

**Huntingdonshire District Council  
Housing Strategy  
2026-2031**

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## Foreword

Welcome to our new Housing Strategy for Huntingdonshire. This strategy sets out the main housing related challenges we face and how we will respond to them through the priorities and objectives we have set out for the next five years.

Our aim is to provide secure, good quality and affordable housing that contributes to improves health and wellbeing, acknowledging that housing plays a significant role in determining people's quality of life, opportunities, and outcomes.

In this strategy we state our commitment to increasing the supply of good quality homes that are affordable to a range of incomes, located in attractive, well designed communities.

The climate emergency and our ambition for net zero within Huntingdonshire means that we will work hard with our partners to reduce housing related carbon emissions. The strategy outlines the actions we will take to enhance existing homes by improving standards and safety whilst supporting our partners in increasing the energy efficiency of existing homes.

It sets out our response to preventing and tackling homelessness in an environment where the cost-of-living crisis is increasing the number of households dealing with financial hardship and the risk of homelessness.

The strategy details how we will support older people and vulnerable people who wish to remain living independently in their own homes, as well as addressing the needs of those who need more specialist accommodation.

We look forward to turning this strategy into action and are committed to working with our partners to deliver the priorities set out in this document.

## **Introduction**

Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy 2020–2025 was adopted in October 2020 and subsequently reviewed in December 2021 and June 2023. With the current strategy approaching its end, it is now necessary to develop a new Housing Strategy that will guide housing priorities and delivery across Huntingdonshire for the next five years, covering the period 2026–2031.

The Housing Strategy brings together in a single document the various elements that make up the council's strategic housing function. The purpose of the Housing Strategy is to identify the key housing issues and challenges facing Huntingdonshire over the next five years and to set high level priorities and objectives across the full range of housing-related areas.

The Housing Strategy and its Delivery Plan has been developed and prepared in collaboration with all relevant service areas within the Council, to ensure that the housing related themes and issues relevant to the delivery of their service area are reflected in the strategy and inform the priorities and areas for actions set out in the Delivery Plan.

Ongoing engagement with our Registered Providers (RP's) and Homes England has taken place through and informed the strategy. It sets out our priorities, commitments and programme for the period 2026 to 2031 for a wide range of housing matters, including:

- How we will Support Sustainable Growth and Regeneration in Huntingdonshire
- How we will increase the supply of homes which people can afford and tackle homelessness
- How we will raise housing quality standards in existing homes to support health and wellbeing
- How we will meet the need for accessible and adapted housing, supported accommodation, and housing for specific groups

Experience has shown that our strategy needs to be agile, so that we can respond quickly and effectively to changes in legislation and shifting national and local issues as they develop. The strategy is therefore purposefully high level, with detail about how we will achieve our priorities set out in our Delivery Plan which we will publish each year.

## **National and Local Context**

This section highlights some key national and local housing-related policies, strategies and plans that inform our housing agenda and underpin the priorities of the Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy 2026 to 2031.



## **National Context**

This Housing Strategy has been developed in the context of evolving national policy and legislation in housing, welfare and planning. Below is a summary of the key legislative changes of recent years and some proposed legislative changes that are relevant to the housing sector and shape our response to meeting housing needs and demand in Huntingdonshire.

### **Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which came into effect in April 2018 represented a fundamental change to homelessness legislation. It introduced new duties around preventing and relieving homelessness. The act extended the period which a person can be at risk of homelessness from 28 days to 56 days. This required local authorities to work with people to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage.

The act also requires local authorities to provide homelessness advice and support to all applications for housing assistance and make inquiries to see if they have a duty to help. This is a change from the previous duty where local authorities only had to help those at risk of homelessness if they considered them to be in priority need.

### **Changes to Government's Departments and Delivery Agencies**

In 2018 as part of the government's bid to raise the profile of Housing, a new minister for housing was appointed and the Department for Communities and Local Government was renamed Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) were rebranded as Homes England (HE) and the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) was created as a stand-alone body.

In September 2021 MHCLG was renamed to become the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) "to help deliver on the government's mission to level up

every part of the UK as we build back better from the pandemic and deliver on the people's priorities". In July 2024 it reverted back to MHCLG following the new government removing the "levelling up" element as part of a refocussing on substantive government work.

### **Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018, 2023, 2024 and 2025**

A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) released by Government in July 2018 broadened the definition of affordable housing to include a range of products aimed at providing affordable routes to home ownership including starter homes, discounted market sale and rent to buy. The Definition of affordable housing for rent was also expanded to include affordable private rent which is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision in a Build to Rent scheme.

In December 2023 following a consultation process a further revised NPPF was published. This removed the requirement for Planning Authorities to continually demonstrate a deliverable five-year housing land supply. The updated NPPF states that local planning authorities will not need to meet this requirement as long as their adopted plan is less than five years old and had identified "at least a five year supply of specific, deliverable sites at the time that its examination concluded".

In December 2024 there was a further revision to NPPF which included the reinstatement of Mandatory Housing Targets and the removal of the urban uplift. The First Homes requirement was also removed giving Local Authorities flexibility to determine tenure mix based on local need. There was also the introduction of the term "grey belt" a new designation for previously developed or low contribution green belt land (e.g.: golf courses, car parks and solar parks) this land can now be considered for development subject to specific conditions; it is worth noting that Huntingdonshire does not have any green belt. Policies in local plans and spatial development strategies should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should be updated as necessary. Reviews should be completed no later than five years from the adoption date of a plan.

In December 2025 the Government published a draft overhaul of the NPPF and opened it for public consultation until March 2026, this consultation is based on the structure of the document into a more plan like policy coded structure, clearer separation between plan making and decision making containing non-statutory development management policies, stronger emphasis on national decision making and a housing delivery focus.

### **Homes England**

In the Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) 2021 -2026 Homes England announced that grant funding could now be used to fund replacement homes, alongside new affordable homes, as part of wider estate regeneration plans and to help bolster the affordable housing sector and maintain housing supply. Previously, affordable housing funds were limited to new build projects. AHP can also be used on replacement homes as part of estate regeneration, as long as schemes are providing additional new affordable homes.

In March 2025 it was announced that there would be a further £2 billion in additional “bridging” funding on the same terms as the AHP, but providers would have until March 2027 to start construction.

In July 2025 there was an announcement that there would be a new 2026-2036 Social and Affordable Homes Programme (SAHP) as part of the Government's “Delivering a Decade of Renewal for Social and Affordable Housing” committing a total of £39 billion over ten years. Key features include a delivery target of 300,000 homes with at least 60% for social rent; funding would be secured either by continuous market engagement (CME) or Strategic Partnerships, without ringfenced budgets enabling greater flexibility to support diverse housing needs. This new SAHP shows a long term commitment to funding for affordable housing and therefore provides certainty in the market alongside this the government confirmed a 10 year rent settlement for social housing providers allowing rents to increase by CPI +1% annually from April 2026 alongside a rent convergence mechanism to align rents below this formula.

### **First Homes**

The government First Homes (FH) scheme was launched in June 2021, and it was a new policy that aimed to provide discounted homes to first time buyers in England who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford to purchase a home. As part of the NPPF 2024 the Government changed its position on FH and whilst it remains an active and supported affordable housing tenure, local authorities now have discretion over its delivery. The key elements of FH were that homes should be sold at 30% to 50% below market value, with the discount locked into the property for future resales, these were available to first time buyers, with a household income below £80,000 outside of London with discount prices not exceeding £250,000 and priority given to key workers, local residents, or those on lower incomes.

### **The Rough Sleeping Strategies 2018 and 2022**

The Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 set out the government's vision for halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it entirely by 2027. In September 2022 the government published a refreshed rough sleeping strategy “Ending rough sleeping for good”. The strategy has four key themes to end rough sleeping which are prevention, intervention, recovery and a transparent and joined up system. This was also accompanied with a further £2billion investment over a three-year period into policy and schemes to end rough sleeping such as Housing First and the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme. This strategy was reviewed in January 2024, and the four pillars were reaffirmed.

