



ADUR & WORTHING  
COUNCILS

# **Housing and Homelessness Strategy for Adur & Worthing Councils**

**2025 - 2030**

**Consultation Version 1  
(for Joint Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee and public consultation)**

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- Making sure all our existing homes are safe, of good quality and are sustainable (they are affordable to run and have a low carbon footprint)
- Ensuring there is enough genuinely affordable housing
- Preventing homelessness and providing proactive early help for those that need it, with our partners and communities.
- People are healthy, resilient and resourceful. They can access the right help when they need it
- Providing our residents with the accessible services they need

## 5. Delivering the Strategy

# 1. Introduction

Everyone should have a home in which they feel comfortable and safe and that positively contributes to their health and wellbeing – it is a foundation for a good life, where communities can thrive and neighbourhoods can be safe and prosperous.

This strategy is being developed during a national crisis in housing, with extraordinary pressures on our communities and a diminished supply of truly affordable and social housing provision in Worthing Borough and Adur District. This is compounded by funding pressures on the public sector to support our residents, including Adur & Worthing Councils and also our health, social care and wellbeing partners for example West Sussex County Council, NHS and the community and voluntary sector. The strategy is being drafted as a new national government has come to power and their policy and strategy framework for public service funding and housing provision is at an early stage of formulation and agreement.

Within this context the draft housing strategy outlines the councils' proposed priorities for the next five years, it sets out our ambitions and the high level steps we will take to deliver them. Given the economic and political uncertainties, this strategy seeks to enable us to adapt our programme accordingly. The strategy will guide our approach and actions as councils in a number of housing related areas to help ensure our residents, communities and neighbourhoods develop and thrive. Good quality housing can also help to improve population health and wellbeing; this strategy therefore, is deliberately not just about buildings, but is about homes for people, communities and neighbourhoods and working in partnership with others to achieve this.

Whilst this is a strategy being developed and driven by the councils, this work will be shaped and delivered alongside our partners and communities.

The strategy is made up of two parts: **Part 1** sets out the high level strategic missions or priorities and **Part 2** will be made up of delivery plans for each mission or priority area, describing the actions that will be undertaken to achieve the priorities over the next five years.

The councils' corporate plan, 'Our Plan' sets out the council's purpose, which is to provide strong and lasting stewardship for both Adur and Worthing, so that all of our people and places can thrive. It includes our ways of working and priority areas of work to ensure our services, communities and places are more resilient and adaptable and that people are at the heart of decision making and service delivery. In the plan the councils make a commitment to ensuring, wherever possible, everyone has a safe, secure and sustainable home.

Both Adur and Worthing Councils are led by administrations that have pledged to be fair, green and local throughout all that they do. The election of the new council in Adur in May 2024 has strengthened and joined up the commitment between both councils and provides an opportunity to work together for the benefit of both communities. As councils for the community, the authorities have committed to listening to their residents to ensure their focus is on the issues that matter most to those who live, work, study and visit the area. As part of these commitments both councils have agreed a set of shared strategic priorities and these have been used to shape and direct the plans development, will guide the plan's consultation journey and will support its eventual delivery. The priorities are as follows:

- **A home you can call your own** - A key priority area is to address the significant shortage of housing available to residents, increasing the supply of affordable accommodation and addressing issues of homelessness and the costs and disruption associated with temporary accommodation. As part of this the councils are committed to developing proactive homelessness prevention and tenancy sustainment programmes. In addition they are committed to working with housebuilders, seeking to find creative ways to build more good-quality, sustainable homes for rent and first step accommodation for those at risk of becoming homeless. Adur District council will continue its focus on its under-utilised land to build new council homes for Adur residents in need of somewhere to live. At the same time, the council is committed to progressing delivery of its improvement plan to make sure all of its existing Adur Homes properties are safe, secure and of a good standard.
- **Being councils for the community** - By working closely with communities across Adur and Worthing and with partners, the councils have committed to reshaping their services, including housing, to make them more sustainable and accessible for those who need them, to ensure they can meet the needs of residents of today and tomorrow.
- **Fair, green and local** - The councils will develop blueprints for the future of Adur and Worthing town and village centres to make them more environmentally friendly and more inviting for residents, shoppers, visitors and workers. The councils will as part of this priority work with partners to improve the environment to try to make Adur and Worthing the fairest and greenest coastal areas in the country.
- **Regenerating our streets and spaces** - The councils have committed to working with partners to develop an inclusive economy that works for everyone, through community wealth-building principles. As part of this the council's will work to make the best use of every pound they have to spend into the local economy, developing procurement and commissioning strategies that build community wealth and a circular economy with anchor institutions.

The housing strategy will form the foundation of the next Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and provide a framework for more detailed housing plans, including the (Adur Homes) Improvement Plan agreed with the Housing Regulator and the Adur and Worthing Housing Allocations Policy. It connects to other major strategies and plans including our Local Plans and the priorities of the Adur and Worthing administrations described above.

The housing strategy is about more than council housing services and the provision of good and truly affordable housing. This is about how housing can be used to improve population health, shape our neighbourhoods and places and develop and deliver a shared long-term agenda with our residents, local partner organisations including the NHS, the community and voluntary sector, West Sussex County Council (WSCC), housing providers, developers and the wider community.

This strategy sets out the council's vision for housing in Adur and Worthing. The five Missions or priorities we have identified will help focus our efforts to do all we can to deliver accessible, genuinely affordable and decent homes for as many people as possible in Adur & Worthing.

The strategy outlines the councils' contribution to improving housing outcomes in Adur District and Worthing Borough, but it acknowledges the councils cannot achieve this on their own. The strategy is therefore also a call to action. To urge our communities and partners to work with us to ensure our residents have access to good quality, safe and sustainable homes.

## 2. Executive Summary - Strategy on a Page

Our vision is for all our residents to have access to good quality, safe and sustainable homes that positively contribute to their health and wellbeing, enabling them to live equitable, fulfilling lives and contribute to the future growth and sustainability of Adur and Worthing.

We will seek to achieve this through a focus on the following five strategic Housing Missions:

- Making sure all our existing homes are safe, of good quality and are sustainable (they are affordable to run and have a low carbon footprint)
- Ensuring there is enough genuinely affordable housing
- Preventing homelessness and providing proactive early help for those that need it, with our partners and communities.
- People are healthy, resilient and resourceful. They can access the right help when they need it
- Providing our residents with the accessible housing and homeless prevention services they need

These are the big ambitions and complex issues and by their nature the missions are bigger than the housing services we provide. Coupled with extraordinary pressures in relation to housing demand and supply, we need much more creative and longer-term solutions, focusing on prevention and building stronger collaboration between our teams, our partner organisations and our communities. This requires new ways of joint working and collaboration. In doing so, we stand to achieve better things for everyone, making what we have go further.

Our councils have identified three principles in Our Plan, to reshape how we work and continue to adapt as an organisation, to be able to provide more resilient services that are created with and by our staff, elected members, partners and communities. These principles, along with the councils' priorities, have guided the development of the strategy and will provide the framework for its implementation:

- **Resilience:** To move beyond efficiency to making the best of our collective resources. We will work with our teams and partners to build a more sustainable coalition that makes us greater than the sum of our parts. We will build a digital approach and make best use of our collective assets (people, money, buildings), capacity and capabilities. This also means getting the basic foundations right through good systems, data and processes.

- **Adaptable:** To plan and deliver in ways that recognise and embrace ongoing change, using digital and systems, people and data to enable us to innovate and constantly meet the changing needs of our places and communities. Developing a digital approach that enables us to be more technologically intuitive and use our people to do brilliant person centred work.
- **Participative:** This principle is about putting people at the heart of decision-making and services. We will as part of this approach seek to involve people more closely in the design and provision of housing services. We will offer genuinely participatory ways for our teams and residents to be involved in decision - making and provide inclusive services by listening to underrepresented voices, creating equal access and meeting our equality duties.

### **3. Context for our strategy**

Since the last strategy was agreed there have been a number of changes to our context impacting on our residents and the provision and delivery of housing in Adur and Worthing, including the national housing crisis and significant changes to legislative and planning frameworks.

This section explores the context in which we are developing the strategy and the issues we are seeking to address. Information provided below includes data, feedback and lived experience gathered through the Homeless and Rough Sleeping Assessment carried out in 2023.

