
Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives



Bath & North East Somerset Council
Housing Plan 2025 to 2030

Image source:
Buro Happold

Contents

Foreword	3
Housing Plan and Local Context	4
Our Ambition	15
Delivery & implementation	41
Housing Steering Group	42
References	43



Foreword

We are pleased to introduce Bath and North East Somerset Council's Housing Plan for 2025-2030. This important document aligns closely with the ambitions outlined in our Corporate Strategy and responds to the 2023 Economic Strategy, specifically in relation to ensuring that B&NES residents have access to affordable and high-quality housing.

As a council, we take our housing responsibilities and duties very seriously. These responsibilities are wide-ranging and include not only ensuring that new homes are developed to meet local needs but also that existing homes are safe and meet residents' requirements. We also have responsibility for allocating social housing, providing housing advice, and working to prevent homelessness.

The election of a new Government in July 2024 has resulted in changes to the housing landscape. These changes include the reintroduction of mandatory housing targets for all local authorities and an ambition to increase housing supply by building more affordable homes, including social housing, to address high demand and low supply.

The new Government is focused on improving tenants' rights, including removing no-fault evictions, extending [Awaab's Law](#) and the Decent Homes Standard to the private rental sector. Additionally there are commitments to make homes more energy efficient, as part of the Government's broader environmental goals.

Cllr Kevin Guy and Will Godfrey



For B&NES, with limited development land and a large private rented sector, these changes will present a challenge. However, we are pleased that the government understands the importance of addressing the housing crisis. While the full extent of government policy changes will continue to emerge in the coming months, we believe we are well-placed to respond as the government shapes housing policy. Much of what we already know aligns with our own clearly stated ambitions for housing, which include:

- Delivering the right homes in the right places
- Building and enabling more social housing and truly affordable homes
- Continuing to improve the quality of rented housing
- Ensuring that new homes meet the highest environmental standards

Achieving our housing ambitions will not be easy, but this Housing Plan is our first step towards providing more and better-quality homes for our residents, thereby supporting economic growth and prosperity for everyone who lives and works in Bath & North East Somerset.



Housing Plan and Local Context

Introduction To Housing Plan

Welcome to Bath & North East Somerset Council's 5-year Housing Plan for 2025 to 2030. This crucial document outlines our commitment to ensuring that residents of Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) have access to affordable, safe, and high-quality homes. By achieving this, we aim to help residents thrive supporting the council's overarching goal of enhancing people's lives.

The following section provides context and details the housing challenges we face in the district, such as affordability issues, a high proportion of private rental stock, and a relatively low amount of social rented housing compared to other districts.

We then explain how this plan fits with, and indeed supports, other corporate priorities, including the Corporate Strategy, the Economic Strategy and the Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

The Housing Plan identifies five key themes and outlines the actions the council will take in relation to each, using a 5 Pillar approach. Each pillar has a clearly defined objective, supported by a series of necessary actions to meet that objective.

Finally, the Housing Plan concludes with our strategy for driving these actions forward. This includes ongoing external engagement with key partners, such as the Future Ambitions Partnership, and the establishment of a new Housing Steering Group, which will report to the new B&NES Place Group. Cabinet Member engagement will be via regular monthly meetings with the Cabinet Member for Built Environment, Housing and Sustainable Development, together with decision making and progress review via Informal Cabinet.

Overview Of Local Housing Position

Bath & North East Somerset faces several housing-related challenges. It is one of the least affordable places to live in the UK, with house prices around 13.4 times the annual earnings. Recently, Bath was ranked the third least affordable city in the UK. This unaffordability creates significant issues, including a high number of households on the social housing waiting list, the highest number of households in temporary accommodation in 20 years, and negative pressure on economic growth.

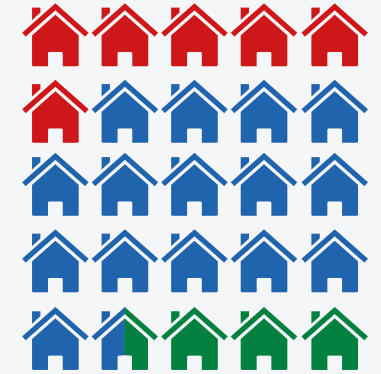
The housing stock in the area is older than the national average, resulting in lower home energy efficiency, higher heating costs, and poorer housing conditions.

The population in B&NES is increasing. From 2011 to 2021, the percentage population increase was greater than in the rest of the region or England. A significant rise in the proportion of older residents is predicted over the next few years as the "bulge" of 30–60-year-old households ages. Therefore, maintaining independent living at home is a key housing priority.

The Bath and North East Somerset Local Housing Needs Assessment Report (January 2024 Draft) identified the need for an additional 1,678 specialist older person housing units in the district over the next 20 years.

Households and Tenure

- There are 84,440 dwellings in the district.
- Levels of private renting have fallen in recent years but are still high and account for 24% of the total stock.
- Owner occupiers make up 62% of stock and social rented housing the remaining 14%.
- In B&NES social housing stock is lower than the national average of 17%, which is around 2,533 fewer social rented homes than equivalent sized authorities.
- In B&NES, the official rough sleeper count has averaged around 14 for the last 12 months. Whilst this is low compared to historic figures, it is still relatively high for the population size



24%

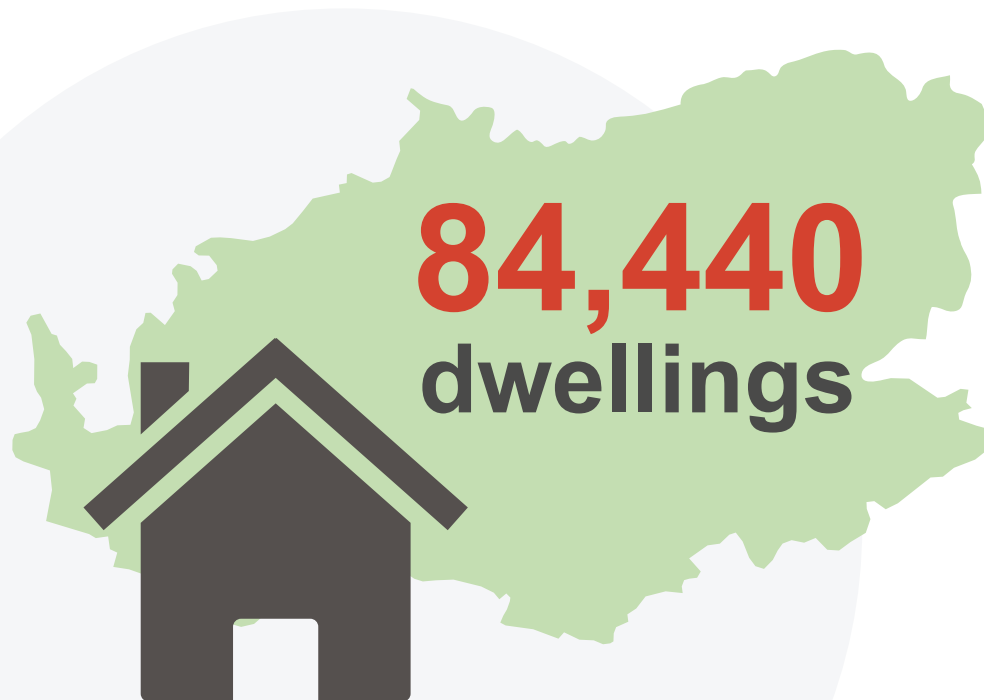
rent privately

62%

owner occupied

14%

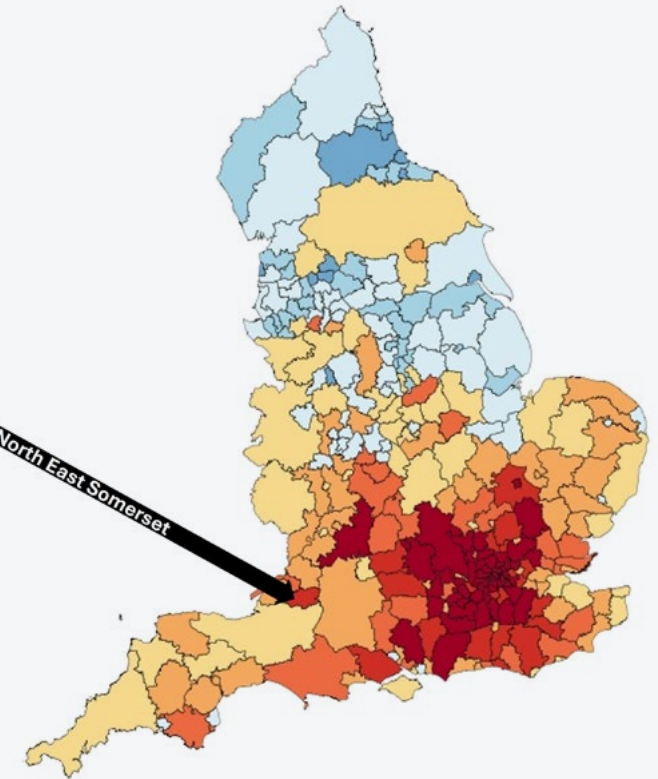
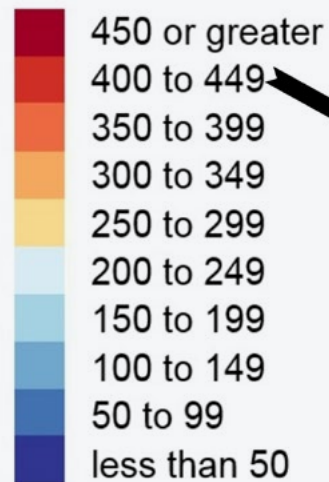
social rented



Housing Affordability

- In Bath & North East Somerset, gross annual pay (residence-based) is higher than England & the Region (£38,512, vs £35,955 and £32,790 respectively⁽ⁱ⁾) but this is not enough to offset high house prices.
- House prices are significantly higher in B&NES than in the South West and England (average price paid in August 2024 was £439,000⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ vs £320,774 and £309,572 respectively⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾). Average property prices in the city are higher still at £585,612^(iv).
- The ratio of house prices to earnings (residence-based) in B&NES continues to be higher than the Region and England at 13.4, 10.9 and 8.4 respectively. Whilst these ratios have improved slightly over the last year, large numbers of residents are still priced out of home ownership. For example:
 - ✗ 74.41% of all first-time buyers cannot afford a typical terraced house^(v).
 - ✗ 53.81% of all first-time buyers cannot afford a typical 2-bed flat.