### **Domestic Abuse Act 2021**

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced a statutory definition for domestic abuse for the first time including physical, emotional, coercive and economic abuse and placed a duty on local authorities in England to provide safe accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children. The Act recognised children as victims and introduced Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPN's) and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPO's). The Act amended homelessness legislation so that all eligible victims of domestic abuse that are

homeless because of domestic abuse are regarded as being in priority need under the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002.

### **Social Care White paper (2021) and revisions**

In 2021, the government published their 10-year vision for adult social care in England. The Health and Social Care White Paper highlighted the importance of an integrated approach to meeting people's day-to-day health and social care needs and the government's aims and proposals regarding, amongst other things, housing adaptations and the Disabled Facilities grant (DFG). The principles of the paper of "Providing the Right Care, in the Right Place at the Right Time" provided for individuals to have choice over their housing arrangements which play a crucial role for achieving positive outcomes, this could be in the form of a new home or their existing home, purpose designed or not to meet their needs and have access to technologies and adaptations.

Since the publication several important elements have been changed the care cost cap was removed in 2024 and funding originally intended for long term reform has been redirected to immediate issues

### **The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023**

The Social Housing Regulation Act received Royal Assent in July 2023 and is now officially law. The Act aims to improve the standard of social housing in the UK. It includes increased regulation for social landlords and new rules for the protection of tenants in their homes against serious health and safety hazards. It will require social landlords to investigate and fix hazards, such as damp and mould, in their homes within strict time limits for tenants. The intention of the Act is to enable proactive regulation to improve these standards and provide tenants a voice that ensures that social landlords are held accountable by the Regulator of Social Housing. A new consumer regulatory regime began in April 2024, adding a Consumer Standard grading alongside existing Governance and Financial Viability gradings.

The Regulator of Social Housing has started issuing consumer grades based on proactive inspections and reactive engagement. As part of this **Awaab's Law** (a two-year-old boy who tragically died in social housing whose death was caused by prolonged exposure to black mould) which mandates that social landlords must investigate and resolve health hazards like damp and mould within strict legal timeframes, came into force on the 27 October 2025. Social landlords will have to address all emergency hazards and all damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to tenants to fixed time frames. In 2026 this will extend to excess cold and excess heat; falls associated with baths etc., on level surfaces, on stairs and between levels; structural collapse; and explosions; fire, and electrical hazards; domestic and personal hygiene and food safety. In 2027, regulations will be extended to all remaining Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazards (apart from overcrowding) where they present a significant risk of harm.

## **Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023**

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURA) received Royal Assent on 26th October 2023 and is now law. The LURA intends to change the planning and regeneration system in many ways by putting local people at the heart of development. It will now be easier to put Local Plans in place and future Local Plans will be limited to 'locally specific' matters with general policies set out in a suite of National Development Management Policies (non-statutory) which will have regard to climate change. Local Planning Authorities should develop design codes for their entire area. These codes set out specific design requirements and parameters to ensure that new developments reflect local character and preferences, ultimately aiming to create well designed sustainable places. It is important to note that the provisions it contains will require a raft of secondary legislation and further consultation before coming into effect. The Act makes provision for a new Infrastructure Levy which will replace the s106 and CIL regime, but it is anticipated that the new Infrastructure Levy will take several years to enact.

## **Future Homes Standard**

The Future Homes Standard is an energy efficiency standard that should come into force in 2026 although the deadline for final publication which was expected in Autumn 2025 has past. The key purpose of the standard is to significantly reduce carbon emissions. Homes constructed under the future home's standard should produce 75-80% less carbon emissions and deliver homes that are zero carbon ready so that homes built under this standard will not need retrofitting to become net zero. It was expected that following a twelve month transitional period all new homes must comply by December 2027, but given the delays to publication, no new date has been set.

## **The Renters (Reform) Bill (Rights)**

The Renters Reform bill now renamed the Renters Rights Bill received Royal Assent on 27 October 2025. It aims to change the law to provide a better deal for renters and landlords in the private rented sector. The key measures in the bill is the abolition of Section 21 "no fault" evictions, which comes into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026, other elements including the decent homes standard extended to the Private Rented Sector, rent regulation, and additional powers for Local Authorities to inspect homes will follow, no date has currently been set for this.

## **The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025**

The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 aims to accelerate the delivery of new homes and nationally significant infrastructure by streamlining planning processes and reducing delays. It introduces major reforms to speed up consenting for critical infrastructure, modernise National Policy Statements, reduce judicial review opportunities, and remove certain pre-application requirements for large projects. Local authorities gain more flexibility over planning decisions, and a nature restoration levy allows developers to fund environmental improvements more efficiently. Overall, the Act seeks to boost economic growth, support clean energy infrastructure, and help deliver the government's target of 1.5 million homes and faster decisions on major projects.



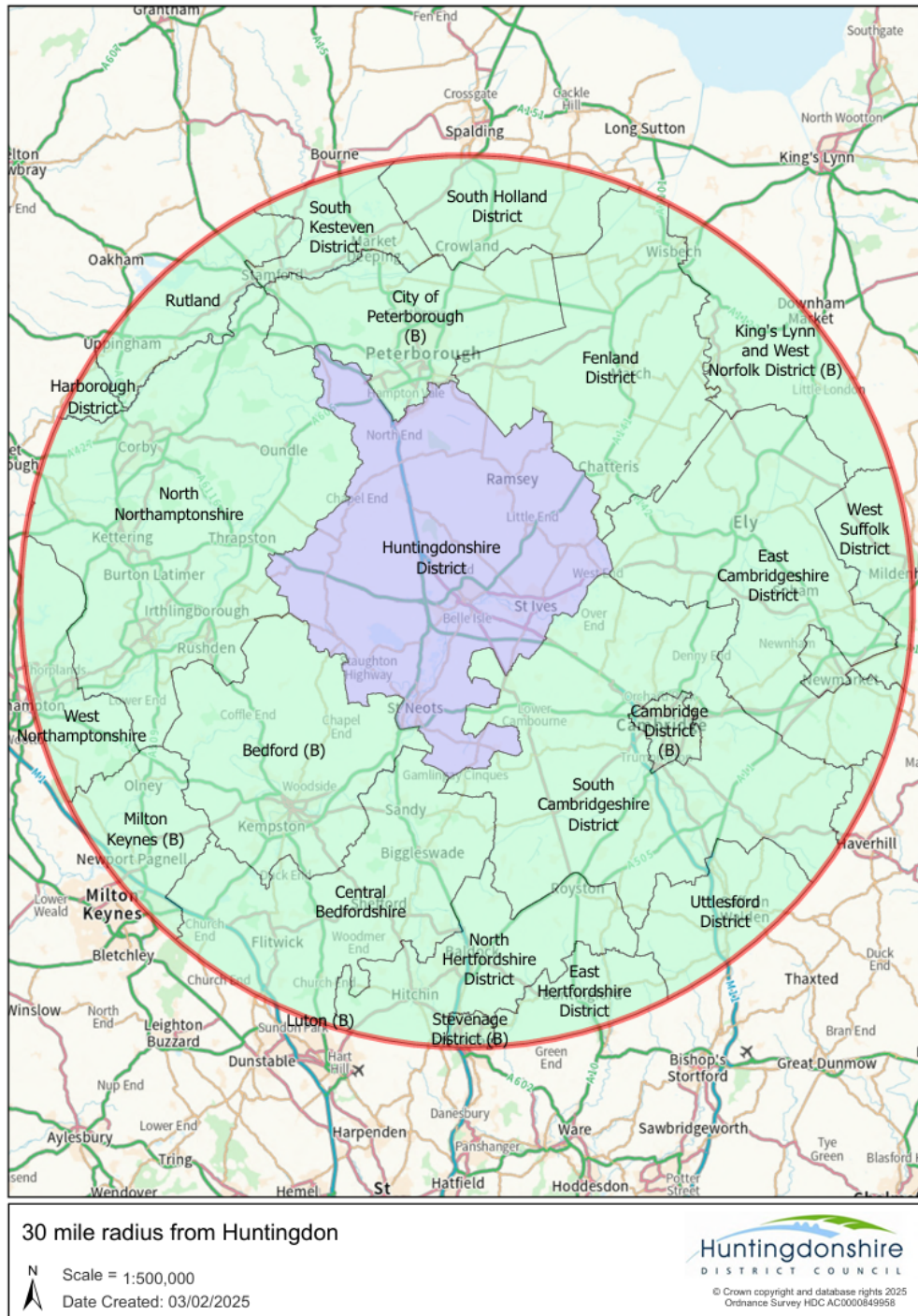


## **Local Context**

### **Getting to know Huntingdonshire**

Huntingdonshire is a large district (900 square kilometres) and a predominantly rural area in the county of Cambridgeshire. However over 40% of the population live in three of market towns of St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives.

