



Working in partnership with **Eastbourne Homes**

# Eastbourne Housing Strategy 2020-2024

**HOMES** **FIRST**

# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
Foreword by Councillor Shuttleworth	<b>3</b>
Executive summary	<b>4</b>
<b>1</b> Introduction	<b>8</b>
<b>2</b> Theme A - Increasing the supply of new homes	<b>16</b>
<b>3</b> Theme B - Promoting quality housing that meets modern standards	<b>28</b>
<b>4</b> Theme C - Reducing homelessness	<b>38</b>
<b>5</b> Theme D - Successfully managing & maintaining our homes	<b>46</b>
<b>6</b> Theme E - Promoting homes that sustain health & wellbeing	<b>58</b>
<b>7</b> Putting our plans in place	<b>68</b>



**HOMES FIRST**



# Foreword



It is my ambition that all residents of Eastbourne are able to have access to a good quality home that meets their needs and provides a stable foundation for creating stable communities and driving forward the economic prosperity of the town. Since the publication of our last housing strategy, we have worked in partnership with a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies to address rough sleeping, tackle homelessness and build new homes.

That said, there remain existing and new challenges to address and we need to continue to work in partnership with others to address these over the coming year, by focussing our collective efforts to help:

- Increase the supply of new homes to meet growing needs.
- Promote quality housing for all.
- Reduce carbon emissions and address climate change.
- Reduce homelessness and tackle its causes.
- Work in partnership to help people with complex needs.
- Raise standards in the private rented sector.
- Ensure that Council homes remain well managed and maintained
- Promote homes that sustain health and wellbeing.

The impact of COVID-19 has really brought into focus the key fundamentals that matter the most to us all and as we adjust to the new challenges ahead, it is clearer than ever that having access to a good home is key to us all feeling safe, secure and well. This health crisis has impacted in so many ways and will have a lasting legacy, but we need to take positives from people working together to strive to help others.

Working together, we can make real progress to help tackle inequality by putting in place the initiatives, projects and programmes to help achieve this.

I passionately believe that we can make a difference.

*Cllr. Alan Shuttleworth*





# Executive Summary





# Executive Summary

Access to safe, secure and affordable housing is fundamental to supporting the health and independence of residents, creating sustainable communities and promoting economic growth. The majority of Eastbourne residents live in good quality homes and have access to a range of housing options when they need, or decide, to move. However, the town currently faces a series of key challenges, driven by national policy, regional influences and local factors, which have seen significant changes to the housing market take place in the past ten years. These challenges, explored in more detail in the introductory section, include:

- **Meeting housing demand.** The latest assessment of housing need estimate that meeting demand requires building between 550 and 740 homes each year, against the backdrop of a constrained land supply.
- **Rising housing costs.** Although house prices have dipped from their peak, the average price of a home in 2019 was £241,000, over eight times the local average full-time salary. Meanwhile average rents for all sizes of accommodation have risen significantly and stand above the maximum levels that those receiving housing subsidies can claim.
- **A changing demographic.** As those with long term health condition live longer the type of accommodation and support needed to sustain their independence will change, whilst new family size homes is key to supporting economic activity in the town.
- **Private rented sector.** The private rented sector doubled in size in the ten years to 2011, when it housed 10,500 people, a quarter of all households in the town. This trend has continued and, as such, the Council now has a significant interest in helping shape a healthy private rented sector.
- **Tackling poverty and inequality.** Eastbourne town is a place of contrast, containing neighbourhoods of affluence and significant levels of deprivation. Devonshire & Hampden Park wards contain four areas where Indices of Multiple Deprivation rank amongst the most deprived 10 per cent in the country<sup>1</sup>
- **Homelessness.** Heightened legislative duties, Universal Credit and frozen housing subsidies have reduced the supply of accessible rented homes for those on the lowest incomes, increasing evictions and levels of homelessness. Meanwhile, the scale of rough sleeping continues to present a key challenge.
- **Tougher environmental targets.** Meeting national and locally set targets will require working with our own teams, local developers and private owners to make a managed transition to new low carbon and water saving technologies that balances the costs and benefits involved.

---

<sup>1</sup> Source – Office of National Statistics - Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019.

In updating *At Home in Eastbourne*, the current housing strategy that runs to the end of 2020, we are responding to these challenges by setting out a strategic framework that delivers plans across five key themes – these are:

- Theme A - Increasing the supply of new homes.
- Theme B - Promoting quality housing that meets modern standards.
- Theme C - Reducing homelessness.
- Theme D - Successfully managing & maintaining our homes.
- Theme E - Promoting homes that sustain health & wellbeing.

Within each there are a series of key priority areas that cover those issues that matter most to Eastbourne's residents and will have the most impact on improving housing delivery and access to a quality home. The themes and priorities are:

**Theme A: Increasing the supply of new homes –by:**

- Maximising existing delivery targets to meet local housing needs.
- Agreeing a new Local Plan that sets clear targets for new homes.
- Attracting residential development into the town centre.
- Increasing our direct provision of affordable and low-cost housing options.
- Creating stronger relationships with developers and housing associations.
- Transitioning to carbon-neutral & environmentally friendly homes.

**Theme B: Promoting access to housing that meets modern standards –by:**

- Promoting access to low cost rental and home ownership initiatives.
- Shaping a thriving, high standard, private rented sector.
- Making best use of the social rented housing across the Borough.
- Taking steps to maximise the utilisation of empty homes.
- Reducing the impact that privately owned homes have on the environment.

**Theme C: Reducing homelessness –by:**

- Focussing on prevention, to support households at risk of homelessness.
- Setting a clear direction for the future of the local Rough Sleeper Initiatives.
- Work with private sector landlords to house homeless / at risk households.
- Speeding up the move of homeless households to permanent homes.
- Renewing our strategic approach.

**Theme D: Successfully managing and maintaining council homes –by:**

- Giving residents a voice in shaping our services.
- Renewing the delivery of Homes First's key services.
- Giving resident access to digital services.
- Keeping our assets in a good state of repair.
- Reducing the impact that Council owned homes have on the environment.



**Theme E: Promoting homes that sustain health & wellbeing –by:**

- Shaping the Borough’s supported housing stock.
- Supporting and maintaining the independence of local residents.
- Using adaptive technology to maintain independence.
- Developing integrated housing, health and care strategies

Sections 2 to 6 of this strategy examine each of these themes in more detail, assessing the challenges, risks and opportunities that the Council and local partners can address to improve the access Eastbourne’s residents have to good quality homes.

Each section provides identified the plans priorities that we will focus on in the first year of the plan and allocates responsibility for delivery to a nominated lead. The plans set out for years 2 – 5 of the strategy will be reviewed in 2021, to ensure that the Council’s priorities remain fixed in the right direction, against the backdrop of an uncertain operating context and rapidly changing housing market.

# 1

# Introduction





## 1. Our plans

- 1.1 The home in which we live has a huge influence on the quality of all our lives. Access to safe, secure and affordable housing is fundamental to supporting the health and independence of residents, creating sustainable communities and promoting economic growth. For this reason, *Housing & Development* is one of the key themes that shape the vision for Eastbourne as set out in our latest Corporate Plan.
- 1.2 These themes support a vision to deliver an attractive, carbon neutral town, characterised by a high quality built environment, excellent parks and open spaces and good transport options. All four themes of the Corporate Plan are supported by a commitment to make the best use of available resources, by reducing costs, improving service quality and generating new streams of income.
- 1.3 In updating *At Home in Eastbourne*, the current housing strategy that runs to the end of 2020, we are responding to the significant changes that have occurred in the local housing market over the past few years and the climate emergency declared by the Council in July 2019.

## 2. Our Vision

- 2.1 This is a strategy for all residents of Eastbourne, as well as those facing the challenges of moving into the local area, homelessness or changing housing needs. Our vision is to:  
  
*'Deliver and maintain affordable, high quality homes and promote access to housing options for home owners, residents of social housing and private renters alike. By working with partners to identify housing needs, deliver new homes and promote housing standards across local housing markets, we will help drive economic prosperity, sustain integrated communities and tackle the inequalities faced by many of our residents.'*
- 2.2 To deliver this vision effectively, the strategy sets out clear goals and plans that our teams will deploy over the next five years, to address the key challenges posed by the national operating context, the local housing market and the changing housing needs of households living with disability and long term health conditions. This includes those living with age related disabilities, households containing children with complex needs, those with sensory disabilities and households where a long term mental and physical condition affects their day to day wellbeing and quality of life.

### 3. Our challenges

- 3.1 Eastbourne is an attractive place to live and work. Despite recent economic challenges, the town has retained its status as a leading town centre. The town is home to 350 more businesses than ten years ago and a steady stream of housing developments has attracted new households, increasing the population to over 103,000.
- 3.2 The demand for new homes remains strong. The majority of residents live in good quality homes and have access to a range of housing options when they need or decide to move home. However, the town presently faces a series of key challenges, driven by national policy, regional influences and local factors that have seen significant changes to the housing market take place during the past ten years. These have left local households facing rising housing costs and increased residents' reliance on the private rented sector to meet housing needs. These factors have each contributed to increased levels of homelessness in the town.
- 3.3 More specifically, the key challenges are as follows:

**Housing demand.** Official projections from the Office of National Statistics estimate that over the next fifteen years the population of Eastbourne could grow to 118,000. Meeting this demand would require building almost 700 homes each year<sup>2</sup>, across a land area constrained by the coast, national park boundaries and significant areas of flood risk. Such constraints mean that the majority of land for new homes will need to come from re-cycled land sites, with the most recent assessments of land availability<sup>3</sup> estimating that these will support the delivery of only 3,000 homes up to 2035. Meanwhile, the large scale of the challenge now facing the retail sector has intensified the need to focus on housing can play a role regenerating the town centre.

The challenge: To develop a strategy that aligns development, regeneration and policies to boost the delivery of new homes on available sites and in the town centre, helping to meet demand and sustain economic growth.

**Housing costs.** Analysis that compares house price and rental values with local earnings has shown that without a dual income (i.e. two adults both in work), access to savings, or equity, the owner-occupied market remains unaffordable to the vast majority of local residents. The average price of an Eastbourne home in February was £240,000, over eight times the local average full-time salary. Average rents have risen also, to the extent that private renting remains largely unaffordable to many single-earner households. Rents for all sizes of accommodation are significantly higher than the Government's Local

<sup>2</sup> Eastbourne B.C. Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2016

<sup>3</sup> Eastbourne B.C. Strategic Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment 2017



Housing Allowance rates, which means that those on the lowest incomes often struggle to access the market, or are forced to make up the weekly difference from a limited fixed weekly income.

The challenge: To increase the access that all residents have to good quality homes across all tenures and price ranges.

**A changing demographic.** Eastbourne's population is changing, as improvements to health outcomes result in residents with long term health conditions living longer. This places additional demands of both delivering housing that can meet the needs of an ageing population and providing services that to help maintain the independence of all. These trends are echoed in Eastbourne's 2016 Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which emphasised the need to build more 3-bedroom homes and invest in more enhanced sheltered and extra care schemes. Overall, it estimated that there is a an annual shortfall of 300 affordable rented and 130 shared-ownership homes. It is vital that housing, social care and health strategies are aligned to provide improved and innovative ways of delivering support for all those living with disability and long terms complex health conditions.