Average prices £,000



Ref Average House Price Data in England (v)

Social Housing in B&NES

There are 31 Registered Providers, also known as Housing Associations, operating in B&NES, managing 11,935 social housing homes, comprising 9,317 and 2,611 general needs and older people/supported housing accommodation respectively.

There has been a net increase of 935 social housing homes over the last 10 years^(vi).

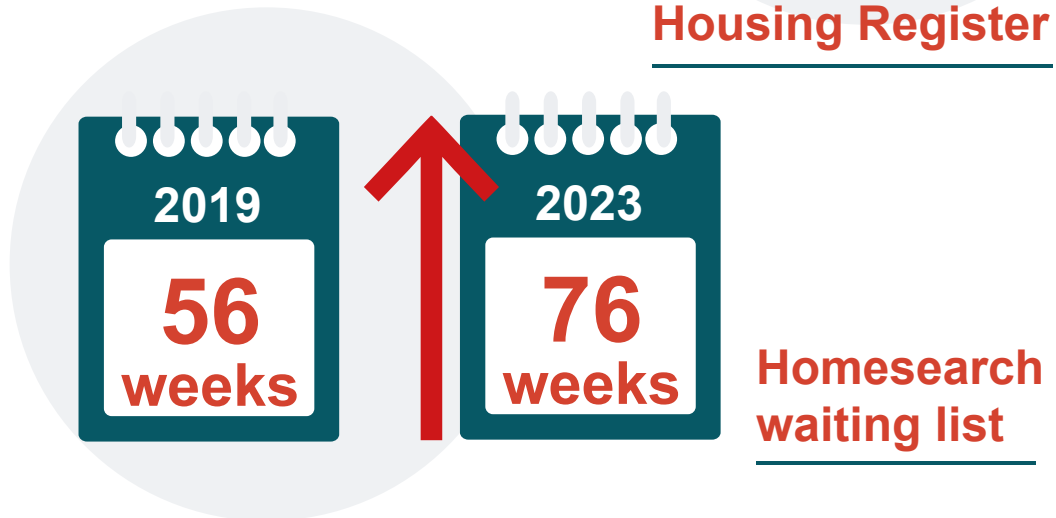
At the end of 2023 there were 1,008 households with an urgent or high priority need for housing in Bath & North East Somerset. Overall, a total of 4,923 households were registered on the Homesearch waiting list competing for around 500 to 600 vacancies annually.

Whilst most households on the register require 1 bedroom accommodation, there are particular challenges around securing larger accommodation. For example, there are 371 households on the register requiring 4+bedroom accommodation yet in the last 3 years only 16 such homes have become available.

Waiting times for social housing

The average waiting time of those housed has been increasing over recent years, particularly for households in high and non-priority groups.

Using figures for those who were housed showed that in 2019, those with High Priority could expect to be housed in 56 weeks; by 2023 this had risen to 76 weeks. In 2019, those classed as in non-priority need could expect to be housed in 171 weeks, but by 2024, this had risen to 231 weeks.



Why is social housing so important?

Social housing is the most affordable type of housing and provides good quality affordable housing for those residents who are unable to compete on the open market. Building more social homes would provide greater housing options for local residents whilst supporting the local economy.

The average cost of renting social housing

The chart on the right shows the difference in average rent for different tenancy types. In B&NES social housing rents are typically around 35 to 45% of the cost of private rents.

1 bedroom

- Social Rent £93
- Affordable Rent £131
- Private Rent £229

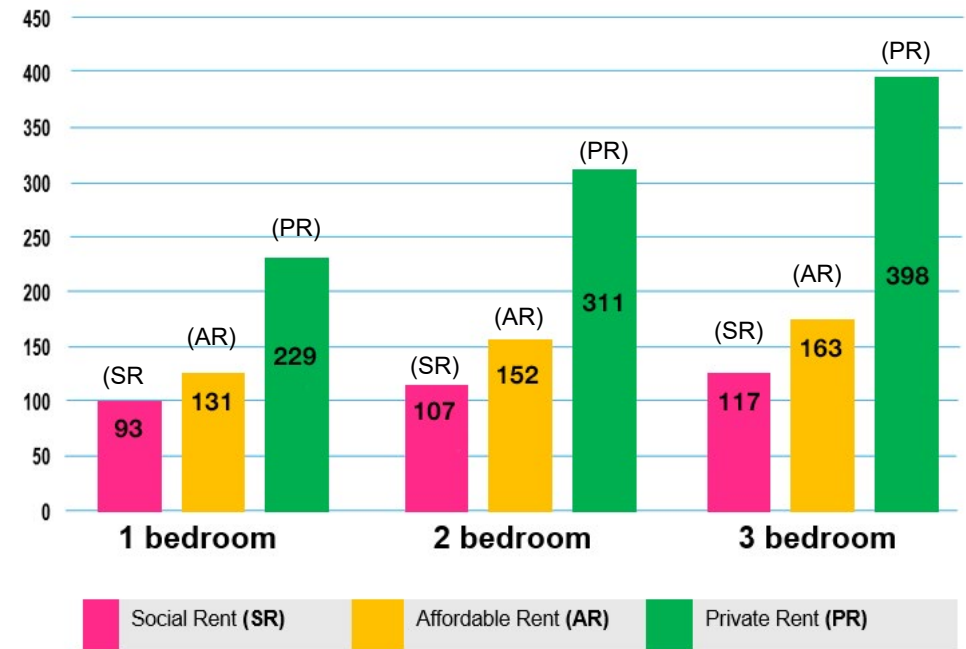
2 bedroom

- Social Rent £107
- Affordable Rent £152
- Private Rent £311

3 bedroom

- Social Rent £117
- Affordable Rent £163
- Private Rent £398

B&NES Average Weekly Rents (£)



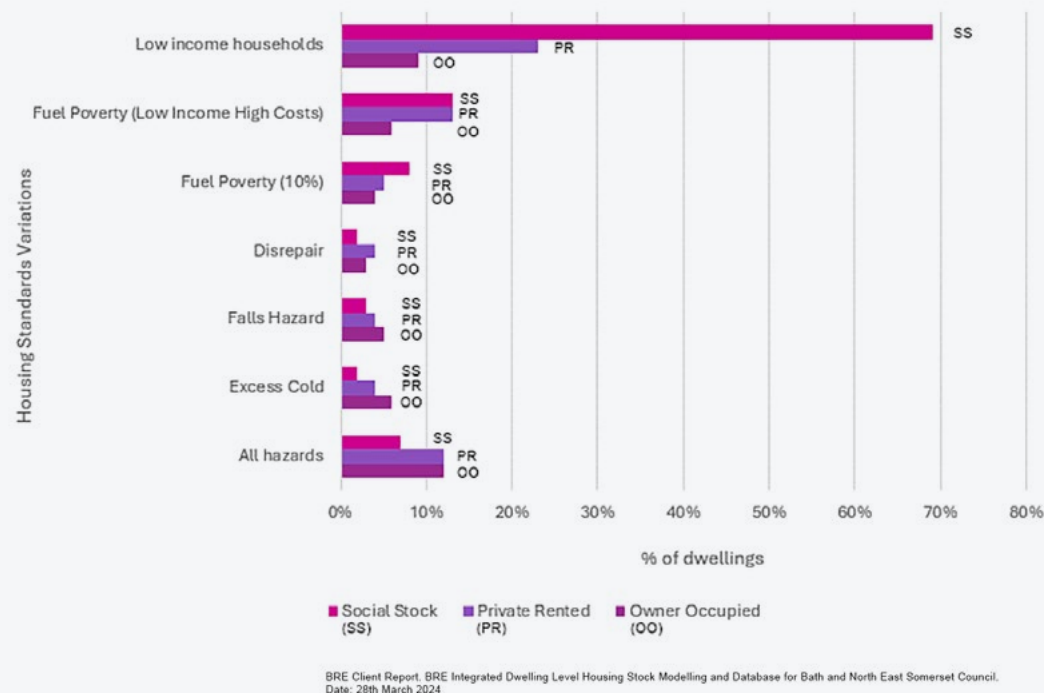
Housing Conditions

- The B&NES House Condition Survey shows that the overall performance of the housing stock in Bath & North East Somerset is mixed, compared to the [English Housing Survey](#) and South West regional average.

Housing Standard Variable	B&NES	EHS England	South West
Fuel Poverty	5%	8%	8%
Fuel Poverty (low-income/high cost)	9%	10%	9%
Low-income households	21%	25%	22%
Stock disrepair	3%	3%	3%
All Hazards	11%	10%	11%
Excess Cold	5%	3%	5%

- The Condition Survey confirms that the housing stock in the district is typically worse than the national average, with 11% of B&NES's stock having a Category 1 hazard present, compared to 10% in England. Excess cold is generally the biggest single contributor to overall rate of hazards and drives the profile of all hazards across the district.
- The poorest conditions are found in private rented (non-HMO) and owner-occupied properties, particularly in rural locations, whilst the best conditions can be found in the social sector and private rented (HMOs).
- Whilst a higher proportion of low-income households reside in social housing the greatest proportion of residents in fuel poverty reside in the private rented sector.

