affordable housing, rural communities lose people who want to live and work there, who sustain local services, and who volunteer their time to help others. Employers and service

providers find it harder to recruit and those workers that do choose to work in rural areas are forced to make longer journeys, often by car, to their place of work. Underused services, schools, shops and public transport are at risk of being lost altogether, inconveniencing all members of the community, particularly those older and more vulnerable people who depend on services being provided locally. This will lead to a countryside characterised by exclusive, ageing, lifeless settlements with few facilities, accessible only by car.

Around 20% of households on the council's Hampshire Home Choice Register have a connection to at least one of the rural villages/parishes defined in the council's scheme of allocations. However, it is probable that this figure masks the scale of housing need. This "hidden housing need" is particularly prevalent in rural areas with households living in unsuitable circumstances not wishing to move away from their home village but who do not register as in housing need as they see little prospect of finding an affordable home.

Where housing demand is unclear, a housing needs survey for the parish or village may help. However, it is still possible that residual hidden need will remain (e.g. from people who have had to move from a parish or village) that only becomes evident closer to the completion of a scheme. As well as using a housing needs survey to mitigate some of the risks, community engagement and marketing can help reveal the true extent of need.

As well as allocating land for development and permitting development within the boundaries of larger settlements (which will often generate affordable housing as part of developer led S106 schemes), the Local Plans of the council and the South Downs National Park have enabling policies that support rural exception development and community led housing to meet parish and village needs. Delivery of affordable housing through both routes is required to meet rural housing needs and close work with each local planning authority will be critical to delivery of this strategy.

While homes for affordable rent in most settlements are open to anyone in housing need to apply to live in, the scarcity of supply in some rural areas means special rules apply to certain villages or parishes. In these areas priority for occupying affordable homes is given to those with a local connection to that village or parish. These villages/parishes and "local connection" are defined in the council's Scheme of Allocation/Hampshire Home Choice Allocations Framework. Similar requirements apply to certain rural shared ownership homes. In some rural areas low-cost home ownership staircasing is restricted to 80%.

The Community Benefits of Rural Housing

- Maintenance of social networks and reduced reliance on formal support services, particularly by older and more vulnerable people
- High levels of social capital and cohesion as a result of those vested in the local community, including high rates of volunteering - The HARAH/Winchester City Council study *Home is Where the Heart Is* revealed residents in new affordable housing were involved in organising youth, church and school activities, nature conservation, sitting on a pre-school committee and working as a parish councillor
- Young people of working age are able to stay in villages
- A local bank of labour can be created, including for part time jobs that employees are unwilling to travel to
- Spending on local services by residents and investment in services by Government and the private sector

The 20-year partnership between Action Hampshire and the council has been instrumental in ensuring housing delivery in smaller settlements. Building on the success of the HARAH partnership and through Action Hampshire's rural housing enabler programme we will continue to look for opportunities in rural areas. We will work with Government, other local authorities, parishes, and rural agencies such as Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) to secure revenue funding for Action Hampshire, to support the challenge of providing the right homes in the right places in rural areas, including the South Downs National Park.

The council has the ability and desire to develop new homes itself, however we recognise that some rural communities may wish to see other AHPs, including local community led housing organisations and housing trusts and co-operatives that are embedded in their communities, provide affordable homes in their area.

What we want to achieve

- Additional affordable housing delivered in market towns and villages

How we will achieve this

- By developing a balanced programme of new homes ensuring council resources are used to deliver homes in market towns and villages
- Supporting the delivery of new affordable homes within settlement boundaries in the market towns and larger villages
- Creating opportunities to deliver new homes provided through rural exception and community led housing policies in Winchester and South Downs Local Plans, working with and supporting Action Hampshire, specialist AHPs, communities and parish councils
- Supporting those towns and parishes with (or proposing to produce) neighbourhood, community, town or parish plans identifying local housing needs and delivery of new homes in sustainable locations
- Working with Government, Homes England, Action Hampshire, ACRE and other stakeholders to develop innovative ways to increase supply in rural areas and secure long-term funding for rural housing enablers

