



SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL HOUSING STRATEGY 2026-2031

DRY

Contents

Foreword from Councillor Frampton	0
Executive Summary	1
Our Approach	3
Focus	4
Setting the Scene	10
Priority 1: Improving Our Landlord Services	11
Priority 2: Increasing Quality Homes in the City	18
Priority 3: Supporting Strong and Resilient Communities	29
Delivering our strategy	0
Link in with existing plans and strategies	1
Glossary of Terms	0

Foreword from Councillor Frampton

Housing is central to Southampton's prosperity, growth, and health and wellbeing. It shapes lives, strengthens communities, and enhances our city's vibrancy. The Southampton City Council Housing Strategy 2026-2031 sets out a clear plan to meet the diverse housing needs of residents, businesses, and the transient population.

I have lived in Southampton most of my life, and as councillor, I have seen first-hand how deeply housing affects our residents, our communities, and our city's future.

We have not always got it right or consistently followed through on commitments. We acknowledge the 2024 Housing Regulatory Judgement. They were clear and a reminder of the work we need to do. We are truly sorry for where we have fallen short, and we are committed to making things right, and acting. The judgement has helped us take a long hard look at ourselves. It has sparked genuine change and a renewed sense of purpose. We recognise that poor housing conditions, such as damp and mould, can have serious consequences for health and well-being. These challenges significantly affect daily life, especially for people with health conditions. Addressing these concerns is a priority, and we are committed to making homes safer, healthier, and more comfortable for all.

The strategy lays out a new chapter. Our vision is clear: to create a thriving, inclusive community where everyone has access to safe, affordable, healthy and sustainable housing. Achieving this requires improving how we manage and deliver housing services, increasing access to quality homes, and strengthening partnerships to support thriving communities.

We have built this plan around three core priorities:

- 1. Improving Our Landlord Services** – significantly enhance tenant satisfaction and foster better relationships
- 2. Increasing Quality Homes in the City** – Expanding housing supply to ensure more affordability, sustainable, healthier and high-quality homes
- 3. Supporting Strong and Resilient Communities** – creating environment where all individuals feel valued, respected, and have equal opportunities to participate fully

We will measure our progress honestly and share it publicly. We will do this together. Our residents, partners, and communities all playing a role. This is our shared mission to make Southampton a city we are all proud to call home.

Executive Summary

Our Housing Vision

Southampton City Council's vision is to meet the diverse needs of the people of Southampton, employers and transient population, such as students and ship crews, and to create a thriving, inclusive community where everyone has access to safe, affordable, healthy and sustainable housing. We also want to create an environment where everyone lives in a neighbourhood where they feel safe and happy.

Purpose of this Strategy

This strategy will help to meet the Corporate Plan 2025 priority 'to deliver the homes, sustainable transport, and social infrastructure Southampton needs to thrive'. Specifically, enabling the delivery of new homes across the city, ensuring the right mix of properties to meet our city's needs, and improvement to the council's housing stock.

Priorities and Projects

Our 2026-2031 Housing Strategy focuses on three priorities, each with various projects and objectives:

Improving Our Landlord Services	Increasing Quality Homes in the City	Supporting Strong and Resilient Communities
---------------------------------	--------------------------------------	---

To address Southampton's housing challenges and deliver better outcomes, this strategy outlines a comprehensive approach that includes:

- Enhancing landlord services and service delivery
- Expanding and improving housing supply
- Investing in sustainable building design
- Strengthening tenant and leaseholder involvement through clearer communication, active participation, and more responsive feedback mechanisms
- Tackling overcrowding via our downsizing policy
- Regenerating outdated housing stock and neighbourhoods
- Strengthening partnerships to prevent homelessness and support vulnerable groups

- Building healthier homes to improve wellbeing and reduce health inequalities
- Delivering adaptations through the Housing Adaptation Policy, enabling residents to live independently in safe, accessible homes tailored to their needs

By delivering these key actions, from expanding housing options to regenerating neighbourhoods, supporting independence, and improving health outcomes, this strategy reflects our commitment to inclusive growth and better living. It focuses on making sure that every resident can access housing that meets their needs, strengthens their wellbeing, and enables them to feel secure, respected, and supported in the place they call home.

We recognise that lasting change depends on collaboration. That is why we are committed to working closely with tenants, delivery partners, businesses, developers, and communities. Building shared responsibility, shaping services together, and ensuring housing in Southampton reflects the needs and aspirations of everyone it serves.

Our Approach

Our strategic vision is clear: to build a future where everyone in Southampton can access high-quality, sustainable housing they can afford. Live in neighbourhoods that feel safe, welcoming, and supportive.

Housing touches every part of life. It shapes health, opportunity, and inclusion. This strategy looks beyond individual tenures or service areas, taking a whole-system view of Southampton's housing landscape. It responds to changing demands, historic pressures, and a shared ambition for better homes and stronger communities.

Long-term Objectives:

To deliver our Housing Vision, Southampton City Council (the Council) have set out six long-term objectives which we will work towards delivering with various projects, both within the timescale of this Housing Strategy (2026-2031) and beyond. They are:

- High Quality housing stock available at affordable levels
- Sustainable Energy provision for economic, energy efficient homes and reduce fuel poverty
- Strong Partnerships to deliver investment and regeneration opportunities to foster thriving communities
- Housing provision to support people to live healthy, independent lives
- Enabling sustainable growth in the number of homes available across the city
- Prevention of homelessness rather than homelessness growth

How We Will Measure Success

Indicator	Current SCC Statistics	Benchmark Comparison
Council homes meeting Decent Homes standard	50%	80% ¹
EPC Rating C+ (council stock only)	43.7%	80% EPC B or above ²
Homelessness Referral Rate (per 10,000)	15	30% less referral – 90% of cases receive intervention before crisis point ³
Overall Tenant Satisfaction	62% ⁴	85%

¹ [Latest sector scorecard published - Housemark](#)

² [Benchmarking | Acuity | Social Housing Sector](#)

³ [Tables on homelessness - GOV.UK](#)

⁴ [Housing annual/TSM report 2023/24](#)

Focus

The strategy is structured around three defined themes, working with colleagues and business partners to achieve our aims. It articulates a clear roadmap with associated actions, timelines, and investment priorities that will guide Southampton through the next five critical years.

Improving Our Landlord Services: We are focused on ensuring homes are safe, healthy, good quality and well-maintained. We need to understand our customer’s needs, characteristics, experiences and expectations to shape how we plan, deliver and improve – every day and at every level.	Increasing Quality Homes in the City: Southampton needs to increase the availability and viable delivery of good quality housing, to meet the growing demand, to support economic growth and reduce adverse health and social impacts, and inequality.	Supporting Strong and Resilient Communities: Housing is key to creating healthy, thriving communities. We will work with partners to prevent homelessness, support independence, and collaborate with residents, businesses, and organisations to make neighbourhoods safe and welcoming for everyone.
--	--	--

About Southampton

Southampton is a vibrant and culturally rich city, known for its diversity, deep-rooted maritime history and dynamic economy. It is home to one of the largest seaports in the UK⁵, the city plays a crucial role in global trade, fostering economic growth and creating opportunities for businesses and residents alike.

Southampton's population reflects its diversity, with 31.9%⁶ of residents identifying as non-white British, and more than 160 languages spoken. This rich cultural mix contributes to the city's unique character but also brings distinct housing challenges that need careful planning and investment.

Beyond its maritime heritage, Southampton thrives as an economic hub, hosting 7,400 enterprises⁷ and two prestigious universities that attract students, transient workers, and long-term residents. With a population of 264,957 people across 109,226 households⁸, the city balances tradition with modern development, and its housing strategy must reflect this evolving landscape.

Who Lives Where and Why it Matters

Southampton is home to a wide mix of people and living situations:

- 47.7% of households own their home, either outright or with a mortgage⁹, compared to 63.2% nationally
- 29.2% rent privately, significantly higher than the 19% national average
- 21.9% live in social housing, notably higher than the 17% national average, underscoring the importance of council and housing association services
- 1% reside in shared ownership properties, closely reflecting the national figure.
- 0.1% live rent-free, in line with national trends

Life expectancy averages 77.8 years for men and 82.4 years for women¹⁰ while the average age of the population is 34 compared to 40 years in England¹¹, demonstrating the city's need for housing that caters to both its younger and aging populations. However, these life expectancy figures are notably lower than the national and regional averages reflecting Southampton's health inequalities. These inequalities are also found within the city where there are differences in life expectancy between some wards of nearly seven years for men and eight years for women.