Housing Health & Safety Standards in B&NES



Taking definitive action: Improving HMOs

In 2013 the council introduced an Additional Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing scheme for smaller HMOs within the city. Along with the mandatory licensing scheme for larger HMO these schemes have contributed to the improvement of conditions in the 3,000 HMOs included in both schemes.

The 2023 House Condition Survey has now identified HMOs as typically in better condition than owner-occupied and other private rented properties in the district.

Case Study - Argyle Works

Future Housing Need

The draft Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) seeks to identify housing need in B&NES over the twenty-year period 2022 to 2042. This identified a need for 11,035. Of these 4,976 need to be affordable homes comprising 1,949, 819 and 2,208 social rent, affordable rent, and affordable home ownership products respectively.

However, under the recently announced housing targets, the Government has proposed that the district should be providing almost 30,000 homes, more than double the previous requirement.

Based on past trends and current estimates LHNA analysis has concluded that 1,984 households in Bath & North East Somerset are currently living in unsuitable housing and are unable to afford their own housing.

Under the Local Plan, developments of new homes must comply with accessibility standards to make a proportion of the homes suitable for elderly people or those with disabilities. This, together with our expanded adaptation and community equipment service will help ensure that in future more B&NES residents will be appropriately housed.



Artist's Impression of Argyle Works, Bath

The Argyle Works site on the Lower Bristol Road, formerly a Highways Maintenance Depot, will be developed to provide affordable, energy efficient apartments to help meet the demand for low-cost homes in the area. The properties will be delivered in partnership with Aequus Construction Limited (ACL) the council's wholly owned development company and will include three one-bedroom apartments and five two-bedroom duplexes.

40% of the homes on the development will be prioritised for Care Experienced Young People. The development is the next step in the council's own affordable housing programme, which directly delivers council housing by developing existing council properties and surplus land.

Housing for Older People

In B&NES, our ageing population is a looming challenge, both in relation to future adult support needs and the provision of appropriate, sustainable homes. The number of people in B&NES aged 65+ is expected to grow by 15% by 2028, however as people are living longer, many are also working longer and so the traditional approach to older persons' housing may not be the most appropriate solution. Older people have a wide range of different housing needs, ranging from suitable and appropriately located market housing through to residential institutions. We need to plan for a diverse range of housing and accommodation options suited to older people, including specialist/supported accommodation and mainstream housing.

Homes for Young People

Ensuring we have the right homes in the right places is especially relevant when housing young people, specifically those who need additional support. Being housed close to family networks, where there is access to the right level of support is important for the wellbeing of the young person being housed. Providing suitable accommodation is another important factor that can directly impact on the wellbeing of the young person.

For the council, there are significant financial pressures in relation to the accommodation that it provides to under-18s in residential care and also over-18s where we have insufficient supported accommodation. Placing young people out of area due to lack of suitable homes in B&NES is creating budget challenges that will continue to increase if we fail to develop the right type of homes in B&NES. More importantly, out of area placements are not the best solution for young people.

Taking Action

Resolving the challenges facing young people in need of appropriate housing and also the financial burden this places on the council, requires action. The council has a large Corporate Estate, and this presents an opportunity for to establish a prioritisation process that would allow early identification of assets that could be utilised to develop the best housing solutions for young people.

Care Experienced Young People (16 to 25)

Council data shows that there are currently 66 high risk care leavers who need supported housing. This group can face real challenges in finding suitable accommodation and the right level of support to help them as they move out of care. A lack of suitable accommodation often leads to care leavers being forced to live in unsuitable conditions, sofa surf or sleep rough. The lack of appropriate housing coupled with young people's practical and emotional readiness to live independently all impact on care leavers' future outcomes.

Unaccompanied Young People

A lack of support and a limited supply of appropriate accommodation is a problem faced by young unaccompanied people, often asylum seekers, who find it difficult to establish themselves in an area without a proper support network around them. There are currently 26 Unaccompanied Young People in B&NES and although the Home Office provides some funding to the council, it very rarely covers the expensive market available accommodation, leading to a high financial burden for the council.

Delivering to meet specific need

The council estimates that by 2030 there will be an undersupply of around 100 specialist supported housing units. Delivering our own supported housing to meet specific needs allows us to address high spend on expensive out of district supported housing placements and provide better outcomes for clients. An example of the council taking this opportunity is the Englishcombe Supported Housing Scheme.

Case Study - Englishcombe Lane is an example of how the council can ensure that residents have homes that meet their specific needs. The development provides an opportunity to:

- Address the shortage of supported housing provision
- Employ sensitive and considered design which responds to the built and landscape context
- Focus on the needs of the end users
- Support nature recovery and low-carbon living

B&NES Homes commissioned the development at Englishcombe Lane to provide a model community of purpose-built housing for persons living independently in need of care and support with Autism and other disabilities. All units proposed will be available for affordable rent.



How will the plan respond to the challenges?

The council has a range of statutory responsibilities and general powers of competence that enable the council to influence, initiate and intervene in the market to help shape positive local housing outcomes. These are varied but principally include.

Statutory Provision

Homelessness & temporary accommodation; regulation & enforcement of housing conditions; mandatory adaptations and other services etc.

Place Shaping

Data collection, interpretation & sharing; visioning and planning; defining the key issues and challenges; community leadership and local influence etc.

Direct Delivery

Intervening where there is market failure, including committing to scaling up B&NES Homes

Having regard to these principles the Housing Plan will respond to the local challenges by:

- Clearly articulating ambitions and high-level objectives for housing in B&NES, focusing the council's necessarily limited resources and effort on these priorities.
- Set the strategic context and direction to inform and shape the council's statutory housing duties.
- Allows the council's partners and residents to have a better understanding of the housing challenges and priorities in the area
- Supporting bids for additional funding through funding bodies such as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; Homes England, West of England Combined Authority and Dept of Health & Social Care and Better Care Fund etc.
- Demonstrating the council's direction of travel to developers and registered providers (housing associations), increasing options for working in partnership on schemes which can deliver council owned affordable homes and social housing.



Taking definitive action: B&NES Homes

The council has set an ambitious goal to accelerate its general needs council housing programme over the next 10 years. This initiative is a key priority in our adopted Corporate Strategy, which aims to deliver the right homes in the right places. Our focus is on improving the availability of affordable housing that is accessible to local jobs and services, all in support of our overarching purpose: to improve people's lives.

To support this aim, the council has established B&NES Homes, a Registered Provider, secured Investment Partner status with Homes England and established Aequus a wholly owned housing development company.

The Housing Plan further outlines how we will utilise surplus council land assets, new land acquisition opportunities and partnering arrangements to unlock and deliver these homes to meet local housing needs and priorities.



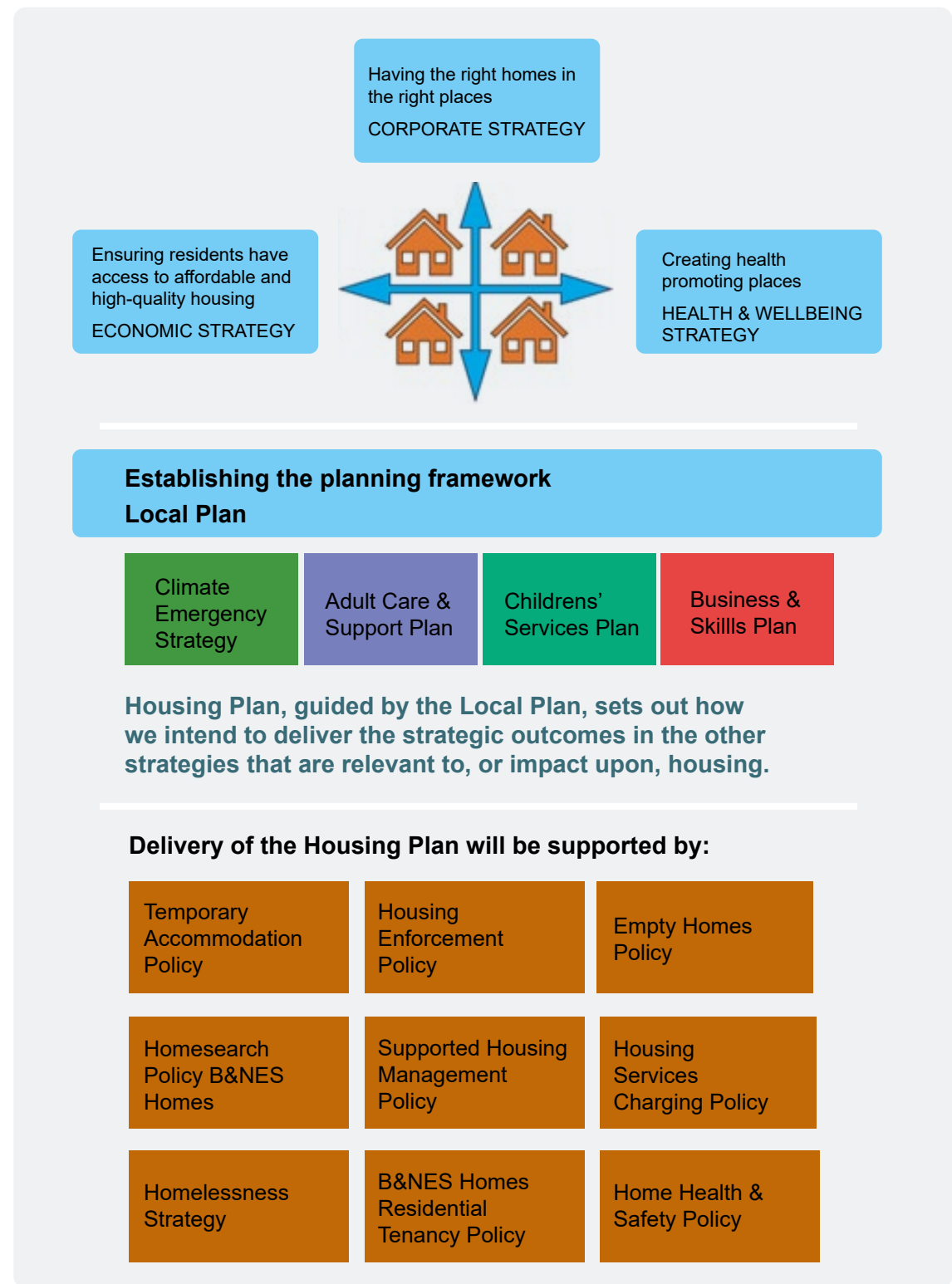
Our Ambition

How does the plan fit with other council priorities?