#### **The Housing Crisis**

Our communities are experiencing a significant housing crisis with those on low and or fixed incomes at the sharpest end. The acute shortage of housing, particularly genuinely affordable housing, is a significant driver for the crisis and has led to spiralling rents and house prices in both Adur and Worthing. Many young people and families on low to middle incomes struggle to afford to rent or buy a decent home. In part this is a result of the cost of living crisis driving up costs in every part of life for families and residents and the increased vulnerability of many, including mental and physical health, after the COVID pandemic. The severe lack of available affordable housing and rising demand is also raising costs in both the private rented sector and with house purchases, especially for first time buyers.

Our area features a variety of housing types, including large Victorian properties, many of which have been subdivided into flats, alongside more modern housing developments. These housing styles are often concentrated in specific wards, creating distinct neighbourhood profiles. A key challenge we face is the disproportionate concentration of supported accommodation in certain areas, as it is often commissioned into these wards rather than being evenly distributed. This clustering can create pressures on local services, strain community relations, and raise concerns about the balance between meeting housing needs and maintaining neighbourhood cohesion. As a result, locating new supported accommodation presents challenges, especially in terms of engaging with communities to ensure that development happens in a way that fosters inclusion and addresses local concerns.

The private rented sector is a vital part of the housing infrastructure in both Adur and Worthing and has the potential to help alleviate homelessness but many good private landlords are leaving the sector following regulatory and tax changes combined with rising interest rates and this is driving both rising rental costs and homelessness.



A small minority of landlords are exploiting the situation and are making considerable financial gain through the constraints of the market circumstance and the vulnerable situation of some of our residents. A further minority of landlords are also abusing the lack of available accommodation and choice by providing substandard accommodation that can often be detrimental to the health of the occupants, despite both central and local government striving to improve housing standards.

Benefits payments have not kept pace with these changes, for example, maximum Housing Benefit levels for residents who rent privately are set by the government's Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and these have failed to keep track of rising costs in rent. National research, conducted by YouGov on behalf of the Trussell Trust in early 2024, revealed that 12% claiming Universal Credit have been forced to use a food bank in the last month (Dec 23/Jan 24), and more than half (55%) ran out of food in the last month and couldn't afford more. Also, in the last three months, 22% of people claiming Universal Credit were unable to cook hot food as they couldn't afford to use their oven or other utilities. Half (52%) of people claiming Universal Credit are either behind on bills and credit commitments or are finding it a constant struggle to keep up with them. The impact of inadequate Universal Credit stretches even further, with one in four (26%) people missing an essential appointment, such as visiting the doctor or travelling to work, because they couldn't afford the cost of transport in the last three months. In the same period (42% had to skip meals to keep up with other essential costs like utilities or rent and 43% people reported being unable to keep their home warm in winter. Both Adur & Worthing Councils are part of a partnership with other councils to lobby on the unfairness of the current benefit systems.

In this context and through these policies overcrowding, evictions, rent arrears and homelessness are all on the rise and the costs to the councils in rehousing homeless residents, often into temporary accommodation, is placing significant burdens on council finances and displacing families in less than suitable locations, sometimes a distance from Adur and Worthing. Details of housing demand, temporary accommodation and pressures on the housing waiting lists are described in the Local Context: Housing Need, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping section later.

Both Adur and Worthing district councils as service providers have also had to deal with the impact of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis, impacting on both demand and the resources available to provide services. The impact of the costs of homelessness and temporary accommodation are very significant and this has led to increased financial pressures for both authorities, but especially Worthing. The two councils spent a combined £4.4m on temporary accommodation in 2023/24. This is forecast to increase to almost £5m in 2024/25. The pressures these costs put on the housing and wider council budgets is unprecedented and unsustainable, again especially in Worthing. These costs are projected to increase further in the next three years without significant changes in national policy and local service provision.

The broader historic policy landscape has exacerbated this situation further with a lack of appropriate government funding to invest in social rented homes; the dramatic reduction in the supply of genuinely affordable housing through policies such as the Right to Buy and the lack of effective regulation in the private rented sector.

In addition, social care providers have suffered from significant disinvestment at a local level as authorities face significant cuts to their settlement. These reductions are being accompanied by some social care providers having to raise the eligibility criteria for access to services in order to balance their books, excluding some vulnerable people with low level needs. This downward pressure on budgets is also being seen in the health service as budgets are increasingly under pressure through demand, inflation and limits to annual funding increases. The total impact is that access to services, that could prevent the need for acute care at high cost, is being made more difficult. The risk of greater numbers of vulnerable people being left without the valuable preventive and supportive services, which can help them to avoid crisis situations such as homelessness means that effective partnerships between housing and health services are more important than ever.

### **The Legislative Context**

Since our last housing strategy was agreed in 2020 there have been a number of major changes in national housing policy. In terms of legislation, the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) significantly changed our legal duties towards households facing homelessness and, following the end of the 'Everyone In' policy implemented during the pandemic to ensure no-one was left without a place to live, there is now an even greater emphasis on the prevention of homelessness. This strategy sets out our ongoing response to these and other related statutory requirements.

The continued rise in rough sleeping and homelessness, and concerns over the quality of rented homes, have informed further improvements in housing rights and standards. This has led to the introduction of new regulations like the Social Housing Regulation Act, which aims to improve the standards, safety, resident voice and landlord accountability.

The "Everyone In" policy referred to above demonstrated just what could be achieved with everyone striving towards a common aim. The initiative, launched in March 2020, succeeded in providing temporary accommodation to thousands of people who were sleeping rough or in unsafe conditions. It involved securing hotel rooms, hostels, and other forms of temporary housing. The accommodation often came with access to support services, including health care, substance abuse treatment, and mental health support. This holistic approach aimed to address some of the underlying issues contributing to homelessness.

For some individuals, the initiative provided a bridge to longer-term solutions, such as permanent housing or more stable forms of accommodation.

With the election of the new national government we await announcements regarding further policy and legislative changes. The main thrust of these announcements is to 'unlock' the planning system to address the housing crisis while delivering economic growth. It should be noted that these proposed changes very much focus on the delivery of homes with an emphasis on affordability.

Initial announcements include:

- **Changes to planning regulations and the implementation of local housing targets to accelerate development and the provision of social housing.** In general terms housing targets are set to increase through these proposals but it is important to note that the presumption in favour of sustainable development will be determined through the Local Plan process. Authorities will be able to justify housing requirement (target) figures on the basis of local need, opportunities and constraints on land and delivery.
- **Prioritisation of development on brownfield land and increasing housing density.** For both Adur and Worthing, the constrained geographies mean that the majority of development is already on brownfield land. There may be requirements, through the Local Plan process, to review housing densities for potential schemes and development sites.
- **Prioritisation of genuinely affordable homes, with a focus on the increased provision of social rented homes.** Both the Adur and Worthing Local Plans already specifically refer to the significant need for social rented homes and makes clear these are a priority for delivery. Changes to the Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) have also been proposed to ensure that it delivers more social housing from existing funding.
- **The Government proposes to introduce new mechanisms for cross-boundary strategic planning to address key spatial issues including meeting housing needs and delivering strategic infrastructure.** Both Adur & Worthing have worked with other authorities in West Sussex and Greater Brighton to develop Local Strategic Statement however, as yet this process has not been able to address the significant shortfalls in housing. The proposed approach may provide opportunities to influence decisions on appropriate geographies, allowing factors such as housing market areas, travel to work areas, functional economic areas and similar to be taken into account.
- **A review of the Right to Buy** is proposed including the discounts introduced in 2012 and to "increase protections" on newly built social housing.
- **The ending of no fault evictions** and actions to reduce homelessness.
- **Improvements to building safety standards.**
- **Increased powers for local authorities**, and an expectation to use them, to take action against criminal landlords.

The interventions announced so far in the housing market will be helpful in addressing some of the challenges faced in Adur and Worthing and the councils will need to develop a joined up position which cuts across housing needs and new homes that work for each council. The increased emphasis on social and affordable housing through the planning process is again helpful for both councils and their challenges and work will be required to ensure the economic viability of new developments. The renewed focus on strategic planning and also cooperation between councils to deliver ambitious targets is also helpful and could provide the councils with the opportunity to develop and promote a Sussex footprint and connect to emerging ambitions around enhancing sub regional decision making and the opportunities offered through devolution.