Support for communities

- Identifying the local need for housing, often via a housing need survey
- Facilitating a parish/town council rural affordable housing working group
- Support to find a suitable site for development
- Council delivery and assistance in selecting an AHP partner
- Support to engage with local communities and carry out consultation events
- Support to set up a community-led housing group, explore the options for delivering a scheme and establish a steering group

Our Affordable Housing Provider Strategy

If we are to see significant increases in new affordable housing delivery we need to continue to **encourage and support providers other than the council to provide new homes.**

We recognise that many AHPs work across the region and country so **we want to make Winchester an area that it is attractive for them to invest in.**

We are fortunate in having a number of excellent affordable housing providers working locally, mainly Registered Providers, but also important local and specialist providers such as Winchester Housing Trust, Wickham Community Land Trust, St John's Charity and Trinity. Between 2017/18 and 2023/24 AHPs provided over 2,300 new homes. Around 500 more homes are forecast to be provided by AHPs other than the council over the next 2 years.

These organisations have brought many £100s of millions of inward investment into the area. Our close relationship with Homes England has meant that very many of these new homes have been grant funded by Government.

Support for these organisations to do more will be a cornerstone of our Strategy. We particularly want work with them to explore opportunities for **affordable housing land-led sites that add housing over and above that provided from S106 sites.** We will work with AHPs to achieve the optimum housing mix for each development site taking account of housing needs and the nature of the development.

It is also important that we work closely with landowners and developers to achieve the affordable housing objectives of this Strategy and the Local Plans. This is particularly true of smaller developers with limited experience of affordable housing delivery.

Quality AHP management is critical to sustainability. Developing AHPs will need to engage fully with the council's Registered Provider Forum (which is also open to non-Registered Providers), have a satisfactory local management presence, ensure new lettings to rented homes are through Hampshire Home Choice and that low-cost home ownership homes are accessible to those who live and work in the district. We will support AHPs achieve these requirements.

What we want to achieve

- To align council and other AHPs priorities and actions for new affordable housing delivery to provide new affordable housing to meet identified local needs across the district. This includes:
 - S106 opportunities
 - Increased land led opportunities to create additional new housing supply.
 - Supporting affordable housing supply in association with council-led regeneration initiatives.
 - Use of asset management strategies to make best use of housing stock and land to increase housing supply
 - Rural housing to meet village and parish needs
 - Social rented housing as the priority rented tenure

- Shared ownership housing as the priority low-cost home ownership product
- Specialist housing for those with care and support needs and at risk of homelessness.
- An environment where it is attractive for AHPs and Homes England to invest.

How we will achieve this

- Providing a housing enabling service as part of our New Homes Team to support delivery by AHPs deliver S106 and non-S106 opportunities.
- Working with AHPs who are part of Hampshire Home Choice and the Winchester Registered Provider Forum, developing shared objectives, approaches and initiatives.
- Work with AHPs to provide affordable housing including –
 - Supporting viability on land-led, non S106 sites to provide additional homes or improved tenure balance (in particular to provide homes for Social Rent) by offering investment, grants or loans to compliment AHPs' own resources and Homes England Funding and partnering opportunities.
 - Working in partnership on council-led regeneration initiatives and on other development opportunities.
 - Using the council's own nutrient credits to support delivery.
 - Supporting access to Homes England Grant.
 - Supporting AHPs through the planning process and engagement with councillors and communities.
 - Supporting AHPs with discussions with developers and landowners.
- Working with landowners and developers to support affordable housing delivery.
- Working with AHPs to ensure new lettings to rented homes are through Hampshire Home Choice and that low-cost home ownership homes are affordable to those who live and work in the district.

Our Council Plan and Housing Development Strategy Priorities



GOOD HOMES FOR ALL

Housing in our district is expensive and young people and families often struggle to find suitable accommodation they can afford. We are focused on providing Good Homes for All, across the Winchester district – in Winchester Town, large settlements, the market towns and rural areas – homes that are affordable and sustainable, with low energy use and low bills, built in the right areas to meet the needs of changing communities.

As well as being a developer of affordable homes itself, the council has strong relationships with other developing AHPs, many with large housing stock in the district, others with skills in specialist and rural housing provision, and which are committed to investing locally. Working collaboratively with a range of providers and with developers and landowners is the best way to create additional affordable housing.