There are numerous council strategies and plans which are linked to housing, and which contain the detailed activities and outcomes necessary to deliver high quality homes and neighbourhoods where people want to live.

The Housing Plan will be underpinned by the parts of other plans and strategies that are relevant to, or impact upon, housing and this will include the objectives of the:

- **Corporate Strategy** – which sets out the council’s high-level aims, against which specific projects will be assessed and more detailed plans made.
- **Health & Wellbeing Strategy** – which provides the focus to establish the right foundations for everyone’s health and wellbeing over the next few years.
- **Economic Strategy** - sets out the council’s approach to local economic development and prioritises meeting the needs of residents and places whilst reducing impacts on the environment.
- **Local Plan** - will establish the planning framework for Bath and North East Somerset and contain a vision, strategy, and policies to guide and manage how the district grows and changes over the next 20 years.
- **Emerging Corporate Asset Management Strategy** – sets the framework for managing the council’s property portfolio.



Pillars



Determining our next steps:

The Housing Plan identifies 5 key themes and the actions the council will take to achieve these, using a 5 Pillar approach. Each pillar has a clearly defined objective, below which sits a series of actions necessary to meet that objective.

Release land for Housing

Objective: Release land to deliver homes sustainably, at pace, to respond to need

Action:

1. Intervene to address market failures in the type, mix and availability of housing
2. Ensure a pipeline of available land for homes prioritising council assets appropriate for housing delivery
3. Deliver strategically providing high quality and sustainable housing fit for future generations

B&NES Homes & Affordable Housing

Objective: Working to unlock and deliver affordable housing

Action:

1. Scale up B&NES Homes ensuring programme meets the needs of local residents
2. Work with RPs, Aequus, and other partners to maximise the delivery of affordable homes
3. Ensure the new Local Plan policy framework supports delivery & economic need
4. Provide and enable specialist supported housing products to address needs in Adult and Children's Services

Affordability Across the Housing Market

Objective: Develop a housing offer that is accessible and attractive to all

Action:

1. Work with anchor organisations to release housing land to support the economy
2. Diversify tenure and type of housing to support economically active households
3. Locate housing in areas of economic demand reducing in-out commuting pressure
4. Continue to bring empty properties back into use to expand housing offer
5. Using influence with Government to shape national policy

Housing Support

Objective: Reduce homelessness & ensure supported housing meets local needs

Action:

1. Refresh and enhance Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy
2. Reduce use of expensive and inappropriate temporary accommodation
3. Ensure appropriate accommodation for those with long-term care needs
4. Ensure housing and support contracts are strategic and relevant

Housing Suitability

Objective: Ensure residents have access to housing that is safe, warm & accessible

Action:

1. Tackle fuel poverty for the most vulnerable households
2. Promote affordable warmth and healthy housing across B&NES
3. Maintain & develop an effective enforcement role
4. Develop comprehensive home adaptations and equipment service which responds to community needs

Pillar One – Releasing Land For Housing

The council's ambition is to be able to release land to deliver homes that respond to local need.

The council has a unique opportunity to directly address market failures in the type, mix, and availability of housing by repurposing its own assets or through proactive land assembly. This approach will accelerate housing delivery and create the homes that Bath & North East Somerset needs.

How will we achieve this?

To enhance delivery, the council will undertake a strategic review of local authority land and property through a Corporate Landlord Asset Review. Additionally, the council will develop proposals for the direct acquisition of suitable land or properties to influence and expedite housing delivery across the district.

Most council interventions are expected to occur on council-owned land, allowing us to build quickly and without competing with other developers. As a priority, the council will ensure that all new homes support our climate and ecology goals and are resilient to future climate conditions.

The council is already progressing the development of new homes and supported housing on council owned land and assets, including for instance around 500 new homes at Bath Riverside and the Midland Road waste site.

However, the council aims to establish a rolling programme of development. This programme will include a variety of sites, ranging from large sites accommodating 40 to 100 new dwellings to smaller infill sites for 6 to 12 homes, and potentially even fewer in some cases.



Midland Road Development Aerial View

A variety of home types, sizes, and tenures will be built to meet identified housing needs and create mixed, sustainable communities. The greatest challenge is land availability and balancing cost and quality. When considering development, the council will aim to:

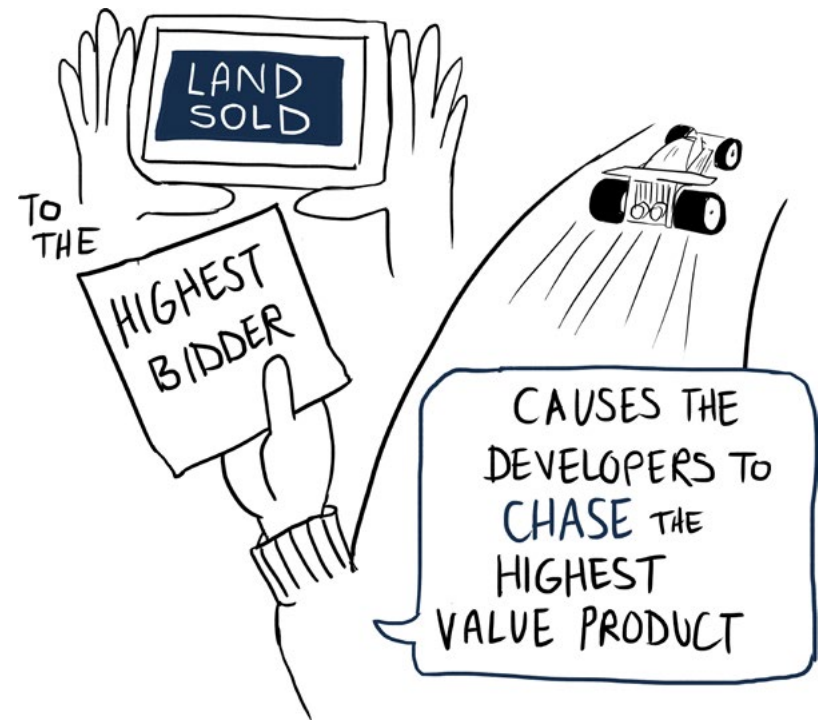
- Address the climate emergency by designing new homes to be as close to net zero carbon as possible and resilient to future climate conditions.
- Build high-quality, healthy, and affordable homes to meet identified needs.
- Create housing that people choose to live in and are proud to call home.
- Ensure value for money and benchmarked build costs.

The council will also continue to work directly with anchor organisations or by partnering with developers, including Aequus, and contractors to provide new affordable homes. This will secure a pipeline of available land for homes, delivered via a range of mechanisms.

The council has strong, established links with other Registered Providers (RPs) that significantly contribute to housing supply in the district. It is important that this continues, and it is not the council's intention to compete for sites with other RPs. Instead, the council intends to work alongside partners and anchor organisations, offering a complementary approach to the delivery of affordable homes.

The financial viability of each scheme will be assessed to ensure the cumulative effect of the programme is affordable within the context of the wider business plan. Each project will be evaluated to ensure it aligns with the aims of the Housing Plan, has been risk assessed, and is financially viable, meeting key criteria.

The council has a strong track record of successfully delivering on funding agreements. A range of funding sources are available to support the council's ambitions, including legacy Right to Buy funds, MHCLG/Homes England grants, Section 106 receipts, and loan funding.



Existing or off the shelf acquisitions

Further housing stock can be added via the purchase of existing properties or considering conversion of office to residential to use as council homes. These will be considered where the properties can meet the council's requirements and acquisition is proven to be financially viable. They may be new homes completed by a developer and offered to the council.

Using market intelligence and housing need the council can identify gaps in the market that require greatest intervention, develop a process to identify land led opportunities and assess suitability for development against a checklist bringing forward development where there are gaps in provision.

Land is the key to providing high quality and sustainable housing fit for future generations. With the council's own land driving housing delivery, it can control and influence the place for residents and businesses, creating sustainable well designed and healthy places that deliver economic benefits and community resilience and respond to the climate and biodiversity emergencies.