In addition to the above the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has announced plans to provide better care and support for veterans, care leavers and those fleeing domestic violence seeking access to housing by removing the requirements around local connection and residency tests. Other changes include bringing forward Awaab's Law to better tackle hazards such as damp and mould, new Competence and Conduct standards for housing staff and minimum energy efficiency standards for the social rented sector

In summary, we are working in a space with ever evolving and multi layered policy demands including focusing on planning delivery, housing affordability, sustainability and energy efficiency technological integration and data led outcomes. The action plans associated with our missions will be flexible to respond to these and other emerging policy and legislative changes.

## **Housing and Healthy Neighbourhoods**

Our homes and the neighbourhoods we live in are fundamental building blocks for our health and lay the foundations for our involvement in things like: education, employment and connecting with others. The conditions we live in can have a profound effect on health outcomes, with poorer living conditions increasing risks to health - for example damp, overcrowding, lack of heating and insecurity of tenure.

Local Authorities have responsibility for Public Health through the Social Care Act<sup>1</sup>; as councils therefore we will ensure that implications for the health and wellbeing of local residents is at the heart of the decisions we make, with the aim of improving the health of the population and reducing inequity. Evidence from a range of sources indicates that the quality and security of someone's home can have a significant impact on both their physical and mental health.

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<sup>1</sup> [Health & Social care Act \(2012\)](#)

Housing that is secure and accessible, that's set in pleasant and safe environments well connected to facilities and transport links makes a significant contribution to helping people to live healthy and active lives, and to remain living independently as long as possible. Addressing housing related health inequalities needs a systems approach that not only improves the quality of housing, security and affordability - but also the quality of the neighbourhoods where people live, including social cohesion, crime rates and transport infrastructure.

Through this strategy Adur & Worthing councils wish to support and extend collaborative working with partners to drive innovation in how health, social care and housing can deliver more personalised and cost effective services that give people the outcomes they want - good health and the opportunity to live well and successfully. Working together as partners in a system, housing and related support services can provide earlier intervention and help to prevent problems worsening and becoming a crisis. A collaborative, preventative approach can help to provide effective solutions and better outcomes - not only for the individuals and households concerned, but also significant savings for wider public services, such as health and social care.

As part of this the councils are committed to working with our NHS and other council and voluntary sector partners to consider the housing environment in which people live, to make sure that it supports and enables what health partners are aiming to achieve and doesn't undo what they are trying to achieve. For example, developing housing's role in the 'reablement' agenda, to ensure that people do not return to hospital because their housing places them at risk of falls, or repeat episodes of ill health.

We will work with all of our communities but will focus harder on those that experience poor health and wellbeing, especially those that have been hit hardest by the pandemic and those that have protected characteristics under the Equalities Duty. The risk of higher numbers of people who are vulnerable being unable to access preventive and supportive services, to help avoid their problems escalating to crisis, means that effective collaborative working between Housing and Health is more important than ever.

### **Our Collective Role**

Each council has a wide range of housing duties and responsibilities including the allocation and provision of social housing, the provision of housing advice and information, services aimed at preventing homelessness, and the development of new housing to meet local housing needs.

Whilst Adur and Worthing Councils share the same duties, the needs and assets for each local authority are quite different. In addition, Worthing Borough Council transferred its housing stock to Worthing Homes (a community-based Housing Association) in 1999 whilst Adur District Council continues to directly manage its own housing stock through its housing service called 'Adur Homes'.

As set out in the corporate plan, Our Plan, and the statement of priorities between the two councils, we believe these duties and responsibilities are shared (between the councils but also with our partners) and we have a collective responsibility, delivered through systems partnership, to achieve better housing outcomes for our residents. Through this strategy the councils are seeking to form a coalition of the willing, focusing on a shift to prevention and the use of our shared assets more widely.

In working this way the councils want to explore and trial new ways of working and solutions such as cooperative living, cohousing and 'homeshare' where two or more people who are not related share a home or apartment. We will seek to use information from lived experience, data and examples of best practice from elsewhere to direct and shape our work.

### **Adur Homes and Self Referral to the Regulator**

Adur Homes is Adur District Council's local authority housing service. Delivering housing and related support services in Adur for over 40 years, Adur Homes owns and manages over 3,000 properties and over 1,000 garages. Adur Homes also provide a Community Alarm service that helps over 1,500 customers to live independently in their own homes.

In terms of tenure:

- 76% of Adur homes are general needs properties for rent
- 9% are sheltered housing
- 16% are leaseholder
- Adur Homes owns 52% of social sector housing within the Adur District

On 22nd November 2022, following the death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale, the Regulator of Social Housing wrote to all registered providers requesting that they identify properties not meeting standards relating to decent homes and repair. The Regulator said that any registered providers not meeting these standards should 'self-refer' immediately.

In 2023 the then new Director for Communities undertook a diagnostic review of compliance within Adur Homes housing stock and this process identified a number of areas where Adur Homes was not compliant with required housing standards.

In consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Adur Homes and Customer Services, Adur District Council self-referred to the Housing Regulator on 24th February 2023.

In May 2023, Adur Council received formal notice from the Regulator confirming that the Council is in breach of two sections of the Home Standard. The Home Standard sets expectations for registered providers of social housing to provide tenants with quality accommodation, including the provision of decent homes, effective management of health and safety compliance and the provision of cost effective repairs and maintenance. In discussions subsequent to the self referral, the Regulator also indicated that Adur Homes performance against other standards including tenant participation and engagement were not optimal, and suggested that the response by the Council should be comprehensive and address all areas of underperformance.

In response to this the council has developed a comprehensive Improvement Plan and is making progress to address the areas of non compliance. Through the development of the action plan we have been able to better understand and diagnose our challenges, refocus our efforts on the priorities and are working purposefully to rebuild trust and confidence with our residents through improved delivery.

### **Housing Need, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping**

In November 2023 the councils commissioned Cordis Bright to undertake a Homeless and Rough Sleeping Assessment for Adur District and Worthing Borough. Information from this assessment has been used to inform and shape this Housing Strategy.

The full analysis of housing needs can be accessed in the accompanying documents on the website and summary of the findings are provided below. Where more up to date data is available since the publication of the assessment this has been provided below.

### **Housing landscape**

In terms of household tenure, home ownership levels in Adur, at 73%, were higher than the South East, at 67%, while Worthing more closely aligns with the South East at 69%. In both Adur and Worthing, the majority of housing is owned by the private sector, and there is no local authority owned housing in Worthing.

Median house prices increased by 41% in Adur and 39% in Worthing between 2013 and 2022, far exceeding income growth of 17%. Lower quartile house prices were over 10 times local earnings in both areas in 2022. The discrepancy between local wages and house prices highlights a significant barrier for households in Adur and

Worthing that are wanting to get on the property ladder. Young people are disproportionately impacted by the decrease in affordability. The increases in rent and housing costs makes accommodation increasingly out of reach. Supported housing can be an essential and life-enhancing option for young people leaving the care system or for adults with support needs. However, the lack of move-on options for people who are ready to live independently means they can become “stuck” in accommodation that they no longer need, which also results in longer waiting lists for the people who now need the support.

The median rental values between April 2022 and March 2023 average £1,100 per calendar month (pcm) in Adur, and £950 pcm in Worthing. Adur rates were above the South East average and notably above the national average of £825; Worthing rates were slightly below the South East average but were also markedly above the national average. In Adur and Worthing private rents between 2013/14 to 2022/23 have increased by 32%, more than the rate of increase for the region (25%) and nationally (28%). Figures published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) on the average rents in September 2024 demonstrate the shortfall tenants in the private rental sector face if they are on a low income and require assistance with paying their rent.

Monthly LHA rates for Brighton & Hove BRMA and ONS average rent Sept 24 (Includes Adur east of the River Adur)					
	1 Bedroom (Shared)	1 Bedroom (Self contained)	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4 Bedroom
LHA 2024	£585	£917.50	£1,196.69	£1,446.03	£1,994.50
ONS Average	£929	£929	£1,209	£1,501	£1,956

Monthly LHA rates for Worthing BRMA and ONS average rent Sept 24 (Includes Adur west of the River Adur)					
	1 Bedroom (Shared)	1 Bedroom (Self contained)	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4 Bedroom
LHA 2024	£443.78	£757.90	£947.40	£1,176.76	£1,460.98
ONS Average	N/A	£855	£1,141	£1,381	£1,895
Shortfall	N/A	£97.10	£193.60	£204.24	£434.02



In addition, in Adur, the different Broad Market rental areas make it more unaffordable to rent in Lancing, Sompting & Worthing than east of the river.