⁵ [Home - Southampton VTS - ABP Southampton](#)

⁶ Census 2021

⁷ ONS UK Business Counts 2024

⁸ Hampshire County Council SAPF 2023

⁹ ONS Housing Survey, 2024

¹⁰ ONS 2020-2022

¹¹ Census 2021

Improving housing quality so that Southampton residents have homes that are safe, warm and with a secure tenure will help to address these inequalities. Overcrowding is a growing concern, with 5.8% of households needing more space - either one additional room (5.1%) or two or more rooms (0.7%). Nationally, overcrowding rates are slightly lower at 4.5%, reflecting Southampton's acute pressures on housing availability.

Challenges in Housing

Southampton faces significant housing pressures as demand continues to outstrip supply. Rising house prices and rents have made housing increasingly unaffordable for many, especially those on lower incomes with the residents' average gross weekly wage is £690¹². Key figures include:

- The average house price in Southampton reached £235,226 in January 2025, compared to the national average of £271,415¹³
- Private rents have surged by 7.8% over the past year, with the average monthly rent now at £1,198, slightly below the national average of £1,218¹⁴
- First-time buyers in Southampton face an average home cost of £210,709, compared to £249,763 nationally¹⁵, making it harder for young people to get on the ladder.

Affordability challenges, combined with the impacts of 282 Right to Buy purchases completed in 2024/25, reduce the availability of social housing and exacerbate overcrowding. Meanwhile, 8,361 households remain on the Housing Register, while rough sleepers recorded remains high in a single-night counts total.

The number of lettings through the Housing Register is declining year on year, averaging 800 total lettings annually. Meanwhile, councils across England are obliged to provide homelessness duty to 324,990 households between April 2023 and March 2024 due to risk or reality of homelessness. In Southampton, demand for homelessness support and emergency housing continues to grow, particularly among vulnerable individuals who are prioritised under the Housing Allocation Policy.

The strategy must work for owner occupiers, private renters, shared owners, affordable/social renters, and people with specialist housing needs. It will work for everybody whether they are in a detached house, temporary accommodation or tower block.

¹² ONS – 2024 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

¹³ Land Registry, March 2025

¹⁴ ONS Housing Prices Report, February 2025

¹⁵ Land Registry, March 2025

The Council is committed to delivering a long-term, sustainable programme of high-quality, affordable mixed tenure housing that meets the needs of residents and supports wider place-based regeneration.

Housing Register Demand and Waiting Times

The demand for different property sizes highlights the significant pressures on housing availability:

Property Size	Numbers Waiting	Wait Times (with priority)	Wait Times (no priority)
1 bed	4645	2 years 3 months	4 years 8 months
2 beds	1656	2 year 4 months	4 years 9 months
3 beds	1594	9 years	11 years 5 months
4 beds +	282	10 years 1 month	12 years 6 months

The long waiting times for larger homes highlight the critical need for family-sized housing, reinforcing the importance of housing expansion and allocation strategies that focus on efficient use of existing stock and increased new developments.

Investment

- Through estate regeneration using regeneration funding to decommission and replace high-cost, end-of-life blocks will reduce long-term maintenance costs and support the delivery of modern, energy-efficient homes.
- Prudent borrowing: Exploring borrowing options to support the HRA in the short to medium term, enabling investment in critical infrastructure and housing improvements.
- Strategic partnerships: Working with investment and development partners to regenerate and rebuild housing stock, leveraging adjacent Council-owned housing land to unlock new housing opportunities.

These actions form part of a wider, integrated approach to housing investment and regeneration. By aligning financial planning with asset management and community needs, the Council aims to deliver a more sustainable, high quality housing portfolio that meets the Decent Homes Standard and supports the wellbeing of Southampton's residents.

Regeneration

To ensure we drive the achievement of decent homes standards and support strong, resilient communities, we will be working across the housing stock to identify opportunities to invest and develop local areas where new homes can be created; where housing stock, that by reason of time or build type has reached the end of its viable life, can be replaced; and investment can be found to support community facilities. This work has begun with our regeneration ambitions built around a newly developed place-shaping, archetype-led housing regeneration strategy that combines new council homes, with retrofit, refurbishment, and estate regeneration. This multi-faceted approach is informed by a city-wide assessment of over 18,000 council-owned homes, identifying neighbourhoods and housing typologies with the highest repair liabilities, lowest energy performance, and greatest socio-economic need. The regeneration strategy will identify 'early win' pilot projects that are replicable other housing estates, and by leveraging new external funding and delivery models.

External investment will be critical in enabling further, accelerated housing renewal in delivering new homes and wider regeneration benefits through the delivery of new social rent housing on existing housing estates. In addition, the delivery of any renewal programme will need to be dynamic, with the support of multiple strategic partners and funding organisations, such as Homes England, as has been demonstrated through the Council's Affordable Housing Framework.

Opportunities and Solutions

Despite these challenges, Southampton has significant opportunities to create a more inclusive, healthy, and sustainable housing offering. The Council is committed to delivering housing that is:

- Affordable: ensuring that homes remain within reach for low- and middle-income families
- Desirable: designed to high standards with modern amenities
- Adaptable: meeting the diverse needs of a growing and changing population

Key initiatives include:

- The delivery of a new Housing Regeneration Strategy
- Prioritising social housing supply and reinvesting in council-owned stock
- Exploring new models for social rent housing delivery
- Ensuring new homes are built to high standards and meet sustainability targets
- Improving conditions in the private rental sector, particularly through compliance enforcement

Impact of Right to Buy and Legislative Changes

Legislative changes, particularly around Right to Buy, present opportunities to reinvest in housing stock and strengthen efforts to meet demand. Currently, the Council uses Right to Buy receipts to fund 100% of the cost of replacement dwellings and purchases of existing open market properties.

However, from March 2026 onwards, changes in legislation may restrict how these funds can be used. The Council is awaiting further guidance from central government on how future policies will shape affordable housing investment strategies.

Looking ahead, key considerations include:

- Number of council properties sold under Right to Buy and their impact on the city's housing stock
- Utilisation of Right to Buy receipts to support social housing projects
- Strategies to reinvest in social housing development, ensuring long-term sustainability

Setting the Scene

National and Local Policy Drivers

Nationally, the UK faces a historic shortage of affordable housing, with rapid population growth and evolving demographic trends placing unprecedented pressure on local housing markets. Locally, Southampton contends with:

- A growing population with complex and intersecting needs
- A significant number of empty properties that could be reactivated to meet housing demand
- The need to maintain the vibrancy and safety of quickly transforming urban environments
- A regulatory framework that demands higher standards from both the public and private sectors

Regulatory Standards & Judgement	Covid 19	Building and Fire Safety	Domestic Abuse	Health and Wellbeing
Care Leavers	Housing Crisis	Adult Social Care	Private Rented Sector	National Housing Target
Planning Reforms	Local Plan	Environmental Regulations	Financial Mechanisms	Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleepers
Performance data on service delivery	Tenant Feedback	Economic Growth	Young People	Renter's Reform Act
Supported Housing Reform	Planning and Infrastructure Bill	Devolution	Awaab's Law – Damp and Mould	

Strategic Priorities

Our strategy is built around three themes which details our aims and goals with key actions, and tentative timelines.

Priority 1: Improving Our Landlord Services

Strategic Aim and Context

Asset Investment Strategy and Plan

We manage approximately 16,000 council homes and a further 2,200 leasehold and shared ownership properties across Southampton. Our aim is to make sure every council home meets the minimum quality standard for homes in England, known as the Decent Homes Standard. This includes:

- Homes that are in a reasonable state of repair
- Homes with modern facilities, such as kitchens and bathrooms
- Homes that provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort
- Homes that meet current legal standards

Our goal is to make our homes safe, warm, energy efficient and well-maintained — supporting health, dignity and everyday living.