Housing Plan Pillar 1 - Release Land for Housing Release land to deliver homes sustainably, at pace, to respond to need

Action	Next Steps	Timescale	Ownership
Intervene to address market failures in the type, mix and availability of housing.	Create pipeline of housing delivery using land led opportunities to identify and secure development land.	Short Year 1	Housing/Corporate Estates
	Address market failure and gaps in provision to support socio-demographic in area by identifying products and delivery vehicles to support this.	Underway Years 1 to 2	Housing/Economic Development
	Planning and co-ordination of a range of infrastructure investment to unlock future housing and create communities.	Underway Years 1 to 5	Housing
	Identify and bring forward development where there are gaps in provision, by using council resources and available public funding to establish effective, alternative delivery mechanisms.	Underway Years 1 to 5	Housing/Capital Delivery
Ensure a pipeline of available land for homes prioritising council assets appropriate for housing delivery.	Strategic review of local authority land & property through Corporate Landlord Asset Review	Underway Years 1 to 2	Housing /Corporate Estates
	Develop proposals for direct acquisition of land, with the council taking on a lead role	Underway Years 1 to 5	Housing
	Raise profile and increase the level of investment, using public sector funding routes and private sector innovation in financing to support targeted housing delivery.	Underway Years 1 to 5	Housing
	Work collaboratively with landowners, developers and delivery partners to focus and align resources to achieve more successful housing outcomes.	Short Years 2 to 4	Housing
Deliver strategically providing high quality and sustainable housing fit for future generations.	Explore and enter into partnership/JV vehicles as route to delivery with the aim to introduce a much wider range of alternative housing delivery mechanisms.	Short Year 1	Housing
	Working across the council with a joined-up approach we will align housing delivery to create sustainable, well designed, attractive, and healthy places that deliver economic benefits and community resilience, support clean, inclusive recovery and growth, and respond to the climate and biodiversity emergencies	Medium Years 1 to 5	Housing /Sustainable Communities
	Meeting current policy. Embrace innovation adopt a standard design code for all new homes, building resilience in the council's delivery output. Making homes sustainable to ensure homes are fit for the long-term and contribute to achieving net-zero carbon.	Short Years 1 to 5	Housing/ Sustainable Communities/Capital & Delivery

Pillar Two – B&NES Homes And Affordable Housing

The council's focus in this area will be on working to unlock and deliver affordable housing. The housing development market in B&NES, particularly Bath, has not delivered the housing needed, either in terms of Affordable Housing or more specialist housing.

Affordability

B&NES is a beautiful place to live but it is heavily constrained with limited land for development. The consequence is high house prices.

The latest housing needs assessment indicates that around 80% of new housing growth in the city would need to be Affordable Housing over the next 20 years to meet assessed need.

There are many factors influencing this, though principally a lack of development land. This is why a key aim of this pillar relates to the Local Plan which is the main tool the council has to effect the release of land and control its purpose.

Market Failure

Over recent years, and encouraged by Government policy, the focus of Registered Providers (RPs) has moved to that of larger scale delivery of general needs affordable housing.

This approach is successful in terms of the overall number of affordable homes produced but does result in RPs developing where the opportunity to deliver large sites at pace exists. This is a challenge locally given many of the council's sites are small and/or high value. This has also seen some of the positive work RPs did in the past to meet specialist need significantly decline in recent years.

To address to these key factors, the council will:

- Scale up B&NES Homes as a local registered provider and ensure its delivery programme meets the needs of residents and the economy. This will help address the gaps left by the market failing to deliver homes which meet local need.
- Work with RPs and other partners to support the delivery of affordable housing. B&NES Homes has a significant role but will deliver even better results by working with partners leveraging resources and investment to maximise delivery of affordable housing.
- Ensure the new Local Plan policy framework supports delivery and that housing responds to economic needs.

Scaling Up B&NES Homes

The Council has made a promising start by developing a portfolio of 66 units, comprising supported housing, general needs rented units, and shared-ownership properties. The council aims to significantly scale up the direct delivery of affordable and specialist housing through B&NES Homes, the Council Registered Provider, with a further 48 units either under construction or due to start construction within the next 12-18 months.

To determine the best approach for enhancing delivery and management capabilities, including the potential reopening of a Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the council has commissioned specialist consultants to explore options and implications for scaling up delivery.

The report highlights the importance of developing a robust and viable housing pipeline while incrementally enhancing capacity and capability in housing delivery and management. This approach will mitigate risks and ensure the council selects the most appropriate delivery and operating model. Since the initiation of this programme, the new Government has accelerated several significant policy changes that will also need to be considered and assessed in future decisions.

Therefore, the council is adopting a phased and incremental approach to scaling up B&NES Homes. The table opposite summarises this route map

SHORT (<18 months) Phase 1: Mobilisation

Issue	Action
Asset Strategy (Pipeline)	Build Asset Strategy (Pipeline) Asset review/challenge process to identify Council land suitable for development. Investigate market purchase.
Develop staff capacity/capability	Build staff capacity/professionalism incrementally Scale-up staff capacity, particularly around commissioning/development expertise.
Finance/CAPEX Review	Review Financials Assess pipeline capital requirements on updated asset pipeline. Review balance sheet implications and financial options to the Council for delivering the pipeline

MEDIUM (18 months – 2 years) Phase 2: Decisions

Issue	Action
HRA Decision	HRA Decision Based on cost, benefit and risk. Trigger point for implementation unlikely to be before Apr 2028 based on current trajectory.
Housing Management Decision	Housing Management Decision Options include in-house, ALMO; outsourced to RP or specialist management provider.
Operating Model Decision	Operating Model Decision When greater clarity on resources and pipeline then consider best operating model, such as, inhouse; joint ventures, RP company etc.

LONG (2 years +) Phase 3: Scaling

Issue	Action
Implement Options & Scaling	Implementation & Scaling Implement & scaling at this stage.

Including Net Zero Commitments

All B&NES Homes new build homes will meet or exceed the council's Net Zero Planning Policy Requirement.

Each scheme will be appraised to identify opportunities for exemplar activity, such as innovative use of materials or new technology.

Each refurbishment scheme will be appraised to establish the maximum practical energy efficiency improvement with a view to EPC 'C' being the minimum.

On new build schemes we will aim to work with the Building with Nature Standard as well as meeting or exceeding Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.



Working with Partners

The council will develop and leverage Homes England, West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and West of England relationships by:

- Creating a proposition which makes an ask and offer against their stated housing aims.
- Collaborating with WECA to find capacity funding to explore development options.
- Leveraging the Homes England 'place' priority of: 'encourage more local government led delivery of affordable housing.'
- As referenced in more detail in Pillar 3 the council will work with anchor organisations and partners to identify land owned by employers which could be used to provide 'employer linked affordable housing' schemes.



Effective Use of Assets

B&NES is fortunate in terms of the scale of its assets, but the council needs to be certain it is using these to best effect. Therefore, the council will:

- Embed a system for identifying council assets which could be used to create housing.
- Create a method of consistently prioritising options for client/tenure
- Create a decision-making process to determine the most appropriate route to market for council land.



Image source:
Aequus

Newbridge Hill is a development of seven 1 and 2 bed apartments in Bath. The former council office building was refurbished by Aequus and provided B&NES Homes with the first socially rented council housing for 30 years. The award winning development is an excellent example of how the council has refurbished an existing council owned building and brought it back into use as social housing.

117 Newbridge Hill

Housing Plan Pillar 2 – B&NES Homes & Affordable Housing Work to unlock and deliver affordable housing

Action	Next Steps	Timescale	Ownership
Scale up B&NES Homes ensuring programme meets the needs of local residents.	Develop and implement asset review system for identifying council assets which can contribute to a single corporate housing pipeline.	Underway Years 1 to 2	Corporate Estate
	Develop and implement robust methodology for prioritising end user group for housing delivered, for example Temporary Accommodation, Specialist Supported or General Needs housing.	Short Years 1 to 2	Housing/Housing Group
	Commission specialist advice on most appropriate delivery at pace and housing management options for B&NES Homes, including HRA implementation.	Underway Year 1	Housing
	Agree and implement B&NES Homes medium term business plan having regard to above specialist advice, including appropriate governance and structure arrangements.	Underway Year 1	Housing/Corporate Finance
Work with RPs and other delivery partners to support the delivery of affordable housing.	Work with RPs to deliver enhanced local housing outcomes; including increasing proportion of larger homes provided and transitioning from policy compliant to 100% affordable tenure on small to medium development sites.	Underway Year 1	Housing
	Work with WECA and partners to exploit OPE and other land opportunities to get land in the hands of developers and RPs to bring forward additional affordable housing.	Underway Year 1	Housing
	Explore opportunities to work with partners to lever in additional infrastructure provision or grant to unlock housing sites.	Short Years 1 to 2	Housing/Corporate Finance
	Explore opportunities where key partner aspirations align with the council's to deliver greater housing outcomes.	Short Years 1 to 2	FAB/Housing
Ensure the new Local Plan policy framework supports delivery & ensures that the provision of housing responds to economic need.	Using a 'lessons learned' approach, adapt or create new policy which responds to market trends, and which seeks to maximise the delivery of affordable housing.	Medium Years 2 to 5	Housing/Local Plan
	Undertake comprehensive viability testing of proposed policies to verify deliverability and minimises the potential loss of affordable housing due to sub-policy compliant schemes.	Medium Years 2 to 3	Housing/Local Plan
Bring empty properties back into use to expand the housing offer	Maintain an effective suite of interventions and incentives for empty property owners.	Underway Years 1 to 5	Housing
Provide and enable specialist supported housing products to address pressures in Adult & Children's	Develop and implement a protocol for joint working between Housing and Adult and Children's Services, including identifying Housing Champions in Adult and Children's Services.	Short Year 1	Housing/Social Care
	Utilise Housing with Care data to better understand existing and predicted need and secure long-term pipeline of Housing with Care schemes to meet the assessed need of 100 specialist homes by 2030.	Medium Years 2 to 5	Housing/Social Care

Pillar Three – Affordability Across The Housing Market

Delivering housing that is affordable and meets our economic need.

Affordable Housing is a specific definition of housing tenure based on need. However, housing affordability is about the rest of the housing market which needs to be affordable to economically active residents and located in the right places.

The market is typically producing high-value, high-density housing in the city and low-value low-density housing in areas like the Somer Valley. This causes an increase in unsustainable commuting.

Whilst the council cannot solve this entirely, its objective is to create the right housing in the right places by deploying the following levers.

Council asset review

Availability and the cost of land impact on affordability of homes and have resulted in viability being cited by developers as a reason for not delivering sufficient affordable housing. The council can start to change this by using its own land and assets as a means of increasing the delivery of homes that are affordable.