Housing development fell short of targets from 2012-2022 in Adur, with completions averaging 97 homes per year against a target of 177. In Worthing, completions averaged 312 versus a target of 200.

### **Demand for housing support**

Data which tracks both the number of households placed in temporary accommodation and the number of households on the waiting lists for social housing in Adur and Worthing over the last four years give a strong indication of the growing demand for housing and housing support.

The increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation and on the housing register are indicators of the range of difficulties facing our residents that have an impact on their ability to find and sustain suitable, affordable housing. From their modelling and analysis, the Cordis Bright assessment identified that there is a large unmet need for affordable housing, with approximately 1,440 households in Adur and 2,800 in Worthing living in unsuitable housing and unable to afford market options (such as home ownership or private rented accommodation) without assistance.

This means that many households in our area, both single people and families with children, are living in precarious or unstable housing, such as with family and friends, where there is a risk of arrangements breaking down and with households living with the threat of homelessness. Increasingly, working households are priced out of the private rental market resulting in them requiring the assistance of the councils when their accommodation arrangements break down or when they are served notice by their private landlord. Being unable to find their own alternative accommodation that is affordable, households are increasingly seeking the support of the councils which have a statutory duty to provide housing advice and assistance to anyone who finds themselves homeless or at risk of homelessness.

At the end of July 2024 there were almost 3,000 households on the waiting lists for social housing in Adur and Worthing (Adur 976 and Worthing 1,949). These figures have increased year on year from the beginning of April 2019 when there were approximately 1,900 households registered (Adur 608, Worthing 1,299). Applicants to a local authority's housing waiting list apply for a variety of reasons, such as homelessness, current accommodation becoming unsuitable due to changes in mobility and physical health, and the housing register provides invaluable insights into the growing demands for housing in our areas.

Overcrowding is also a key factor where families are increasing in size and children getting older. A household may be statutorily overcrowded for example where children of the opposite sex over the age of 10 have to share a room.

The increase in the number of households placed in temporary accommodation is another significant indicator of the level of housing difficulties faced by the residents of Adur and Worthing. At the end of July 2024 there were 537 households (Adur 127 and Worthing 410) in temporary accommodation, waiting on an offer of more permanent housing, either through the housing register or into supported housing or private sector housing. This includes 192 households with children placed in temporary accommodation (Adur 54, Worthing 138).

Out-of-area placements are increasingly used due to limited supply and availability of temporary accommodation locally, creating financial pressures and disrupting support networks. As well as being very costly for the councils, clients placed in out-of-area accommodation may lose their local support system, leading to disengagement with local services and networks and adding further pressure to households already experiencing hardship as a result of homelessness and living in temporary accommodation. Of all households temporarily housed by the Councils at the end of July 2024, around 300 (Adur 122 and Worthing 211) were housed outside their own local authority area; this includes 104 households with dependent children (Adur 50 and Worthing 54).

The number of households in temporary accommodation has increased sharply year on year and is projected to continue increasing. At the beginning of April 2019 there were 150 households placed in temporary accommodation by both Adur & Worthing councils (Adur 44, Worthing 106), increasing to 440 at the beginning of April 2023 (Adur 91, Worthing 349).

In Adur the demand for temporary accommodation has risen by 98% over a three year period. By March 2025 it is projected to increase by a further 42%. Nightly average cost of accommodation is £42 per night (September 23) and the shortfall between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) - the rate the council can claim - and market rents for a 2 bed property is £321.00. In Worthing, demand for Temporary Accommodation (TA) has risen rapidly, with the numbers of households in TA rising by 157% over a three year period. By March 2025 the council projects a further rise of 38%. Nightly average cost of accommodation is £49 per night (Sept 23). In Worthing the shortfall between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) - rate the council can claim - and market rents for a 2 bed property is £578.00.

The graphs below demonstrate the increase in the number of placements in temporary accommodation since February 2023 and the projected increase in placements to March 2025.



## **Information about people who were at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness in Adur and Worthing**

Information taken from the Cordis Bright assessment shows that in the 2022-23 financial year the most common household type owed a homelessness prevention duty in Adur were single female parents with dependent children (41%). In Worthing, the most common household type were single adult males (30%). For households owed a relief duty (homeless at the point of presenting to the council), more than half of household types were single adult males in Adur and Worthing at 41% and 30% respectively.

A number of priority groups have been identified through this research: (1) single adult men, (2) people aged under 35, (3) older people, (4) people experiencing hidden homelessness, and (5) asylum seekers and refugees.

Additionally, a number of needs of concern were identified. Mental health challenges and physical disability or ill health, health were the top two support needs in both areas. Other factors included financial challenges, substance and alcohol abuse and domestic abuse. The assessment also identified that it is becoming increasingly common for homeless people to have complex and multiple needs.

### **Drivers of homelessness**

In the assessment numerous short-term factors were recognised as drivers of homelessness, including the current financial climate, housing affordability, and limited support service capacity across housing and health/social care services. Longer-term drivers include the limited genuinely affordable housing supply, a mismatch between housing costs, local wage growth, Local Housing Allowance rates and service budget cuts.

### **Homelessness and Housing Provision**

All local authorities have a statutory duty to provide advice and information about housing and homelessness to anybody in the district or borough, even those that are not currently homeless or threatened with homelessness. If a person is threatened with homelessness, they are eligible for a prevention duty which requires an authority to 'take reasonable steps to help the applicant to ensure that accommodation does not cease to be available'. Local authorities are also required to support people experiencing homelessness, if they are satisfied that an applicant is homeless and eligible for assistance, under the relief duty which requires an authority to try to secure suitable accommodation for the homeless household. If this is not successful, the authority must assess whether a main housing duty is owed by deciding whether the household is in priority need and not intentionally homeless.

There are a range of housing options for applicants owed a relief or main duty, depending on a person's need. These include in-area, out-of-area, emergency, temporary, and supported accommodation and support to find more permanent accommodation.

The number of individuals sleeping rough is rising and this is the result of a number of factors described above. The closure of Turning Tides' provision at Lyndhurst Road in 2022 had a significant impact on the provision of supported accommodation available in Worthing. In addition, individuals sleeping rough are frequently unable to sustain temporary accommodation due to the complexity of their support needs, resulting in multiple temporary accommodation placements until accommodation options are exhausted.

The increasing numbers of single homeless people with complex needs means that there are fewer suitable housing options other than temporary accommodation, which often doesn't meet all of an individual's needs. There is also a very limited number of specialist supported accommodation to move them into from temporary accommodation and rough sleeping situations with long waiting lists resulting in people having to stay in unsupported temporary accommodation for long periods.

In recent years, demand for temporary accommodation in both Adur and Worthing has continued to grow and this demand is projected to continue to grow. This increasing demand for temporary accommodation is due to a number of events and factors including:

- The COVID-19 Pandemic changed the way we live and work including how services are delivered. The court system being effectively "closed" creating a significant backlog of potential cases of homelessness.
- The cost of living crisis which has seen more people on low income struggle to maintain their homes and rendering accommodation increasingly unaffordable for families and single people who need to find a new place to live if they become threatened with homelessness.
- An increase in private sector landlords leaving the market due to increased regulation of the sector through the Renters Reform Bill and increased interest rates impacting the financial returns

It is challenging to secure suitable temporary accommodation in both Adur and Worthing areas. We have been taking action to deliver additional temporary accommodation through new developments which take time to work through the planning and delivery stages and private market property buy backs to bolster the access to local accommodation.

As already highlighted within this document, a lack of supported or move on accommodation negatively affects people's journey to live independently. Two sites of supported accommodation are being developed in partnership with Turning Tides and Worthing Homes. The sites in Worthing will provide 21 accommodation units in addition to a service hub, clinical and counselling space in one location and a further 13 units of accommodation as move on from supported accommodation in another.

In this context we need to be creative to support the delivery of new genuinely affordable homes across both council areas. There is not a one size fits all approach in this area and we need to bolster our enabling work to really understand the blockers to on site delivery. We need to be helping to shape the size and type of homes being recommended for sites and building meaningful partnerships with local Registered Providers to understand their delivery aspirations and motivators. We also need to develop our work with Homes England to explore possibilities for partnership working, unlocking delivery blocks such as access to grants whilst we work with the Regulator for Social Housing.