More than 9,500 of our council homes still require work to meet this standard. Despite previous investment programmes, we have not yet achieved full compliance across our stock, and this will take sustained investment over time. We will prioritise improvements such as better insulation, A-rated windows and doors, and enhanced roofing to strengthen energy performance and tackle fuel poverty.

At the same time, we will reinforce our approach to the six core areas of housing compliance:

- Fire safety
- Gas safety
- Electrical safety
- Legionella control
- Lift safety
- Asbestos management

These areas are critical to ensuring safe living conditions. We will enhance our systems, skills and monitoring so issues are identified and addressed swiftly. Reducing risk and improving quality across all homes.

New legislation such as Awaab's Law, which becomes enforceable from 27 October 2025, sets clearer expectations for landlords to act quickly on issues like damp and mould. Our investment programme reflects this shift — strengthening how we respond to these hazards and prioritising improvements in homes where health risks are greatest.

Key point: *To make sure all council homes are safe, good quality by fixing problems like damp and mould, improving, insulation to keep homes warm, and checking fire, gas, and electrical safety to protect our residents. By upgrading older homes and making them more energy efficient, we help people to live comfortably while keeping costs down.*

Optimise Existing Stocks

Southampton's population has grown by 5.1% since 2011, reaching nearly 265,000 residents across 109,226 households. Meanwhile, private rents have risen by 7.8%, and average house prices are over £235,226, making it harder for many people to buy or rent homes. At the same time, 29.2% of residents rent privately; much higher than the national average of 19%, while many face low wages and high living costs.

Overcrowding is a growing concern, with 5.8% of households needing more space, compared to the national average of 4.5%. This includes 5.1% needing one extra room and 0.7% needing two or more (Census 2021, ONS 2020–2022).

Demand for larger homes is especially high. There are 1,594 households waiting for a three-bedroom property, with priority applicants facing a nine-year wait, and non-priority applicants waiting up to 11 years and five months. This highlights the urgent need to make better use of existing stock and reduce delays in getting homes back into use.

To address these challenges, we will make better use of the homes we already have. This includes:

- Fair and transparent housing allocation
- Supporting tenants to downsize where appropriate
- Promoting mutual exchanges across social housing providers

We will deliver a planned maintenance programme and improve voids and repairs services to maintain Decent Homes standards and make sure homes are ready for use without unnecessary delay. By reducing waiting times, streamlining repairs, and investing appropriately, we aim to improve tenant satisfaction, reduce costs, and maintain well-performing housing.

These improvements will be guided by our Housing Asset Management and Regeneration Strategies, ensuring our housing stock meets current and future needs across the city.

Key point: *To make best use of available housing by reducing empty properties, improving repairs, and ensuring fair allocation so more residents can access safe and suitable homes.*

Working with You as Customers

Our goal is to provide an outstanding housing service, delivering high-quality homes and building safe, welcoming communities. We are committed to being customer-focused and guided by our Council values: trust, pride, respect, and accountability.

We are developing a new Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy¹⁶, placing tenants, shared owners, and leaseholders at the heart of service improvement. Listening to our customers allows us to prioritise what matters most, strengthen decision-making, and drive service excellence.

We will:

- Improve how we communicate - keeping things clear, timely, and transparent.
- Offer more ways for tenants and leaseholders to get involved — including representative panels and neighbourhood schemes.
- Share performance data regularly to show what's working and where we need to improve.
- Make sure our customer service is friendly, efficient and helpful — with a focus on accuracy, ownership and clear signposting.

We also recognise that complaints are an important part of learning and improving. In 2023/24, 329 Stage 1 complaints were received, with 46.9% upheld - many relating to repairs, delays and communication. We are committed to improving how we respond, resolve issues, and learn from what residents tell us.

In November 2024, the Regulator of Social Housing issued Southampton City Council a C3 consumer grading, identifying serious failings in how housing services were delivered — particularly around repairs, health and safety, and tenant engagement. This was the first time the Council received a consumer grade, and it has prompted a renewed focus on transparency, accountability, and improvement.

We continue to promote digital services for ease and accessibility, while making sure non-digital customers are supported through dedicated phone lines and in-person help. Our suite of 23 online housing forms allows residents to raise issues, upload documents, and track progress. We use surveys and direct feedback to understand what's working and where we need to do better.

¹⁶ Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy awaiting approval

We also recognise the importance of engaging younger residents. Our Junior Neighbourhood Warden Scheme gives young people a chance to learn, take pride in their communities, and shape future services.

Key point: *By listening to residents and acting on their feedback, we ensure housing support is responsive, accessible, and meets community needs*

Neighbourhood Environment

The Council recognises that the quality of the neighbourhood environment is vital to tenants' wellbeing and sense of pride in their community. The Decent Neighbourhoods scheme was developed to improve the external environment around council homes, acknowledging that communal spaces are just as important as individual housing. It targets issues such as poor lighting, signage, and lack of seating, and reinvests rent money into enhancements co-designed with residents — from raised planters and benches to improved pathways.

This approach reflects national priorities outlined in the UK Government's 2025 Plan for Neighbourhoods, a £1.5 billion commitment to revitalise underserved areas through long-term investment, community empowerment, and locally driven change (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2023). By aligning local delivery with national aims, Southampton demonstrates its role as a proactive partner in building healthier, more resilient places.

The scheme is further underpinned by principles of community co-design, ensuring that tenants help shape their environments. Through this inclusive approach, the Council not only improves public spaces but also fosters greater engagement, ownership, and cohesion.

The benefits of the Decent Neighbourhoods programme are wide-ranging:

- Improved living standards through safer, greener, and more attractive surroundings
- Greater community pride and resilience, with residents actively involved in shaping their neighbourhoods
- Enhanced social connections, reducing isolation and encouraging neighbourly interaction
- Reduced anti-social behaviour and void turnover, as well-maintained areas promote stability and satisfaction
- Better health and wellbeing outcomes, especially where improvements support active lifestyles and mental health

These environmental improvements also contribute to broader strategic goals — supporting the city's corporate priorities, regeneration ambitions, and emerging Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

Key point: *Continue to invest in shared spaces, promoting community pride, and improving the local environment for all residents.*

Our Plan

Priority 1: Improving Our Landlord Services		
Our aims	Asset Investment Strategy and Plan	Optimise Existing Stocks
What does success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the level of Decent Homes of the council housing stock. This will be done as part of other actions to optimise the existing housing portfolio. Robust asset data which informs investments and divestments to ensure the future viability of housing stock now and in the future Reduction in empty homes to less than 1.0% of stock A sustainable housing stock profile which is supported by robust acquisition & disposal decisions, to ensure a housing stock that is fit for purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voids turnaround times meet targets, reducing the average from 118 days (routine voids) and 334 days (major voids) to 10 days and 65 days, respectively Improved repair response times, with appointments completed on time increasing to 99% and first-visit repairs exceeding the target of 96% A robust and transparent Housing Allocation Policy ensures the equitable distribution of homes while addressing housing needs effectively Increased availability of appropriately sized homes for families on the housing register and those experiencing overcrowding
What are our priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a strategy which sets out what the future of council housing looks like in the city Make sure that the council has a robust assurance and reporting framework Homes are safe and free of serious hazards Ensure that investment in homes is targeted, planned, and sustainable to meet both current and future needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing the number of void properties to a normalised level of 75 from the current 341 and increasing rental income through faster turnaround times Maintaining properties at the Decent Homes Standard while adhering to legislative requirements and addressing repair needs proactively Supporting tenants through downsizing schemes and mutual exchange programs to optimise housing stock use citywide Strengthening engagement with tenants to raise awareness of housing options and support informed decisions on downsizing or exchanges
How are we going to do it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust asset data which informs investments and divestments to ensure the future viability of housing stock now and in the future Explore all options to retain social housing stock levels decisions Maximise investment in decent homes Increase the use of delivery partners to ensure the delivery of planned works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drive digital transformation initiatives to improve reporting and tracking systems for voids and repairs, enabling faster turnaround and better service delivery Temporarily reallocate trade and staff capacity from major projects to address backlogs and enhance efficiency in voids and repairs combined with procuring an additional contractor to clear backlogs Implement and actively promote downsizing schemes with tailored incentives and practical support for tenants seeking smaller, more suitable homes Collaborate with housing associations to improve mutual exchange processes, enabling tenants to swap homes across social housing providers efficiently