**The challenge:** To accurately assess needs and translate these into clear targets, working with local agencies delivering housing and social care strategies that meet the needs of all children and adults living with limiting disability and long term health conditions.

**Private rented sector.** The private rented sector doubled in size in the ten years to 2011, when it housed over 10,500 people, almost a quarter of all households in the town. This growth, driven by high house prices, has continued and the sector now plays a bigger role than ever in meeting the housing need across the town. As such the Council has a clear interest in helping to shape a healthy private rented sector. Reduced tax incentives, limits on rental deposits and planned restrictions on the use of mandatory possession have raised concerns that some landlords may look to exit the market or look to other sources of income, such as Air B&B to maximise returns. Additional concerns about Universal Credit delays and the continued freeze of the Local Housing Allowance may also continue to dissuade some landlords from letting to households claiming welfare benefits.

**The challenge:** To put in place measures that promote a good quality private rented housing supply, encourage good quality management across the sector and balance the interests of landlords and tenants.

**Tackling poverty and inequality.** Our town is a place of contrast, containing neighbourhoods of affluence and neighbourhoods where a high number of residents experience significant levels of deprivation, characterised by poorer health, lower skills, educational disadvantage, fuel poverty and reduced access to quality housing. Devonshire & Hampden Park wards contain areas where

Indices of Multiple Deprivation rank amongst the most deprived 10 per cent in the country<sup>4</sup>. Welfare reform, exacerbated by high housing costs, has contributed to rising levels of poverty amongst both working and non-working households, increased the use of food banks and raised levels of evictions, which have in turn placed higher levels of pressure on homelessness services.

**The challenge:** To develop high quality advice and support services to those most at risk of losing their home, whilst working with partners to support local measures that tackle deprivation and inequality across our town.

**Tackling homelessness.** The Homelessness Reduction Act changed the responsibilities of the Council in relation to homelessness. This, combined with raised levels of evictions resulting from the implementation of Universal Credit and a reduced supply of accessible market rented accommodation for those on low incomes, has contributed to a sharp increase in the number of households, often with children, presenting as homeless to the Council. Addressing the additional financial costs of placing families in temporary accommodation, as well as the social costs and instability faced by the affected households, is a key priority for the Council. Likewise, the scale of rough sleeping taking place in the town continues to present a key challenge to the local partnerships deployed to support those experiencing the most acute form of housing need.

**The challenge:** To work with partners to deliver high quality prevention strategies for supporting those at risk of homelessness and promoting the delivery of well-defined housing options to reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation by those awaiting re-housing and experiencing rough sleeping.

**Meeting carbon neutral & environmental targets.** The latest national figures estimate domestic homes contribute to around 20% of the UK's annual carbon emission, so taking steps to reduce these locally, can play a significant role meeting wider sustainability objectives. As we look to transition to low and zero carbon heating systems and reduce the environmental footprint of local homes, we will need to take a balanced approach that supports and enforces new regulations and encourages adoptions across different tenues. This is likely to include; helping owner occupiers and private landlords to access funding to implement carbon reduction measures; resourcing good quality sustainability advice; enforcing any new regulations to building standards through the planning system; and implementing a balanced transition to low/zero carbon technologies in the newly built and refurbished Council homes. Implementing measures that address broader environmental concerns, by reducing water consumption, increasing the greening of open space and encouraging bio-diversity will all feature in our plans.

**The challenge:** To ensure that reducing housing emission plays a significant role in helping meet the Council's declared ambition of becoming a carbon-

---

<sup>4</sup> Source – Office of National Statistics - Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015.

neutral Borough by 2030 and ensuring that our housing plans align with wider environmental sustainability targets.

**Integrating the wider Housing Market Area.** Eastbourne is part of a housing market and functional economic area that extends into the southern area of Wealden, where a large number of housing developments have recently been completed or are under construction. These have the capacity to address some local housing demand and help sustain local growth. However, these developments can only be accessed by Eastbourne residents that can afford to own or rent privately, with residents ineligible for any affordable homes built as part of these schemes.

**The challenge:** To develop local 'duty to cooperate' arrangements that provide local residents with fair access to homes across the wider housing market area.

## 4. Our priorities

4.1 This strategy has five key themes that set out to address the key housing challenges facing the town. Within each there are a series of key priority areas that cover those issues that matter most to Eastbourne's residents and will have the most impact on supporting housing delivery and access to a quality home. The themes and priorities are:

### **Theme A: Increasing the supply of new homes –by:**

- Maximising existing delivery targets to meet local housing needs.
- Agreeing a new Local Plan that sets clear targets for new homes.
- Attracting residential development into the town centre.
- Increasing our direct provision of affordable and low-cost housing options.
- Creating stronger relationships with developers and housing associations.
- Transitioning to carbon-neutral & environmentally friendly homes.

### **Theme B: Promoting access to housing that meets modern standards –by:**

- Promoting access to low cost rental and home ownership initiatives.
- Shaping a thriving, high standard, private rented sector.
- Making best use of the social rented housing across the Borough.
- Taking steps to maximise the utilisation of empty homes.
- Reducing the impact that privately owned homes have on the environment.

### **Theme C: Reducing homelessness –by:**

- Focussing on prevention, to support households at risk of homelessness.
- Setting a clear direction for the future of the local Rough Sleeper Initiatives.
- Work with private sector landlords to house homeless / at risk households.
- Speeding up the move of homeless households to permanent homes.
- Renewing our strategic approach.

### **Theme D: Successfully managing and maintaining council homes –by:**



- Giving residents a voice in shaping our services.
- Renewing the delivery of Homes First's key services.
- Giving resident access to digital services.
- Keeping our assets in a good state of repair.
- Reducing the environmental impact that Council owned homes have on the environment.

**Theme E: Promoting homes that sustain health & wellbeing –by:**

- Shaping the Borough's supported housing stock.
- Supporting and maintaining the independence of local residents.
- Using adaptive technology to maintain independence.
- Developing integrated housing, health and care strategies

4.2 Sections 2 to 6 of this strategy examine each of these themes in more detail, assessing the challenges, risks and opportunities that the Council and local partners can address to improve the access Eastbourne's residents have to good quality homes.

4.3 Each section provides identified the plans priorities that we will focus on in the first year of the plan and allocates responsibility for delivery to a nominated lead. The plans set out for years 2 – 5 of the strategy will be reviewed in 2021, to ensure that the Council's priorities remain fixed in the right direction, against the backdrop of an uncertain operating context and rapidly changing housing market.

## **5. Consultation & partnerships**

5.1 We cannot solve these issues alone. Concerns about the operation of the local housing market are shared by local residents, landlords, as well as our statutory and voluntary partners, and we have sought to incorporate many of the views they provided during our recent consultation exercise. The resulting strategy presents a framework within which we can now engaging the skills, knowledge and resources of our partners to effectively meet housing need across the Borough.







2

## Theme A: Increasing the supply of new homes





## A1 Why is this a priority?

A1.1 The demand for new homes in Eastbourne remains strong. Projections indicate that, based on historic trends, the population of Eastbourne could grow from 103,000 to 118,000 by 2034, requiring enough new homes to house 15,000 extra residents living in 8000 households. The standard assessment used under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) estimates that to meet this need requires building 668 additional homes per year.

A1.2 In all likelihood, the ability to meet this potential demand will be restricted by the availability of suitable sites across the Borough. This is reflected in dwelling-led population projections, which indicate a slower rate of growth, increasing to around 106,000 residents by 2034. This is relatively more moderate, but still requires the provision of homes for an additional 4,000 households<sup>5</sup>. The most recent strategic land assessments<sup>6</sup> indicate that existing and re-cycled sites will only support 3,000 new homes, so without a change of approach the Borough may well struggle to meet demands and build homes that could attract new working age households. Such restrictions could contribute to higher house prices, raise dependency ratios as the population ages and limit growth, as economically active households move into other areas of Sussex.

A1.3 High house prices have reduced the level of home ownership and increased reliance on the private rented sector across the town, which now plays a bigger role than ever in meeting local housing need. Young single adults, low waged workers servicing the care sector and keyworkers struggle to afford self-contained housing in Eastbourne, with many having to rely on shared accommodation in the town, trends accentuated by the reduced availability of Housing Benefit for under-35s. These trends have also driven the demand for social rented housing. There are around 6,500 social rented homes in the town, but turnover is low and the supply of new homes has not kept up with demand. To help equate supply and demand a revised allocations policy allows only those with the highest levels of need to apply to the housing register, but even then, almost 1,000 applicants are waiting on the list. The wider demand for homes from households living in private homes sector is much greater.

A1.4 In line with national trends Eastbourne's demographic is changing, as improvements to health outcomes mean that local residents with long term health conditions live longer. Any new supply built to meet this growth must meet the future needs of the town, taking a balanced approach that delivers new family size accommodation and models of housing that meet the growing needs of older persons and other households living with long-term limiting conditions. Ensuring that new provision meets, or can be more easily adapted to meet, *accessible* standards will help more easily maintain the independence or resident in their homes.

---

<sup>5</sup> This figure takes into account a predicted reduction in average household size.

<sup>6</sup> EBC Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016 / Strategic Housing & Economic Land Avail. Assessment 2017.

A1.5 Assessments of house price, migration and travel to work data confirm that Eastbourne lies at the heart of a wider housing market and functional economic area extending into the southern area of Wealden. Recently completed and planned new developments are likely to have met some of the excess demands for housing, from Eastbourne residents who wish to live locally and continue to work, shop and access schools and leisure facilities in the town. Only those Eastbourne residents who can afford to buy or rent homes privately can access these new developments, as any affordable homes built are only available to existing Wealden residents.

A1.6 Eastbourne Borough Council has set a commitment of responding to the climate emergency and to deliver a carbon neutral borough by 2030. Working towards these goals will mean: setting out a clear path to adopting green technology in newly built homes; incorporating design features that reduce energy use; and putting in place regimes that can effectively test the impact of measures, to help ensure that we achieve agreed sustainability targets.

## **A2. Our current position.**

A2.1 The current Eastbourne Local Plan 2006-2027 (Core Strategy) sets the build targets for new homes across the Borough and outlines the policies used to support the creation of balanced communities. The Plan set out supports the building of 240 new homes each year, a total of 5,000 or so across the plan period. It also identifies the level of housing growth anticipated across the Borough's 14 neighbourhoods, highlighting the Town Centre and Sovereign Harbour as the two most sustainable centres of delivery. The town centre, in particular, is now likely to become the focus of further residential growth.

A2.2 The plan has delivered an average of 225 homes per year, close to the set target, although this record is influenced by high levels of delivery in the early years of the plan. Recent delivery has struggled to recover to pre-recession levels and in the past three years has fallen back. This is reflective of site availability as well as economic fortunes, with 75% of all sites delivering five homes or less across the life of the plan.

A2.3 In the past three years performance against the build target has fallen back to 73%, so we have taken the following actions to help boost future supply:

- Putting in place a timetable to update our Local Plan, which will revise those policies that set the scale, type, size and tenure mix of housing up to 2038.
- Agreeing a Town Centre Local Plan that recognises the importance of diversifying land use to encourage the development of new homes.
- Completing regular updates of the 'brownfield land register', a list of previously used sites that are suitable for housing and accelerating the granting of planning permission on the sites it contains. As a result, 627 homes on 39 sites are now approved for new development.