Huntingdonshire is situated approximately 100km (62 miles) north of London. It has strong relationships with Cambridge to the east, Peterborough to the north and Bedford to the south-west.



## Huntingdonshire Futures Strategy

The Huntingdonshire Futures Strategy is a long-term, place-based vision developed by the Council to guide the district's development up to 2050. It was shaped through extensive public engagement—the largest in the district's history—and is designed to respond to major challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, and public health, while celebrating local identity and opportunity.

The purpose of the strategy is to create a shared vision for Huntingdonshire's future, to guide collaborative action across public, private, and community sectors and to ensure Huntingdonshire remains one of the best places to live in the UK.

There are five journeys each representing a strategic theme with long-term goals and actions:

**Pride in Place** - Focuses on celebrating local identity, heritage, and community spirit and aims to make Huntingdonshire's towns and villages distinct, unified, and well-loved.

**Inclusive Economy** - Seeks to build a confident, skilled, and resilient workforce and promotes access to opportunity, innovation, and economic participation for all.

**Health Embedded** - Prioritises holistic wellbeing, happiness, and health and encourages active lifestyles, social connection, and integrated health services.

**Environmental Innovation** - Champions sustainability and climate resilience and supports local environmental stewardship and global leadership in green innovation.

**Travel Transformed** - Envisions a future of greener, smarter, and more enjoyable travel that promotes sustainable transport, connectivity, and reduced reliance on cars.

### **Bringing the Place Strategy to life**

Well planned housing delivery has a critical role in shaping places that are healthy, inclusive and environmentally sustainable. It does this through several interconnected mechanisms that link with the Place Strategy aims, these are:

**Creating walkable neighbourhoods with access to key services** – locating new homes close to schools, healthcare, shops and community facilities reduces car dependency and supports everyday needs within a 15-20 minute walk or cycle; designing neighbourhoods with direct, safe walking and cycling routes which should be connected to wider networks encourages these sustainable choices. Masterplanning new development around mixed use centres helps sustain local businesses, strengthens social cohesion and improves long term viability of services.

**Embedding green and blue infrastructure** – Housing Schemes can integrate parks, play areas, nature corridors and sustainable drainage systems enabling the creation of attractive environments that improve bio-diversity and climate resilience and provide access to high quality green space which supports physical and mental health and encourages outdoor activity.

**Ensuring high quality design and placemaking** - Policies that emphasise design codes, character, tenure integration and well considered street layouts result in developments that feel coherent and safe, this in turn creates long term attractiveness of an area whilst reducing anti social behaviour and create **pride in place**. A mix of housing types and tenures alongside community spaces supports diverse household needs from young to old. Modern housing built to a higher energy efficiency standards reduces carbon emissions, fuel bills and long term environmental impacts.

**Strengthening local services and infrastructure** – Through planning agreements, Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy contribute to the funding of schools, GP capacity, transport upgrades, open space improvements and community facilities.

**Building Climate Resilient Homes and Neighbourhoods** – modern housing design can reduce vulnerability to future climate hazards including: overheating resilience through passive cooling, shading, ventilation, tree cover and better orientation; flood resilience via sustainable drainage systems, permeable surfaces, flood resistant material and site selection; this protects resident by reducing long term costs. Climate change is increasing water scarcity especially in regions like Cambridgeshire using systems like, rainwater harvesting, greywater recycling and low flow systems helps reduce demand. Climate resilient homes help to lower household bills keeping more people financially secure, they improve the health outcomes, reducing pressure on the NHS and adult social care and provide stable, future proof homes for vulnerable groups.

**Retrofitting Existing Homes** – most homes that will exist in thirty years already stand today, making retrofit essential for long term sustainability and to deliver more energy efficient homes. This will include lower energy consumption through insulation, airtightness, glazing improvements and efficient heating systems and by switching from fossil fuels to heat pumps and other low carbon solutions. This supports improving air quality and reducing damp and mould and enhancing thermal comfort.

**Health Outcomes** – warm, energy efficient homes reduce respiratory and cardiovascular illness by preventing damp, mould and cold related conditions, accessible homes support independent living for older people and reduce pressure on the NHS and social care, whilst stable housing improves mental health, reduces stress and supports child development and healthy neighbourhoods with green space, active travel routes and low traffic improve physical activity and wellbeing.

**Economic Growth** - Good quality housing attracts and retains employers who need a stable local labour market and homes that employees can afford, jobs in construction, retrofit and green technologies helps to create skilled jobs in the local economy, whilst regeneration and homes in town centres helps to support high streets, stimulate local spending and attract investment. Housing affordability directly impacts economic growth, by providing a mix of housing types and tenures it enables key workers, such as NHS staff, teachers and emergency services to live near workplaces.

### **Huntingdonshire District Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2028**

The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's strategic priorities and desired outcomes for the five-year period, aligning with the Huntingdonshire Futures Strategy and reflecting feedback from residents, businesses, and partners.

There are three Strategic Priorities

## **Improving Quality of Life for Local People by**

- Improving the happiness and wellbeing of residents
- Keeping people out of crisis
- Helping people in crisis

## **Creating a Better Huntingdonshire for Future Generations**

- Improving housing
- Forward-thinking economic growth
- Lowering carbon emissions

## **Doing our core work well**

Delivering good quality, high value for money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations.

## **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. (CPCA)**

The CPCA was created in 2017 and is a devolved regional body formed by the seven councils to make strategic decisions in the region. It has a range of responsibilities including transport, infrastructure, planning, housing, economic growth, business support and adult education.

The CPCA's Corporate Plan 2025-2029 identifies delivering homes as a core objective linked to wider goals of economic vitality, connectivity and resilience. It emphasises building homes that inspire **pride** and support a thriving inclusive region this supports HDC own housing ambitions through affordable provision, delivery targets and spatial planning.

The CPCA's Local Growth Plan which was adopted on 22 October 2025 is the region's overarching strategic framework guiding economic development to 2035. It identifies sector strengths, barriers to growth and investment priorities. It leads on discussions with government and aligns local ambitions across housing, transport, skills and infrastructure.



## **A New Local Plan**

The purpose of the Local Plan is to provide a framework for sustainable development within Huntingdonshire including the identification of land for development to deliver the homes, employment and services needed and to set out local policies against which decisions on all planning applications are made. The Local Plan is the main basis for making planning decisions.

The council's current Local Plan to 2036 was adopted on 15 May 2019 identifying sufficient land for new homes (20,100), jobs, facilities, infrastructure, and open spaces to meet known needs. On 24 January 2023, Huntingdonshire District Council's Cabinet agreed to the preparation of a full update to the adopted Local Plan which will set out a plan for how the district will grow over future decades to 2046. The new plan will also be able to take into account recent changes in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) other recent national legislation as well as Huntingdonshire's Place Strategy and Climate Strategy.

The replacement Local Plan has benefitted from multiple phases of public engagement and it is the Council's intention to finalise a draft by the end of 2026 and then move through the public examination phase with the aspiration of adopting a replacement plan in 2028. The new plan proposes 32,200 new homes between 2021 to 2046.