A strategic review of the council's corporate estate is currently underway. The Asset Challenge Framework will identify where there are opportunities to develop new homes, reinstate vacant properties or improve the environmental standard of dilapidated homes above shops and bring them back into use.

The strategic review will also be used to establish whether there are potential alignments with partner organisations which can be leveraged, such as situations where partners own adjacent land or buildings in similar need of updating.



Effective intervention: making best use of council assets

Previously a vacant Council office block, the renovated Riverside View development, delivered by the council's housing company, Aequus, provided a total of 95 studio, one and two-bedroom flats. Twenty of the properties were offered to people with a Keynsham address before they went on general sale, and most were very modestly priced.

The development supported the Council's vision of using surplus assets to provide facilities and housing for local communities.

Working with anchor organisations and partners to support housing delivery

The council is working hard to build on relationships with existing and new partners, many of whom form part of the solution to tackling affordability across the housing market. The table below indicates anchor organisations and partners, how they may contribute and what the council's broad strategy could be.

Organisation	How can they contribute to land release?	Strategy/Next Steps
Registered Providers	Limited contributors of land but willing recipients of land which can be freed-up.	Actively engage with Registered Providers, including Homes West Partners.
St John's Foundation	May own surplus buildings which they wish to sell or align for marriage value.	Understand their disposal strategy, discuss options with them.
NHS Trust	Free up land for key worker housing within existing site ownership.	Understand their needs/aspirations and site capacity. Develop operating model whereby the council could partner/develop for them.
Universities	Identify surplus land for on-site provision.	Understand their strategy and identify common goals or mutual interest.
Duchy	Significant landowner with a track record of affordable housing delivery.	Understand their strategy and identify common goals or mutual interest.
Charities/other public bodies	Diocese of Bath & Wells, smaller local groups who may own outdated/dilapidated buildings which they wish to sell.	Gather local intelligence, raise awareness that the council may be interested in acquiring land.
One Public Estate (OPE)	Provides detailed property search and mapping, including land registry titles of all land packages and vacant land.	Embed OPE as part of the council's land acquisition strategy (for appropriate opportunities).
Homes England DPS	Delivery Partner DPS members can bid to develop homes on land owned by Homes England or other public sector bodies.	Ensure the council is registered to bid for appropriate sites.

Providing homes for essential local workers

A key element within the housing needs of Bath & North East Somerset is catering for essential local workers. However, this cannot be delivered at the expense of more vulnerable people on the housing register. This compromise can be achieved by working with anchor organisations and partners to identify land owned by employers which could be used to provide 'employer linked affordable housing'. By creating a comprehensive policy and delivery model it could unlock land for workers which would otherwise not come forward for development.

Shape national policy

The council will aim to influence the Government to help shape national policy, especially in relation to planning policy, amending right to buy, regulating Air BnB type accommodation and availability of funding for affordable housing.

Influencing market activity

Over the last three years developers have not delivered almost 50% (over 400 homes) of the Affordable Housing which should have been delivered due to various lawful approaches, such as viability or exemption claims. This is a significant loss to the district and replacing such a home can cost the taxpayer around £150k per unit in public subsidy.

To reduce this loss, the council will ensure that:

- The Local Plan is robustly viability assessed
- It enhances specialist support to ensure it can challenge viability claims as robustly as possible
- The new Local Plan requires affordable housing contribution from all developments which create 10 or more dwellings (i.e. not just Use Class C3)



Image courtesy of Curo

Bringing empty properties back into use

There has been a year-on-year rise in empty property figures across the Country. Currently in B&NES there are 225 long term empty properties (2yrs empty onwards).

The council's Empty Residential Properties Policy (ERPP) is supporting the council to bring empty properties back into use, bringing 398 properties back into use in the last 3 years. The council is committed to maintaining this trajectory.

The Empty Residential Properties Policy outlines a twin track approach to dealing with empty homes:

1. Offering advice and financial assistance to all empty property owners
2. Cross service enforcement action where appropriate

The ERPP identifies ways different service areas can work together to reduce duplication of effort and save resources, whilst delivering an effective approach to bringing empty homes back into use.

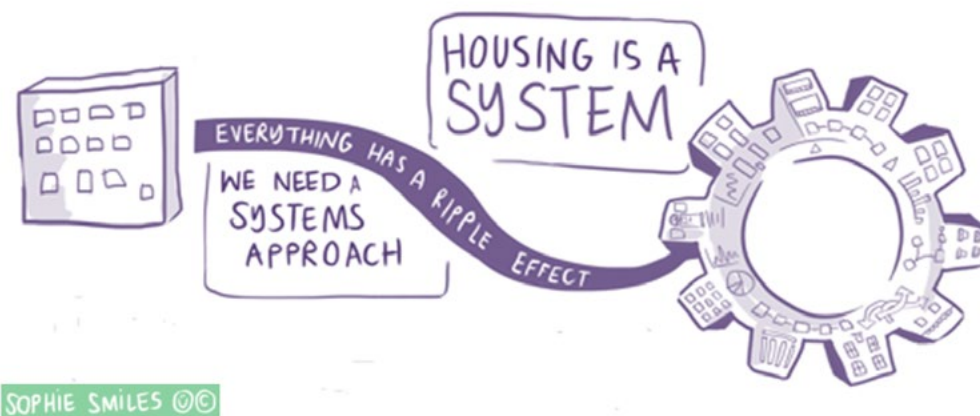
To enhance the ERPP, the council will now be concentrating on developing and embedding procedures for high-level enforcement action on empty homes, including Enforced Sale and Compulsory Purchase Orders. The properties that come forward through these enforcement measures will be fed into the forthcoming asset review process for consideration as social housing.

Empty Properties and B&NES Homes

The aspiration is to compound the benefits of the council's empty property work by viewing them as potential contributors to the B&NES Homes pipeline. Empty properties are diverse in nature and may present a solution to specific areas of market failure.

To facilitate the development of this thinking the council will:

- Catalogue Empty Properties by size and type, which will be shared with B&NES Homes
- Create a process whereby the contents of the catalogue can be assessed for suitability for B&NES Homes
- Create a referral pathway for owners of empty properties who wish to sell their property to B&NES



Housing Plan Pillar 3 – Affordability Across the Housing Market

Develop a housing offer that is accessible and attractive to all

Action	Implementation	Timescale	Ownership
Work with anchor organisations to release housing land to support the economy.	Engage with anchor organisations and other key partners to identify surplus land for lower cost housing identifying common objectives and effective joint delivery models.	Year 1	Housing/FAB
	Working across the council, develop a policy compliant model that supports the release of land from anchor organisations and other key partners to provide lower cost key worker housing.	Year 1 Underway	Housing/ Planning
	Work with WECA to identify additional capacity to support development of OPE opportunities.	Year 1 Underway	Housing/FAB
Diversify tenure and type of housing to support economically active house-holds (including shared housing for young professionals).	Investigate the potential to provide greater influence over new allocations in terms of density, tenure, and bed sizes by use of SPD etc as per BWR Phase 1.	Year 1	Planning
	Ensure that Local Plan includes policies which respond to understanding of local needs in terms of tenure/size and type of housing.	Years 1 to 2	Planning
Locate housing in areas of economic demand reducing in-out commuting pressure	Use land allocations in the local plan to influence appropriate location of housing land to employment.	Years 1 to 2	Planning
	Refresh our understanding of where those areas of economic demand are.	Year 2	EZ Lead
	Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (SVEZ) – investigate the potential to co-locate housing.	Year 3	EZ Lead
Continue to bring empty properties back into use to expand housing offer	Review the suite of interventions and incentives to ensure the recovery of empty homes.	Year 1 Underway	Housing
	Undertake affordable housing suitability assessments on all empty properties and leverage opportunities to work with partners to turn empty properties into social housing.	Years 1 to 5 Underway	Housing
	Elevate the status and work of the empty properties programme throughout the district, including using national networks.	Underway	Housing
Using influence with Government to shape national policy.	Produce an Influence and Engage Strategy to guide the council's interactions with influential partners. Supporting changes to regulation on policy affecting our residents, for example short term lets (e.g. Air BnB etc).	Year 1	Housing

Pillar Four – Housing Support

The council's approach will focus on reducing homelessness and ensuring supported housing meets local needs.

The best way to end homelessness is to prevent it occurring in the first place. Not only does it produce better outcomes, but it is also more cost-effective. Understanding when the risk of homelessness is particularly acute, the routes into services and responding to what data is telling us, can underpin policy to make a real difference for decision-makers and more importantly Bath & North East Somerset communities. When homelessness cannot be prevented, the right housing and support must be in place for those that require it.

Through understanding data and listening to customers, the council knows that the longer someone sleeps rough the greater the impact on their health and wellbeing. The council is clear that placing homeless people in unsuitable temporary accommodation is detrimental to the health and development of children. The council knows that provision of good quality, safe accommodation reduces the impact of domestic abuse on children and families. It is also clear that having access to a stable home, with intensive support, reduces rough sleeping and improves the health outcomes for those with multiple and complex needs. Too often responding at the point of crisis, not only has a higher financial cost and poor outcomes but causes a cycle of repeat homelessness when unsuitable housing placements fail.

Only by services working together to find creative solutions can homelessness be reduced, rough sleeping ended for good, and those experiencing domestic abuse have a safe place to call home.

Next Steps

The action plan set out under housing support will build on progress made and identify the changes needed across the council and its Partners to deliver the council's ambition. It will stand for better temporary accommodation provision, a rapid rehousing pathway and more effective and person-centred support. Overall, it is about delivering what our community deserves.

