



SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL HOUSING STRATEGY 2026-2031

DRAFT

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Foreword from Councillor Frampton

I was born in Southampton, and I still live here today. This city is my home, and I know how much home matters. A home is more than just bricks and mortar. It is where dreams are built, memories are made, and futures take shape. That is why it is so important that we house our residents and tenants correctly. With dignity, fairness, and care.

As Cabinet Member for Housing, I hear from residents every day about the challenges they face - long waiting lists, rising costs, and the need for safe, secure housing. This strategy is our response. Not just to those challenges, but to the hopes and expectations of the people of Southampton.



We have built this strategy around three clear priorities:

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

This is not a strategy that will sit on a shelf or in a draw. It will live on. Through delivery plans, through action, and through the voices of our residents. It will be a working strategy, one that guides our decisions and holds us accountable.

We are already acting - investing in regeneration, tackling damp and mould, improving energy efficiency, and strengthening tenant engagement. We are working to prevent homelessness, support independence, and make better use of the homes we already have.

I want to thank everyone who responded to the consultation. Your feedback has further strengthened this strategy. One resident told us:

“My daughter and granddaughter have been waiting nearly five years on the housing list. They’ve lived their whole lives in Southampton, and it’s ridiculous that they have to live with us in a small two-bedroom flat when they should have a property of their own”

Another said:

“Access to good low-cost housing is becoming increasingly important given the economic and employment situation. The lack of it impacts many other areas and spending on it can reduce costs across a range of other budgets, not necessarily Council ones.”

These are not just comments – they are calls to action and we are acting.

This strategy is built on listening, built on action, and built on belief. Belief that Southampton can and should be a city where housing supports health, opportunity, and dignity.

Cllr Andy Frampton

Cabinet Member for Housing

Executive Summary

This housing strategy sets out a vision to create a thriving, inclusive community where everyone has access to safe, affordable, healthy and sustainable housing.

Our City Plan sets out the change we want to see in Southampton by 2035¹. It states that over the next decade the number of new homes has dramatically increased, and the quality of current homes has also improved and that this has helped meet local housing needs. This strategy is rooted in our city missions and sets out how our approach to housing will help support this change over the next five years.

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

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

Improving Our Landlord Services	Increasing Quality Homes in the City	Supporting Strong and Resilient Communities
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To address Southampton’s housing challenges and deliver better outcomes, this strategy outlines a comprehensive approach that includes:

- Improvements in how we deliver our social landlord function
- Expanding and improving housing supply
- Investing in sustainable housing design
- Understanding diverse customer needs and feedback, prioritising them and using the insight to improve our services
- Alleviating overcrowding through a downsizing policy that supports existing residents eligible for the housing register to move to suitably sized homes. This will make better use of existing housing stock and help residents live in homes that meet their needs.
- Urban regeneration

¹ [City Plan](#)

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

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

Our Approach

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

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

Long-term Objectives:

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

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

Focus

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

Improving Our Landlord Services:

We are focused on ensuring homes are safe, healthy, good quality and well-maintained. We need to understand our customer's needs, characteristics, experiences and expectations to shape how we plan, deliver and improve – every day and at every level.

Increasing Quality Homes in the City:

Southampton needs to increase the availability and viable delivery of good quality housing, to meet the growing demand, to support economic growth and reduce adverse health and social impacts, and inequality.

Supporting Strong and Resilient Communities:

Housing is key to creating healthy, thriving communities. We will work with partners to prevent homelessness, support independence, and collaborate with residents, businesses, and organisations to make neighbourhoods safe and welcoming for everyone.

About Southampton

Southampton is a vibrant and culturally rich city, known for its diversity, deep-rooted maritime history and dynamic economy. It is home to one of the largest seaports the UK, the city plays a crucial role in global trade, fostering economic growth and creating opportunities for businesses and residents alike².

Southampton's population reflects its diversity, with 31.9% of residents identifying as other than white British, and more than 160 languages spoken³. This rich cultural mix contributes to the city's unique character but also brings distinct housing challenges that need careful planning and investment.

Beyond its maritime heritage, Southampton thrives as an economic hub, hosting 7,400 enterprises⁴ and two prestigious universities that attract students, transient workers, and long-term residents. With a population of 259,424⁵ people across 109,226 households⁶, the city balances tradition with modern development, and its housing strategy must reflect this evolving landscape.