What difference does this make?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Homes where people want to live ▪ A sustainable housing stock which meets both existing and future needs ▪ Safer, healthier homes that support residents' wellbeing and quality of life. ▪ Greater trust and confidence in the council's management of its housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved housing conditions that align with Decent Homes Standards, enhancing tenant satisfaction and wellbeing ▪ Reduced rent loss and increased availability of safe, well-maintained homes through efficient voids management ▪ Families on the housing register and those facing overcrowding will benefit from quicker access to appropriately sized properties ▪ A more balanced and flexible housing system empowers tenants while addressing critical housing shortages citywide
---------------------------------	--	---

Our Plan

Priority 1: Improving Our Landlord Services

Aims	Working With You as Customers	Neighbourhood Environment
What does success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Residents making a real difference to services ▪ An accessible and well publicised complaint process ▪ Improved Tenant Satisfaction Measures results ▪ Increased impact of the Junior Neighbourhood Wardens scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring neighbourhoods are modern and attractive ▪ Improved accessibility and connectivity to surrounding areas ▪ Address community safety concerns- including 'designing out' crime and anti-social behaviour ▪ Alleviate parking pressures
What are our priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To make it easy and convenient to contact us, and demonstrate that we act on your feedback ▪ Effective scrutiny: enabling tenants to critically examine how services are provided ▪ Create a culture that recognises and values tenant engagement ▪ To improve communication and interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote social & environmental wellbeing ▪ Ensure the safety of shared external spaces ▪ Consider the needs of all residents, including children and those with mobility issues ▪ Empower and support residents to take ownership of the outside spaces near their homes
How are we going to do it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Having customers form part of our Housing Advisory board ▪ Make available good quality, up-to-date performance data and information to those involved in scrutiny activities. ▪ Implementing a tenant's charter & introducing a new Tenant Engagement Strategy • Collect, analyse and use tenant profile information in order to deliver tailored services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage residents in decisions which affect where they live ▪ Enable residents to make requests for improvements to their neighbourhood ▪ Develop an independent Decent Neighbourhood strategy ▪ Commit an annual budget which is dedicated to making improvements to the external environment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recording and communicating of lessons learnt from complaints 	
What difference does this make?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Giving you an active stake in the running of Housing Services rather than just being recipients of services will lead to better outcomes and standards for all residents ▪ We will rebuild trust with residents, embedding resident engagement throughout Housing Services We will empower you to scrutinise and shape the continuous improvement of your housing service ▪ Services will be shaped by resident voices to meet their needs ▪ Increased tenant satisfaction: Clear and consistent communication helps to build trust and ensures that you feel valued and respected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create neighbourhoods where residents are proud to live ▪ Increased resident satisfaction in neighbourhoods helps contribute towards more stable, less transient communities ▪ Improved living standards - Access to quality amenities, green spaces, and safe environments ▪ Creates neighbourhoods which support residents' physical health and mental wellbeing

Priority 2: Increasing Quality Homes in the City

Strategic Aims and Context

Housing Supply

Increasing housing supply in Southampton is of primary importance to the Council. Small Area Population Forecasts¹⁷ suggest the city's population will grow by 16,821 people between 2025 and 2030, a 6.1% increase. Whilst housing affordability in Southampton is better than it is many other parts of Hampshire, there are still many who struggle to afford a home as reflected in the over 8,000 residents on the Council's housing register in 2024. When considering these factors against the backdrop of a national housing crisis, the delivery of more homes in the city, of all tenures, is vital.

The city also faces unique challenges, such as a dense and tightly constrained urban environment with a high proportion of previously developed land. However, the Government expects all local planning authorities to plan for and allocate sufficient sites to deliver the strategic priorities of their area. This includes:

- homes (including affordable housing);
- employment;
- retail;
- leisure and other commercial development;
- infrastructure (for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat));
- community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure);
- conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure; and
- planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The Government also sets a standard method for calculating housing need. Southampton's target as of 28th May 2025 is 1,209 new homes per annum (note: this target will change at least annually). It is the role of the Local Plan to set out a vision and strategy for how the city will grow and develop, meeting all of the above needs, over a minimum 15-year period from adoption.

¹⁷ Small Area Population Forecasts are prepared by Hampshire County Council. The Southampton forecasts are available on the Southampton Data Observatory. See the population dashboard at <https://data.southampton.gov.uk/population/population-size-and-structure/> [accessed 08/04/2025]

The current adopted Local Plan is reaching the end of its lifespan, therefore we are currently developing a new Local Plan, known as “Southampton City Vision” which we intend to adopt in 2027 (see the [Local Development Scheme](#) (LDS) for detailed scope and timeline for preparation).

The emerging Local Plan, “Southampton City Vision” will be a pivotal tool for achieving our housing target. It will allocate sites for housing, as well as other land uses, and will set out planning policies for optimising residential densities in sustainable locations and achieving high-quality design, balanced against the need to protect the built and natural environment.

New homes in the city will also need to be of different types and tenure to meet varying needs of current and future residents. As such, a key evidence document which will support development of the Southampton City Vision Local Plan will be the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA). This study is anticipated to be completed in late 2025 and will provide evidence-based recommendations on the types, sizes, and tenures of housing required into the long-term. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Family housing (including service families)
- Specialist housing (including older people housing, disability housing, housing for looked after children)
- Affordable housing (including social rent)
- Key worker housing
- Gypsies and Travellers’ accommodation
- Houseboats and moorings
- Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs)
- Purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA)
- Build to rent and Co-living
- Self and Custom-Build housing

The findings of the HENA will inform the development of the new Local Plan policies and site allocations, with the overall aim of ensuring housing needs are met, as far as reasonably possible, for the duration of the plan period whilst supporting the creation of mixed and balanced communities across the city.

Collaborative efforts with neighbouring authorities through the ‘duty to cooperate’ which is a legal requirement that obligates local planning authorities and other public bodies to work together on strategic planning matters that cross administrative boundaries, will aim to address any unmet housing needs in and beyond the Southampton authority boundary, maintaining a regional perspective on supply challenges.

We will also be working on a new Growth and Prosperity Plan (Local Growth Plan) that will not only be extremely important for Southampton, but for the wider sub-region as well. Local Growth Plans and strategies which have been thoughtfully designed with delivery in mind, and with the right capacity and organisational structures, are best placed to leverage future funding and investment to realise shared ambitions. A good example is the Solent Growth & Prosperity Strategy providing an economic vision to 2050 and including Housing and Regeneration as a top 10 priority.

The sub-regional dimension is critically important with the twin prospect of Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). For Southampton this will likely mean a new regional Mayor for Southampton, Portsmouth, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight as part of a new, wider sub-regional Strategic Mayoral Authority.

A new Mayor will have responsibility for driving local economic growth, strategic planning and infrastructure, strategic transport and other areas with powers and funding passed down from government departments. Government also intends to end the current two-tier system of counties and district councils in some areas by creating unitary councils across the whole country with populations of around 500,000. If Southampton is reconstituted as a new larger unitary authority, this will have implications for the extent and nature of the local housing market.

The Southampton Renaissance Board is committed to driving the future growth and development of our city, with a focus on economic prosperity, strategic skill enhancement, sustainable development, and investment. The primary goal of the Board is to shape Southampton into a vibrant, thriving city that realises its potential, aligning public and private sectors together with our major institutions around a unified agenda for growth. The Southampton Renaissance Vision was published in February 2025 and sets out the long-term ambitions for the city. A key theme is Neighbourhoods where the board have stated the ambition: “We will invest in the diverse communities within our historic inner-city neighbourhoods, including community facilities and social infrastructure. This will be delivered alongside a range of new homes to support a new era of urban living”.

Southampton’s Growth and Prosperity Plan (Local Growth Plan) will promote growth, investment, good quality jobs, improvements to employability & skills, infrastructure, transport, housing, and regeneration. The Plan will also provide a clear framework for the delivery of the Southampton Renaissance and the Asset Development and Disposal programmes.