## **Health and Wellbeing Integrated Care Strategy December 2022**

Within the Health and Wellbeing Integrated Care Strategy, Priority 3 looks at:

*"Reducing poverty through better housing, employment and skills"*

It is known that poverty limits life chances, health and wellbeing, and has a much wider societal impact beyond the individuals who are personally affected. This priority focuses on reducing poverty through improving skills, better employment and better housing although reducing poverty is much broader than just these aspects.



The interaction between housing and poverty is two-way; poverty limits people's housing choices, often resulting in living in poor quality housing as that is all that is affordable or available. However, housing also affects the risk or severity of poverty; expensive housing reduces the financial resource for other life essentials, poor quality housing is likely to require considerably greater spend of limited incomes on heating, and poor quality or insecure housing also affects wellbeing and physical health which in turn can limit educational or employment outcomes.

Stable, secure, and good housing can have huge benefits not just to health but to the wider life chances. For example, housing with adequate space not only improves personal privacy reducing depression, anxiety and stress but also gives children room to play, a good night's sleep and provides sufficient study space enabling better achievement. The issue of poverty is being exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. The 'Let's Talk - your health and care' campaign that was launched on 7 October 2022 to inform the Health and Wellbeing Integrated Care Strategy has identified that 45.8% of the respondents (1051/2292) felt that the cost of living crisis was impacting their health and wellbeing; key themes were the cost of heating and not having the heating on, having to cut down or purchase cheaper versions of food, the costs of transport to key services such as hospital appointments, reducing activities and increasing feelings of isolation

Although fewer homes nationally are classed as non-decent compared with 10 years ago; overcrowding and affordability problems have increased in recent years and are likely to worsen given the cost-of-living crisis. The Covid-19 pandemic has also highlighted the direct health implications of housing with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Covid Impact Assessment showing that deprivation, including poor housing conditions such as overcrowding, and high density were associated with greater spread of COVID 19. The economic fallout from the pandemic and the current cost of living crisis is likely to lead to an increase in evictions, a lack of housing security and increased over-crowding.

It is estimated to cost the NHS some £1.4bn per year to treat those people who are affected by poor housing conditions. The most common extreme hazards likely to be found in the home are those relating to cold and home accidents. These are, generally, not expensive to rectify or avoid compared with the long-term cost to the health services and society if they are ignored. Such hazards are particularly harmful to the most vulnerable, especially older people and families with young children. This was particularly highlighted recently in the case of Awaab Ishak, who died at two years old as a direct result of mould in his family home resulting in DLUHC highlighting some of the commitments needed to tackle poor housing standards. This links back to the "Renters Reform Bill mentioned earlier in this document.

Tackling poor housing is complicated and will require more cross sector working. The pattern of tenure and ownership shows that only a very small proportion (16.3%) of housing is under the direct control of partners, the vast majority of housing in Cambridgeshire is either private rented or owner occupied.

## **Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy 2024**

The Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy is Huntingdonshire District Council's long-term commitment to improving quality of life for local people by addressing the root causes of poor health and economic inequality. By adopting a Community Wealth Building approach, the strategy ensures that public sector investment and decision-making deliver direct benefits for local communities. It supports the Council's Corporate Plan and Huntingdonshire Futures partnership's shared focus on prevention and wellbeing.

The strategy focuses on creating the conditions for residents to thrive by strengthening:

- economic resilience
- social connection
- physical and mental wellbeing
- access to local opportunities

The Community Health and Wealth Building Fund builds on the success of the pilot phase and Huntingdonshire District Council has now launched the full Community Health and Wealth Building Delivery Fund.

The Delivery Fund is an investment over three years to support community-led projects that improve health, wellbeing and economic resilience across Huntingdonshire by funding projects that:

- improve physical and mental health, including through increased physical activity
- strengthen economic resilience, focusing on employment, skills and reducing barriers
- increase social connection and a sense of community across Huntingdonshire

The fund will empower local communities, organisations and partners to lead initiatives that address the root causes of inequality and poor health.



## Housing Need in Huntingdonshire

Huntingdonshire Local Housing Needs Assessment was completed by Iceni Projects Ltd on behalf of the Council in August 2025. This has provided the Council with more up to date information as follows:



## Demographics

It shows that Huntingdonshire's population grew from 170,000 in 2011 to 186,000 in 2023, making up about 27% of Cambridgeshire's total. The district's growth was greater than the national rate but below the county and regional rates. The district has an older age profile than the county and region, with more residents aged 50 and above and fewer student age groups. In 2021 Huntingdonshire had 76,880 households, equating to an average household size of 2.35, this is smaller than the other comparable areas. Single-family households dominate in Huntingdonshire, especially married or civil partnership couples, Single-person households are less common than in the county or region. **(comparators are Cambridgeshire, Eastern Region and England)**

## Housing Stock and Supply Trends

The total number of dwellings in Huntingdonshire in 2024 was 83,400, a 17% increase since 2011. This is a faster rate of growth than the national and regional growth rates and has a lower implied vacancy rate than the wider comparators.

Over the last five years, housing delivery in Huntingdonshire has increased to an average annual rate of 1,139 dwellings. Huntingdonshire has a larger proportion of detached dwellings than the wider comparators and a smaller proportion of flatted developments, linked to this there is a greater percentage of homes with four or more bedrooms when compared to the wider comparators. Huntingdonshire also has a larger proportion of owner-occupied households and conversely a smaller proportion of renters (social and private). The district has a higher proportion of under-occupied homes and a lower rate of overcrowding in the district. This is linked to the ageing population and the size of the housing stock.

## Housing Market

Huntingdonshire's median house price is £315,000 in 2023 which is lower than the county (£337,000) and regional (£340,000) medians, but higher than the national median of £290,000. Apart from flats, Huntingdonshire's property prices are above the England average but below county and regional averages for all home types.

Over the past decade, house prices in Huntingdonshire have grown by 69%, similar to the county (67%), but below regional growth (74%) and above national growth (57%). In the last 5 years, overall median house price growth was 18%, lower than in the other wider areas. Property sales in Huntingdonshire have followed benchmark trends, with declines since 2022, the affordability ratio in Huntingdonshire is 8.45.

The median private rental value is £875 per month, lower than county and regional values, but higher than the national rate. Single-room rents have increased the most, indicating a high demand for smaller, affordable homes.

## Housing Need and Demographics

Applying the government's Standard Method for assessing housing need to Huntingdonshire results there is an annual housing need of 1,232 dwellings per annum. This shows a projected population increase of around 54,700 people by 2046. This equates to a 29.1% increase, which is higher than a trend-based projection based on the last five years (24.5%).

Further analysis indicates that with the Standard Method, the increase in the economically active population is projected to be up to 30,300, which, taking account of individuals having two roles at the same time, could support up to 31,400 additional jobs. The main changes to

economic activity rates are projected in the 60-69 age groups, linked to changes in pensionable age and trends in older people working longer.

## **Affordable Housing**

The analysis has taken account of local housing costs (to both buy and rent) along with estimates of household income. The evidence indicates that there is an acute need for affordable housing in the district and a need in all sub-areas. The majority of need is from households who are unable to buy or rent and therefore points particularly towards a need for rented affordable housing rather than affordable home ownership.

Affordable housing need for households unable to buy or rent equates to 480 homes per annum. The link between affordable need and overall need (of all tenures) is complex, and in trying to make a link, it must be remembered that many of those picked up as having an affordable need are already in housing (and therefore do not generate a net additional need for a home).

In addition, the private rented sector is providing benefit-supported accommodation for many households. That said, the level of affordable need does suggest the Council should maximise the delivery of such housing at every opportunity where viability allows. The Council's current approach of seeking 40% affordable housing with 70% being either Affordable Rent or Social Rent would be justified. The analysis suggests there will be a need for both social and affordable rented housing – the latter will be suitable particularly for households who are close to being able to afford to rent privately and possibly also for some households who claim full Housing Benefit. It is, however, clear that social rents are more affordable and could benefit a wider range of households – social rents could therefore be prioritised where delivery does not prejudice the overall delivery of affordable homes. The study also considers different types of AHO (notably First Homes and shared ownership) as each may have a role to play.