A2.4 The latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), published in 2016, assessed the mix of housing likely to be needed across the Borough. Based on expected changes to household profile, the analysis provides a summary of the unit mix required across all tenures.

*Figure A1 - Existing & future housing requirements 2015-2035*

<b>Housing Type</b>	<b>No. (2011 Census)</b>	<b>Additional no.*</b>
1 - bedroom flat	7,037	2,507
2 - bedroom flat	7,493	2,681
3 - bedroom flat	1,630	522
2 - bedroom house	7,892	2,448
3 - bedroom house	14,503	4,996
4+ bedroom house	6,000	1,686
<b>Total</b>	<b>44,555</b>	<b>14,840</b>
*Based on the upper recommendation in SHMA of 743 units per year 2015 - 2035.		

Source: Eastbourne B.C. SHMA 2016

This is summarised in figure A1 (above), which identifies 3-bed houses, along with 1-bed and 2-bed flats as the types of home in highest demand. The demand for all types of older persons' accommodation increases, with the need for an additional 2,300 homes identified in the SHMA. The report highlights the scale increase required in models of provision that provide enhanced sheltered or extra care support. High level options for how the new Local Plan meets this need are currently being discussed with infrastructure providers and neighbouring authorities, to better understand the potential impact of pursuing various configurations of development.

A2.5 The 2016 SHMA also assessed the scale of affordable housing need in the Borough, by modelling existing and future needs against the likely supply of lettings and new homes. It identified a shortfall of around 430 homes per annum over the next five years. Although the assessment is based on a number of key assumptions, taken together all indicators point to a significant under supply that must be addressed. We have made a start, by:

- Setting up a new development arm of the Council, Aspiration Homes. This has delivered the first affordable housing schemes in Wayside Terrace and Northbourne Road and has a scheme on-site in Langney Road, which will deliver new homes for NHS staff at discounted market rents.
- Focussing on land acquisitions that can unlock capacity for new affordable housing delivery, such as the acquisition of the old Magistrates Court site, set to deliver new affordable housing by March 2022.
- Identifying financial support to unlock new sites and schemes, such as the £1.2M secured through the Housing Infrastructure Fund, which will support the development of new homes and deliver improvements to the public realm at Bedfordwell Road.



A2.6 Maximising the delivery of new homes can only be achieved if we fully engage private and public sector partners. As preparations for the new Local Plan move through to the consultation phases we have been:

- Pro-actively contacting site owners to discuss development options.
- Engaging local housebuilders, authorities and infrastructure providers to obtain an initial view about the impact of various options for the spatial development of new homes.
- Working collaboratively with Wealden District Council to reach a memorandum of understanding. This will form the basis of future discussion about how we can work together to meet housing and employment needs across the Eastbourne & South Wealden housing market & functional economic area.

### A3. Our plans

A3.1 Our plans will support a range of strategic and operational activities that will help boost the housing supply needed to create an environment that supports thriving communities and allows businesses to prosper. These are set out in five key areas, as follows:

**Maximising housing delivery targets to meet local needs.** The actions set out here will keep housing need and land supply under review, drive forward plans to maximise output against current build targets and actively monitor progress.

Goal:	To put these in place we will:	Year:	Allocate to:
Effectively assessing housing needs across the Borough.	- Agree a mechanism and use it to carry out regular housing needs assessments that effectively measure housing need, demand and under occupation.	1 - 2	Head of Homes First
	- Assess the degree to which delivery is meeting local housing needs of all residents, including those in <i>protected groups</i> , such as those with disabilities or long-term health conditions, BAME and LGBT residents.	1 - 2	Head of Homes First

Clearly monitoring current delivery against targets set out in the current Local Plan.	- Annually update the NPPF Housing Delivery Test (HDT) to check progress and review the successes, risks and barriers to delivery.	1 - 5	Head of Planning
	- Monitor delivery of the latest (2019/20) HDT action plan.	1 - 5	Head of Planning
Implementing our annual housing delivery (HDT) action plans.	- Update our Strategic Housing & Employment Land Availability Assessment every two years.	1 - 5	Head of Planning
	- Engage the Project Review Sign-Off Panel / Local Planning Steering Group on all new key projects.	1 - 5	Head of Planning

**Agreeing a new Local Plan that sets achievable delivery targets for new homes.** The updated plan will provide a *Core Strategy* that will set out to identify a sustainable supply of land, boost housing supply and set out a new spatial strategy for co-ordinating its development alongside accompanying improvements to local infrastructure. The plans will run up to 2038.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To put these in place we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate to:</b>
Revising strategic planning policies for housing as part of our new <i>Core Strategy</i> .	- Complete the required phases of consultation.	2 - 5	
	- Implement new strategic housing policies. - Obtain Government approval of our Local Plan and associated Core Strategies.	2 - 5	
Setting clear and sustainable delivery targets for new homes up to 2038.	- Agree annual targets for housing delivery across all tenures that balance local need with unit mix and available land.	2 - 5	
Maximising housing delivery.	- Implement a spatial delivery strategy that maximizes output from	2 - 5	

	available land, shapes residential development across the Borough's neighbourhoods and drives town centre renewal.		
Working to secure supply across the wider Housing Market area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agree the boundaries of the shared area.</li> <li>- Agree the impact of land constraints on the Council's ability to meet local housing needs.</li> <li>- Finalise a <i>Memorandum of Understanding</i> outlining how Eastbourne B.C. and Wealden D.C. can work together to shape plans across the shared housing market &amp; functional economic area.</li> </ul>	2 - 5 2 - 5 2 - 5	
Incorporating the Council's environmental sustainability objectives in our delivery plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update our design standards to balance the delivery of new homes with targets that help reduce carbon emissions and other adverse environmental impacts.</li> </ul>	2 - 5	

**Attracting residential development into the town centre.** Recent investment in Eastbourne town centre has helped maintain its status as a first-class retail and leisure destination. However, the retail sector continues to experience structural transformation and it is essential that clear plans are in place to diversify the use of any vacated retail space. Attracting new residential development will form a key part of our strategy for maintaining a vibrant and thriving town centre.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To put these in place we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate to:</b>
Taking clear steps to diversify the overall mix of uses in the Town Centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agree a spatial strategy that identifies specific zones for residential development.</li> <li>- Set town centre targets for new homes in the new Local Plan.</li> </ul>	2 - 5 2 - 5	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Align housing, growth and planning policy to underpin the sustainable development of the town centre.</li> </ul>	1	Director of Regeneration & Planning
Targeting under-utilised sites for residential development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with the owners of vacant sites to prioritise the residential development.</li> <li>- Examine opportunities to attract new institutional investors, keen to move out of retail and into residential portfolios, to the local market to unlock more capacity for new homes.</li> </ul>	1  1	Director of Regen. & Planning  Director of Regen. & Planning

**Increasing our direct provision of affordable and low-cost housing options.** Fostering the development of mixed communities requires the delivery of new homes across price points and across tenure. As well as working with our partners to achieve these goals, the Council has submitted plans to build its own homes. This pipeline of projects will help directly meet local housing needs, support wider economic regeneration and deliver new income streams. The Council will focus provision on meeting the needs of residents who face barriers to accessing suitable housing in the private sector, including young people, families, older people, those with complex disabilities, those with long term-health conditions, local key workers and those facing harassment and discrimination.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To get there we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate to:</b>
Deliver existing plans to develop large sites in central Eastbourne.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop an agreed quota of new affordable homes at our site in Bedfordwell Road</li> <li>- Develop homes planned at the former Magistrates' Court site.</li> </ul>	1  2 - 5	Head of Commercial Business
Utilise Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing to build new homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reviewing our HRA business plans to support the delivery of a sustainable supply of</li> </ul>	1	Director of Regen. & Planning

	<p>new homes, funded from the HRA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set build targets and monitor progress (from 2020/21).</li> </ul>	1	Director of Regen. & Planning
Use Aspiration Homes (a Limited Liability Partnership with Lewes District Council) to acquire/build low cost homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuing to support the delivery of affordable schemes delivered through the Housing Revenue Account.</li> </ul>	1 - 3	Head of Commercial Business
Use Eastbourne Housing Investment Company Limited (a Council owned investment company) to acquire/build for private rent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deploy the agreed commercial investment strategy, generating a commercial return from new schemes and acquisitions.</li> <li>- Agree business plan, set clear delivery targets and monitor progress.</li> </ul>	1 - 5 1 - 5	Head of Commercial Business Head of Commercial Business
Incorporating the Council's sustainability objectives in our delivery plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update our design standards to balance the delivery of new homes with targets that help reduce carbon emissions and adverse environmental impacts.</li> </ul>	2 - 5	

**Creating stronger relationships with local partners, developers and housing associations.** Strong partnerships and a commitment to strategies that develop a shared understanding of local markets can help unlock new capacity to deliver additional market and affordable housing.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To get there we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate to:</b>
Pursue an active strategy to unlock and re-cycle privately owned land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make regular 'calls for sites' from landowners.</li> </ul>	1 - 5	Head of Planning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep our 'brownfield' land register up to date and accelerate processes for granting planning permission for the sites it contains.</li> </ul>	1 - 5	Head of Planning
Work with other public bodies in East Sussex to unlock development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participate in the SPACES programme (One Public Estate)</li> </ul>	1 - 3	Head of Commercial Business

capacity.	consortia, developing shared estate strategies that explore co-location and other ways of maximising land utilisation for development.		
Work with local developers to encourage residential development into Eastbourne.	- Participate in the Developers East Sussex Forum, to understand local barriers to development and agree joint actions to address them.	1 - 3	Head of Commercial Business
	- Explore new models that enable developers to purchase small sites and sell developed homes back to the Council.	1	Head of Commercial Business
Continue to maximise the provision of affordable homes in private developments.	- Support developers to design schemes that deliver affordable housing quotas.	1 - 5	Head of Commercial Business
	- Maximise section 106 quotas to deliver more affordable homes.	1 - 2	Head of Commercial Business
Explore opportunities to unlock capacity through the regeneration of existing estates.	- Develop high level options for unlocking capacity across key estates.	2 - 5	
	- Seek external funding opportunities / interest from developers.	2 - 5	

### **Transitioning to carbon-neutral, environmentally friendly, homes.**

Our plans here will focus on working with local developers, other local authorities and agencies to promote the adoption of green technologies by reducing costs through bulk procurement, supporting the development of local skills and agreeing strategies that can take advantage of any future funding opportunities set out by central Government. Our planning guidance will be updated on an ongoing basis to ensure that any new regulations are applied to all newly built homes.