### **Housing Complaints and Standards**

Between April 2023 and December 2023, the Councils received 179 complaints from residents; 153 (Adur - 46, Worthing - 107) which were about their housing conditions. Our councils are committed to continue to use their powers to drive up standards in the private rented sector by making landlords carry out improvements where these are necessary and by licensing Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

The Councils carried out 22 (Adur - 8, Worthing - 16) formal Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) inspections and served 44 formal notices (Adur - 10, Worthing - 34). About 11 enforcement notices have been revoked meaning that required actions have been completed by the landlords and the properties in question are now safer to use. The Councils served 12 Fixed Penalty Notices (Adur - 4, Worthing - 8), where owners have failed to maintain properties in a safe condition or have not complied with statutory notices.

In Adur and Worthing, there are now around 191 licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO). 21 of these are in Adur and 170 are in Worthing. The numbers of HMOs in Worthing reflect a number of factors including the makeup of our housing stock, particularly large houses in and around central Worthing that are suitable for conversion into smaller units of accommodation. The character of HMOs varies with some for young single professionals but many others are lower cost accommodation options for single people on low incomes. There are 13 new HMO properties awaiting HMO licences (Adur - 4, Worthing - 9). Three properties in Worthing are currently under active investigation as an unlicensed HMO.

## **Housing and Homelessness Support**

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Assessment identified a number of gaps in support including: limited temporary accommodation, transitional and step-down housing models, assistance for those with complex and multiple needs, as well as preventative early intervention initiatives.

The main pathways to access housing support include self-referral, duty to refer, and outreach services. However, these pathways were identified through the assessment as complex and too complicated for service users. Key access barriers include strained capacity across housing teams and partner agencies, inflexible service delivery models that exclude some groups, complex online forms, uncoordinated systems that fail to provide holistic assistance, restrictive eligibility thresholds, and generic pathways that do not address diverse needs. Those with complex intersecting issues face particular challenges securing adequate support.

The assessment also identified that while services at a high level have shared values and goals around supporting people with their housing needs and ending homelessness, different sectors and services have distinct approaches and views about how best to support these ambitions, which in practice results in separate ways of working, a lack of shared responsibility, and potential inefficiencies in providing support. There is not yet an integrated, multi-agency response to homelessness that recognises the complex nature of the issue; instead, many services operate in silos. However, the assessment did identify that there are positive examples of services working collaboratively together in Adur and Worthing which the wider system can learn from.

### **Priorities for the future**

Several recommendations were offered by stakeholders (housing providers, charities and health services) through the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Assessment process to enhance service responses and improve outcomes for people with housing support needs:

- Providing wrap-around, holistic support
- Increasing the focus on prevention
- Supplying housing with the right support
- Introducing specific pathways for different groups
- Co-locating services
- Introducing systemwide learning events and training days

Further details of these are provided in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Assessment report. These recommendations have been integrated into the suggested actions for the Draft Housing Strategy below.

## 4. Delivering Our Housing Missions

As described above, this strategy document presents an overview of the national and local housing policy context as well as painting a picture of the current housing situation in Adur District and Worthing Borough. Below we have set out, in more detail, the overarching objectives that will guide the whole strategy period, looking at the challenges and steps we wish to take to address the issues.

Detailed action plans are being developed for each mission area to describe the actions, outcomes, objectives and the times scales for delivering. A key outcome from the consultation process is to identify potential actions for these mission action plans.

### **Mission 1: Making sure all our existing homes are safe, of good quality and are sustainable (they are affordable to run and have a low carbon footprint).**

Many properties in Adur and Worthing, across all types of tenure, need work to ensure that they are accessible, suitable, safe and sustainable, now and in the future. The quality of our homes plays a key role in residents overall wellbeing and is a fundamental factor affecting people's health - both physical and mental (see Mission 4). Many properties are poorly maintained, failing to meet housing standards and some properties are coming to the end of their life and need to be replaced.

Adur Council manages approximately 2600 rented (of which approximately 270 are sheltered housing) and 400 leasehold properties and following a recent review and subsequent referral to the housing regulator the council is undertaking a far reaching improvement plan to improve the quality and safety of our homes. This work will help ensure the councils comply with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and meet the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standard on safety and quality. As part of this work we are improving services and increasing investment in our buildings including fire prevention, gas and electrical safety, asbestos, legionella and other health and safety risks such as damp and mould, to ensure safe, good quality council homes.

Registered providers of social housing in Adur and Worthing, including Worthing Homes, are subject to the same regulatory frameworks and will be reviewing their service standards and investment priorities accordingly.

The private rented sector in Adur and Worthing plays an increasingly significant role. In Adur just over 12% of households are in social rented accommodation whilst nearly 15% privately rent. In Worthing the role of the private rented sector is even more significant with just under 10% of households in the social rented sector and 22% in private rented accommodation.



While many landlords manage their priorities responsibly, there are concerns that some do not and basic housing standards are not being met. For this reason we need to improve the safety and quality of housing provision in this important part of housing provision. The councils have an active programme of housing quality inspections and issue notices for improvement where these are required.

Both Adur and Worthing Councils have declared climate emergencies and as part of this are committed to reducing the emission of greenhouse gases. Housing is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and we can therefore make significant improvements to our carbon footprint by improving the energy efficiency of our homes.

Reducing fuel use can help manage costs for households, helping to reduce the impacts of the cost of living crisis. We will therefore work to improve the energy efficiency of council homes and accommodation and, where possible, support other residential property owners to make improvements. We will as part of this work seek to secure funding from sources including the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS).

## **Our Plans:**

### **Improve the quality of our homes and neighbourhoods**

- Through the implementation of the Adur Homes Improvement Plan, provide an effective, efficient, and timely service for repairs and maintenance to Adur's homes, ensuring we continue to reduce the backlog of routine housing repairs and ensure all council-owned homes meet the national Decent Homes Standard. As described below, a key part of this work will be to improve resident involvement and engagement work to build trust and confidence in the service.
- We will develop and implement a new Housing Asset Management Strategy for Adur Homes to ensure we understand the condition of our homes and inform the delivery of our planned and major works programmes.
- We will deliver a range of programmed planned improvement works to address issues and priorities identified by the Housing Asset Management Strategy, ensuring Adur Homes are upgraded to regulatory standards within agreed timescales.
- In Worthing we will ensure the management of council owned and managed provision meets both the expectations of the Housing Regulator and the needs of our residents.
- In both Adur and Worthing we will also work with residents to transition to a more preventative model for maintaining and upgrading council owned and managed properties.

- In both Adur and Worthing we will continue to prioritise dealing with damp and mould and other health and wellbeing hazards in all our properties and the temporary accommodation we use.
- We will ensure that Adur & Worthing Councils comply with health and safety requirements in all our homes. As part of this we will continue to invest in building and fire safety to meet our new duties under the Building Safety Act 2022 and Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022.
- We will ensure Adur Worthing Councils will comply with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, other forthcoming legislation including Awaabs law, and meet the Regulator of Social Housing consumer standard including the Safety and Quality Standard.

### **Improve private rented sector housing standards**

- We will seek to improve the condition of Houses in Multiple Occupation through the existing mandatory licensing of larger properties.
- We will seek to secure funding to introduce selective licensing schemes in Worthing in key Wards - Heene, Selden and Central.
- Where we identify that improvements are required in a residential property, we will communicate this clearly with the landlord/owner. This may include the service of statutory notices, setting out work that must be completed within specific timescales.
- We will continue to invest in and support our Opening Doors service, aimed at derisking part of the housing market in order to open up supply for people in housing need:
  - Helping the councils save on temporary accommodation costs by supporting people in private rental accommodation where possible.
  - Helping people stay in private rental accommodation where they are already in but have fallen into more difficult circumstances.
  - Helping people move into private rental accommodation from either a social or from other parts of the private rental sector.
- We will prepare to respond to the expected changes to the Renters Reform Bill and other relevant legislation currently being developed by the new national government.

### **Increase sustainability and improve energy efficiency in our homes**

- We will improve the sustainability of our housing by reducing our carbon footprint, minimising waste, adapting to climate change and enhancing biodiversity. New development where possible will enhance biodiversity by providing new habitats and strengthening wildlife corridors.
- We will as part of this work seek to secure funding from sources including the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), the Warm Homes Social

Housing Fund and explore opportunities through the Biodiversity Net Gain Scheme and other opportunities to protect and enhance local nature value.