Shared ownership is likely to be suitable for households with more marginal affordability (those only just able to afford to privately rent) as it has the advantage of a lower deposit and subsidised rent. There was no strong evidence of a need for First Homes or discounted market housing more generally. Shared Ownership is considered more flexible, accommodating a wider range of income groups.

In deciding what types of affordable housing to provide, including a split between rented and home ownership products, the Council will need to consider the relative levels of need and also viability issues. For example, seeking Social Rented in place of Affordable Rented Housing could reduce the viable quantum the Council could secure. Viability consideration should recognise, for example, that providing AHO may be more viable and may therefore allow more units to be delivered, but at the same time, noting that households with a need for rented housing are likely to have more acute needs and fewer housing options. The evidence would justify a policy position of 70% low-cost rented and 30% affordable home ownership homes. The evidence indicates that up to 70% of rented affordable housing at social rents could be justified in need terms (therefore, about 50% of all affordable housing); although some additional viability testing is currently being undertaken and likely to conclude in the Autumn of 2026.

Low-cost home ownership provision should focus on shared ownership, with no strong evidence of a need for First Homes or discounted market housing identified. Overall, the analysis identifies a notable need for affordable housing, and it is clear that the provision of new affordable housing is an important and pressing issue in the area.

The report does not provide an affordable housing target; the amount of affordable housing delivered will be limited to the amount that can viably be provided. The evidence does, however, suggest that affordable housing delivery should be maximised where opportunities arise as the overall data shows that there is an 8% increase in housing demand.

## Housing Mix

Analysis of the future mix of housing required takes account of demographic change, including potential changes to the number of family households and the ageing of the population. The proportion of households with dependent children in Huntingdonshire is about average, with around 28% of all households containing dependent children in 2021 (compared with around 29% regionally and nationally). There are notable differences between different types of households, with married couples (with dependent children) seeing a high level of owner-occupation, whereas lone parents are particularly likely to live in social or private rented accommodation.

There are a range of factors which will influence demand for different sizes of homes, including demographic changes, future growth in real earnings and households' ability to save, economic performance and housing affordability.

The analysis linked to future demographic change concludes that the following represents an appropriate mix of affordable and market homes, which takes account of both household changes and the ageing of the population, as well as seeking to make more efficient use of new stock by not projecting forward the high levels of under-occupancy (which is notable in the market sector).

### *Suggested size mix of housing by tenure – Huntingdonshire*

|             | Market | Affordable home ownership | Affordable housing (rented) |             |
|-------------|--------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
|             |        |                           | Under 65                    | 65 and over |
| 1-bedroom   | 5%     | 15%                       | 25%                         | 50%         |
| 2-bedrooms  | 30%    | 45%                       | 35%                         | 50%         |
| 3-bedrooms  | 40%    | 30%                       | 30%                         |             |
| 4+-bedrooms | 25%    | 10%                       | 10%                         |             |

*Source: Icen Analysis*

For affordable rented housing, the Council's letting policies seek to minimise housing families with children in flats. Consequently, properties of 2 bedrooms or more will therefore mostly be houses. In all sectors, the analysis points to a particular need for 2 and 3 bedroom accommodation, with varying proportions of 1 and 4 bedroom homes.

For rented affordable housing for under-65s, there is a clear need for a range of different sizes of homes, including 40% to have at least 3-bedrooms, of which 10% should have at least 4-bedrooms. The strategic conclusions in the affordable sector recognise the role which delivery of larger family homes can play in releasing a supply of smaller properties for other households. Also recognised is the limited flexibility which 1 bedroom properties offer to changing household circumstances, which feed through into higher turnover and management issues.

The conclusions also take account of the current mix of housing by tenure and also the size requirements shown on the Housing Register. The mix identified above could inform strategic policies, although a flexible approach should be adopted. Additionally, in applying the mix to individual development sites, regard should be had to the nature of the site and

character of the area, and to up-to-date evidence of need (including the Housing Register) as well as the existing mix and turnover of properties at the local level and recent housing delivery.

## **Older and Disabled People**

Huntingdonshire has a very slightly older age structure than is seen regionally and nationally, and lower levels of disability compared with other areas. The older person population (65+) shows high proportions of owner-occupation, and particularly outright owners who may have significant equity in their homes (79% of all older person households are outright owners). The older person population is projected to increase notably moving forward. An ageing population means that the number of people with disabilities is likely to increase. Key findings for the 2024-46 period include:

- a 38% increase in the population aged 65+ (potentially accounting for 32% of total population growth).
- a 64% increase in the number of people aged 65+ with dementia and a 54% increase in those aged 65+ with mobility problems.
- a need for around 2,000 additional housing units with support (sheltered/retirement housing) – around 70% in the market sector.
- a need for around 1,200 additional housing units with care (e.g. extra-care) – the majority (around three-quarters) in the market sector.
- a need for additional nursing and residential care bedspaces (around 1,300 in the period); and
- a need for around 670 dwellings to be for wheelchair users across all tenures (meeting technical standard M4(3)).

This would suggest that there is a clear need to increase the supply of accessible and adaptable dwellings and wheelchair-user dwellings, as well as providing specific provision of older persons housing. The evidence justifies current Council policy requiring all dwellings (in all tenures) to meet the M4(2) standards, and around 5% of homes meeting M4(3) – wheelchair user dwellings in the market sector (a higher proportion of around 10% in the affordable sector). Properties in the affordable sector should be wheelchair-accessible dwellings (constructed for immediate occupation) and in the market sector, they should be wheelchair-user adaptable dwellings (constructed to be adjustable for occupation by a wheelchair user and mostly in the form of bungalows). At the very least in the affordable sector M4(3) properties should be supplied with level access showers rather than baths recognising the needs of the individuals that will occupy the property at completion.

It should, however, be noted that there will be cases where this may not be possible (e.g. due to viability or site-specific circumstances) and so any policy should be applied flexibly. In framing policies for the provision of specialist older persons accommodation, the Council will need to consider a range of issues. This will include the different use classes of accommodation (i.e. C2 vs. C3) and requirements for affordable housing contributions (linked to this, the viability of provision).

## **Other Specific Groups**

### **Looked After Children**

The County Council's overarching policy is to ensure as few children as possible will be placed in residential care homes. There are currently around 700 looked-after children within the county, of which 63 are placed in residential children's care homes (0.03%). Although the

county has 32 registered children's care facilities, a significant proportion of these are filled by placements from outside the area. As a result, there is insufficient local provision.

If current prevalence rates continue, the projected population growth, linked to the Standard Method, would result in an increased demand for 3 additional residential beds in children's care homes by 2045 (a total of 14). Additional demand for residential care bedspaces for children will depend on the success or otherwise of preferred alternatives such as familial care or foster care and there will also be a need for supported accommodation for young adults.

The County Council is investing in children's social care by providing an extra £10.4m for looked-after children and reducing agency social worker use to improve stability. The Council is expanding local residential capacity by opening two new council-owned children's homes. It has also commissioned a new Residential Care Service using council properties and strengthening placement procurement through its Dynamic Purchasing System and less reliance on high-cost external placements.

### **Service Families**

Huntingdonshire is home to several military establishments, including RAF Alconbury, RAF Wyton and RAF Molesworth. RAF Alconbury is a joint-service base with the US Air Force and the RAF.

According to data from the Ministry of Defence (MOD), as of April 2024, there are 2,200 military (UK Regular Forces) and MOD Civilian Personnel based in Huntingdonshire. Overall, the presence of regular forces in Huntingdonshire is not considered to be significant and is unlikely to have any implications on overall affordability, but it may be driving demand in local areas.