<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To get there we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate to:</b>
Reduce the impact of newly built homes / schemes on the environment, through planning policy and development management	- Work with local developers to encourage the adoption of low & zero carbon technologies.	1 - 5	Head of Planning
	- Work with local developers to encourage the adoption of individual & communal rainwater harvesting / grey water saving technologies.	1 – 5	Head of Planning
	- Encouraging developers to optimise wildlife friendly communal planting, green corridors/walls/roofs and tree cover.	1 - 5	Head of Planning
	- Ensure that public transport options are integrated into scheme planning.	1 - 5	Head of Planning
	- Ensure that full provision is made for EV charging points.	1 - 5	Head of Planning
Promote and encourage the adoption of low carbon measures by private developers.	- Work with our local and regional partners to establish a high quality advice service. - Promote access to national and regional funding opportunities.	2 - 5	
Grow the local 'green tech' supply chain and installation services.	- Encourage developers to use green / sustainable products by developing new supplementary planning guidance.	2 - 5	
	- Work with colleges and local businesses to identify suitable training and apprentice opportunities.	2 - 5	
Ensure compliance with any new regulations implemented by Government.	- Enforce controls through updated local planning policy and associated enforcement of planning permissions & building regulations.	2 - 5	

A3.2 The plans set out above are designed to meet head on the challenges associated with increasing local supply, create solutions that support the private market, the Council and registered providers and meet demand. Exercising plans to boost the supply of homes in a timely, yet sustainable, manner is an essential element of our wider plans to meet future carbon-neutral targets, support local economic growth and maintain balanced and thriving communities for generations to come.

#### **A4 Key delivery tools**

A4.1 The following strategies, policies, tools and action plans will be used to deliver the key parts of our strategy:

Homes First Allocation Policy 2018
EBC Sustainability Policy 2018
Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan 2013
Eastbourne Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
Eastbourne Town Centre Local Plan (2013)
EBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016)
Eastbourne Sustainable Building Design Supplementary Planning Document (2013)

3

## Theme B: Promoting access to housing that meets modern standards



## **B1. Why is this priority?**

- B1.1 Having access to a quality home helps individual residents achieve wellbeing, education and employment goals, supports the delivery of balanced communities and a prosperous town. High housing costs, squeezed household budgets and welfare reforms have impacted the choice that many households are able to exercise in the local housing market, driving falling levels of home ownership and a rise in private renting. The private rented sector doubled in size in the ten years to 2011, when it housed almost a quarter of Eastbourne's residents, in 10,500 households. It continues to grow. These trends have driven levels of demand for affordable housing, whilst the number of vacancies in existing and new affordable homes remains low.
- B1.2 Securing a mortgage, high deposits, rent in advance and concerns over the length of tenancies on offer are worries that local residents searching for a new home face daily. Supporting measures that promote access to new homes and give residents access to good quality advice is an essential element of our strategy. Indeed, it could be argued that helping residents make good housing choices, along with measures that set out to stabilise local housing markets and promote fair access to social housing, are as important as increasing the supply of new homes, when helping address local need.
- B1.3 Taking steps to ensure that private sector housing meets legal standards is another key aspect of the Council's work, the importance of which is amplified by the larger role that the private rented sector plays in meeting local housing need. Meanwhile, the debate on standards is increasingly focusing on how the local housing stock can be supported to transition towards contributing to national and locally agreed carbon reduction targets.

## **B2. Our current position**

- B2.1 Housing in Eastbourne is more unaffordable than ever. The average price of a home in February 2019 was £240,000, an increase of 5% on 2016 and a 40% increase on the price ten years ago. This means that an increasing number of middle income and working households struggle to afford housing on the open market. Those wishing to buy need to raise more than eight times the local average salary and secure housing finance by raising a large deposit, a key barrier that many looking to buy face. Although the Government's *Help to Buy* scheme does provide equity loans to those who meet the required eligibility criteria, its reach in the Borough is limited by the low numbers of new homes being built. There are, however, developments in the wider housing market area that do subscribe to the scheme.



B2.2 Those households finding themselves unable to purchase have witnessed a steady rise in private rents (see table B1) with the high costs proving challenging for working as well as lower income households.

**Table B1. Private rents & Local Housing Allowance rates Eastbourne 2014-2019**

Mean rent	Room	Studio	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed
2014	356	414	541	707	876	1249
2019	382	487	618	811	951	1293
Perc.. Increase	7%	18%	14%	15%	9%	4%
Local Housing Allowance (LHA)	300	300	537	678	816	1,022
LHA as a % of 2019 rent	79%	61%	90%	84%	86%	79%

Source: Valuation Office Agency

B2.3 The accepted housing affordability test is that households should not spend more than 30% of their disposable income on housing costs, beyond which it can become difficult to afford other basic spending needs. The take home pay of a full-time worker earning the local median wage would be £1,900 per month. A single parent with one child renting a two-bed home let at the average (mean) rent would, despite receiving a top up via Universal Credit (UC), still find themselves be spending 35% of their income on rent. The freeze on increases to Local Housing Allowance means that any rise in rent will need to be met from disposable income. Meanwhile, more specific rules that limit the payment of housing subsidy for those under-35 have restricted the ability of many single households to access self-contained accommodation.

B2.4 At the end of 2016, the benefit cap which limits the total amount of welfare payments that a non-working household can receive, was lowered to £18,200 per annum (for households with children). This led to a 500% increase in the number of households in the town whose income fell short of the amount needed to meet housing and basic subsistence costs. The number continues to rise and at the start of 2019, 125 families were likely to need discretionary housing payments to meet their housing costs.

B2.5 Affordability is largely driven by the market and longer term price reductions can only be achieved by increasing supply. However, we have taken a number of direct and indirect steps to help local residents address affordability issues.

Recent interventions include:

- Signposting those likely to meet the required eligibility criteria for *Help to Buy* to the local agent to see whether this, or other similar low-cost home ownership schemes, can help them access funding to purchase a new home.

- Helping residents access new affordable rent homes, developed by our partners and Aspiration Homes, a Council owned company that uses money from Right to Buy receipts to reduce market rents.
- Working with our partners to access a small portfolio of shared ownership homes, the high demand for which indicates there is a keen appetite for this product.
- Co-ordinating a programme of work being led by the Eastbourne Strategic Partnership, to evaluate and address rising levels of poverty across the town. Although this work has broader appeal, the outcomes will help those struggling to meet housing costs.

B2.6 The local private rented sector now houses over a quarter of Eastbourne's residents, across a series of market offers providing homes for single sharers, students, keyworkers, working and non-working family households. For the most part standards are satisfactory, although tenants concerns about the condition of some homes, high rents and security of tenure mean that nationally only 69%<sup>7</sup> of residents are satisfied with the tenure. This compares to 83% of social housing tenants and 98% of homeowners.

B2.7 The potential costs go beyond the concerns of individual. Nationally, private sector tenants move more frequently than those in other tenures, on average every four years, compared to twelve years for a social rented tenant and eighteen for an owner occupier<sup>8</sup>. This can drive higher levels of in/out migration between neighbourhoods and reduce community cohesion, whilst an accompanying lack of ownership options can reduce the attractiveness of an area to new economically active households. Ultimately, this has the potential to reduce the productivity of the town and accentuate the current trend of an ageing population.

B2.8 The sector has faced recent pressures, with reductions in tax breaks, limits on deposits and caps of agents' fees having reduced margins for some landlords. There may be further changes to come, should the Government press ahead with plans to increase security of tenure by removing mandatory possession grounds. This is potentially good news for tenants but may be a cause of further concerns amongst some local landlords. Continuing fears about the payment delays that lower income tenants may face as UC is rolled out further and the 'competition' posed by the short term let markets, could further disrupt the sector.

B2.9 Given the heightened role the sector now plays in meeting local housing needs, supporting and stabilising the private rented sector in the town is a key aspect of our strategy.

---

<sup>7</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017/18.

<sup>8</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017/18

We have made a start by:

- Strengthening the relationships with landlords and local letting agents, working closely with those willing to take referrals from the housing options team in return for financial guarantees or support packages for tenants
- Holding advice sessions for local landlords to explain the transition from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit.
- Working with local landlords to improve standards in privately rented homes, by encouraging good management practices and undertaking enforcement action as necessary.
- Setting up *Eastbourne Housing investment Company Limited*, a Council owned company which has now built up a portfolio of over 100 privately rented properties that are let, managed and maintained to a high standard by the Council's *Homes First* team.

B2.10 Around eighty five percent of homes in Eastbourne are under private ownership, so encouraging owners and landlords to adopt low/zero carbon heating, ventilation and insulation systems, that can help meet local carbon climate reduction targets, is an essential element of our strategy. Support is likely to take the form of high quality advice services, working with suppliers to reduce the costs of installation through bulk purchasing and the compliance of any new tougher regulations to limit emissions. Assessing the feasibility of installing communal and district heating systems across the town and evaluating the impact this can make on reducing environmental impact is also something that we are keen to explore.

B2.11 The Council's own housing stock provides social rented homes for 3,500 residents, with a further 2,500 homes owned and managed by other social rented landlords across the Borough. This amounts to around 12% of the local housing stock, which is low when compared with average levels across the country, where 18% of homes fall into this category. However, we work closely with our partners to ensure that any available vacancies are let in a fair and transparent way.

We have recently:

- Put in place a revised allocations policy that promotes access for those in most need and gives the highest priority to this, freeing up larger homes or those vacating supported accommodation.
- Adopted a tenancy policy that continues to ensure that the vast majority of our homes are let on fully secure tenancies. We encourage our partner social landlords to maximise security of tenure by using fully assured tenancies.

### B3. Our plans

B3.1 The focus of our plans centres on delivering outcomes and targets across four key areas, each targeted at supporting the local housing market and opening up the access residents have to quality homes.

**Promoting access to low-cost rental and home ownership initiatives.** The emphasis placed here is on identifying those residents, on our waiting list or more generally, that may benefit from accessing intermediate rent or low-cost home ownership schemes. These schemes may be located in the Borough or the wider local housing market area.