Central to the successful delivery of both these strategically important programmes will be the deliverability and viability of mixed-use, residentially led, regeneration schemes. Housing delivery will be a key factor in delivering a new investment cycle and in kick-starting regeneration activity in the city. At present the viability of housing delivery is challenging. This is a key issue that we need to address in order that residentially led schemes can help to drive new investment and quality mixed-use development. Large city-centre schemes are a precursor to the success of the city and a key driver for growth and prosperity. Such schemes are also critical in our meeting our housing targets.

City-wide the use of existing housing land will be important in kickstarting the local housing market, in supporting development viability, in delivering regeneration and new social rent housing. The analysis conducted through the Housing Regeneration Strategy provides a basis for essential prioritisation. The Council now has a lens through which to view the HRA portfolio, with a better understanding of where stock condition, socio-economic need, and investment potential converge. Southampton can transform its housing future - not through a single, sweeping solution, but through a portfolio-wide approach that balances ambition with pragmatism. The provision of new homes on existing Council owned housing land will be a critical consideration in tapping into new funding opportunities through Government grant funding, including Homes England's Affordable Homes Programme or in accessing private institutional capital. The alternative is for a hybrid approach, combining public and private funding, potentially allowing the Council to balance financial viability with social value objectives

Key point: *Delivering more homes to meet growing demand by developing a new Local Plan, allocating land for housing, promoting regeneration opportunities, and ensuring a mix of housing options to support diverse community needs.*

Quality of New Build Homes

We want all new homes in Southampton to be well-designed, sustainable, and built to high standards. This means homes that are attractive, safe, and long-lasting — places that people are proud to live in and that support healthy, inclusive communities. Quality is not just about aesthetics; it's about how homes perform, how they feel, and how they contribute to the wider neighbourhood.

Southampton's population is projected to grow from 264,957 in 2023 to 284,924 by 2030 — a 7.5% increase. This growth reinforces the need to deliver homes that are not only fit for purpose, but also capable of meeting future demand while supporting health, inclusion and climate resilience.

The emerging Southampton City Vision Local Plan, expected to be adopted in 2027, will set a strong framework for new development, guided by the following principles:

- **Design:** Ensuring high-quality design of buildings to ensure they work as intended and fit into the surroundings, encourage safe and inclusive neighbourhoods (e.g. via natural surveillance), use appropriate materials to ensure longevity, and that taller buildings are visually interesting and add positively to the cityscape
- **Amenity:** Setting minimum space standards for new homes, ensuring new developments fit well with existing neighbourhoods and don't negatively impact the quality of life of existing residents or future occupiers (e.g. via overlooking), and ensuring residents have access to adequate outdoor amenity space, all of which is important for mental and physical health and wellbeing
- **Sustainability:** Making homes environmentally friendly (e.g. sufficient heating and cooling, energy and water efficiency) and directing them to locations which are accessible and have the necessary services nearby to reduce the need for long car trips and encourage more walking and cycling

These principles align with Southampton City Council's commitment to becoming a net zero council by 2030, and the wider ambition for Southampton to become a net zero city by 2035. New homes will play a vital role in achieving these goals by reducing energy demand, supporting active travel, and integrating low-carbon technologies.

Nationally, the Government's proposed Future Homes Standard will require new homes to reduce carbon emissions by 75–80% compared to current standards — making them “zero carbon ready” and aligned with the UK's 2050 net zero target (Planning Portal).

Southampton will work proactively with developers and housing providers to deliver homes that meet these expectations. This will include:

- Encouraging high-performing building design and construction methods
- Using planning mechanisms to secure strong design and sustainability outcomes
- Supporting innovation and best practice through guidance and regulation

Key Point: Ensuring all new homes are well-designed, sustainable, and built to high standards to create safe, attractive, and long-lasting communities

Delivery of Affordable Housing¹⁸

Southampton faces a significant shortfall in affordable housing, with over 8,000 households currently on the housing register and demand continuing to outpace supply. Rising private rents, limited availability of family-sized homes, and the loss of council stock through Right to Buy have all contributed to growing pressure on the city's housing system.

Following an invitation to tender, the council awarded an Affordable Housing Framework (AHF) in 2024, specifically for the disposal of council-owned sites to selected Registered Providers (RPs) for the delivery of affordable housing. This was established to increase the amount of affordable housing being delivered in the city, and four RPs were selected to take forward development opportunities.

The current focus is on progressing plots earmarked for estate regeneration in Townhill Park, which were identified some years ago but have stalled for a variety of reasons. These include challenges around viability, site preparation, and tenant decanting. However, substantial progress is expected on a number of these plots within the lifetime of this strategy, including the completion of a significant number of affordable homes based on preliminary project programmes.

In parallel, the council continues to secure affordable housing through the planning system via Section 106 (s106) agreements. Delivery has been challenging for many years due to developers' routine use of viability submissions. However, late-stage viability reviews are now being

¹⁸ According to NPPF definition

incorporated into agreements, allowing for additional affordable housing contributions if a scheme's viability improves — though this is likely to be in the form of commuted sums rather than on-site provision due to the timing.

Work on the emerging Southampton City Vision Local Plan is progressing in line with the Local Development Scheme. Evidence is being commissioned to underpin future affordable housing contributions and inform the tenure split between rented and low-cost home ownership. This will also provide insight into the genuine affordability of Affordable Rent (AR) and the types of low-cost homeownership that best meet local needs.

This multi-pronged approach enables the council to:

- Unlock underused land for affordable housing
- Influence the type, tenure, and quality of homes delivered
- Work in partnership with trusted providers and developers
- Secure contributions through planning policy and negotiation

It also supports the council's wider regeneration ambitions, helping to revitalise neighbourhoods, reduce waiting lists, and improve health and wellbeing outcomes for residents.

Key point: *We are expanding access to affordable housing by working with partners, using our council-owned land, and securing new developments to meet the growing community needs.*

Maximise Private Renting Offer

Southampton's private rented sector (PRS) accounts for 29% of the city's households, making it a critical component of the housing system. Yet persistent challenges around affordability, stability, and quality continue to drive rising levels of homelessness, household debt, overcrowding, and health inequalities — particularly for families with children, older residents, and people with disabilities.

The 2023–24 Scrutiny Inquiry into Private Renting confirmed that these issues are especially pronounced in Southampton and called for the council to take a more assertive and proactive approach. Historically, enforcement powers have been used sparingly, but there is now a clear understanding that tackling poor housing conditions is essential to reducing waiting lists, preventing homelessness, and improving residents' health and wellbeing.

To address this, the council will:

- Expand enforcement activity and capacity, using the full range of legal tools to remove any financial benefit from non-compliance

- Increase prosecutions and penalties, including fines of up to £30,000, where appropriate
- Prioritise properties containing Category 1 hazards, which pose serious health and safety risks such as dangerous electrics or severe damp and mould
- Respond appropriately to Category 2 hazards, which are less urgent but still materially affect residents' wellbeing

These hazards are assessed through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and underpin the new Decent Homes Standard introduced in the Renters' Rights Act, which strengthens the council's powers and responsibilities in the private rented sector.

To ensure that enforcement is evidence-based and targeted, the council will conduct a city-wide stock condition survey to identify high-need areas. This will support the rollout of:

- Additional HMO licensing schemes
- Exploration of selective licensing in parts of the city with high concentrations of poor-quality housing
- Protocols with housing associations to monitor and improve stock conditions
- A working relationship with the Private Rented Sector Ombudsman to support tenant complaints and resolution

Alongside enforcement, the council is committed to building trust and collaboration:

- A Landlords Forum has been established to foster mutual understanding and encourage responsible practices
- The council will engage directly with tenants and their representative organisations to better understand lived experiences and inform policy development

This renewed focus on the private rented sector is grounded in a commitment to equity, dignity, and public health. Improving standards in rented homes is not only a housing priority — it is an essential part of safeguarding wellbeing, particularly for vulnerable residents who face the greatest risk from unsafe conditions.