Who Lives Where and Why it Matters

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

- 47.7% of households own their home, either outright or with a mortgage⁷, compared to 63.2% nationally
- 29.2% rent privately, significantly higher than the 19% national average
- 21.9% live in social housing, notably higher than the 17% national average, underscoring the importance of council and housing association services
- 1% reside in shared ownership properties, closely reflecting the national figure.
- 0.1% live rent-free, in line with national trends

Life expectancy averages 77.9 years for men and 82.3 years for women⁸ while the average age of the population is 34 compared to 40 years in England⁹, demonstrating the city's need for housing that caters to both its younger and aging populations. However, these life expectancy figures

² [Home - Southampton VTS - ABP Southampton](#)

³ Census 2021

⁴ ONS UK Business Counts 2024

⁵ ONS - Mid-Year Estimate 2024

⁶ Hampshire County Council SAPF 2023

⁷ ONS Housing Survey, 2024

⁸ ONS 2021-2023

⁹ Census 2021

are notably lower than the national and regional averages reflecting Southampton's health inequalities. These inequalities are also found within the city where there are differences in life expectancy between some wards of nearly seven years for men and eight years for women. Improving housing quality so that Southampton residents have homes that are safe, warm and with a secure tenure will help to address these inequalities. Overcrowding is a growing concern, with 5.8% of households needing more space - either one additional room (5.1%) or two or more rooms (0.7%). Nationally, overcrowding rates are slightly lower at 4.5%, reflecting Southampton's acute pressures on housing availability.

Challenges in Housing

Southampton faces significant housing pressures as demand continues to outstrip supply. Rising house prices and rents have made housing increasingly unaffordable for many, especially those on lower incomes with the residents' average gross weekly wage is £724¹⁰. Key figures include:

- The average house price in Southampton reached £234,076 in September 2025, compared to the national average of £291,515¹¹
- In 2024/25, private rents have surged by 11.5% with the average monthly rent now at £1,225, slightly below the national average of £1,366¹²
- First-time buyers in Southampton face an average home cost of £209,060, compared to £244,886 nationally¹³, however, it is still a challenge for young people to get on the ladder due to high cost of living.

Affordability pressures, alongside wider market constraints, continue to reduce the availability of social housing and exacerbate overcrowding. As at the end of the 2024/25 financial year, 8,361 households remain on the Housing Register

Demand for social housing continues to far exceed the number and size of available homes. The Housing Register has grown in recent years due to rising housing costs, increased homelessness, increased occupancy levels and limited movement within existing stock. As a result, households are waiting longer for accommodation, and pressure on the allocations and homelessness system continues to increase.

The ratings from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), following an inspection conducted in November 2024, assigned a consumer grading of C3¹⁴ to Southampton City Council out of four possible outcomes. These focus on the quality of service and outcomes for tenants. C1 where the organisation fully meets standards, C2: Broadly meets standards but has weaknesses that need improvements, C3: serious failings identified; significant engagement needed for improvements.

¹⁰ ONS – 2025 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

¹¹ Land Registry, October 2025

¹² ONS Housing Prices Report, December 2025

¹³ Land Registry, October 2025

¹⁴ [Southampton City Council \(00MS\) - Regulatory Judgement: 27 November 2024 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/southampton-city-council-00ms-regulatory-judgement-27-november-2024)

The Housing Allocation Policy was updated in July 2024, with implementation completed in May 2025. The previous points-based system was replaced by a banding approach, making the process easier to understand, more efficient to administer, and more closely aligned with practices used by many other councils in England. The new policy also provides a more accurate and up-to-date assessment of housing need across the city.

Housing Register Demand and Waiting Times

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

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

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

Investment

We will seek to fund the investment commitments in this strategy through a range of approaches.

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

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

Regeneration

To ensure we drive the achievement of decent homes standards and support strong, thriving communities, we will be working across the housing stock to identify opportunities to invest and develop local areas where new homes can be created; wherein housing stock, that by reason of time or build type has reached the end of its viable life, can be replaced; and investment can be found to support community facilities. This work has begun with our regeneration ambitions built around a newly developed place-shaping, regeneration strategy that combines new council homes, with retrofit, refurbishment, and estate regeneration. This multi-faceted approach is informed by a city-wide assessment of 17,861 council-owned homes, identifying neighbourhoods and housing typologies with the highest repair liabilities, lowest energy performance, and greatest socio-economic need. The regeneration strategy will identify 'early win' pilot projects that are replicable other housing estates, and by leveraging new external funding and delivery models.