Goal:	To get there we will:	Year:	Allocate to:
Maximise the availability of the Government's <i>Help to Buy</i> scheme to local residents.	- Encourage local developers to participate in the next phase of the Government's scheme (from March 2021).	1 - 3	Head of Commercial Business
	- Present information about the scheme on a new, easier to access web portal linked to Homes First website.	1	Head of Business Planning & Performance
	- Target the marketing of schemes to residents on our waiting list who may meet the eligibility criteria.	1	Head of Homes First
Maximise the availability of shared ownership/affordable rent schemes.	- Incorporate delivery targets into local planning policy/development targets.	2 - 5	
	- Present information about any new shared schemes on a new, easier to access web page	2 - 5	
	- Establish partnerships with local agents to market newly developed schemes & target those meeting eligibility on Council waiting lists.	2 - 5	



**Shaping a thriving private rented sector.** The actions summarised here focus on encouraging the supply of quality homes, by striking the right balance by protecting standards for tenants and viability for landlords' operations.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To get there we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate to:</b>
Better understand the impact of sector reforms and changes to the local market.	- Engage in regular dialogue with local landlord & letting agents.	1 - 2	Head of Homes First
	- Analyse rents and the volume of adverts to help track the performance of the local market and its impact on tenants.	1 - 5	Head of Business Planning & Performance
Identify viable opportunities for the Council's investment company to increase its portfolio.	- Pursue viable opportunities to secure a sustainable supply of well managed private rented homes.	1 - 5	Head of Commercial Business
Increase the number of homes that landlords make available to those in housing need.	- Review the success of the current landlord incentive scheme.	1	Head of Homes First
	- Explore the introduction of a Guarantor bond to encourage landlords to let to identified households in need.	1	Head of Homes First
	- Examine the barriers that households claiming welfare benefits face when trying to rent privately and work with landlords / managing agents to address identified any areas of concern.	2 - 5	
Raise the standard of local private rented sector homes.	- Pilot a scheme to pro-actively identify low standard homes and work with tenants and landlords to ensure that they are safe, secure and free from hazards.	2 - 5	Head of Homes First
	- Consider the benefits of selectively licencing all	2 - 5	Head of Homes First

	private rented sector homes in designated geographical areas & evaluate the success of any pilot.		
--	---	--	--

**Making best use of the social rented housing across the Borough.** Our work here is set to ensure that available social rented homes are made available to those households in the most housing need.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To get there we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate to:</b>
Examine capacity to align the level of available vacancies with housing needs.	- Evaluate the operation of the allocations policy and choice based letting model.	1 - 2	Head of Homes First
	- Ensure that banding system operates to fairly address the needs of BAME communities, households living with complex disabilities and long term health conditions and other protected groups.	1 - 2	Head of Homes First
Work with partner residential social landlords to further align allocations policies.	- Agree clearer and more transparent criteria for letting all social homes across the Borough.	2	Head of Homes First

**Taking steps to maximise the utilisation of empty homes.** The goal here is to put in place a mechanism that can help to routinely identify empty homes across the Borough, then deploy an approach that balances engagement and enforcement actions to bring them back into residential use.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To get there we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate to:</b>
Implement our newly agreed strategy.	- Agreed processes in place to identify, investigate and engage owners. - Clear recovery targets and monitoring in place.	1	Head of Homes First
Consider the conversion of empty offices and shops to residential use	- Identify empty premises and work with owners to examine options for conversion to homes that	1 - 2	Head of Commercial

	can meet local housing needs.		
Align strategy with plans of the Council's housing investment company.	- Assess the viability of using the Council's investment companies to bring identified homes back into use.	1	Head of Commercial Business

**Reducing the environmental impact of privately owned homes.** Support here is likely to take the form of high quality advice that can help owners understand which technologies best suit their home and help them to accurately calculate the costs, returns and associated wider environmental benefits involved. Securing cheaper installation deals through bulk purchasing schemes, channelling access to Government funding and adapting the Borough's planning policy to ensure that refurbished homes meet any tougher standards announced by Government, will play their part too.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To get there we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate to:</b>
Reduce the carbon-emissions emitted from privately owned homes.	- Work with registered industry providers to procure discounted purchasing for PV solar panels and the latest battery technology.	1 - 2	Head of Business Planning & Performance
	- Investigate opportunities for discounted procurement/purchasing of low/zero carbon & water saving technologies.	2 - 5	
	- Investigate the feasibility for creating communal / district heating networks across the town.	2 - 5	
Promote and encourage the adoption of low – carbon measures by private owners.	- Work with our partners to establish a high quality advice service for property owners.	1 - 2	Head of Business, Planning & Performance Head of Business, Planning & Performance
	- Promote access to national and regional funding opportunities.	1 - 5	
Grow the local 'green tech' supply chain and installation services.	- Establish a list of approved suppliers for green/sustainable products.	2 - 5	

	- Work with colleges/local businesses to identify suitable training and apprentice opportunities.	2 - 5	
Promote the use of 'green' energy'.	- Secure bulk energy deals that can help reduce the costs of 'green tariffs' for local consumers.	1 - 2	Head of Business, Planning & Performance
Ensure compliance with any tougher regulations implemented by Government.	- Enforce controls through updated local planning policy and associated enforcement of planning permissions & building regulations.	2 - 5	Head of Planning

B3.2 The measures above set out to promote access to affordable housing options, address the problems faced by those experiencing the most severe problems with housing costs and support the local housing market. Successful delivery of these will make a difference, but maximising their impact requires harmonising the plans here with objectives set elsewhere in this strategy that seek to boost supply and help those with support needs live independently. Our goals can only be achieved if we work closely with all of our partners to deliver together.

#### **B4 Key delivery tools**

B4.1 The following strategies, policies, tools and action plans will be used to deliver the key parts of our strategy:

Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy (2016)
EBC Sustainability Policy 2018
Discretionary Housing Payments Policy (2019)
Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan 2013
Homes First Allocation Policy 2018
EBC Tenancy Policy (2012)
Eastbourne Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
EBC Prescribed standards for houses of multiple occupation
Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants Policy (2019)
Eastbourne Sustainable Building Design Supplementary Planning Document (2013)



4

## Theme C: Reducing homelessness



## C1. Why is this a priority?

C1.1 The loss of a home is a traumatic process that places a huge strain on affected households. Placements in emergency accommodation can result in families having to share small rooms, share facilities with others and live in accommodation located away from familiar neighbourhoods, schools and places of employment. Meeting housing need on an emergency basis is costly for the Council, costs that have been rising year on year.

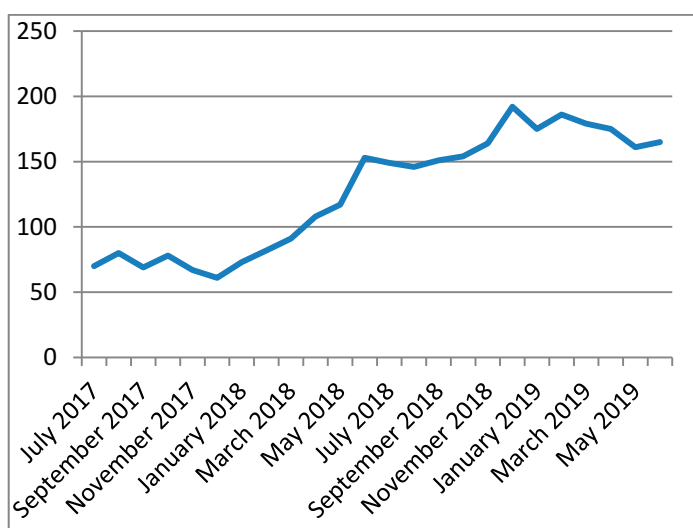
C1.2 Rough sleeping is the most acute expression of housing need. It has a severe and proven impact on the lives of affected individuals, increasing their risks as victims of crime, illness and at worst, can result in an early death. Levels of rough sleeping in the town have steadily increased in recent years, despite the implementation of programmes that have had considerable success in re-housing individuals affected.

C1.3 For these reasons, focussing on measures that prevents homelessness occurring in the first place and putting in place the support and access to housing options when it does, remain key priorities for the Council.

## C2. Our current position

C2.1 Eastbourne, like other towns and cities across the country, has seen a rise in both the number of homelessness presentations our Housing Options Team receives and rough sleeping. No single cause is responsible for these trends, with heightened responsibilities under the Homelessness Reduction Act, the impact of welfare reforms and increasingly restricted access that those on low incomes have to the private rented sector contributing to the rise in the number of households placed in temporary accommodation.

**Table C1. Number of households living in temporary accommodation**



C2.2 Table C1 shows the increase in households living in emergency accommodation, which rose sharply as the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act placed additional duties on the Borough to assist those threatened with homelessness. The figure peaked at 192 households in December 2018.

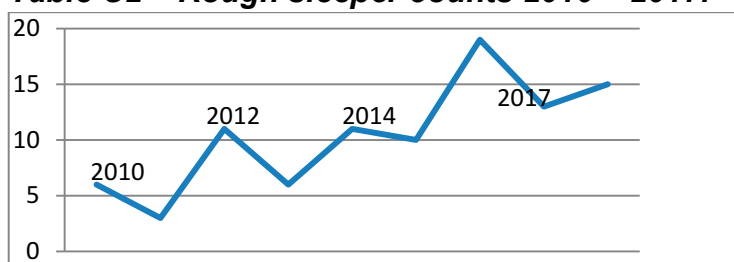
In response our Housing Options team put in place a number of key measures:

- Providing financial incentives to landlords willing to accept referrals of homeless households and putting in place support packages to help sustain their tenancies. In the past year this support has provided permanent homes for around 50 households each year.
- Re-shaping our Housing Options team to focus on providing solutions that help keep those at risk of becoming homeless in their homes and out of temporary accommodation by; supporting their search for an alternative home, negotiating new tenancy agreements with landlords and providing financial advice and support. These measures help stop around 30 households becoming homeless each month.
- Using Discretionary Housing Payments to help pay the rent arrears of those facing delays to Universal Credit and facing other financial. In 2018/19 we used this money to support 396 households, reducing pressure on our homelessness services.
- Working closely with our partners, Brighton Housing Trust, the Citizens Advice Bureau and the YMCA to provide advice and support services to young people and local residents at risk of homelessness.

C2.3 In recent months this work has helped reduce the numbers of households living in unsuitable and costly temporary accommodation, but we remain committed to putting in place additional measures to focus our preventative work and deliver better quality temporary housing solutions.

C2.4 In line with national trends, Eastbourne has seen an increase in the numbers sleeping rough on our streets, many with undiagnosed mental health conditions and a significant number with multiple complex needs. Towns and cities along the South Coast have been significantly more affected, with Eastbourne witnessing an increase from six cases in 2010 to 15 in June 2019 - table C2.

**Table C2 – Rough sleeper counts 2010 – 2017.**



C2.5 Hastings Borough Council (HBC) witnessed a similar rise in cases and in 2017 Eastbourne Borough Council secured joint funding with HBC under the Government's Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI).

This money has been used to:

- Create a multi-disciplinary team of health, social care, substance misuse & housing professionals.
- Establish a dedicated assessment unit for up to twelve individuals.
- Support an accommodation pathway, to focus efforts on matching rough sleepers with suitable homes in the private rented sector or supported housing.
- Establish a *Housing First* scheme that takes rough sleepers straight into a permanent home and provides intensive support to maintain the tenancy.
- Expand day centre provision, giving regular access to advice, washing and health care services.

C2.6 The RSI project is making a positive impact, securing accommodation and new homes for 27 individuals since October 2018. The programme supports an active case load of around 30 individuals and the high level of demand is illustrated by the fact that a further 40 'at risk' individuals are on a waiting list for the service.

C2.7 Additional funding to provide two dedicated officers working to secure a *Rapid Rehousing Pathway*, identifying individuals who can, with support, move directly into permanent homes has also been secured. They have been in place since the start of 2019 and are on track to help over 40 rough sleepers search for a new home.

C2.8 This work forms part of a broader Street Communities Strategy, which brings together a range of statutory agencies and voluntary partners to tackle issues relating to a wider group of individuals, including those begging on the streets and 'street drinkers' contributing to persistent crime and anti-social behaviour.



### C3. Our plans

C3.1 The focus of our plans here centre on delivering outcomes across five main areas, under each of which we will introduce new elements to compliment tried and tested measures.

**Focussing on our approach to prevention.** The focus here is on providing early support to households facing homelessness, to keep residents in their existing homes or by helping them to find a new place to live.