It is considered that the most pressing issue is likely to be finding accommodation for those transitioning out of the forces, as well as existing personnel who are seeking to buy in the district. Provision of Low-Cost Home Ownership can help account for this, as well as the allocation of housing regulations, which allow military personnel to establish local connections to the area. Overall, this group are likely to already be accounted for within affordable housing need and is not considered to be additional to it.

Under the Armed Forces Covenant the Council has committed to support service personnel through housing priority (under certain conditions), financial assistance, employment support, health and wellbeing services and family support.

### **Custom and Self-Build**

The Council is required to grant sufficient planning permissions to meet the demand identified on the Register. There has been a total of 361 registered expressions of interest for a serviced plot of land in Huntingdonshire. This is an average of 45 registrations per base period (31<sup>st</sup> October to 30<sup>th</sup> October 12 months, but not a calendar year).

Although recent registrations have fallen significantly, HDC are meeting their requirement through CIL exemptions (361 on register, 377 exemptions, completions are 311) The proposed replacement plan allocates some sites for custom and self-build, although there is evidence that windfall development is meeting the need (most people on the register want a single plot).

The Council is considering a policy for self and custom build as a proportion of new homes on larger developments.

### **Keyworker Provision**

There is strategic importance in providing housing for key workers in Huntingdonshire and this aligns with national policy. Key workers (NHS staff, teachers, emergency services, social care) are essential for community well-being. National surveys show 68% of NHS staff consider affordable housing critical to staying in their job, housing provision helps attract and retain skilled professionals locally, reducing vacancies and service disruption. Without stable housing, staff face long commutes or leave the area, creating gaps in essential services. Housing provision ensures reliable delivery of health, education, and emergency services.

Key workers underpin local economies—schools, hospitals, and care services enable other sectors to function, Workforce shortages impact productivity and growth. Many key workers earn below market thresholds for home ownership or private rent, affordable housing provision ensures they can live near their workplace, reducing inequality and improving quality of life.

In 2023 the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System (ICS) undertook a housing survey that reached approximately 50,000 local health and care staff, with 1,142 responses, of which 86 were from those living in Huntingdonshire—representing ~7.5% of the total sample.

The survey encompassed a broad range of staff: from Cambridge University Hospitals NHS FT, CPFT, NWAFT, Royal Papworth, local authorities, primary care, ambulance services, social care.

The survey revealed significant housing challenges for health and care staff in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. Affordability emerged as a major concern, with many respondents struggling to secure housing near their workplace, leading to long or poor commutes that negatively impact wellbeing and job satisfaction.

Staff expressed a strong preference for housing within 5–20 miles of work and highlighted financial strain, safety concerns, and the need for longer tenancies to ensure stability. Desired housing types vary by household size, underscoring the need for tailored policies at district level.

Respondents strongly supported employer-led housing initiatives and partnerships to provide affordable options closer to work, alongside better access to information through tools like a Housing Hub. The survey also identified gaps in accessibility for staff with disabilities and highlighted demographic variations in housing needs, reinforcing the importance of targeted interventions to improve staff wellbeing and retention.

**As part of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** Affordable housing includes provision for “essential local workers.” and Local Plans are expected to help to address this need as part of meeting housing requirements whilst Section 106 agreements can secure affordable homes targeted to key workers.

In HDC we have completed two schemes for keyworkers at Alconbury Weald with Rentplus, which delivered a total of 22 homes, a mixture of one and two bedroom apartments, all

properties were occupied by September 2022. The second scheme was with Mangpm also in Alconbury Weald where a total of 75 homes, a mixture of one, two, three and four bedroom homes were identified for keyworkers.

## **Rural Housing**

Rural housing is vital to the sustainability, resilience, and long-term viability of rural communities, but they are significantly less affordable than those in urban areas, with the average National lower-quartile rural house price standing at 8.8 times local earnings, compared with 7.6 times in comparable urban areas, making it increasingly difficult for local people—particularly younger households, key workers, and lower-income families—to remain in their communities.

The lack of affordable housing in rural areas leads to people moving away and undermining rural jobs, as essential workers—including those in health, social care, education, hospitality, and agriculture—face being priced out of the communities they serve. National analysis shows that demand for rural social housing has increased by 31% between 2019 and 2022, compared with just 3% in predominantly urban areas, underscoring how acute the challenge has become.

The consequences extend far beyond individual households: the lack of secure, affordable homes contributes to the erosion of key rural services. Between 2018 and 2023, rural areas saw the closure of 45 schools, 53 post offices, and 49 play parks, alongside a 6% reduction in rural pubs and bars, demonstrating how housing pressures directly weaken the social infrastructure on which communities rely. Investing in rural housing therefore strengthens local economies, protects essential services, supports intergenerational cohesion, and ensures that rural areas remain vibrant, economically active places where people can live, work, and thrive. [[englishrural.org.uk](http://englishrural.org.uk)] [[housing.org.uk](http://housing.org.uk)]

In Huntingdonshire we work with Cambridgeshire ACRE who support the delivery of rural housing schemes across Cambridgeshire. Many of these sites are classed as Rural Exception Sites which are sites outside the village development boundary on land not otherwise suitable for development. The schemes are small and in keeping with the size, scale and character of the village.

The resulting homes are made available for social rent, affordable rent or shared ownership to people who have a connection with the village, usually to people that are already living there, or work or have family in the area . A small number of open market homes can also be permitted to make the scheme financially viable; this would be no more than 40% net of the site area. The homes are provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Importantly, the homes will also stay affordable in perpetuity and are not able to become open market homes in the future.

CACRE work with Town and Parish Councils to provide information about rural housing and how this could work in their town or parish, especially around any questions they may have on rural exception sites, housing tenures, local connections and allocations policies. They will also undertake an independent housing needs survey which establishes the demand for

affordable housing in the town or parish. CACRE will also support the relationship between the Town or Parish Council and Huntingdonshire DC alongside, potential housing association partners and potential landowners.

## **Empty Homes**

Empty homes represent a significant and often overlooked opportunity to meet housing need, support community regeneration, and make more effective use of existing housing stock. At a time of growing demand for affordable and decent homes, the presence of long-term vacant properties, often located in areas of high need, can undermine neighbourhood vitality, attract anti-social behaviour, and contribute to urban decline.

With the appointment of a new Empty Homes Officer in September 2025, the Council is developing an Empty Homes Strategy which will outline our commitment to tackling empty homes as part of a wider effort to create thriving, resilient communities and ensure that every home counts. This will include Strategic Integration, Data Driven Action, Tailored Interventions and cross sector collaboration.

This activity will support the role of the Environmental Health team who have previously responded to service requests relating to empty homes within the district, however, their input was focussed around dealing with the impact the property was having on immediate neighbours and the local community. This activity would generally require action under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 or Anti social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, their resourcing did not allow for further engagement with the property owner to discuss bringing the property back into use and there was no proactive management of empty homes.