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

Opportunities and Solutions

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

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

Key initiatives include:

- The delivery of a new Housing Regeneration Strategy
- Prioritising social housing supply and reinvesting in council-owned stock
- Exploring new models for social rent housing delivery

- Ensuring new homes are built to high standards and meet sustainability targets
- Improving conditions in the private rental sector, particularly through compliance enforcement

Impact of Right to Buy and Legislative Changes

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

The Council is currently utilising Right to Buy receipts to support a pilot programme of property acquisitions during 2024/25 and 2025/26. This approach will help meet housing need more effectively by increasing the supply of affordable homes and making better use of available funding.

From 2026, RTB receipts can be used more flexibly to fund replacement homes, as councils can use up to 100% of receipts for this purpose, alongside other funds like [Section 106 contributions](#). This new flexibility abandons the old rigid replacement targets, focusing on providing councils with the tools to build more homes.

Looking ahead, key considerations include:

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

Strategic Priorities

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

Priority 1: Improving Our Landlord Services

Strategic Aim and Context

Asset Investment Strategy and Plan

We manage 17,861 (15,635¹⁵ council homes and a further 2,129 leasehold and 97 shared ownership) properties across Southampton. Our aim is to make sure every council home meets the minimum quality standard for homes in England, known as the Decent Homes Standard. This includes:

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

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

We have reduced our non-decent homes from 9500 during 2025 to 6,878 and we will continue to do so through sustained investment over time. We recognise the challenges we face in reaching a target of 100% decent homes by 2030. We will prioritise improvements such as better insulation, A-rated windows and doors, and enhanced roofing to strengthen energy performance and tackle fuel poverty.

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

- Fire safety
- Gas safety
- Electrical safety
- Legionella control

¹⁵ As of October 2025

- Lift safety
- Asbestos management

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

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

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

Optimise Existing Stocks

Southampton's population has grown by 10% between 2011-2024, reaching nearly 259,424 residents across 109,226 households. Meanwhile, private rents have risen by 11.5%, and average house prices are over £234,076, making it harder for many people to buy or rent homes. At the same time, 29.2% of residents rent privately; much higher than the national average of 19%, while many face low wages and high living costs.

Overcrowding is a growing concern, with 5.8% of households needing more space, compared to the national average of 4.4%. This includes 5.1% needing one extra room and 0.7% needing two or more.¹⁶

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

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

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

¹⁶ Census 2021

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

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

We will: Make best use of available housing by reducing empty properties, improving repairs, and ensure fair allocation so more residents can access safe and suitable homes.

Working with You as Customers

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

Our Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy, places tenants, shared owners, and leaseholders at the heart of service improvement. Listening to our customers allows us to prioritise what matters most, strengthen decision-making, and drive service excellence.

We will:

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

We also recognise that complaints are an important part of learning and improving. In 2024/25, 329 Stage 1 complaints were received, with 60% closed within timescale and 46.9% upheld - many relating to repairs, delays and communication. Our target is to reply to 100% of complaints within timescales and we are committed to improving how we respond, resolve issues, and learn from what residents tell us.

Following an inspection conducted in November 2024, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) assigned a consumer grading of C3¹⁷ to Southampton City Council. The two standards where the Regulator found serious failings are:

¹⁷ [Southampton City Council \(OOMS\) - Regulatory Judgement: 27 November 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

- **Safety and Quality Standard**, which is explicitly focused on health and safety compliance, covering gas, electrical, fire and building safety, and
- **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard**, that requires landlords to publish performance information and demonstrate responsiveness to customers' feedback

This was the first time we have received a consumer grade, and it has prompted a renewed focus on transparency, accountability, and improvement.

We will train our housing services staff to identify tenants' health, safeguarding concerns, and signpost to support services.

To ensure tenant sustainability we will continue to support tenants to access employment.