Goal:	To get there we will:	Year:	Allocate to:
Produce a new prevention toolkit.	- Develop a defined set of actions that members of the Housing Options Team (HOT) can access at key points in the process.	1	Head of Homes First
	- Deliver an accompanying training module tailored to individual HOT roles.	1	Head of Homes First
Provide high quality advice to target groups, including young people, care leavers and those facing welfare restrictions.	- Continue to commission partners to provide advice to target groups.	1 - 2	Head of Homes First
	- Issue grant agreements that specify outcomes and monitor performance.	1 - 2	Head of Homes First
	- Work with ESCC to implement the Care Leavers Protocol and develop appropriate services and processes that support it.	1	Head of Homes First
Raise awareness of youth homelessness and the realities of independent living.	- Support a school education programme that engages over 2,000 pupils aged 14-16 each year.	1 - 2	Head of Homes First
	- Develop 'tenancy ready' coaching for young people identified as being at risk of repeat homelessness.	2	
Optimise the impact of Discretionary Housing Payments.	- Review protocols that govern payment to ensure they maximise the support for those threatened / at risk of homelessness.	1	Head of Customer First.

	- Track the outcomes of support and apply the learning to assessment decisions.	2	
--	---	---	--

**Setting a clear direction for the future of support for rough sleepers.** Put in place a stable offer that draws together key agencies across the County to address the root cause of rough sleeping and implement required interventions.

Goal:	To get there we will:	Year:	Allocate to:
Speed up the process of re-housing identified rough sleepers.	- Put dedicated officers in place, servicing a pathway that matches individuals to suitable properties.	1	Head of Homes First
	- Utilise recent Government funding to invest in permanent homes for rough sleepers supported during the Covid-19 pandemic.	1 - 2	Director of Regen. & Planning
Work with our partners to better support those with multiple complex needs.	- Develop closer ties with local mental health & rehabilitation services	1	Head of Homes First
	- Examine the development of reciprocal letting agreements between partners.	2 - 5	
Evaluate the success of the Eastbourne Street Partnership.	- Review progress and issue a report summarising progress against year 1 outcomes and re-set targets.	1	Head of Homes First

**Work with private sector landlords to create vacancies for homeless/at risk households.** The actions summarised here set out to maximise the availability of suitable housing options for applicants who can, with support, sustain tenancies in the private rented sector.

Goal:	To get there we will:	Year:	Allocate to:
Further increase the number of private rented sector homes available to referrals made by our Housing Options Team and	- Evaluate the impact of our landlords' reward scheme.	1	Head of Homes First
	- Introduce a guarantor bond scheme to replace some financial incentives.	1	Head of Homes First
		1	

reduce costs.	- Agree how vacancies in homes purchased by Eastbourne Homes Investment Company Limited (EHICL) will be utilised.		Head of Homes First / head of Commercial Business
---------------	---	--	---

**Speeding up the move-on of homeless households.** The actions here focus on improving the experience of those households to whom we have accepted a re-housing duty and optimising the options they have for finding a permanent home.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To get there we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate to:</b>
Provide a lower cost, sustainable supply of temporary accommodation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maximise the use of EHICL vacancies for homeless households.</li> <li>- Set targets to reduce the use of emergency bed and breakfast accommodation.</li> <li>- Set targets for financial savings and monitor our progress.</li> </ul>	1	Head of Commercial Business
Undertake assertive outreach work to identify new homes for those currently living in temporary homes.	- Deploy dedicated officers to identify potential homes in the public and private sector and deliver intensive tenancy sustainment to developing the skills tenants need to effectively manage their homes and related affairs.	1	Head of Homes First
Match households with additional needs to suitable homes in supported housing.	- Undertake an active programme of work to identify permanent homes for those in supported housing, to free up move-on for households needing extra support.	1 - 2	Head of Homes First
Agree Personal Housing Plans (PHPs) with all households to whom we accept a re-housing duty.	- Commission a local partner agency to support the deployment of agreed PHPs, specify outcomes and monitor delivery.	1	Head of Homes First
Intentionally homeless households with	- As the new Supported Accommodation	2	

children.	Framework is implemented, work with ESCC, Districts & Boroughs, to examine how it can be used to secure more accommodation for these households.		
-----------	--	--	--

**Renewing our strategic approach.** The measures set out above are tailored to addressing the immediate response we make to homelessness. Over the coming months we have committed to undertake a more detailed review of our homelessness strategy, which will focus on how we can better work with our partners to shape the local response.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To get there we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate to:</b>
Drive forward a strategic response to reduce homelessness across the town.	- Hold a summit of agencies and partners to agree local barriers, opportunities and solutions.	1	Head of Homes First
	- Agree a clear scope for our review and accompanying timetable.	1	Head of Homes First
	- Produce and agreed strategy and action plan.	1 - 2	Head of Business Planning & Performance

C3.2 These objectives will be taken forward alongside the proposed strategic review, the outcomes of which will inform a partner led set of solutions that address focus on prevention, partner working and lasting provisions that help promote sustainable housing options across the Borough.

#### **C4 Key delivery tools**

C4.1 The following strategies, policies, tools and action plans will be used to deliver the key parts of our strategy:

Eastbourne and Lewes Street Communities Strategy 2018-2021
Discretionary Housing Payments Policy (2019)
EBC Tenancy Policy (2012)
EBC Exceptional Hardship Policy 2016
EBC Private Housing Enforcement Policy (2016)
EBC Corporate Plan 2016-20
Homes First Allocation Policy 2018



5

Theme D:  
Successfully managing  
and maintaining  
our Council homes



## D1. Why is this priority?

- D1.1 The Council is a major provider of housing, working in partnership with Eastbourne Homes Limited (the Council's arms-length management organisation) to deliver management services to 3,500 social rented tenancies and 600 leaseholders across the town. As such, the delivery of high-quality management and maintenance services has a direct impact on the lives of many households across the town, whilst the effective management of the estates and neighbourhoods can have a positive impact on the wider public realm.
- D1.2 Listening to our customers' concerns and taking steps to provide our residents with clear opportunities to voice opinions about the future direction of core services forms the basis of our approach. Our key goals are to make it easier for customers to transact and to lower the cost of key services to provide better value for both the customer and the Council.
- D1.3 In recent years we have invested in repair and improvement programmes to ensure that all our housing stock meets Decent Homes standards<sup>9</sup>. Continuing to develop asset management plans that optimise investment in the fabric of our existing homes is an essential element of our future plans. The focus here is on ensuring that these plans: deliver warm, safe and modern homes that make a real difference to our customers lives; are structured to maximise procurement opportunities and reduce contract costs; and improve the resilience of homes to reduce future responsive repair costs.
- D1.4 Given the relatively low levels of new homes being built across the Borough, significant investment in existing homes will be required to speed the transition to a *zero carbon offer* and meet the Council's policy of becoming a carbon-neutral Borough by 2030. Investment in our own social housing stock will be a significant component of this, and the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan will set out to drive our investment in 'green' initiatives and related sustainability work across our housing stock.
- D1.5 Through our role as a provider of homes, we have direct influence on the neighbourhood environment, particularly where homes are located in large blocks and estates. As such the delivery of housing services has an impact on the neighbourhood environment and the associated public realm that affects residents of the town more widely, so getting our approach right is key. Meanwhile, the landlord function also presents opportunities for local businesses, apprentices and trainees to benefit from available contract and employment opportunities.

---

<sup>9</sup> The Decent Homes Standard was introduced by the UK Government in 2004 to bring minimum standards on; statutory fitness; repairs; modern facilities and services; and thermal comfort.

## D2. Our current position

D2.1 In 2017, we established *Homes First*, a team dedicated to managing and maintaining our social housing stock across the town. The team manages the housing on behalf of Eastbourne Homes Limited, administering the waiting list, allocating available homes, assisting with the collection of rents and handling reports of anti-social behaviour in its homes. It also works in partnership with appointed contractors to deliver estates services, responsive repairs and deliver planned repair and improvement programmes to our homes.

D2.2 Underpinning our ability to fund services and deliver new investment is the effective and robust management of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), a 'ring fenced' amount of money raised from the rents and charges paid by tenants and leaseholders, that the Council must use to pay for housing services and the upkeep of its homes. The Homes First team deploy a series of plans, policies and checks to help drive performance, provide value for customers, minimise risk and meet their HRA commitments.

The main features of our current performance include:

- Getting to our repairs appointments on time and then completing reported repairs in line with set targets – in the three months to September 2019 over 95% of appointments were kept and 95% of repairs completed on time. We expect to complete around 13,000 repairs each year.
- Minimising the time it takes to re-let vacant homes - in the first half of 2018/19, 84 vacant homes were checked, repaired and re-let to new tenants, within our target time.
- In the year to March 2019, 87% of survey respondents were satisfied with the housing series they received.
- Working alongside the Account Management Team to reduce arrears by implementing policies that balance the need to support those facing difficulties and take tough enforcement action on those who refuse to pay.

D2.3 Delivering our targeted investment plans is key to ensuring that our homes meet the modern expectations and wellbeing of our residents and that the quality and sustainability of our assets is enhanced. Recent programmes of work are designed to take account of the information we hold about the condition of our housing stock and are structured to deliver improvements that maximise the impact for customers and provide value for money.



D2.4 Making planned investment in our homes improves the reliability of our assets and reduces the expenditure on responsive repairs.

Our current plans include:

- The programmed replacements of ageing boilers with more efficient models that reduce carbon emissions and lower energy costs for customers. Over 200 new boilers will be replaced in 2019/20.
- A kitchen, bathroom and window replacement programme that will raise standards and improve energy efficiency for over 60 residents in the current year.
- Raising the standards of insulation as standard during any renovation/ refurbishment projects, again raising levels of energy efficiency for our residents.

D2.5 Keeping all our homes safe is another key aspect of Homes First's work and during the past year the team has maintained a 100% compliance record by inspecting gas safety checks in each of its homes. In addition, it undertakes an annual programme of checks that includes over 1,000 fire related tests and inspections, and a further 1,200 safety checks to ensure compliance with asbestos, water safety and electrical safety requirements.

D2.6 In recent years we have undertaken investment that has reduced the carbon emissions that our homes generate, through window replacement programmes, by improving levels of insulation and replacing inefficient boilers. In addition, more than seventy blocks of our homes have been fitted with solar PV to produce green energy and reduce the cost of electricity for our residents. The cost of further lowering emissions in existing homes (by *retro-fitting* our homes) remains high, but is expected to decrease as the sector adopts new technologies in volume and supply chains improve. Working with our local partners, we will look at ways of speeding up this transition through by exploring bulk purchasing opportunities and investing in local green technology and associated skills.

D2.7 In 2018, we asked tenants about how they wanted to be involved in shaping the services they receive. We received a clear response, with 80% of tenants telling us that they wanted more of a say in the decisions which affect their homes and neighbourhoods. Tenants were most keen to have their say about how their homes and neighbourhoods were managed and maintained, as well as our future plans.

Our new involvement plan sets out:

- A clear set of objectives to: help shape our approach around residents' availability and interests; drive real challenge to our plans and services; and give clear feedback on how we have used any views received.



- A full range of practical activities that range from formal meetings, such as our scrutiny panels or less formal activities such as walkabouts with Homes First staff, or simply responding to surveys.
- An approach that is resourced to provide the support, training and advice to get all tenants that want to be involved, involved.
- An accompanying action plan to raise levels of engagement by 2022.