- We will advise residents on opportunities and measures that can be taken to tackle fuel and utility poverty and help reduce carbon emissions.
- We will continue to assist private landlords and homeowners in enhancing the energy performance of their properties by facilitating access to grant funding and directing them to resources for home energy efficiency advice and support.
- We undertake the required planning to resource and deliver the anticipated new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard.

## **Measuring our progress**

Each year we will update our progress using a range of possible indicators.

Suggested measures include:

- Proportion of Adur Homes properties that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard
- The proportion of non-emergency repairs completed within Adur Homes' target timescales.
- The proportion of emergency repairs completed within Adur Homes' target timescales.
- Proportion of Adur Homes properties for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out.
- Proportion of Adur Homes properties for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out.
- Proportion of Adur Homes properties for which all required asbestos management
- Proportion of Adur Homes properties for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out.
- Proportion of Adur Homes properties for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out.
- Percentage of Adur Homes tenants satisfied with the level with repairs
- Percentage of Adur Homes tenants satisfied with time taken to complete their most recent repair
- Percentage of Adur Homes tenants satisfied that their home is well maintained and safe to live in
- Percentage of Houses in Multiple Occupation where all special conditions have been met
- Number of fully licenced properties within mandatory, additional and selective licensing schemes
- Total number of Opening Doors tenancies
- Energy efficiency rating of council-owned homes

- Energy efficiency rating of Opening Doors tenancies

## **Mission 2: Ensuring there is enough genuinely affordable housing**

We recognise that access to truly affordable and suitable housing is very important to ensuring our residents and communities are able to live well and thrive. The financial burden on both councils in dealing with homelessness, often caused by a lack of genuinely affordable and suitable accommodation, poses a very significant risk to the councils' budgetary sustainability.

Both Adur and Worthing are relatively expensive places to live seeing significant recent rises in both the cost of purchasing and particularly the cost of private renting. The cost of living crisis (inflationary costs and rises in interest rates) has been so significant that even some 'affordable' homes are now beyond the reach of many. Data provided through our homelessness and housing allocations service shows that there is a particular shortage of family-sized homes in both Adur and Worthing.

Sandwiched between the sea and the South Down National Park, with Brighton to the East and Littlehampton to the West, available land for housing development is very limited. The requirements to ensure new housing has appropriate associated facilities such as schools, health services, open space and transport infrastructure is an additional challenge in this context. High land values and escalating building costs can affect the viability of development sites that continue to present barriers to accelerated development. In this context, the changes to planning regulations and the implementation of local housing targets to accelerate development and the provision of social housing currently being considered by central government will be challenging.

Our focus in this strategy is on providing more genuinely affordable housing either through our own new build programmes, partnership initiatives, developer contributions or registered providers. The council's are also interested in exploring other options for affordable housing provision including different construction methods, Community Land Trusts and self/custom build. In undertaking this work we will seek to improve the supply of housing or different housing options, from social rent to home ownership. In response to the changing needs of our residents we will also seek to provide homes that can be adapted to changing needs (for example ageing), as well as temporary and supported accommodation.

Reflecting the councils shared commitments our developments will be sustainable, keeping costs down and reducing impact on the environment.

We are currently working with Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) and the South Downs National Park Planning Authority (SDNPA) to carry out an update to the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. Through this work we aim to have a better understanding of need and be able to undertake the consultation and planning work to ensure appropriate provision is made for gypsy and traveller communities in Adur and Worthing.

## **Our Plans**

### **Increase the supply of genuinely affordable homes that meet the needs of our communities.**

- In the context of our Local Plans we will respond to the changes in planning regulations currently being considered by central government with regard to housing targets, use of S106 off site contributions and where possible accelerate development and the provision of genuinely affordable housing
- For Adur District this will focus on how we work with partners to enable delivery given the challenges faced in accessing appropriate funding for the delivery of new homes. In Worthing this will include a focus on the provision of temporary accommodation to meet local housing pressures both through in house delivery and maximising partnership opportunities.
- We will explore the benefits of developing a protocol, setting out how the council will enable developers and Registered Providers to develop and maximise the provision of genuinely affordable housing.
- We will as part of this seek to work with our partners in an enabling role to develop and provide a balanced mix of property sizes and tenures appropriate for the future needs of our residents and communities, including family housing, housing for single people and a range of adaptable and specialist homes to meet people's changing needs throughout their lives. Housing density for planned schemes, in line with national governments emergent guidance, will be reviewed as part of this work. An updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment will be undertaken to support this work.
- We will identify opportunities to work with our partners to develop new sites, including opportunities for developing and regenerating local authority owned land and assets. Our continued focus will be on developing sites on brownfield land in line with emergent national guidance.
- We will be innovative, including using modern methods of construction and building partnerships to design creative solutions where appropriate.
- We will explore a variety of other housing development options including Community Land Trusts and self/custom build
- In line with planning policy frameworks we will ensure the design of new homes are easy to maintain and manage and meet the highest environmental and sustainability standards.

- We will review our housing allocations policy to ensure that allocations are fair and give appropriate access to our housing. We will as part of this review our Transfer Incentive Scheme to reduce under-occupation and better match people to homes that really meet their needs.
- Work with property owners to bring long-term empty housing back into use, informed by for example by our Empty Homes Strategy and the new council tax charges for empty homes.
- Work to ensure long-term voids are brought back into use either through restoration or disposal.
- We will, where possible and appropriate, buy back homes lost through the right to buy schemes and consider the purchase of other properties where there is opportunity and a strong business case.
- We will work with local, regional and national partners to ensure there are new homes that meet the needs of residents. We will as part of this explore the benefits of the new mechanisms for cross-boundary strategic planning being proposed by national government to address issues linked to housing needs and delivering strategic infrastructure.
- We will work with our residents in both Adur and Worthing, through our neighbourhood management teams to ensure our neighbourhoods are well run, safe, clean and green.
- Complete the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and with partners undertake the consultation and planning work required to ensure appropriate provision is made for gypsy and traveller communities in Adur and Worthing.

## **Measuring our progress**

Each year we will update our progress using a range of possible indicators.

Suggested measures include:

- Number of additional genuinely affordable homes delivered by the councils (new build, acquisitions and conversions).
- Number of additional genuinely affordable homes delivered by Registered Providers.
- The percentage of genuinely affordable homes achieved in new housing developments.
- The number of accessible homes that meet the space standards of 'Lifetime Homes'.
- The numbers of people on the housing allocations waiting list.
- Satisfaction levels by Adur Homes residents with the care of their neighbourhood.

### **Mission 3: Preventing homelessness and providing proactive early help for those that need it, with our partners and communities.**

More and more of our residents are struggling to find, secure and sustain their housing. Driven by rising interest rates, shortages of housing provision and inflation, housing costs of every type have increased leading to an increase in the number of households at risk of losing their home or becoming homeless.

In responding to urgent housing needs and homelessness we aim to:

- **Make homelessness rare:** We will be proactive and do everything we can to make sure homelessness is prevented from happening in the first place
- **Make homelessness brief:** When homelessness does occur, we will make sure that people and families are quickly connected to housing and other support.
- **Make homelessness non-recurring:** Where homelessness cannot be prevented, we will find a long-term solution, so that people and families do not experience multiple experiences of homelessness.

We recognise that tackling and preventing homelessness requires ways of working that are trauma informed, person centred and collaborative. We will, as part of this approach, work with individuals, families, landlords, other council services and our partners, including the Integrated Care Team and Public Health, to prevent and alleviate homelessness. We have seen increasing demand for accommodation for people with urgent housing needs, including those fleeing domestic violence, vulnerable families and people with complex needs. We will ensure that in responding to urgent needs we will tailor our response to ensure fair access to support and services.

In the past three years the number of households living in temporary and emergency accommodation has risen to unprecedented levels. This type of accommodation is problematic for a number of reasons:

- It is extremely expensive and the costs being incurred by both councils are so significant they are impacting on the ability of both councils to deliver other services.
- The accommodations are often unsuitable, for example they are out of the area, and there is evidence that living in temporary accommodation can have a negative impact on children and vulnerable adults
- Housing problems are not equally distributed - driving health inequalities

The associated action plan for this mission being developed will set out our plans in more detail regarding our duties and priorities to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping. This strategy and action plan will inform the development of Adur & Worthing Councils' revised Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, aiming to address the needs of those who find themselves threatened with homelessness and those who are homeless and rough sleeping.