What we want to achieve

- To continue to increase the number of affordable homes across the district both on S106 sites and by supporting additional supply from land-led sites, including:
 - Fulfilling our commitment to deliver 1,000 more council homes between 2020 and 2032
 - With other AHPs, increasing the supply of affordable housing in the market towns and rural parts of the district as well as the Winchester Town and other large settlements
 - Making best use of council assets and encouraging other AHPs to do the same in order to increase affordable housing supply
 - In association with council-led regeneration initiatives
- To ensure we have the right mix of homes with rented and low-cost home ownership options across the whole district, for all incomes, ages and circumstances and for future generations. As a priority we want to increase the supply of homes for social rent.
- To prevent homelessness.
- To provide access to high-quality long-term market rented housing and low-cost ownership housing, for those that wish to live and work locally.
- To provide the opportunity for those working age younger adults and also older adults with housing, care or support needs, disabilities and vulnerabilities to live independent, happy, healthy lives. This includes those with mental health, physical and learning disabilities, with frailty, dementia, autism and mobility impairments; and also care leavers who need supported accommodation.

How we will achieve this

- By having a New Homes Team, dedicated to increasing affordable housing supply and achieving the objectives of this strategy.
- Increasing the supply of council homes by buying as well as building council homes, in sustainable locations, with sufficient local housing demand, including by:

- Direct council commissioning on land led schemes
 - Commissioning the construction of homes on land owned and acquired by the council
 - Effective asset management and making best use of existing council land and properties, including reviewing our sheltered stock
- Council acquisition of new homes
 - Through planning (S106) obligations
 - Purchased from the general market, in particular Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) where there is a shortage of family homes, leasehold properties in predominantly council owned blocks and to meet specifically identified needs
- Collaborating with AHPs to deliver more affordable housing by delivering the AHP Strategy (that is included in this Strategy).
- Working in partnership with AHPs, developers and stakeholders to support affordable housing supply in association with council-led regeneration initiatives and other development opportunities.
- Delivering additional affordable homes in the market towns and rural areas of the district by implementing our Rural Housing Strategy (that is included in this Strategy).
- Delivering a balanced affordable housing programme that meets the needs of those on the council's housing register, including homes for social rent (as a priority) and those in need of low-cost home ownership.
- Delivering a range of affordable housing types and sizes to meet housing needs.
- Working with the Social Care Authority to assess the housing needs of households with care or support needs, to develop a Supported Housing Strategy and to identify opportunities to meet those needs, including housing for those with more complex needs, including:
 - **Extra Care Housing** for older adults and working-age adults with learning, autism or physical disabilities, including mixed-age schemes.
 - **Move-on supported housing** for individuals transitioning from homelessness or settings with more intensive support care, delivered by the council, AHPs, and charitable partners.
 - **Accessible temporary accommodation** for people with physical disabilities.
 - **Specialist housing** for people with mental health needs, in partnership with health and care providers.
 - **Supported accommodation for care leavers** and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, ensuring safe and stable transitions to adulthood.
 - **Women-only housing** with tailored support services for those with specific vulnerabilities.
 - **Future-proofing** supported housing by ensuring all new supported housing schemes are designed to integrate Technology Enabled Care (TEC), with a focus on interoperability, digital inclusion, and adaptability to future needs.
- Increasing the availability of age-friendly and mixed-age housing for residents with no or limited care and support needs, ensuring homes are accessible, adaptable, and suitable for a range of life stages and abilities.

- Working with providers, including Venta Living Ltd (the council's Housing Company) to provide long-term market rented housing.
- Working with Government, Homes England and the Wayfarer Partnership to secure investment in additional affordable housing provided by the council and others and to meet our own regulatory requirements for new council homes.

What we have achieved so far

- Homes for social rent, affordable rent and low-cost home ownership, including
 - Over 500 council homes delivered since 2012
 - Over 2,000 other new affordable homes delivered by other AHPs since 2017
- Setting up of Venta Living Ltd and provision of 41 homes for long-term market rent
- 52 extra care flats for older people at Chesil Lodge
- Delivery with partners of 150 homes on rural exception sites

The Valley

The Valley scheme in Stanmore was completed in 2021 and provided 77 new homes with a mix of affordable houses and flats for rent and shared ownership on land owned by the council.