## **Key Achievements from the 2020 – 2025 Housing Strategy**

The previous Housing Strategy 2020 – 2025 which was adopted in October 2020 had three key priorities:

1. **New homes to meet the needs of Huntingdonshire now and in the future**
2. **Homes to enable people in Huntingdonshire to live independent and healthy lives**
3. **Working in Partnership to achieve shared objectives**

These priorities formed an action plan, in the last five years the Council working in partnership has been able to achieve the following outcomes:

- ❖ Delivered clear expectations for delivering new affordable housing by developing the Affordable Housing Advice Note, including tenure, size and specialist housing (Appendix 1)
- ❖ Delivered a total of 2008 affordable homes with a further 688 currently under construction
- ❖ Delivered five rural housing schemes delivering a total of 111 homes for local people with a further four planned (please see Case Study 2 and 3)
- ❖ Delivered a total of 5478 number of new homes across the district with a further 1,047 under construction.
- ❖ Maintained a strong performance on achieving 40% affordable housing on eligible sites with few challenges on viability
- ❖ Completion of two schemes for keyworkers with a further scheme expected to complete in the first quarter of 26/27 (please see Case Study 1)



- ❖ Entering into contract with Amplius (formerly Longhurst) to deliver affordable housing on Council owned sites
- ❖ Completion of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment known as “Housing Needs of Specific Groups” by G L Hearn, a cross council report for the Cambridge sub region to inform plan-making in 2021
- ❖ Completion of a Local Housing Needs Assessment by ICENI in August 2025 to support the emerging Local Plan
- ❖ Completion of a revised Lettings Policy
- ❖ Completed a revised Tenancy Strategy
- ❖ Continue to actively take part in Regional and Sub- Regional meetings on Housing Strategy, Planning and Enabling, including Housing Board, Strategic Housing Group, Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk Enablers.
- ❖ Continue to financially support the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Housing Co-Ordinator
- ❖ Continue to financially support Cambridgeshire Acre
- ❖ Continue to financially support Age UK in the delivery of the Handyperson Service
- ❖ Completion of the Housing Options for Older People booklet
- ❖ Continuation of the Rough Sleeping outreach project which was recommissioned in 2024
- ❖ Adoption of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2021
- ❖ Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation in 2025
- ❖ Case Study on Affordable Housing Delivery in the Local Government Association
- ❖ Draft Empty Homes Strategy 2026
- ❖ Acquisition of 21 homes in partnership with Stonewater for the Local Authority Housing Fund.

## CASE STUDIES –

### **CASE STUDY ONE**

## Keyworker Provision at Alconbury Weald with Rentplus

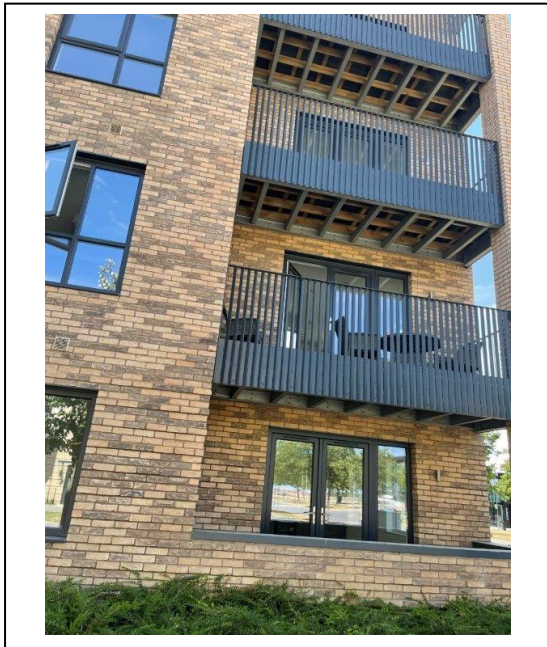
The Rentplus model is an affordable rent to buy scheme offering residents the chance to move into a new home without a deposit and purchase it after a fixed rental period.

The scheme was 22 homes comprising:

8 x 1 bedroom flats

11 x 2 bedroom flats

3 Coach Houses



Of the 28 people living in the 21 apartments, 20 work in key and essential industries – 13 as key (public sector)

Salaries range from £18,000 to £52kpa. With 13 people earning under £29,999 and 17 earning under £39,999.

All had a local connection with Huntingdonshire.

## CASE STUDY TWO

## Rural Housing Delivery – Bluntisham

Meridian Close is a scheme on the western edge of Bluntisham.

This was a developer led rural exception site, with Rose Homes constructing the homes. Hastoe were involved in the planning process, and the affordable homes were built in alignment with Hastoe's design requirements. These requirements aim to maintain high standards at all stages of development and ensure that the resulting homes are energy efficient, well designed, of high quality and provide for the needs of residents



The scheme is unique in that it includes 9 private sale homes. This large proportion of private sale homes is possible through Huntingdonshire District Councils policy allowing up to 40% of a rural exception site to be used for private sale. These homes assist in making the rest of the scheme, i.e. the affordable homes, viable and possible to be provided for the village

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Number of Properties  | 20 (of which 11 affordable and 9 private sale)  |
| Property Types        | Rented =<br>2 x 1bed house<br>3 x 2bed house<br>1 x 2bed bungalow<br>2 x 3bed house<br><br>Shared Ownership =<br>1 x 2bed house<br>1 x 3bed house |
| Housing Needs Survey  | December 2012   |
| Planning Permission   | April 2019  |
| Start on Site         | March 2020  |
| Completion            | July 2021   |
| Homes England Funding | £420,000.   |

- Hastoe Housing Association
- Rose Homes
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- Bluntisham Parish Council
- Cambridgeshire ACRE



### CASE STUDY THREE

## Rural Housing Delivery – Great Staughton Community Land Trust

Jewell Close in Great Staughton is a housing scheme delivered by a Community Land Trust (CLT), a community-led organisation established in August 2018 to provide affordable, long-term housing for local residents.

The scheme emerged from the Neighbourhood Plan, it comprises 12 new homes a mixture of one, two and three bedroom homes for social rent and shared ownership.

All homes were built to modern standards and designed to remain affordable in perpetuity for people with a local connection to Great Staughton and neighbouring villages.

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Number of Properties | 12 (of which 3 for shared ownership and 9 for social rent)   |
| Property Types       | Rented =<br>2 x 1 bedroom flat<br>2 x 2 bedroom house<br>2 x 2 bedroom bungalow<br>3 x 3 bedroom house<br><br>Shared Ownership =<br>2 x 2 bedroom house<br>1 x 3 bedroom house |
| Housing Needs Survey | 2013   |
| CLT Incorporated     | August 2018  |
| Planning Permission  | July 2021  |
| Start on Site        | October 2021   |
| Completion           | March 2023   |
| CPCA Grant Funding   | £606,423   |

- Luminous (now Places for People)
- Eastern Community Homes
- Community Land Trust
- Great Staughton Parish Council
- CPCA
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- Aspen Homes



## CASE STUDY 4

### Affordable Housing Scheme in Bluntisham by Accent delivering 26 Homes



Orchard View, Bluntisham, was a scheme by Accent Housing Association which delivered 26 high-quality, energy-efficient homes for affordable rent and shared ownership. The

The development was supported by Huntingdonshire District Council and received grant from Homes England.

The new development includes 7 homes for affordable rent (5 one-bedroom, 2 two-bedroom) and 19 shared ownership homes (9 two-bedroom, 10 three-bedroom).

All homes have been allocated or sold to people with a local connection, ensuring that the Bluntisham community benefits directly from the development. The homes were built with a fabric first approach, every property achieved an EPC rating of B or higher, with 9 homes achieving an A rating.

Solar panels have been installed on every roof, reducing energy bills for residents and helping tackle fuel poverty. All homes have EV charging points, future-proofing them for sustainable living. The scheme incorporates significant green space, new trees, and a children's play area, all designed for community use.

Two 1 bedroom bungalows and Two 2 bedroom bungalows were delivered as part of the scheme and included wet rooms ensure the homes are accessible to a wide range of residents, including older people and those with reduced mobility.

This new development is located adjacent to existing Accent homes on Station Road

- **Start on site: September 2023**
- **Completion: July 2025**
- **Total investment: £7.43m**

## CASE STUDY 5

### Amplus Housing Scheme – California Road, Huntingdon



This project delivered 56 affordable homes in Huntingdon as part of Cambridgeshire Regional College redevelopment, it delivered a mixture of one, two and three-bedroom properties.

The development was built using modern methods of construction which saw panels constructed in factory conditions using sustainably sourced timber and delivered to the site as complete wall panels with insulation and external cladding. The use of panellised timber along with factory-fitted detailing means the homes will be lower carbon and use less energy for residents. The development also used a ground source heat pump for all the homes, which will also help to reduce energy costs for the residents.

The development won both the social housing project of the year and the overall best timber frame project of the year at the Structural Timber awards.