## **Our Plans:**

### **Improve our homelessness prevention services and reduce rough sleeping**

- We will review and deliver an improved homelessness prevention service that is focused on preventing homelessness and is person centred and trauma informed.
- We will use data and information from lived experience gathered through the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Assessment to ensure protection, and support services are targeted at groups who are particularly vulnerable, including women headed households, single adult males, people under 35, older people, asylum seekers and refugees, people with mental health issues, physical ill health and disability, those struggling with substance and alcohol misuse, those experiencing domestic violence and those with complex needs.
- We will work collaboratively with partners, including the NHS, West Sussex County Council and the Third Sector to form a genuine multi-agency response to homelessness that agrees shared ways of working and recognises the complex nature of the issues and reduces silo working. This work will include services for rough sleepers, strengthening prevention, supporting off street placements, addressing unmet needs and improving transition support out of supported accommodation.
- We will seek to improve accessibility of services and support pathways by simplifying application forms and better coordinating systems. As part of this we will explore the possibility of improving wrap-around support to help people navigate access to services. This could include the provision of specific roles that could advocate and coordinate services on behalf of clients, as seen in neighbouring areas, such as the My Team Around Me approach and the navigator model.
- A particular focus will be given to work with health and social services to ensure people with complex and multiple needs are better assisted and as part of this address waiting lists, assessment formats, and improving transition support between primary and secondary mental health services.
- In reviewing and improving service provision focus will be given to improving engagement and communication, ensuring services are accessible and



suitable for people with differing needs (for example ethnic minorities and neurodivergent people).

- Through our proactive service model and work on service redesign, we will encourage people to access our support services early as a key prevention approach.
- We will further invest in our tenancy support team to better help people in sustaining tenancy and preparation for independent living. We will review and update our tenant handbook and tenant agreement, supporting people to maintain their tenancies and offer advice and assistance to prevent them becoming homeless and improve our neighbourhood approach. As part of this we will develop a plan to ensure we are able to meet the Tenancy Housing Regulator Standards.
- We will review and actively use our allocations policy to support the prevention or relief of homelessness.
- We will seek to improve the provision of step-down, semi-supported accommodation for people that are not ready for independent living, ensuring they don't become 'trapped' in emergency and temporary accommodation.
- We will explore a variety of other housing solutions to help with housing needs such as cooperative, cohousing and 'Homes Share' solutions.
- We will ensure our housing support and allocations policies meet the requirements set out by the new government with reference to meeting the housing needs of veterans, care leavers and those escaping domestic violence.

### **Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation and work with partners to better support people whilst they are in temporary accommodation.**

- We will review and actively use our allocations policy to ensure it is managed well: that allocations are fair and our residents from our different communities and neighbourhoods have access to our housing.
- Ensure enough TA in our area to meet local needs and review our approach to the use of temporary and emergency accommodation and aim to reduce allocations to this type of accommodation and its associated costs. We will also work with our partners to improve move on accommodation.
- We will actively review and further develop our 'Opening Doors' rental service, seeking to increase this type of provision in partnership with private landlords.
- Work collaboratively with our Local Community Network and Health and Wellbeing partners to better support the health and wellbeing needs of people in TA

## **Work with our partners to review and improve the provision of supported accommodation**

- We will further support our homelessness services, including working with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to increase our Homeless Prevention Grant levels.
- We will work with our partners to influence and ensure the right type of supported and accessible move on accommodation, for example through the third Sector, to meet the needs of our vulnerable households.
- We will work with West Sussex County Council Social Care departments and health colleagues to better understand and respond to the housing and support needs of those in urgent housing need. We will through this work develop joined up approaches for those most at risk of harm or where there is greater impact if they become homeless.

### **Measuring our progress**

Each year we will update our progress using a range of possible indicators. Suggested measures include:

- Cases assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness & a statutory duty owed
- Number of households homelessness relieved
- Number of households homelessness is prevented
- Number of households in Temporary Accommodation
- Net expenditure on Temporary Accommodation
- Number of households with an active housing register application
- Number of people sleeping rough
- Total number of Opening Doors lets

## **Mission 4: People are healthy, resilient and resourceful. They can access the right help when they need it**

Our ambition in this strategy is to build much stronger connections between housing and providers of health and support services. We want to ensure access to good homes that are safe, warm, secure and meet the needs of our communities and that people can access the right support at the right time. Ensuring people have appropriate, good quality housing and access to support can help them retain independence, and promote their health and wellbeing for longer. It can help delay or reduce their need for social care and health services in the future.

Neighbourhoods matter - housing that's set in pleasant and safe environments with easy access to green spaces, opportunities for physical activity, that are well connected to facilities, healthcare services and transport links makes a significant contribution to helping people to live healthy and active lives, and to remain living independently as long as possible. We want our neighbourhoods to be inclusive, where everyone is equally valued, celebrated and encouraged and has a sense of belonging.

As councils for the community we are committed to doing what we can to support our communities to thrive by enabling communities to build their connections, resilience and capability. We also want to support our communities to influence the decisions that affect the places in which they live. We recognise there are demographic changes and health and wellbeing needs in our communities that influence this strategy; we will work with our health and community partners to provide and advocate in ways that better meet local needs.

For people with physical disabilities, mobility problems or poor health, remaining in their own home can become difficult, yet we know that when people are required to leave their homes, their overall health and wellbeing can worsen. The councils provide a range of grants which can help those who need it to adapt or repair their homes, so they can stay living at home, safely. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants are available for a range of works needed to help people on a low income who have a disability to live more independently in their home. Working closely with West Sussex County Council's Occupational Therapy service, we will continue to assist residents to remain in their accommodation or make it more accessible.

People with mental health issues can find it harder to cope with housing problems - and problems where you live, being homeless or lacking security of housing can make people's mental health worse. For people with two chronic disorders at the same time, for example a severe mental health illness and a substance misuse disorder - often referred to as *dual diagnosis*, managing issues and accessing the right services can be exceptionally challenging.

With regard to helping people to live well in their homes the Community Alarm and Telecare Service is a well-established and valued service enabling older, disabled and vulnerable people to get emergency help at their home 24/7. The low-cost basic service provides an alarm button, which is worn as a pendant or on the wrist, linked to a base station which connects to a call centre. We will continue to work closely with West Sussex County Council's Adult Social Care teams as this service helps keep people at home who otherwise might need to move into a more supported environment.

The councils work with West Sussex County Council in delivering the function of corporate parent for care leavers. This work will include supporting young people in securing appropriate accommodation and helping them to independently.

## **Our Plans:**

### **Work collaboratively with residents and partners to tackle housing and associated health inequalities**

- When developing mainstream and specialist housing, we will consider how local health, care and housing provision can better support healthy ageing and enable independent living for people with health and care needs. This will include integrating health, care and housing as well as housing related services that support and improve people's health and wellbeing.
- In collaboration with planning policy the councils will seek to guide and influence local housing markets to deliver additional mainstream, accessible and specialist housing that will better meet the needs of older people and working age people with care/health related needs. This will help to reduce demand on health and care services and support individuals to lead healthier lives. The councils will seek to work with a wide range of housing providers at a local level to help deliver a mix of good quality mainstream accessible housing and specialist housing, for rent and for sale, that support an ageing population and working age adults with health and care needs.
- We will work to improve housing conditions to keep people well at home by improving the provision of warm homes initiatives; energy efficient homes with lower running costs; and by improving housing standards, including in the private rented sector.

### **Work with communities and partners to develop safer and healthy neighbourhoods**

- We will redesign our services and commission activities to improve the involvement of residents and community organisations in the design and management of housing provision and neighbourhoods.
- We will work with our residents and partners to deter and tackle antisocial behaviour, domestic abuse and hate crime in our neighbourhoods and homes.
- Working with our partners and through our preventive services and approaches to provide joined up support to more vulnerable residents and communities.
- Develop neighbourhood approaches to how we work with our tenants in Adur, focusing on how we can work alongside them and our partners to improve their places.

- We will develop a plan to ensure we are able to meet the relevant Housing Regulator Standards including the 'Neighbourhood and Community Standard' and the 'Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard'.