### D3. Our plans

D3.1 Putting in place targeted measures that will improve customer experience, keep our homes in a good state of repair and help transition towards carbon-neutral emissions targets are the key objectives of the Council's strategy. We can only achieve this by regularly reviewing the way services are delivered, fully engaging our customers to help us do this and ensuring that we remain open to new technology and ideas. Our delivery plans are set out in the following themes:

**Renewing the delivery of Homes First's key services.** Meaningful service review can be achieved if we are prepared to effectively challenge the way we presently deliver services. To ensure that this is the case our plans will introduce review tools; accurately measure performance and the cost of services; identify the root cause of problems; and identify changes to service delivery approaches, processes and systems that will address these.

Goal:	To get there we will:	Year:	Allocate to:
- Set out our approach to delivering key management services in a scheduled Housing Services Review Programme.	- Map current processes/customer journeys, including those for repairs, allocations, income collection, tenancy, hate crime & anti-social behaviour, estate, leasehold and shared ownership management services.	1 - 3	Head of Homes First / Head of Business, Performance & Planning
	- Identify necessary improvements, establish service standards and engage tenants and leaseholders in any changes we make to delivery models.	1 - 4	Head of Homes First / Head of Business, Performance & Planning

- Implement updated policies, processes and systems to deploy agreed changes.	- Agree supporting policies and processes, delivery mechanisms and performance measures, seeking approval from members and EHL Board as appropriate.	1 - 4	Head of Homes First / Head of Business, Performance & Planning
- Ensure our approaches are updated to reflect any forthcoming legislation.	- Review our approach and implement updates to reflect any newly passed regulations or legislative provisions – particularly in relation to safe & decent homes; empowering residents; complaints; addressing social stigma and celebrating thriving communities.	2 - 5	

**Giving resident access to digital services.** Work here will focus on developing digital services that can transform the service experience for customers, making it easier for them to find key information, initiate a range of transactions, and then track progress through to resolution. Our plans will look at the most commonly accessed services first, such as repairs reporting, payments and rent accounting.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To get there we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate to:</b>
Enhance the range of information Homes First customers can access and update.	- Develop a 'My Homes First' portal – allowing Homes First customers to register and securely access key services	1	Head of Homes First
	- Provide access to essential tenancy, lease and block information.	1-2	Head of Homes First
	- Provide a facility to update contact details and other key information.	1-2	Head of Homes First
Enhance the range of information Homes First Customers can access online.	- Repairs & maintenance - provide access to schedule and track repairs and view outbound transactions e.g. planned works and gas servicing.	2 - 5	
	- Enquiries – provide access to log housing	2 - 5	

	<p>enquiries, complaints and book appointments with colleagues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enquiries – facilitate the tracking of open enquiries and confirm case closure.</li> <li>- Lettings - allowing customers to schedule viewings, sign-ups and virtual tours.</li> </ul>	2 - 5	
Expanding the range of methods by which customers can access key services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enabling access from mobile/handheld devices.</li> <li>- Introducing web-chat services and access via virtual digital assistants to applicable services.</li> </ul>	2 - 5	

**Keeping our assets in a good state of repair.** Our long term plans for the management of our housing assets set out to: protect their value and condition; drive an approach that maximises planned works and minimises responsive repairs; and optimise the use of assets to meet local housing need. Focussing on how we can enhance and use the information we hold about our assets, defining clear standards to drive the re-procurement of services, reviewing contract costs and taking firmer control of our supply chain by reducing the use of sub-contracting, are the key tools we will use to help us succeed. Promoting clearer communications with residents about our approach and investment plans for their home is vital.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To get there we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate to:</b>
Improve the information we hold about the condition of our assets.	- Initiate a systematic programme of stock condition surveys for all our homes and update the records held on Keystone, our Asset Management (AM) System.	1	Head of Homes First
	- Complete work to interface housing management and AM systems.	1	Head of Homes First
Agree a new asset management (AM)	- Analyse our stock condition data to better	1	Head of Homes First

strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand our assets.</li> <li>- Undertake a re-valuation of our stock in line with the latest available market forecast information.</li> <li>- Use this information to devise an approach to rationalise and optimise the use of our housing assets.</li> <li>- Engage key stakeholders to discuss our plan and ensure that assets continue to be used to meet locally agreed needs.</li> </ul>	<p>2 - 5</p> <p>2 - 5</p> <p>2 - 5</p>	
Reconfigure our asset management investment plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Produce new asset management standards to drive investment priorities.</li> <li>- Use improved data to drive more efficient planned maintenance programmes and servicing schedules.</li> <li>- Fully engage residents about our planned works programmes and their timing.</li> </ul>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Head of Homes First</p> <p>Head of Homes First</p> <p>Head of Homes First</p>
Review our key contracts to ensure they offer excellent value for money and support the local economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scope service requirements/standards and re-procure responsive repairs, void works, gas &amp; mechanical service contracts.</li> <li>- Provide contract opportunities for smaller local businesses.</li> <li>- Ensure that our contracts create apprentice opportunities for local residents.</li> </ul>	<p>1 - 3</p> <p>1- 3</p> <p>1- 3</p>	<p>Head of Homes First</p> <p>Head of Homes First</p> <p>Head of Homes First</p>

**Reducing the environmental impact of Council owned homes.** Given that the Council owns and manages eight percent of the local housing stock, it is in



a good position to lower the environmental impact made by its homes. However, our strategy to manage this process needs to take account of the current high financial costs of retro-fitting homes with low-carbon and green technologies, the relatively undeveloped nature of their supply chains and the fact that the long-term reliability of some products is yet to be fully tested. Costs are set to lower more widely across the sector and tracking these effectively will help us strike a balanced approach that reduces energy costs for tenants and leaseholders, meets intended environmental benefits and provides value for money for the investments made by the Council.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To get there we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate to:</b>
Set out a robust asset management response to meet locally set and national environmental and carbon-reduction targets in an agreed plan.	- Make a full assessment of the current emissions made by the Council's homes.	1 - 2	Head of Homes First
	- Assess 'distance of travel' the Council must make to effectively contribute to locally agreed carbon reduction targets.	1 - 2	Head of Homs First
	- Assess the cost and impact of options to deploying low-carbon measures.	2 - 5	
Directly reduce the environmental impact of Council owned homes.	- Evaluate the options for retro-fit low/zero carbon alternatives to gas boilers.	1 - 2	Head of Homes First
	- Review our heating contracts to support the deployment of greener heating alternatives.	2 - 5	
	- Optimise the deployment of green technologies including PV panels, the latest battery technology and water saving devices across the Council's estate.	2 - 5	
	- Designate homes / blocks for a retro-fit pilot and assess the environmental / energy saving impact.	1	Head of Homes First
	- Adopt ground management practices that attract and protect wildlife.	2 - 5	
	- Review the potential to retro-fit existing homes /	2 - 5	

	schemes with tree cover, planting schemes, green walls and roofs that attract and promote wildlife and encourage water absorption.		
--	--	--	--

**Giving residents a voice in shaping our services.** Ensuring that the existing approach agreed with our tenants is extended to leaseholders and fully aligning our plans with any future requirement set out in Government legislation are key features of our plans. Deploying this approach will also ensure that our plans provide sufficient opportunity for residents to challenge any new plans for the redesign of our key services.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To get there we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate to:</b>
Implement agreed strategy to engage Homes First tenants.	- Continue to enhance the options for involvement by deploying the agreed tenant involvement action plan 2019 -2022.	1 - 2	Head of Homes First
Ensure leaseholders have access to the same engagement opportunities as our tenants.	- Develop and agree a new leaseholder engagement strategy with our leaseholders.	1	Head of Homes First
	- Adopt channels to give leaseholders a range of formal and informal ways to engage Homes First.	1	Head of Homes First
Ensure our involvement approach is updated to reflect any forthcoming legislation. <sup>10</sup>	- Review our approach and implement updates to reflect new regulations –in regard to empowering residents; tackling stigma; and celebrating thriving communities.	2 - 5	Head of Homes First

D3.2. The approach set out here is designed to ensure that both the short-term delivery of our service and longer term approaches associated with the management of our assets provide quality outcomes for tenants and leaseholders. Above all else, successful delivery requires maintaining a clear commitment to engaging residents along the way.

<sup>10</sup> Currently set out in the Green Paper, 'A New Deal for Social Housing'.

#### **D4 Key delivery tools**

D4.1 The following strategies, policies, tools and action plans will be used to deliver the key parts of our strategy:

Eastbourne Statement of Community Involvement (2019)
EBC Sustainability Policy 2018
Eastbourne Sustainable Building Design Supplementary Planning Document (2013)
Homes First Allocation Policy 2018
Homes First Transfer Incentive Scheme 2019
Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan 2013
EBC Tenancy Policy (2012)







6

**Theme E:  
Promoting homes  
that sustain health  
and wellbeing**



## **E1. Why is this priority?**

E1.1 The quality and suitability of the homes in which our residents live are key determinants of their wellbeing, physical and mental health. A healthy home is one that is:

- Affordable and offers a secure base.
- Able to provide for all the households' needs.
- A place where occupants feel comfortable and safe.
- Connected to community, schools, work and services.

E1.2 Homes that meet these basic needs provide a secure foundation for individuals and families to lead healthy lives, recover from illness and maintain independence. Where those foundations are not in place and households find themselves living in poor quality homes, experience precarious housing circumstance or have no home at all, then wellbeing, physical and mental health all suffer. These disproportionately impact on those living in poverty and, as such, poor 'housing foundations' are a key driver of health inequality.

E1.3 Recent changes to the operation of housing markets have challenged these foundations. Rising house prices have restricted access to home ownership, the most stable form of tenure, increasing reliance amongst all age groups on the private rented sector. A limited supply of new public sector housing, frozen housing welfare subsidies and restrictive welfare reforms, have made it even harder for households with the lowest incomes to find and keep a home that meets their needs. Meanwhile, the restrictions on housing welfare subsidies for under-35s means that younger households stay living 'at home' with parents for longer, or rely on shared housing until later in life.

E1.4 In the round, the health of older people, disabled people of all ages and people with long term physical and mental health conditions are at greater risk of harm from poor housing conditions. As the population ages, meeting the needs of these groups requires the close alignment of housing, health and care services, to deliver the support that will keep residents in their homes, reduce the duplication of services and lower cost. The deployment of new technology also has a role to play.

E1.5 In 2018, the Government recognised the importance of the role housing plays in delivering better health and wellbeing outcomes. Bringing together twenty-six public sector and industry representative bodies, it issued a memorandum of understanding<sup>11</sup>, committing the health, social care and housing sectors to undertaking joint action to reduce health inequality.