Key point: We aim to improve standards in private rented homes by enforcing regulations, expanding licensing schemes, and holding landlords accountable to ensure safe and high-quality housing for residents

Our Plan

Priority 2: Increasing Quality Homes in the City		
Our aims	Housing Supply	Quality of New Build Homes
What does success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) to inform emerging planning policy. Completion and adoption of the Southampton City Vision Local Plan, in accordance with statutory requirements, including policies to optimise housing delivery and ensure an appropriate mix of types and tenures which have been informed by appropriate evidence. Increased delivery of affordable housing, meeting diverse community needs and reducing housing poverty. Completion and publication of the Council's new Growth and Delivery Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress towards the aspiration for all new housing delivered in the city to meet national space standards and be net-zero in relation to carbon emissions Sustainable communities with more energy and water-efficient homes, reducing wasted heat and water as well as decreasing bills. Access to affordable and sustainable energy sources Integration of the natural environment into residential developments to provide healthy and pleasant places to live Homes that are either accessible and adaptable or suitable for wheelchair users
What are our priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and addressing current and future housing needs by size, type, and tenure. Increasing the delivery of Council homes and enabling the delivery of affordable housing by Registered Providers (RPs) to reduce waiting lists and support vulnerable groups Completion and adoption of the Southampton City Vision Local Plan, which will include site allocations that will contribute towards meeting the Council's housing target and ensure an appropriate mix of types and tenures to meet local needs. Delivery of the Council's new Growth and Delivery Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering high-quality new homes whilst trying to meet the housing target we have been set by Government All council homes to meet Southampton Energy Guidance All private and social-developer-led schemes to be delivered to the same standards or better Improving integration of green Infrastructure and landscaping to sites in order to promote biodiversity and reduce flood risk
How are we going to do it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning consultants to produce the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA), with collaboration across the Council, with stakeholders and other local authorities. Aligning housing policies and strategy in the emerging Southampton City Vision Local Plan and Growth and Delivery Plan with wider Council aims and objectives, such as those relating to affordability and equality. Engaging with landowners, developers, residents, and voluntary groups to shape inclusive housing policies/strategies/developments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New design-related policies to be adopted as part of the Southampton City Vision Local plan Explore opportunities to make the best use of the city's assets to enable innovative heat networks and solutions and local energy generation Utilise in-house Passivhaus expertise to provide RSH providers with guidance to enable highly energy efficient new homes Expansion of Green Space Factor for the whole city

	Working with stakeholders across the city and sub-regions to ignite housing delivery	
What difference does this make?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased supply of homes which meet the needs of current and future residents and provide for a range of tenures, sizes, and types. ▪ Lower poverty rates and improved quality of life through access to affordable, well-designed homes. ▪ Certainty for developers and communities regarding new development. ▪ A robust, evidence-led approach to the provision of new and affordable housing that supports economic growth and sustainability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Progress towards Southampton Net Zero City 2035 ambitions. ▪ More sustainable, appropriately sized homes, with green settings which will help with reducing fuel poverty rates, water consumption and bills, as well as improved health and wellbeing

Our Plan

Priority 2: Increasing Quality Homes in the City		
Our aims	Delivering Affordable Homes	Maximise Private Renting Offer
What does success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased numbers of affordable homes delivered by Registered Providers (RPs) Delivery of s106 affordable housing in line with the Southampton City Vision Local Plan policies once adopted Schemes delivered which assist the council in making better use of its existing stock A healthy and continuous pipeline of development for future years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A well-managed sector that provides safe and suitable accommodation for Southampton tenants and meets the new decent homes standard HMOs and other private rented properties meet safety and amenities standards Landlords are held accountable for poor performance, and tenants feel secure in their homes All high-rise buildings are safe and free from dangerous cladding materials
What are our priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help address housing needs in the city and assist as many applicants on our housing register as possible Deliver a variety of accommodation types and tenures to meet diverse needs, including M4(3) wheelchair-user homes and extra care/ supported living options Progress regeneration projects in Townhill Park to create more affordable homes Increase the supply of temporary homeless accommodation to reduce pressures on emergency housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the safety & conditions of all private rented properties, HMOs & high-rise residential buildings in the city Increasing landlord and letting agent compliance with regulations & safety standards and ensuring properties meet the new decent homes standard & energy efficiency standards Conducting a city-wide stock condition survey to assess housing conditions Reducing the number of empty private residential properties in the city
How are we going to do it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen partnerships with existing and new Registered Providers (RPs) to expand affordable housing delivery Advocate for affordable housing prioritisation within council initiatives and decision-making processes Fully utilise available resources like council-owned land, Right to Buy receipts, and Section 106 monies, and maximise investment in the city by RPs themselves and through RP allocation/use of Homes England grant Keep the effectiveness of the Affordable Housing Framework under continuous review (both in terms of RP interest & performance and in terms of making improvements to our mini-tendering process) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a Private Rented Sector Strategy that aligns with the Renters Rights Act & an Empty Residential Property plan to actively address long term empty homes in the city. Strengthen proactive enforcement through licensing schemes, exploring the introduction of Selective Licensing, and expanding enforcement capacity through staff training, apprenticeships, enforcement targets, seeking out new funding initiatives and , increasing the use of financial penalties of up to £30,000 or prosecuting offenders Proactively using the full range of existing and new enforcement powers to improve compliance with housing safety and

		<p>conditions standards, HMO licensing schemes, energy efficiency standards, and protect the rights of tenants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide information and support to tenants to enable them to be more aware of their rights
What difference does this make?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the supply of affordable housing, addressing the needs of residents on lower incomes who cannot access market housing ▪ Reduce waiting lists for residents who need affordable homes and ensure vulnerable groups find suitable accommodations ▪ Improve residents' quality of life with greater physical and mental well-being through secure housing solutions ▪ Foster inclusive and thriving communities where people can live independently in safe, affordable homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raised safety, fire & amenity standards result in a safer, healthier private rental sector with fewer hazardous homes. ▪ Improved living conditions, leads to better health outcomes for tenants, ▪ Greater community stability by reducing poor-quality housing and tenant turnover ▪ Working with partners on reducing fuel poverty & increasing energy efficiency helps the private rented stocks to meet the minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) & helps provide healthier homes.

Priority 3: Supporting Strong and Resilient Communities

Strategic Aim and Context

Preventing Homelessness

Homelessness remains a pressing issue in Southampton, impacting individuals and families due to financial hardship, complex needs, relationship breakdowns, and limited access to affordable housing. The Council is committed to tackling this challenge by ensuring secure, stable, and high-quality homes are accessible to all. Our Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024–2029 adopts a comprehensive prevention model, focusing on early intervention, expanding housing options, improving support services, and strengthening partnerships.

Southampton has one of the highest homelessness rates in the country — 10.4 households per 1,000 were assessed as homeless in 2021/22, compared to the national average of 6.1 per 1,000 (Strategic Assessment). In late 2024, 603 homeless households with children were recorded locally. The most common reason for homelessness is family or friends no longer able to accommodate, accounting for 37.8% of cases — far above the national rate of 25.5% (Homelessness Strategy).

Factors contributing to housing instability include rising living costs, employment insecurity, and welfare changes. These push many households toward crisis. Mental health challenges, substance use disorder, and domestic abuse further complicate pathways to secure housing. Relationship breakdowns — particularly eviction from shared accommodation — are frequent triggers. Meanwhile, a shortage of affordable homes and the complexity of navigating support systems leave some residents unable to access timely help. Southampton ranks as the 55th most deprived local authority out of 317 in England¹⁹.

The Council continues to invest in services that support those most at risk. While existing programmes help contain homelessness, demand is rising. By strengthening targeted support, we aim to reduce rough sleeping and bolster early-stage prevention.

Early intervention is central to our approach. Tailored housing advice, financial assistance, tenancy sustainment, and mediation services help households remain in their homes. Stronger landlord partnerships reduce the risk of unfair eviction, while employment and skills programmes promote long-term financial stability.

Improving access to social and affordable housing is vital. We are increasing supply by bringing empty homes back into use, supporting sustainable new developments, and enhancing temporary accommodation. Nationally, 131,140 households were living in temporary accommodation in early 2025 — a record high that includes 169,050 children (UK Government, Homeless Link).

¹⁹ Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC), Indices of Deprivation (IoD), 2019

Clear pathways from temporary to permanent homes are being introduced, alongside options that support independent living for individuals with complex needs.