The scheme built on the ideas set out in the Stanmore Planning Framework that has delivered around 100 new affordable homes on council owned land.

Community engagement was a key feature of the scheme, resulting in improved landscaping, footpath and open space improvements and play features.



The Valley, Stanmore
Photo Credit: Snug Architects/Fotohaus

GREENER, FASTER

Dealing with the climate crisis and reaching carbon neutrality is the council's overarching priority. Recent extreme climate events have demonstrated urgent action is needed to avoid catastrophic climate change and the associated nature crisis. New council homes will be provided to high energy efficiency standards, designed to mitigate environmental impacts and make a positive contribution towards biodiversity.

What we want to achieve

- New council homes that limit embodied carbon use during development, are affordable to live in and limit the need to use fossil fuels once occupied.
- Nutrient neutrality on all council schemes and to support other affordable providers achieve the same.
- Protect our residents from extreme climate events and provide homes that are comfortable and healthy to live in.
- Reduce reliance on private transport and increase journeys by public transport, foot and bike.
- Enhance biodiversity as part of new council development.

How we will achieve this

- Investigating how to limit embodied carbon use through design, supply chain management and procurement and incorporate the approach into the development process and contracts.
- Embedding energy efficiency measures to avoid overheating and ensure thermal comfort in the design process, including:
 - Adopting the Future Homes Standard, including, where possible, early adoption of those elements that may be subject to transitional arrangements.
 - Adopting a fabric first approach.
 - On-site energy generation, including solar voltaic panels with battery storage, and air source heat pumps.
 - Incorporating electric vehicle charging in new schemes.
 - Avoiding overheating, for instance by limiting solar gain (e.g. orientation, window size and solar shading from bris soleil, balconies and overhangs), by ventilation (both passive and mechanical), and by using thermal modelling.
- Utilising credits from the council's upgraded sewage and waste-water treatment plants to achieve nutrient neutrality on new affordable housing schemes and by upgrading further plants where this would support this objective.

What we have achieved so far

- Open space enhancement, reclamation of land, new play facilities, outdoor gym, biodiversity enhancements and improved public access as part of new council homes schemes at:
 - Abbotts Barton – Hilliers Haven
 - Stanmore – The Valley and New Queens Gate
 - Winnall – Winnall Flats
- Passivhaus Plus scheme in Micheldever.
- Redesign to omit gas boilers on developer led schemes at Twyford and Kings Barton.

Southbrook Cottages

The Southbrook Cottages, Micheldever scheme consists of six affordable rent flats built on an under used council-owned garage site.

The scheme was designed and built to meet the Passivhaus Plus Standard, a very high energy efficient standard that requires the building to produce as much energy through renewable energy as the occupants consume throughout the year.

As a response to public consultation, off-street parking was provided for the existing community, including spaces for those with disabilities.



Southbrook Cottages, Micheldever

THRIVING PLACES

Our district faces a challenge to attract investment, and high property prices make it hard for many to live and work in the area. Increasing investment in our district to provide homes that meet the varied needs of communities and support inter-generational, mixed, cohesive communities will help our area thrive. The council's regeneration projects provide an opportunity to make best use of our assets to provide new homes, commercial, community, cultural and public spaces, placing environmental, economic and social wellbeing at the heart of what we want to create.

What we want to achieve

- Increased investment by AHPs, Homes England and government in our district.
- The opportunity for young people to live and work in the district.
- To regenerate run down areas, especially the Central Winchester Regeneration Area.
- To support diverse, sustainable rural communities.
- Everyone to benefit from new council homes development.

How we will achieve this

- Working with government, Homes England, The Wayfarer Partnership, AHPs, planners and developers to attract investment into the district by creating deliverable housing opportunities.
- Increasing the supply of low-cost ownership homes and working with Venta Living Ltd, the council's Housing Company and others to provide long-term market rented housing including options for young people and those that wish to work locally.
- Supporting new rural housing that is affordable for local people.
- By collaborating with the council's Regeneration Team and partners to advance regeneration priorities, identifying and support opportunities for delivering new council and affordable homes, and engaging with Homes England to secure funding.
- By capturing the wider benefits of council housing developments for the community, including, improving local infrastructure related to the development, engaging with schools, local amenity and community groups, and by embedding requirements for skills training in major construction contracts.