---

<sup>11</sup> Improving Health & Care through the Home: A National Memorandum of Understanding

## **E2. Our current position.**

- E2.1 More than a fifth of Eastbourne's residents are already affected by disability or a long-term limiting illness and this figure is set to increase to more than a quarter over the next fifteen years, as the local population ages.
- E2.2 In 2016, a survey setting out to measure wellbeing and resilience<sup>12</sup>, key constituents of positive mental health, asked residents across East Sussex to answer 14 questions about their feelings, emotions, moods and confidence. The results gave a combined score of 50.0<sup>13</sup> for all respondents, a figure broadly in line with the national average. The scores were, perhaps unsurprisingly, lower for those with a disability or long-term health condition and also lower for those unsatisfied with their home or local area as a place to live. Scores for Eastbourne (and Hastings) were lower than Wealden, whilst some wards in the town such as Devonshire and Hampden Park were significantly lower than those reported for the County as a whole. The clinical commissioning group covering Eastbourne, Hailsham & Seaford reports higher instances of recorded depression and hospital admission for those with a mental health illness than the other clinical commissioning groups operating across East Sussex.
- E2.3 Changes to the housing market are likely to have contributed to reduced levels of wellbeing. In particular, the increased role of the private rented sector is of concern. Whilst the sector provides suitable, good condition homes for many, a lack of security, affordability and the poorer condition of some homes creates insecurity and anxiety for a significant number of households. The same survey of wellbeing reported significantly lower scores for wellbeing amongst private tenants (47.9) than for homeowners (51.2). When the needs of a household change, getting the landlord's agreement to improvements or adaptations can be a further barrier to the sector's ability to adequately meet housing needs, reducing residents' ability to live independently and adding further pressure on local services.
- E2.4 The Council is already a direct provider of older persons' accommodation, managing 11 schemes that meet the needs of 320 local residents. As the local population ages the housing response will require additional new homes. The latest strategic needs assessment<sup>14</sup> projects that 1,500 more units of older persons' accommodation and 700 residential care places will be needed by 2032. This need will need to be met by a range of public and private sector investment and this investment should, in order to optimise benefits, be targeted at providing a greater choice of housing options to local older residents. This would not only provide the direct benefit of improved health and wellbeing outcomes for those who move, but also free up much needed family sized homes for younger, economically active, households.

---

<sup>12</sup> The Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing scale.

<sup>13</sup> Annual report of the Director of Public Health, East Sussex 2016/17.

<sup>14</sup> Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Eastbourne B.C., 2016

E2.5 Part of the Borough's response will be about ensuring that any new homes built in the Borough meet the needs of all the whole community. However, it is widely accepted that any new supply must be complemented by solutions that help residents' live independently in their existing homes and effectively co-ordinate activities to maximise the impact of available funding across the public and private sector. We have already made a start and work closely with our partners to help achieve this.

Locally supported schemes include the:

- STEPS service - commissioned by East Sussex County Council to provide advice to any Eastbourne residents over the age of 60 who are experiencing housing difficulties. In the year to June 2019 the service helped over 600 people get extra help with housing costs, adapt their home to meet their needs or move to a better suited home. The service is free and offers a face to face service in residents' own homes.
- Homeworks housing support service - working in partnership with Southdown Housing to help local residents who are facing additional challenges keep or find a new home. The service takes referrals from a wide range of social care and statutory agencies, including the council
- Winter Warmth Programme - delivering advice on switching tariffs, insulation, and other energy saving measures to older residents across the town and sign-posting those on lower incomes to available grants where applicable. In 2018/19 over 300 older persons used this service.

E2.6 This support extends through to the provision of physical adaptations.

In 2018/19 we:

- Successfully delivered improvements and minor adaptations in over 200 Council homes, helping to sustain their independence of local residents.
- Administered Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) that funded 90 major adaptations for residents living in privately owned homes.
- Successfully bid for funding that has employed new occupational therapists, to help better understand the needs of local residents and speed up our assessment service.

E2.7 Plans to fully integrate the delivery of health and social care services across East Sussex, as part of the *Better Together* programme are already well established. As a next step, the Director of Public Health at East Sussex County Council has commissioned a piece of work to examine the impact that housing has on the health of the local population and the extent to which it drives health inequalities. The report, due to be published in early 2020, is likely to make a series of recommendations setting out how 'anchor organisations', including local District and Borough councils can deliver shared strategies and practices to address these.



### E3. Our plans

E3.1 The plans set out below centre on delivering outcomes across four main areas. The actions under each will help ensure that we work together with our partners to deliver positive and healthy outcomes for the Borough's residents.

**Shaping the Borough housing stock.** Taking steps to ensure that the strategies which underpin the delivery of new and remodelled homes effectively take account of the need to support the future health and wellbeing of local residents.

Goal:	To get there we will:	Year:	Allocate to:
Ensure that future housing provision is aligned with forecast changes in the needs of local residents.	- Set delivery targets that will effectively meet the need for older persons' additional and extra care units.	2 - 5	
	- Set delivery targets that will effectively meet the needs of those facing additional challenges (i.e. care leavers, identified mental & physical & health conditions).	2 - 5	
Review use of the Council's portfolio of older persons' schemes to meet local needs.	- Review the modelling of existing schemes and the accompanying service offer, to ensure it meet the needs of an ageing population.	2 - 5	
Promote design standards for new homes that support independent living.	- Review relevant planning policies to promote the adoptions of Lifetime Homes <sup>15</sup> standards.	1 - 3	Head of Planning
	- Review the design of any new Council built homes against 'Lifetime Homes'.	2 - 5	
Providing bespoke housing solutions for high need households, such as those containing children with complex needs and disabilities.	- Identify needs and assess whether building or adapting homes can provide lasting solutions to reduce the 'all round cost' of delivering health & housing services.	1 - 3	Head of Homes First / Head of Commercial Business

<sup>15</sup> Lifetime homes incorporate sixteen design criteria that can be applied to new build homes, at minimal cost, to ensure they remain accessible as the needs of occupants change.

**Supporting and maintaining the independence of residents.** Taking steps to support independent living by facilitating physical changes to the fabric of homes and co-ordinating the packages of support needed to keep residents managing their own day to day lives.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To get there we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate:</b>
Support the provision of high quality tenancy sustainment services for local residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with our partners to ensure that any recommissioning of the STEPS or Homeworks service continues to provide high quality housing support and advice.</li> </ul>	1-2	Head of Homes First
Optimise the use of Better Care/ Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to reduce healthcare spending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide a high quality service by effectively managing any applications received for adaptations in our own stock.</li> <li>- Use available funds to support and sustain care leavers, and those with mental health, emotional and well-being needs to reduce local healthcare spend.</li> <li>- Support initiatives that can reduce the impact of rough sleeping on health and wellbeing to reduce local health care spend.</li> </ul>	1 – 5  2 - 5  2 - 5	Head of Homes First
Supporting local partnerships to improve housing advice to young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to support the delivery of housing advice and mental health support services through the Eastbourne Youth Partnership, working alongside the YMCA, Brighton Housing Trust, and the Youth Advice Centre to meet the needs of local young people.</li> </ul>	1 - 2	Head of Business, Performance & Planning
Better support private rented sector tenants in need of adaptations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trialling a scheme to offer the full DFG funding of adaptations in return for a proportionate commitment by landlords to guarantee use of their home.</li> </ul>	1	Head of Homes First

**Using adaptive technology.** Exploring opportunities to utilise existing and future adaptive technologies to extend independent living.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To get there we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate:</b>
Trial how technology can help residents challenged by day to day tasks, such as switching on lights and operating blinds, heating controls and appliances.	- Identify any existing local initiatives and best practice examples already providing benefits to residents.	1 - 2	Head of Business Planning & Performance
	- Seek opportunities for funding pilots in our own housing schemes and forge links with technology providers.	1 - 2	Head of Homes First
Evaluate how new technology such as voice enabled assistance can be better utilised to improve communications and access to services.	- Identify any existing local initiatives and best practice examples already providing benefits to residents.	1 - 2	Head of Business Planning & Performance
	- Work with partners to discuss funding pilots across existing services/ tenancy sustainment initiatives and forge lines with technology providers.	1 - 2	Head of Homes First
Assess how technology can be best utilised to improve safety & security for vulnerable residents.	- Ensure that new adaptive technologies are fully taken into account when re-tendering emergency alarm call contracts.	2 - 5	
Seek opportunities to deliver innovation by seeking to share investment projects with health partners.	- Examine how adaptive technology can address both housing and health objectives e.g. medication reminders and passive health monitoring.	2 - 5	

**Developing integrated housing, health and care strategies.** Working with our partners across East Sussex to reduce health inequality and the demand on health and care services, by improving residents' access to high quality housing that meets their needs.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>To get there we will:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Allocate:</b>
Produce joint strategies that align approaches to delivering housing and healthcare across the County.	- Review outcomes of the forthcoming report of the ESCC Director of Public Health and agree clear action plans and targets that will deliver positive outcomes for the Borough's residents.	1	Head of Homes First
Making every contact with our residents count.	- Participate in County wide initiatives that equip officers and front line teams to recognise opportunities to improve health outcomes for local residents, and signpost them to appropriate advice and support services.	1 - 3	Head of Homes First
Develop expertise to tackle housing and health inequality in an integrated way across East Sussex.	- Participate fully in the implementation of the East Sussex Supported Accommodation framework. - Explore opportunities to consolidate services with our partners and agree joint referral arrangement, to help foster expertise and provide a high quality service response.	2 – 5  2 – 5	
Addressing fuel poverty, promoting warmth and home safety.	- Agree new referral arrangements with ESCC to promote the take-up of available funding to tackle fuel poverty, winter warmth measures & provide advice on home safety.	1	Head of Homes First



E3.2 Addressing the wider public health challenges faced by a local population facing economic adversity and an ageing demographic profile cannot be addressed by housing strategy alone. However, we are confident that we can begin to address health inequality by initiating the plans outlined here to bring together the right types of investment in housing, technology and shared delivery. Working more closely together with our partners to achieve this will be pivotal to our ability to make a difference.

#### **E4 Key delivery tools**

E4.1 The following strategies, policies, tools and action plans will be used to deliver the key parts of our strategy:

Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan 2013
EBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016)
Eastbourne Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
Discretionary Housing Payments Policy (2019)
Community and Housing Grants Policy 2019
Equality and Fairness Policy







# 7

## Putting our plans in place



## **1. Our commitments**

- 1.1 We are committed to prioritising housing for current and future residents and this strategy has been written to guide and focus action over the next five years. This strategy is set out to apply to all housing in the Borough, which means that everyone involved in building and managing homes and supporting the people who live in them has a part to play in achieving its goals.
- 1.2 The council's role in delivering our Housing Strategy is increasingly one of commissioner and enabler, working with partners to maximise investment in new housing and better services. This means bringing people together around a common agenda and set of goals. In recognition of this we are committed to involving a broad partnership of residents, including tenants, home owners, landlords, voluntary organisations, developers, service providers and employers, in its delivery. This will help ensure that the right mix of skills, structures and infrastructure are in place to help drive the key objectives it contains forwards.
- 1.3 In bringing this strategy to life the council needs to be adaptable and flexible to respond to change appropriately, especially given key uncertainties over our current operating context and the potential impact this could have on the local housing market. To keep the goals of this strategy responsive, the goals set out at the end of each theme will be implemented through a series of action plans, policies and processes associated with each. We have highlighted those that we intend to tackle more immediately and identified how and who is responsible for taking these forward. The wider goals remain in place to guide the overall objectives of our approach but will be reviewed in mid-2021 to see whether they remain relevant and fit for purpose in keeping our wider strategy on course.





Working in partnership with **Eastbourne Homes**

Developed by  
Eastbourne Borough Council  
Grove Road  
Eastbourne  
East Sussex  
BN21 4TW

[lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](http://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)

**HOMES** **FIRST**