We are also expanding support services. Improvements to housing advice access, mental health and substance recovery investment, and cross-sector coordination are underway. Outreach initiatives connect rough sleepers and those in unstable housing to timely support, while multi-agency partnerships deliver integrated care. Nationally, there has been an 83% increase in people with mental health needs accessing homelessness services (Homeless Link) — a trend we're responding to locally through enhanced support networks.

Rough sleeping remains an urgent concern. Using data-led identification, we are increasing access to safe accommodation and coordinating care across agencies. In autumn 2024, 4,667 people were estimated to be sleeping rough in England — a 20% increase on the previous year²⁰.

Affordable housing plays a critical role in preventing homelessness. The Council is investing in energy-efficient new builds, reactivating unused homes, and prioritising reduced energy costs for residents. In line with the UK's net zero target for 2050, Southampton is working to achieve net zero by 2035 — embedding sustainability across future housing developments (Southampton 2035 City Plan).

Transparency and accountability guide our efforts. Annual progress reporting, resident feedback, and ongoing strategy refinement will ensure continued impact. By embedding these priorities throughout the Housing Strategy, we are laying the foundation for a fairer, more resilient Southampton.

Key point: *By providing early support and expanding housing options to prevent homelessness, this ensures stability, and help residents to access secure, long-term homes.*

Housing as a Building Block of Health

Housing is a critical building block of health. A safe, stable, and well-maintained home provides the foundation for physical and mental wellbeing. In Southampton, we recognise that poor housing conditions — including overcrowding, damp, cold, and insecurity — contribute to avoidable illness, health inequalities, and reduced life expectancy. Our Housing Strategy embeds health promotion throughout housing delivery, aligning with the Council's broader goals for inclusive growth and improved community outcomes.

Nationally, **3.7 million homes** in England are classed as non-decent, with hazards such as mould, poor insulation, and unsafe electrical systems costing the NHS an estimated **£1.1 billion annually** (Health Foundation). In Southampton, many residents live in older housing stock that fails to meet modern standards, exacerbating respiratory conditions, mental health challenges, and fuel poverty. The tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak due to mould exposure underscores the urgency of addressing housing-related health risks (Health Foundation).

²⁰ [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

Overcrowding is rising, particularly in the private and social rented sectors. In 2022/23, **8% of social rented households** and **5% of private rented households** in England were overcrowded — limiting privacy, increasing stress, and affecting child development (Health Foundation). In Southampton, affordability pressures and limited supply of larger homes contribute to this trend, particularly among families with children and multi-generational households.

Housing affordability directly impacts health. Households spending a high proportion of income on rent or mortgage costs face increased stress and have less money available to access nutritious food and take part in social activities. In 2019/20, **26% of low-income households** spent more than a third of their income on housing, compared to just **3%** of high-income households (Health Foundation). This disparity drives health inequalities and undermines long-term wellbeing.

The Council is committed to improving housing quality and accessibility. We are working to apply the **Decent Homes Standard** across all tenures, including the private rented sector, and to ensure homes meet modern safety, repair, and thermal comfort criteria (Health Foundation). This includes retrofitting older properties, enhancing energy efficiency, and reducing exposure to cold and damp.

We are also embedding health equity into housing development. New homes are being designed to support ageing in place, disability access, and mental wellbeing — with features such as natural light, green space, and community connectivity. The Council's commitment to **net zero by 2035** ensures that future housing will be both sustainable and health-promoting (Southampton 2035 City Plan).

Cross-sector partnerships are central to our approach. We are working with NHS providers, public health teams, and voluntary organisations to align housing delivery with health priorities. Initiatives such as social prescribing, community hubs, and integrated care pathways are being expanded to support residents in vulnerable housing situations (NHS England).

The Council also supports the **Healthy Homes Principles**, which advocate for housing that promotes safety, affordability, energy efficiency, and access to essential services (New Statesman). These principles are being embedded into planning policies and regeneration projects to ensure long-term health benefits for residents.

Key point: *By improving housing quality, affordability, and accessibility, we are tackling health inequalities and creating homes that support physical and mental wellbeing across all life stages.*

Enabling Independence

We are dedicated to empowering residents to live independently in safe, accessible housing that meets individual needs. This involves making the best use of existing housing stock while developing new provisions tailored to diverse needs. Housing with care allows individuals to maintain their independence while benefiting from on-site support — ranging from 24/7 care to flexible assistance delivered at key times. By focusing on inclusive and adaptable housing solutions, the Council ensures residents have access to environments that promote well-being and resilience.

The Council is increasing housing options for adults with learning disabilities, mental health conditions, and multiple complex needs. In February 2025, 2,548 residents were engaged with long-term adult social care services, with further growth expected as the city's population increases by 7.5% by 2030²¹. Supported living arrangements — including shared houses and flats — are being expanded to reduce reliance on residential care and enable individuals to lead fulfilling lives.

We work closely with housing providers, developers, and care partners to ensure housing solutions are practical, inclusive, and future-focused.

To help residents live independently, we will:

- Provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding for essential adaptations such as stairlifts, ramps, and bathroom modifications (Southampton City Council)
- Utilise telecare and sensor-based technologies to support independent living (Southampton Housing Adaptations Team)
- Align with the Better Care Fund to promote joined-up housing, health, and social care services (NHS England)
- Provide access to employment support and welfare rights advice to increase financial independence (Southampton City Council)

Key point: *By providing accessible and adaptable housing, we are supporting residents to live independently with the right care, facilities, and community support.*

Enhancing Neighbourhood

Neighbourhoods shape how people live, connect, and feel a sense of belonging. The Council is committed to creating places that are safe, inclusive, and full of opportunity — where residents, businesses, and services work together to build stronger communities.

We work with residents and partners to shape neighbourhoods in ways that reflect their distinct identities, priorities, and potential. This means investing in local environments, tailoring services, and strengthening community networks to support long-term resilience and pride.

Our priorities include:

- Strengthening community engagement through ward-level forums, Police and Community Together (PACT) meetings, and “Love Where You Live” events
- Enhancing neighbourhood identity through inclusive design, cultural initiatives, and improved green infrastructure
- Reducing anti-social behaviour through early intervention, community-led safety planning, and targeted enforcement
- Improving environmental quality by addressing waste, supporting hygiene, and encouraging biodiversity

²¹ Census 2021

Environmental health plays a central role in this approach. In 2023/24, the Council recorded **10,948 fly-tipping incidents** — the highest in Hampshire and 11th highest nationally. Most cases occurred on council-owned land and footpaths, with household waste being the most common. Enforcement efforts include mobile CCTV, public reporting channels, and fines of up to **£50,000**. The long-term response focuses on prevention — through education, improved infrastructure, and partnership working with landlords and businesses.

Pest control remains a priority, with a **30% increase in rat-related callouts** in 2024 and over **£513,000** invested in treatment services. The Council is expanding digital reporting tools, promoting hygiene awareness, and targeting interventions in areas most affected to reduce health risks and improve living conditions.

Key point: We aim to create cleaner, safer and more connected communities by tackling problems like anti-social behaviour, and fly-tipping while strengthening community engagement.

Our Plan

Priority 3: Supporting Strong and Resilient Communities		
Our aims	Preventing Homelessness	Housing as a Building Block of Health
What does success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A proactive and early intervention approach that prevents people from becoming homeless in the first place ▪ Swift and effective support for individuals already experiencing homelessness, including rough sleepers, ensuring they can transition to stable housing when deemed appropriate to do so. ▪ Strengthened collaborative partnerships across agencies and organisations to deliver coordinated and seamless support systems for those at risk of homelessness ▪ Increased access to sustainable housing solutions, addressing the needs of vulnerable populations and reducing homelessness rates citywide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better housing has led to an improvement in health outcomes and a reduction in health inequalities ▪ Housing supports residents to live healthier throughout their lifetime and is appropriate for meeting their changing health needs ▪ Enhanced community wellbeing through the availability of warm, safe, and suitable homes for all ▪ A measurable improvement in key health indicators so Southampton can meet, and ultimately exceed, national and regional averages
What are our priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on prevention by implementing systems that identify and support individuals at risk of homelessness before they lose housing ▪ Deliver intervention measures that provide immediate assistance to those experiencing homelessness, ensuring pathways into secure accommodation ▪ Build and enhance partnerships with voluntary organizations, housing providers, and other stakeholders to create a unified approach to tackling homelessness ▪ Expand and diversify housing options, such as temporary shelters and permanent accommodations, to meet varying needs effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southampton homes are warm, safe and free of mould, damp, physical hazards and indoor pollutants ▪ There are enough homes, with specialist provision where required, to meet the health needs of the city's current and future population ▪ Homes are part of wider healthy neighbourhoods that connect residents with communities, services, and places of work and learning ▪ Taking a 'Health in All Policies' approach that integrates housing improvements with wider health objectives to enable a comprehensive approach to reducing health inequalities