## ACTION PLAN

### Priority 1 – Delivering new homes and meeting Housing Need

Delivering new homes for Huntingdonshire through sustainable growth and regeneration and through high quality place making that enhances health and wellbeing continues to be an objective of the Council.

Therefore under this priority the Council will:

|        | ACTION   | Lead Service      | Timeframe | Comments   |
|--------|--|-------------------|-----------|--|
| P1 - 1 | Deliver new housing that meets our annual delivery targets <b>DO</b>   | Planning          | Yearly    | Information obtained from the Annual Monitoring Report |
| P1 – 2 | Deliver new affordable housing that meets housing demand <b>ENABLE</b> | Strategic Housing | Yearly    | Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process     |



|         |  |                                   |             |  |
|---------|--|-----------------------------------|-------------|--|
| P1 – 3  | Explore further options for Keyworker Housing<br><b>INFLUENCE</b>  | Strategic Housing                 | Yearly      | Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process |
| P1 – 4  | Support the development of Rural Housing<br><b>ENABLE</b>  | Strategic Housing                 | Yearly      | Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process |
| P1 – 5  | Work with Places For People on housing led regeneration schemes<br><b>ENABLE</b>                                 | Strategic Housing                 | Yearly      | Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process |
| P1 – 6  | Encourage the use of non traditional construction methods to support work on Climate Change.<br><b>INFLUENCE</b> | Strategic Housing                 | Yearly      | Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process |
| P1 – 7  | Refresh the Huntingdonshire Local Plan<br><b>DO</b>  | Planning                          | Summer 2027 | Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process |
| P1 – 8  | Increase the number of homeless preventions recorded<br><b>DO</b>  | Communities & Operational Housing | Yearly      | Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process |
| P1 – 9  | Reduce households in temporary accommodation through innovative housing solutions<br><b>DO</b>                   | Communities & Operational Housing | Yearly      | Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process |
| P1 – 10 | Review and update the Lettings Policy<br><b>DO</b>   | Operational Housing               | 2026/27     | Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process |
| P1 – 11 | Reduced the number of Long Term Empty Homes<br><b>DO</b>   | Strategic Housing                 | Yearly      | Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process |

## **Priority Two – High Quality Homes in Huntingdonshire enabling people to live safe, independent and healthy lives**

Delivering high quality homes continues to be a priority for the Council, the actions below set out how the Council will work with partners to deliver this priority as follows:

|        | ACTION   | LEAD SERVICE | TIMEFRAME | COMMENTS |
|--------|--|--------------|-----------|----------|
| P2 – 1 | Work with partners to deliver the Health and Wellbeing Strategy<br><b>DO /ENABLE/INFLUENCE</b> | Communities  | Ongoing   |          |
| P2 – 2 | Work with partners to deliver the Health and   | Communities  | Ongoing   |          |

|        |  |                      |                             |  |
|--------|--|----------------------|-----------------------------|--|
|        | Wealth Building Strategy<br><b>DO/ENABLE/INFLUENCE</b>   |                      |                             |  |
| P2 – 3 | Develop a Supported Housing Strategy (links to P2 – 5 <b>DO</b> )                                      | Housing Strategy     | March 2027                  |  |
| P2 - 4 | Implement the changes brought about by the Renters Rights Bill <b>DO</b>                               | Environmental Health | 2026/2027                   |  |
| P2 – 5 | Implement the Social Housing Regulatory Act and prepare for further objectives <b>DO</b>               | Housing Strategy     | Unknown at the present time | Prepare for the introduction of additional elements once guidance provided                             |
| P2 – 6 | Review the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy <b>DO</b>  | Housing Operations   | 2026/27                     | In line with Government's National Plan to end Homelessness  |
| P2 – 7 | Work with Health and Social Care in relation to Specialist Housing Provision <b>ENABLE / INFLUENCE</b> | Housing Strategy     | Yearly                      | Accommodation for Physical Disability, Older Persons, Learning Disability, Mental Health, Autism, etc. |
| P2 - 8 | Review services to Rough Sleepers including outreach <b>DO</b>   | Housing Operations   | 2026/2027                   |  |
| P2 - 9 | Review and Monitor the delivery of Disable Facility Grants <b>DO</b>                                   | Communities          | 26/27 and then yearly       | Monitored through the Council's Monitoring process   |

## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Affordable Housing**

Affordable Housing is a broad category covering all homes for rent or sale below market rates. This includes homes let at Social Rent and Intermediate Rent. It also includes homes for sale on a Shared Ownership basis or as Discounted Market Sale.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule**

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) came into force in April 2010. It allows local authorities to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects in their area. The money can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure that is needed as a result of development. This includes new or safer road schemes, flood defences, schools, hospitals and other health and social care facilities, park improvements, green spaces and leisure centres. Local authorities implementing CIL must produce a charging schedule setting out the charge rates for different types of development in their area.

### **Extra Care Housing**

Extra Care Housing is housing designed with the needs of frailer older people in mind and with varying levels of care and support available on site. People who live in Extra Care Housing have their own self-contained homes, their own front doors and a legal right to occupy the property.

## **Homes England**

Homes England is the government housing and regeneration agency with an aim to accelerate the pace of house building and regeneration across the country. It works with housing provider partners to bring together land, money, expertise, and planning and CPO powers to facilitate the delivery of new homes. In May 2023 HE published its new five-year strategic plan that has been signed off by government and supports the levelling up agenda. The strategy has a strong emphasis on supporting regeneration.

## **Net-Zero Carbon**

Net zero is the state in which as much greenhouse gas emissions are removed from the atmosphere as are produced. The term can be applied on many levels, for instance a home, city or country. In the example of a home, the emissions associated with the construction of the property and the day-to-day use of the house (e.g. heating and electricity use) should equal to emissions captured. In practice, this means reducing emissions as much as possible, through energy efficient design and use of low carbon heating and renewable electricity.

## **Registered Provider**

A Registered Provider is an organisation that provides social housing but must be registered by the Regulator of Social Housing.

## **Regulator of Social Housing**

The Regulator of Social Housing is a stand-alone non departmental public body of government. Its role is to promote a viable, efficient, and well-governed social housing sector that can deliver and maintain homes of appropriate quality that meet a range of needs. It is a stand-alone non departmental public body of government.

## **Statutorily Homeless**

A household will be considered as statutorily homeless by their local authority if they meet specific criteria set out in legislation. Broadly speaking, somebody is statutorily homeless if they do not have accommodation that they have a legal right to occupy, which is accessible and physically available to them and which it would be reasonable for them to continue to live in.

In cases where an authority is satisfied that an applicant is eligible for assistance, is in priority need, and has become homeless through no fault of their own, the authority will owe a main homelessness duty to secure settled accommodation for that household. Such households are referred to as acceptances.

## **Section106 Agreement**

Section106 agreements are those struck between developers and the local authority to support planning applications. The agreements included in a s.106 agreement can be broad, but they are usually utilised to ensure that a local community affected by development actually benefits from it. This is usually through the provision of affordable housing on the development where the s.106 agreement is in place, or as a financial contribution from a developer towards schools and other local services.

## **Temporary Accommodation**

Temporary Accommodation is a category of housing provided by a council either while it investigates a homelessness application, or when it has confirmed that it has a duty to provide

settled housing under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. When that legal duty applies this is because somebody is homeless but has not made themselves homeless deliberately and is also in a defined priority need group. Temporary accommodation provided on an emergency basis while a homeless application is investigated is also called 'interim' or 'emergency' accommodation, and it might either be a hostel, self-contained or hotel accommodation.

### **Thermal efficiency**

The ability to use or produce heat without wasting materials, time, or energy

### **Supported housing**

Supported housing is an umbrella term which is applied to a whole range of housing based solutions for vulnerable people. It caters for a wide range of client groups with diverse needs who require different levels of support in a range of accommodation models.

### **Social Housing**

Social housing, or social rented housing is a sub-set of affordable housing. Social housing refers specifically to rental properties owned by local authorities or non-profit Registered Provider

## **Appendices**