Refresh and enhance the council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy expires in 2024. It expresses the council's ambitions for addressing homelessness and rough sleeping, as the issue was viewed in 2019. Much has changed since, with the Covid-19 pandemic presenting new challenges that continue to influence the council's aims and how we work together. The cost-of-living crisis that emerged as Covid receded has added further pressure to households that were previously managing without assistance from the Local Authority or the voluntary sector.

Despite additional accommodation being brought online during the pandemic, rough sleeping remains a significant and highly visible issue for B&NES. The number of homeless households presenting to the council has increased and with it, demand for temporary accommodation has increased to levels that have not been seen before. The council knows that whatever it does in terms of delivering affordable housing, there is not enough for everyone that needs it, so exploring options and choice is a must. A refreshed Strategy, co-developed with the Homelessness Partnership, will set out how, by working in partnership, the council can develop new approaches and solutions and provide the basis for new funding applications.

Future proofing off-the-street housing provision

A significant challenge on the horizon is current off the street provision. The quality of the offer is off-putting and compounds rough sleeping levels as a small but significant number of people refuse to access it, preferring to sleep out. With the lease for the current building expiring in 2026, a new, fit for purpose site is a priority for future provision. In Bath & North East Somerset, we have already moved away from traditional communal night shelters, appreciating the need for dignity and privacy, but when temperatures fall in the Winter often the off-the-street provision is oversubscribed. Not uncommonly, due to high demand for move-on accommodation, the length of stays in off the street accommodation have extended beyond the short term, so improving pathways to longer term accommodation will be a vital part of improving outcomes.

Ensuring housing & support contracts are strategic and relevant

The council has a strong relationship with providers of housing related support and accommodation in B&NES. This has come about by working closely with key partners, listening to their concerns, and involving them in shaping the sector. The council is working with providers to reshape the homelessness pathway, analysing individuals' journeys into and out of services and looking for improvements that will result in a Rapid Rehousing Pathway. The council's aim is to prevent homelessness via timely and appropriate support.

Where it cannot be averted, the council's aim is to foreshorten any period of homelessness by intervention and support. A Rapid Rehousing Pathway will ensure that better, more sustainable outcomes for individuals and families are achieved, and that increased value for money is delivered from services.

The council's housing related support contracts are critical to this work stream. To ensure a range of strategically relevant and effective services, the council is bringing the contract commissioning process back in-house, from HCRG. This started in April 2024 for some key services and will complete by the end of the year. In addition, all support contracts will be reviewed during 2024 to ensure fit within the Rapid Rehousing Pathway and financial envelope.

Providing appropriate accommodation for those with long-term care needs

The cost of delivering social care services has continued to rise due to economic and market factors. In part, and compared to peers, this is due to an over reliance on expensive Registered Care and Nursing Homes and a reduced use of existing mainstream housing options.

By working corporately with partners, the council aims to increase access to mainstream accommodation for more clients whilst also providing specific client led "housing with care" products. This will help to reduce pressures in Adult Social Care.

Housing with care

Housing with care provides people with the opportunity to live in their own purpose-built, self-contained household, while accessing care and meals on-site. This can enable people to live more independently for longer. Care is provided by staff who are available 24 hours.

Current evidence suggests that to meet existing "pent-up" and future demand for housing with care in B&NES will require an additional 100 units of this type by the year 2030.

Reduce the use of expensive and inappropriate temporary accommodation

Reducing the use of inappropriate hotel placements, and developing more supportive temporary accommodation, is a key priority for the council. Hotels are an expensive option for meeting the council's statutory housing duty and can result in families being housed in inappropriate accommodation that may not fully meet their needs, and cause difficulties with family life. Many single people will also find it difficult to sustain a hotel placement, particularly people leaving care and those with multiple and complex needs.

The council will focus on reducing the use of expensive temporary accommodation in a variety of ways, including increasing the provision of its own B&NES Homes temporary accommodation schemes (see inset opposite). The aim is to keep the council's Temporary Accommodation Action Plan fresh and relevant.

B&NES Net Spend on Temporary Accommodation



Effective intervention:

New temporary accommodation

B&NES Homes, in partnership with Aequus has renovated and extended a vacant property to create an eleven-room supported housing scheme providing emergency and temporary accommodation for homeless households.

Theobald House will reduce the use of unsuitable and expensive bed and breakfast accommodation which is often located out of district where it is harder to support clients.

The property is very energy efficient meeting AECB energy efficiency standards. It is provided with PV solar panels and air-source heat pumps.

Housing Plan Pillar 4 – Housing Support

Reduce homelessness & ensure supported housing meets local needs

Action	Next Steps	Timescale	Ownership
Refresh & enhance Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy	Work with B&NES Homelessness Partnership to understand current local need requirements and support transition to a Rapid Rehousing Pathway model.	Year 1	Housing/ Partners
	Expand appropriate and cost-effective move-on housing options for former rough sleepers, including Housing First type schemes.	Years 2 to 5	Housing/ Partners
	Understand future requirements for off the street provision and assist Julian House with the relocation of the existing Manvers Street provision	Years 2 to 5	Housing/ Partners
	Embed a system wide approach of Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) across homelessness settings to ensure offers of housing are sustainable.	Years 1 to 2	Housing/ Partners
Reduction in use of expensive and inappropriate temporary accommodation	Operate a Prevention First model for housing advice ensuring high quality and accessible housing advice is provided to everyone at the earliest opportunity.	Year 1	Housing/ Partners
	Increase the number of high quality and cost-effective temporary accommodation units directly delivered and managed by the council with a target of 25-30 in total, including units for clients with specialist requirements.	Years 2 to 3	Housing
	Keep the Temporary Accommodation Action plan under review to ensure that the council remains in the lowest quartile for temporary accommodation usage and ensuring that children are only placed in B&B type accommodation in an emergency and in any case not for more than 30 days.	Years 1 to 5	Housing

Action	Next Steps	Timescale	Ownership
Ensure appropriate accommodation for those with long-term care needs	Review the Homeseach Allocations Scheme to ensure it meets Corporate priorities, including that vulnerable Adult & Children services clients are enabled and facilitated into mainstream housing options.	Year 1	Housing/Adult Care
	Secure long-term pipeline of Housing with Care schemes to meet the assessed need of 100 specialist homes by 2030.	Years 2 to 4	Housing/Adult Care
	Embed the positive learning from the ongoing development Learning Disabilities and/or Autism at Englishcombe into working practices.	Years 2 to 3	Housing
	Review all housing support contracts to ensure that they effectively support the council's revised homelessness pathways and fit within council agreed financial envelope.	Year 1	Housing/Partners
Ensure housing & support contracts are strategic and relevant	Transfer and embed first phase of former HCRG Housing Support contracts into Housing Services ensuring effective contract management arrangements.	Year 1	Housing
	Implement a Rapid Rehousing Pathway and streamlined application and assessment processes.	Years 1 to 2	Housing/Partners
	Develop and publish a Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy, informed by the recent Needs Assessment, procuring appropriate support contracts.	Year 1	Housing

Pillar Five – Housing Suitability

Ensuring residents have access to housing that is safe, warm, and accessible is the focus of this pillar, and the recent Housing Stock Condition Survey helps set the context for the actions required to achieve the council's objective in relation to Housing Suitability.

The Condition Survey confirms that the housing stock in the district is typically worse than the national average with 11% of stock in Bath & North East Somerset having a Category 1 hazard present, compared to 10% in England. Excess cold is generally the biggest single contributor to overall rate of hazards and drives the profile of all hazards across the district.

The poorest conditions are found in non-Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) private rented accommodation and owner-occupied properties, particularly in rural locations, whilst the best conditions can be found in the social sector and private rented HMOs. Improvements in HMO standards can, at least in part, be attributed to HMO licensing, including the council's extended additional licensing scheme which concluded last year.

Excess cold hazards

Excess cold is the biggest single contributor to overall rate of hazards. In owner-occupied properties which contain a hazard, the excess cold hazard is present for half of them. For private rented and social rented stock containing a hazard, an excess cold hazard is present for a quarter of them.

There is some overlap in the profile of excess cold and fuel poverty across the district, however some areas with higher levels of cold hazards do not have corresponding levels of residents on low incomes.

Houses in multiple occupation have lower levels of hazards, than single household rented homes, but higher levels of low income/high-cost fuel poverty.

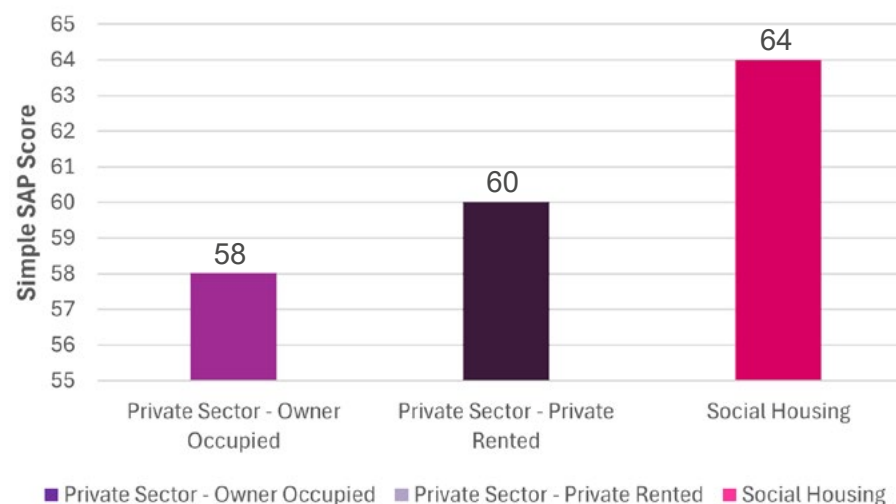
Maintaining & developing an effective enforcement role

The council's Housing Enforcement Policy will be kept under review, ensuring it balances the needs of tenants, landlords and the requirement to promptly resolve poor housing conditions. This will be informed by, and respond to, the enhanced regulatory powers proposed in the Renters Rights Bill.