What we have achieved so far

- Inward investment through government, Homes England, Wayfarer and AHPs to provide new affordable housing.
- Training places as part of the construction contract at Winnall Flats.
- Community history and art projects in association with New Queens Gate and Chesil Lodge council home developments.
- School engagement project at Winnall Flats.

Chesil Lodge

In conjunction with the development of a new council Extra Care Housing Scheme at Chesil Lodge, the council worked with the local community to find out more about their local area.

This included pupils from All Saint's School, young people, and staff from Chesil Theatre, residents at St John's charity, local business such as Chesil Rectory, The Black Boy Pub, The Black Bottle, Winchester City Mill, Winchester tour guides and the Hampshire Cultural Trust.

Six pieces of artwork feature stories, memories and photographs of local people. The artwork is now displayed in various locations throughout the area, including St John's House, All Saint's School, Chesil Theatre and the entrance to Chesil Tunnel.



Chesil Lodge, Extra Care Scheme and Chesil Lodge Community Art Project Poster

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Lack of affordable housing is fragmenting communities and increasing the need to travel as many can no longer afford to remain in the district. High costs of living and difficulties for residents with health, social care and support needs, in particular older people, are amongst the challenges we face. Homes are unaffordable for many and over 9% of households are in fuel poverty.

What we want to achieve

- Residents to live independent healthy and fulfilled lives, with housing to meet their needs.
- Support for those most affected by the increased costs of living.
- Housing suitable for those in need and to ensure that no-one is disabled by their environment.

How we will achieve this

- By developing more affordable housing and by keeping housing costs as low as possible, including providing homes for social rent as a priority and by making new council homes as energy efficient as possible to keep running costs low and tackle fuel poverty.
- Adopting the principles of Building for a Healthy Life in new council schemes.
- Ensuring new affordable housing is built to high accessibility standards and to provide specialist housing with care and support to support independent living and reduce isolation and loneliness.
- Supporting older people to maintain independence in their own homes, maintain healthy lifestyles and to reduce the risk of falls and hospital admissions, by incorporating facilities for physical activities in new Extra Care schemes and encouraging participation of residents in council activity programmes such as 'Live Longer Better'.
- By promoting healthy lifestyles and community cohesion through informal interactions, by exploring opportunities to improve walking and cycling connectivity as part of new developments, including bike parking in every council scheme.

What we have achieved so far

- All new affordable homes built to high accessibility standards.
- New Extra Care Housing for older adults at Chesil Lodge, Winchester that features Technology Enabled Care and access to exercise classes to promote health and wellbeing.
- Venta Living Ltd rented homes and shared ownership homes that appeal to younger working age people. The average age of a new Venta tenant is 27yrs and a new council shared ownership purchaser is 35yrs.
- Providing recreational facilities for local communities as part of new council housing development. The Hillier Way scheme at Abbotts Barton delivered an outdoor gym and reclaimed land to give public access at Hilliers Haven.

Hillier Way, Abbotts Barton

To meet objectives in the Abbotts Barton Planning Framework and as part of the council development at Abbotts Barton, the council reclaimed land to create Hilliers Haven and provide an outdoor gym for the local community.

Previously inaccessible, Hilliers Haven was transformed by the council following discussions with the community and features paths through the woodland, a meadow area, bird and bat boxes and a sculpture trail.



Hilliers Haven, Abbotts Barton

LISTENING AND LEARNING

We will continue to involve communities and stakeholders in new initiatives, listening to what they have to say, learning from them and identifying opportunities to work collaboratively to achieve our objectives.

What we want to achieve

- To ensure residents and communities are well informed about plans for new council homes and that their voice is heard.
- To learn from experiences on schemes we have already completed and use that learning to improve the quality of future homes.
- To learn from others, innovate and influence to achieve our objectives and to prepare for the future.