How are we going to do it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish the Homelessness Prevention Board to oversee and coordinate efforts across the city ▪ Develop and implement detailed action plans focused on early identification of risks, rapid intervention, and long-term housing solutions ▪ Strengthening partnerships with local agencies and stakeholders to pool resources and expertise for a more robust response ▪ Promote and increase access to temporary support services, advice centres, and accommodations tailored to individual needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage and support those involved in housing to deliver healthier homes, including by providing responses to relevant planning applications ▪ Combine an evidence-led approach and the voices of residents and partners to develop interventions that bring about the maximum possible health gain ▪ Learn and share best practices locally and nationally to ensure continuous progress and improvement ▪ Implement a process of Health Impact Assessment for large-scale housing development including the preparation of guidance for developers
What difference does this make?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vulnerable residents will experience greater stability, reducing the impact of homelessness on families and individuals ▪ Homelessness rates will decrease through proactive measures and enhanced housing solutions that address the root causes ▪ Improved quality of life for residents as they gain access to secure, stable housing and tailored support services ▪ Stronger, more resilient communities where individuals are supported to overcome housing challenges and live independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key indicators of health, such as life expectancy, will improve and the gap with the national and regional averages will narrow ▪ Residents' health needs can be better met in their own homes reducing the time that may otherwise be spent in institutional care settings ▪ Pressure on health and social care services will be alleviated as housing is more effective in addressing residents' health needs ▪ Southampton will become a model for integrating housing and health policies, creating stronger, healthier communities

Our Plan

Priority 3: Supporting Strong and Resilient Communities		
Our aims	Enabling Independence	Enhancing Neighbourhoods
What does success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults with learning disabilities and mental health needs have access to secure, well-managed, and affordable housing that supports their independence Strong partnerships with housing developers, landlords, and care providers ensure a steady supply of homes that meet diverse needs, including those requiring specialised accommodations Increased availability of supported living placements each year for both adults with learning disabilities and mental health needs Reduction in residential care placements and a shift toward less restrictive, supported living environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents feel safe and proud of the neighbourhoods they live in Working collaboratively with internal and external partners to ensure neighbourhoods are safe, vibrant and somewhere to be proud of living with good services on offer in their neighbourhoods Reducing ASB in neighbourhoods and increasing reporting of issues. March 2024 – Feb 2025 saw 3055 reported ASB incidents according to Southampton data observatory Reduction of reports regarding homelessness and drug paraphernalia found
What are our priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand supported living options for adults with learning disabilities and those with mental health needs, addressing specific needs such as autism, challenging behaviour, and complex health conditions Develop a mixed portfolio of housing, including shared houses and flat complexes, with features such as communal areas, accessible facilities, and spaces for support staff Implement individual housing needs assessments during transition planning from children to adult services, ensuring tailored support for young people with disabilities Increase allocations from Southampton's housing stock and Housing Associations' properties to adults requiring supported living arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing ASB in the city by identifying issues and solutions to reduce these Reducing homelessness in the city which will lead to reducing abandoned items and reducing the recurring issues of the ABS related to homelessness Empowering neighbourhoods to be part of the solution by engaging in consultations / events and with other organisations to achieve a better neighbourhood Increasing the number of residents attending Police and Community together meetings
How are we going to do it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work collaboratively with housing developers, associations, and care providers to design and deliver new housing provisions aligned with priority needs, including specialised accommodation like wet rooms, hoists, and wheelchair-accessible facilities Incorporate the Inclusive Lives framework to establish a core-and-cluster model of supported living care providers based on local geography Leverage Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and other funding sources to implement housing adaptations and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively promote and increase attendance at the Police and Community Together meetings (PACT), allowing for residents to raise issues and concerns with Police and other Council staff where required. These will be in every ward and will be at least quarterly Deliver Love Where You Live events, with community organisations to identify the needs of the neighbourhood and to create an action plan suitable for the neighbourhood and working with the community to achieve this

	<p>ensure accessibility across private and council-owned homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize housing needs assessments to forecast future demand and align resources effectively for adults with learning disabilities and mental health needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work closer with the Police and other organisations and internal teams to identify areas that require a multi-disciplinary approach including monthly Partnership Action Group meetings for each area of the city Actively work with the Prevention strategy and to ensure residents feel listened too about the needs in their neighbourhoods. This will be ensuring consultations are done and we will feedback to the community
What difference does this make?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents will benefit from tailored housing solutions, allowing them to live independently while having access to care and support as needed Adults with learning disabilities and mental health needs will experience improved long-term outcomes, including better access to education, employment, and community participation Families of vulnerable individuals will have greater peace of mind, knowing their loved ones are safe, supported, and living fulfilling lives. The Council will achieve cost efficiencies by reducing reliance on residential care and focusing on supported living options that empower independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents feel part of the solution and can see we are listening and respecting their needs in each neighbourhood Reducing ASB in our neighbourhoods, fostering a safer neighbourhood where people are proud of where they live Neighbourhoods where people want to live Community cohesion, and community pride

Delivering our strategy

Southampton City Council's approach to delivering its housing strategy is built on collaboration, accountability, and meaningful community engagement. We will continue working closely with housing providers and key partners to ensure that both new and existing homes meet the diverse needs of Southampton's residents. Our housing improvement work is driven by our Housing Improvement Board, our Housing Advisory Panel and is accountable to the Cabinet, the Council and newly established Housing Scrutiny Panel, which plays a vital role in monitoring progress, driving service enhancements, and working with Housing Regulators to address current challenges. These boards provide essential oversight, ensuring that our housing services remain transparent, effective, and aligned with national standards.

A core priority is tenant involvement, ensuring that residents have a direct voice in shaping services. Through the Scrutiny Panel, tenants will actively assess landlord services, helping to drive improvements and ensure value for money. Community engagement will be central to our efforts, allowing residents to influence neighbourhood developments and ensuring housing remains inclusive and responsive to local needs.

To maintain transparency and accountability, we will publish regular reports detailing progress against key issues such as the Decent Homes Standard and tenant complaints. Additionally, the housing strategy will be formally presented to Full Council, with an annual progress report ensuring continued oversight and commitment to delivery.

We recognise the importance of strong partnerships in achieving our housing goals. We will continue working with developers, contractors, and the police to ensure that housing developments are safe, sustainable, and aligned with community needs. It is essential that all contractors and council staff understand their role in delivering high-quality housing services on behalf of Southampton's residents.

Link in with existing plans and strategies.

- **Sustainability strategy**
- [Appendix 1 - Allocations Policy.pdf](#)
- Adaptation Policy (awaiting approval)
- **Southampton Renaissance Vision**
- **Health and Wellbeing Strategy (awaiting approval)**
- [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029](#)
- [Southampton Renaissance Prospectus - Southampton Renaissance](#)
- Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy (awaiting approval)
- **Southampton Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2023-2028**
- <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/adult-social-care/care-info-professionals/the-care-act/market-position-statement/>

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Affordable Housing	Housing let at below-market rents or sold at below-market prices, including social rent, affordable rent, and shared ownership.
Decent Homes Standard	Government standard for housing conditions including health, safety, and energy performance.
EPC (Energy Performance Certificate)	A rating that shows how energy efficient a home is. 'C' is the minimum target for council homes.
HENA	Housing and Economic Needs Assessment – evidence base for determining housing and economic needs.
PRS (Private Rented Sector)	Homes rented from private landlords (not councils or housing associations).
Section 106	A legal agreement that allows councils to secure developer contributions, including affordable housing.
Supported Housing	Housing that includes care, support, or supervision to help people live independently.
Void Property	A council home that is empty between tenancies.
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	Government funding to adapt homes for people with disabilities.

[END]