The council's former Additional HMO licensing scheme, which covered smaller HMOs, has improved housing conditions in the sector. As such the council will keep the case for further licensing under review.

The number of people living in private rented properties that are hard to heat has fallen following the success of a multiagency project to enforce legal minimum energy efficiency standards. The council plans to undertake similar enforcement and educational projects in the future.

Average Energy Performance Across Sectors as indicated by SAP Score used to determine the property's EPC Band



Tackling fuel poverty for the most vulnerable households

Overall, 12% of B&NES households were estimated to be in fuel poverty in 2023 using the Government's low income and high cost of heating definition and 59% of B&NES homes are within energy performance bands of D or below.

The council will work with partners to develop the council's Energy Efficiency Retrofit Strategy, including developing and expanding targeted assistance for those in greatest need, including both grants and loans detailed in the Decent Homes Policy.

Developing an adaptation and community equipment service which responds to community needs

Preparing for the future is an important part of the Housing Plan. The council's Strategic Needs Assessment identifies a population of bulge of residents currently aged 30 to 60 years old. This is likely to result in an increasing number of residents requiring adaptations or equipment to maintain independent living over the next 30 years.

Part of the council's work in supporting residents to remain independent in their own homes involves bringing together all of its adaptations and community equipment services into a single service. This single multidisciplinary service will be able to support elderly, disabled and otherwise vulnerable residents with range of adaptations, both small and large, and with specialist equipment to enable residents to remain independent in their own homes. This service will also encourage timely hospital discharge in the district.

Retrofit Ambitions

The council will encourage retrofitting measures to existing buildings to improve their energy and water efficiency and their adaptability to climate change. Focus on appropriate domestic scale renewables will be essential, which is why the council supports the retrofitting of these measures. The council's Climate Change ambition is that 65,000 homes will be retrofitted with a range of measures by 2030.

To ensure the workforce has the skills to meet its retrofit ambitions, the council will work closely with the West of England Combined Authority to take advantage of national retrofit funding available. The council will also help to promote qualifications to upskill existing workers.

Damp and mould charter

The council working in partnership with local Registered Providers of housing has developed a Damp and Mould Charter. The aim of this Charter is to establish a set of four principles that landlords will use to inform their approach to damp and mould in their housing stock.

Commitment to these principles will support equity in the outcome for tenants, regardless of the provider they are housed with.

Housing Plan Pillar 5 – Housing Suitability

Ensure residents have access to housing that is safe, warm, and accessible

Action	Implementation	Timescale	Ownership
Tackle fuel poverty for the most vulnerable households	Work with partners including Bath and West Community Energy, We Care, and others to develop affordable warmth grants and assistance packages to improve home energy efficiency for low-income and vulnerable residents.	Underway Years 1 to 5	Housing/Green Transformation
	Work with partners to secure and maximise external grant funding to support fuel poverty actions to tackle fuel poverty for low-income and vulnerable residents.	Underway Years 1 to 5	Housing/Green Transformation
Promote affordable warmth and healthy housing across B&NES	Work with colleagues to develop the council's Energy Efficiency Retrofit Strategy, including developing and expand-ing the low-cost energy loan scheme under the Housing Services Decent Homes Policy.	Underway Year 1	Housing
	Work with Trading Standards and other partners to proactively enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) within the private rented sector.	Short Years 1 to 5	Housing
	Use modelling tools to explore scenarios to achieve improved Energy Performance Certificate ratings for each of the B&NES architypes described in the council's Sustainable Construction and Retrofitting Guide.	Medium Year 2	Housing/Green Transformation
	Ensure the council has high quality local data and evidence to support its ambitions to achieve safe and warm private rented homes in B&NES, including to support Government funding applications.	Medium Year 2	Housing

Action	Implementation	Timescale	Ownership
Maintaining & developing an effective enforcement role	Utilise regulatory powers as appropriate to optimise the effectiveness of the council's private sector housing enforcement activities, keeping the case for further licensing under review.	Medium Years 2 to 5	Housing
	Undertake proactive inspection programme of high risk rented homes, including those subject to licensing, whilst providing a reactive service for tenants experiencing substandard housing conditions.	Underway Years 1 to 5	Housing
	Keep the council's Housing Enforcement Policy under review, ensuring it balances the needs of tenants, landlords and the requirement to promptly resolve poor housing conditions.	Underway Years 1 to 5	Housing
	Work with partners to raise awareness of the council's services which tackle poor quality properties and unlawful practices and continue to address issues through negotiation and robust enforcement activities.	Underway Years 1 to 5	Housing
Develop comprehensive home adaptations and equipment service which responds to community needs	Develop comprehensive Adaptations Service to assist elderly, disabled and vulnerable residents to live independently in their own homes, comprising Disabled Facilities Grants, provision of community equipment and minor adaptations.	Short Year 1	Housing
	Review funding arrangements for Adaptations Service considering current demand factors including trends in the cost of the service, population demographics and complexity of health needs.	Short Year 1	Housing/Adult Services
	Investigate provision of an upgraded Community Equipment store that is fit for purpose and designed to meet current and future needs.	Short Year 1	Housing/Projects/ Property
	Respond to people's individual needs as far as practical by listening to residents, health and social care staff and other partners to inform service development and update the Decent Homes Policy.	Underway Years 1 to 5	Housing/Adults & Children's Services

Delivery & implementation

External Engagement

The council holds a significant responsibility for Bath & North East Somerset as a 'place' and continues to collaborate with partners to enhance the area where people live and work, aiming to improve the quality of life for all residents.

One Shared Vision, published in 2021, emerged from a collaboration with various local partners, including businesses, educational institutions, health providers, and charitable organisations, collectively known as the Future Ambition Partnership. This vision sets out an ambition for Bath and North East Somerset to become a Fair, Green, Creative, and Connected place. The goal is to position the region for new investment and wide-ranging returns, ensuring sustained prosperity. The Future Ambition Partnership brings the council and its partners together to oversee the delivery of this vision.

Housing Mission Board

Under the banner of the Future Ambition Partnership, a Housing Summit was held in July 2024 to emphasise the need for innovative thinking and the exploration of new approaches to housing development. Following this, a Housing Mission Board was established to unite participants from across the housing sector, including representatives from local planning authorities, regional authorities, registered providers, housebuilders, and designers.

The inaugural workshop focused on developing a shared ambition and strategic approach to address the housing crisis. Participants actively discussed organisational development and collaborative efforts. Ongoing involvement in the Housing Mission Board will be a positive way of working with partners to develop solutions to some of the challenges that the Housing Plan has highlighted.



Housing Steering Group

The Housing Steering Group will have high-level oversight of delivery and monitoring of the Housing Plan. The Housing Steering Group will include Senior Officers from Adult Social Care and Children's Services, Finance, Public Health, and any other council service that is impacted by or has an impact upon housing issues in Bath & North East Somerset.

Outputs from the group and any required decisions will be fed through the Place Group and above as required.

Housing Officer Group

A B&NES Officer Housing Group will be established, to oversee the day-to-day implementation of the Housing Plan and to work collaboratively on issues related to housing delivery and housing management.

Purpose:

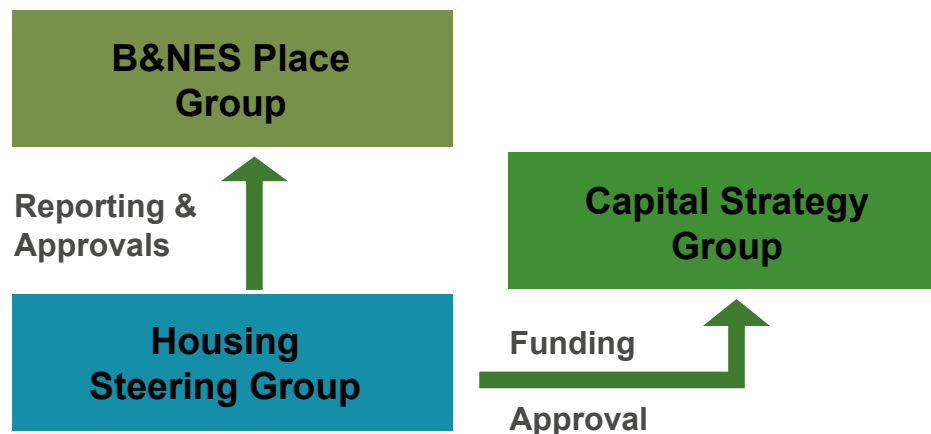
- Supporting implementation of the Housing Plan
- Provide advice and assistance in relation B&NES Homes delivery and management programme.
- Shaping future policy development and priorities for housing delivery and management
- Promoting and sharing good practice in strategic housing, housing management and operations

Frequency of Meetings:

- Monthly

Informal Cabinet

Steering and formal progress reports



Cabinet Member Review

Reporting on Plan progress as part of regular (monthly) Cabinet Member meetings

References

- i. [ONS Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings Table 8 November 2023](#)
 - ii. [ONS Housing Prices in Bath and North East Somerset: August 2024](#)
 - iii. [HM Land Registry UK House Price Index: August 2024](#)
 - iv. [Rightmove: House Prices in Bath August 2024](#)
 - v. [Hometrack Data \(January 2024\)](#)
 - vi. [House Price Heat Map](#)
-

Further detailed information for the bar graph in the Taking definitive action: Improving HMOs section ([page 9](#))

Housing Standards Variations	All hazards	Excess Cold	Falls Hazards	Disrepair	Fuel Poverty (10%)	Fuel Poverty (Low income High Costs)	Low income households
Social Stock	7%	2%	3%	2%	8%	13%	69%
Private Rented	12%	4%	4%	4%	5%	13%	23%
Owner Occupied	12%	6%	5%	3%	4%	6%	9%