How we will achieve this

- Councillors and officers working closely together on new council home schemes to improve local knowledge and communication with communities.
- By engaging with tenants and leaseholders on their experience of each new council home scheme and carrying out a “lessons learned” exercise.
- By engaging with parish and town councils, the Winchester Town Forum and with communities on housing needs and council proposals, including in rural areas, and developing a communication and engagement plan for each proposal.
- By innovating, including:
 - Investigating opportunities that may be offered by Modern Methods of Construction
 - Working with neighbouring district and borough councils, the South Downs National Park and Hampshire County Council to learn, influence and innovate to improve new affordable housing delivery, including in rural areas, and to capitalise on opportunities that may be presented by proposed local government reorganisation

What we have achieved so far

- Consultation and engagement on all new council schemes.
- Changes to schemes as a result of engagement, including new parking at Southbrook Cottages and Winnall Flats, and open space enhancements at The Valley and Winnall Flats.
- Post completion evaluations involving tenants and residents.
- Contractor and resident meetings throughout the development at Winnall Flats.

Burnet Lane, Kings Worthy

Burnet Lane, Kings Worthy was completed in June 2021 and comprised 35 new homes with a mix of affordable rent, shared ownership and discounted market sale.

Community engagement led to a large area of private open space being brought into public ownership for the benefit of the community.

Known locally as Top Field, the open space has benefited from significant ecological preservation work, improved wildlife habitats and includes a network of footpaths linking to the Watercress Way and the main amenities in Kings Worthy.



Top Field (Hookpit), Burnet Lane, Kings Worthy

EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT

We want to ensure what we do is good value for money and delivers the desired outcome of improving housing circumstances across the district. Our own financial, human, property and land resources must be well used, and we must work with others to bring investment into the district.

What we want to achieve

- Effective and efficient governance and decision making.
- Best use of council resources and attract additional funding to support new development.
- Encourage others to invest in new affordable housing in the district.
- Our strategies and plans are up to date and take account of changing circumstances and best practice.

How we will achieve this

- Having a dedicated New Homes Team to drive forward delivery.
- Adopting a 'One Council' approach to delivering affordable housing, with the delivery of new council and other affordable homes featuring in the strategies and plans throughout the council and by supporting officers and councillors deliver council priorities.
- Using the New Homes Programme Board and Cabinet Committee (Housing) to ensure efficiency, accountability and commerciality in decision making.
- Annually reviewing this Housing Development Strategy and delivery programme as part of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan process and producing an updated Delivery Plan.
- Producing an annual Service Plan setting out projects, initiatives and strategic activities for the coming year.
- Working with Government, Homes England and The Wayfarer Partnership, to shape national policy and strategy so they support the delivery of this Strategy's priorities.

What we have achieved so far

- Inward investment into new council homes from Home England.
- Land and new homes for rented, low-cost home ownership, wheelchair accessible and extra care housing as part of land-led schemes and S106 planning agreements.
- Improved governance and decision making for new council schemes.

Winnall Flats

In the last 3 years between 35% and 45% of all new homes provided in the Winchester Local Plan area have been affordable. This is a result of close working between councillors, communities, the New Homes Team, planners, developers, landowners, Wayfarer and Homes England.

This scheme at Winnall was completed in 2024 and provided 76 new homes, with a mix of one- and two-bedroom flats and two-bedroom houses for a mixture of shared ownership and long-term market rent through Venta Living Ltd, the council's own housing company.

Community engagement was key to the success of this development. A major feature of the scheme was the upgrading of the public open space around the four existing blocks on the site, by changing the previous car-dominated areas to a more people focussed environment, making it more pleasant to walk around the site and also making space for a new pocket park.

The 73 flats were built to Passivhaus low energy building standard and the three houses to AECB standard (Association for Environment Conscious Building), addressing the climate emergency by delivering as close to net zero carbon as possible.



Goatsbeard House and Pocket Park, Winnall Flats

Monitoring and Review

The Housing Development Strategy will be reviewed annually alongside the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

Key Measures of Success

- Council Home Delivery against 1,000 home target – actual and forecast
- Affordable housing delivered each year by other AHPs and 3-year forecast
- Total affordable housing delivered each year and 3-year forecast

Delivery Plan

This strategy is supported by a delivery plan that will be updated annually to take account of changing challenges and opportunities.

Further Case Studies

<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/new-affordable-housing/completed>