## **Support residents so they can stay well and live independently, for longer**

- The councils will support people to remain independent for longer in their homes through providing adaptations and retrofitting to existing homes in both the social and private housing sectors, to improve accessibility, housing standards and long-term housing sustainability
- The councils will work with health and social care providers to make the best use of mainstream digital technology and care-enabled devices to support older people and other people with health and care needs to live independently in mainstream and supported housing.
- We will work with commissioning partners and providers to review the provision of exempt supported accommodation to ensure we meet the needs of vulnerable households who need our services.
- We will work with our partners to develop and deliver new supported housing solutions for people with physical disabilities.
- We will continue and improve our work with colleagues in the NHS and wider community partners to develop Integrated Community Teams that focus on health and housing and improving wellbeing
- We will continue to work in partnership with Public Health West Sussex to deliver a local programme of public health activities for adults aged 18+ including: free support to stop smoking, free support to manage a healthy weight and free support to reduce alcohol levels and support people to take responsibility for their health and decide for themselves to live a healthy lifestyle
- We will work with West Sussex County Council Social Care services to design and commission preventative and support services jointly.
- We will develop and provide better and more accessible information and advice to residents who want to move to accommodation which is better suited to their needs.

## **Measuring our progress**

Each year we will update our progress using a range of possible indicators. Suggested measures include:

- Number of Disabled Facilities Grant applications processed (private sector)

- Number of applications for major adaptations in council homes processed
- Number of residents, across tenures, supported in sustaining their tenancies.
- Adur Homes tenant satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods
- Customer satisfaction with community alarm provision.
- Number of residents engaged and supported through the Wellbeing Programme
- Numbers of failed tenancies
- Number of residents still on housing register because of no suitable, accessible housing.

## **Mission 5: Provide our residents with the accessible services they need**

The councils are seeking to provide safe, secure and sustainable homes for their residents, located in communities and neighbourhoods that are sustainable, happy, vibrant, safe, connected and thriving.

A key part of the work to achieve these ambitions is to transform and improve our resident engagement and communication, building trust and empowering residents to shape and determine the improvements required in the neighbourhoods in which they are located.

Following the 2017 Grenfell Tower fire, new legislation affecting all social landlords has established a Regulator of Social Housing. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 requires the council and other social landlords to fully meet and ensure compliance with the new regulatory framework, including standards around service information, engagement and participation.

We will work to develop and provide high quality community development and engagement provision for our residents that helps ensure the councils are able to meet these information, participation and engagement elements of Regulator's standards.

In terms of achieving the engagement and participation elements of these standards we will use an asset based approach that:

- a)** strengthens resident voice, influence and participation in good quality decision making and service delivery
- b)** improves communication and trust, community resilience and adaptation and builds social value
- c)** has a clear focus on equality, diversity and inclusion.

We have much work to do in this area, to build, trust, improve communication and re-establish the link between engagement and improvement. Our focus in the first part of the strategy period will therefore be on foundations, getting the basics right and building better relationships. As part of this work our complaints and feedback service will be redesigned and improved and we will prioritise the improvements needed to respond effectively to residents, support service improvement and achieve the required regulatory standards.

## **Our Plans**

### **Listening and responding to our residents**

- We will, in partnership with residents, deliver and commission services and activities that will establish relationships and trust with neighbourhoods, community groups, individual residents and partners.
- Our approach will be based on understanding how communities are already working with a focus on complementing and supporting existing community activity. As part of this, we will develop and use collaborative approaches to working with housing officers, local community organisations and partners who already hold relationships and facilitate spaces where Adur Homes residents meet.
- We will engage with residents with lived experience to re-establish the link between engagement, empowerment and change. As part of this trial a neighbourhood management approach.
- We will broaden and strengthen engagement with our residents by providing a range of opportunities to engage more diverse voices.
- We will improve our processes and systems for handling resident complaints to ensure they are addressed fairly, effectively and promptly. We will capture learning from complaints to identify issues and help us improve our performance.
- We will communicate more clearly and provide information so that people understand what they can expect from us.
- We will collect and share information about our performance.
- We will develop a plan to ensure we are able to meet the relevant Housing Regulator Standards including the 'Neighbourhood and Community Standard' and the 'Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard'.

## **Ensure our housing services are accessible and fair**

- We will collect and use data and resident feedback to help us better understand and respond to the needs of our residents, including those arising from protected characteristics and additional support needs.
- We will retain resource investment in our communities through the use of community wealth building principles in the delivery of our contracts and procurement activities.

## **Delivering good quality housing services**

- Adur Homes will deliver its improvement plan and achieve compliance sign off by the regulator.
- We continue to review and improve the Adur Homes repairs service, ensuring it is responsive and well regarded by the tenants, achieving good value for money.
- We will invest in our digital infrastructure to improve systems working and associated service delivery across housing. We will as part of this increase our use of data and technology to support residents to access our services
- Adur Homes will improve tenancy support and care of communal areas through an increased investment in housing officers, better procurement and service monitoring. In partnership with residents we will trial neighbourhood management approaches in key areas.
- We will ensure that our housing workforce has the relevant skills and competencies to deliver an effective service to residents.
- We will develop a plan to ensure we are able to meet the relevant Housing Regulator Standards including the 'Neighbourhood and Community Standard', the 'Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard' and the Safety and Quality Standard. We will update these plans to include other legislation, for example the anticipated Awaab's Law.

## **Work with our partners to agree and deliver shared priorities**

- We will work with our partners to develop and deliver integrated services at a neighbourhood level. This work will include work with the NHS Integrated Care Board, Public Health, the Community Safety Partnership and West Sussex Social Care Services.
- We will seek to develop the neighbourhood management pilots and design services with our partners and residents to address the needs of our most vulnerable residents, including people with complex needs.
- We learn from others and share good practice by engaging with regional and national networks of housing authorities and providers of social housing.



- We will proactively engage with regulatory bodies as the standards and requirements evolve.

## **Measuring our progress**

Each year we will update our progress using a range of possible indicators.

Suggested measures include:

- Housing related complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales
- Adur Homes repairs completed within target timescale
- Adur Homes tenant overall satisfaction with the service provided.
- Adur Homes tenant satisfaction with repairs
- Adur Homes tenant satisfaction that their home is well maintained and safe to live in
- Adur Homes tenant satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them
- Adur Homes tenant satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them
- Adur Homes tenant agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect
- Adur Homes tenant satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean, safe and well maintained
- Adur Homes tenant satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of anti-social behaviour
- Adur Homes tenant satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of complaints
- Adur Homes tenant knowledge of how to make a complaint

## 5. Delivering the Strategy

This strategy document presents an overview of the national and local housing policy context as well as painting a picture of the current housing situation in the Adur District and Worthing Borough. It also sets out in more detail the overarching objectives that will guide the whole strategy period, looking at the challenges and steps we wish to take to address the issues.

The housing strategy and its priorities are complemented by linked and supporting strategies and plans including the Corporate Plan, 'Our Plan', the councils' shared priorities, the two separate Local Plans for Adur and for Worthing and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Detailed action plans are being developed for each mission area to set out the actions, outcomes, objectives and the times scales for delivery. Feedback from the consultation process will be used to develop these action plans appropriately. Work will commence in the new year on the updated Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Adur & Worthing.

The Adur Housing Revenue Account is a ring fenced budget that contains the income and expenditure relating to the Adur council's social landlord duties. Resources from this fund are used exclusively for the management and maintenance of council-owned housing stock. The council's annual budget planning processes includes the additional agreement for the allocation of funds for building maintenance, health and fire safety compliance and ensuring adherence to the Regulatory Standards for Housing.

The general budget for both councils also continues to support investment in new housing supply and sustainable homes as well as in the work of our housing services. Housing and health and wellbeing services are also funded by the General Fund and through grants from external funding bodies, including West Sussex County Public Public Health.

Performance reporting on the Housing Strategy will be annual, through the Joint Strategic Committee and the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Adur & Worthing Councils. Additional delivery and performance oversight will be provided by the Adur Home Advisory Board, attended by members, tenants and leaseholders.

The councils will also invest in training and development. This investment will help ensure our housing services and staff teams have the right skills, behaviours and experience to carry out their roles, which often involve supporting some of the most vulnerable in our society. In line with the proposed Competence and Conduct Standard, this commitment to learning and development will enable the councils to deliver the strategy and ensure our residents receive a professional service and are treated with respect and dignity.