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

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

We will: Listen to residents and act on their feedback, we will ensure housing support is responsive, accessible, and meets community needs

Neighbourhood Environment

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

This approach reflects national priorities outlined in the UK Government's 2025 Plan for Neighbourhoods, a £1.5 billion commitment to revitalise underserved areas through long-term investment, community empowerment, and locally driven change. By aligning local delivery with national aims, Southampton is committed to building healthier, more resilient places.

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

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

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

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

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

Our Plan

Priority 1: Improving Our Landlord Services		
	Asset Investment Strategy and Plan	Optimise Existing Stocks
What are our priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an asset management strategy which sets out what the future of council housing looks like in the city Make sure that the council has a robust assurance and reporting framework 100% of Homes are safe and free of serious hazards Ensure that investment in homes is targeted, planned, and sustainable to meet both current and future needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing the number of void properties to a normalised level of 237 from the current 341 (as of May 2025) and increasing rental income through faster turnaround times Maintaining properties at the Decent Homes Standard while adhering to legislative requirements and addressing repair needs proactively We will reduce overcrowding by implementing a downsizing policy that enables eligible existing residents on the housing register to move to suitably sized homes. This will ensure better use of existing housing stock and support residents to live in accommodation that meets their needs We will strengthen engagement with tenants to increase awareness of housing options, enabling residents to make informed decisions about downsizing or mutual exchanges. This will support more efficient use of housing stock and promote sustainable tenancies
How are we going to do it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust asset data which informs investments and divestments to ensure the future viability of housing stock now and in the future Explore all options to retain social housing stock levels decisions Maximise investment in decent homes Increase the use of delivery partners to ensure the delivery of planned works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drive digital transformation initiatives to improve reporting and tracking systems for voids and repairs, enabling faster turnaround and better service delivery Diversify our delivery model to maintain enough capacity and capability for current and future needs in voids and repairs. Implement and actively promote downsizing schemes with tailored incentives and practical support for tenants seeking smaller, more suitable homes Collaborate with housing associations to improve mutual exchange processes, enabling tenants to swap homes across social housing providers efficiently
What difference does this make?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homes where people want to live A sustainable housing stock which meets both existing and future needs Safer, healthier homes that support residents' wellbeing and quality of life. Greater trust and confidence in the council's management of its housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved housing conditions that align with Decent Homes Standards, enhancing tenant satisfaction and wellbeing Reduced rent loss and increased availability of safe, well-maintained homes through efficient voids management Families on the housing register and those living in overcrowded conditions will benefit from faster access to homes that are the right size for their needs, helping to improve wellbeing and make better use of available housing. A more balanced and flexible housing system empowers tenants while addressing critical housing shortages citywide

<p>What does success look like?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve the level of Decent Homes of the council housing stock to 60% by 2027 and 100% by 2030. This will be done as part of other actions to optimise the existing housing portfolio. ▪ Robust asset data which informs investments and divestments to ensure the future viability of housing stock now and in the future. We will achieve 100% stock condition data by 2027. ▪ Reduction in empty homes to less than 1.0% of stock ▪ A sustainable housing stock profile which is supported by robust acquisition & disposal decisions, to ensure a housing stock that is fit for purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Voids turnaround times meet targets, reducing the average from 118 days (routine voids) and 334 days (major voids) to 10 days and 65 days, respectively ▪ Improved repair response times, with appointments completed on time increasing to 99% and first-visit repairs exceeding the target of 90% ▪ A robust and transparent Housing Allocation Policy ensures the equitable distribution of homes while addressing housing needs effectively ▪ Increased availability of appropriately sized homes for families on the housing register and those experiencing overcrowding / higher occupancy levels.
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Our Plan

Priority 1: Improving Our Landlord Services		
	Working With You as Customers	Neighbourhood Environment
<p>What are our priorities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ understand the diverse needs of tenants and use these to deliver fair and equitable outcomes ▪ co-create service improvements with tenants ▪ be open with tenants about our progress and constraints, and ▪ share information with tenants in accessible ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote social & environmental wellbeing ▪ Ensure the safety of shared external spaces ▪ Consider the needs of all residents, including children and those with mobility issues ▪ Empower and support residents to take ownership of the outside spaces near their homes
<p>How are we going to do it?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhanced tenant insight and scrutiny through the establishment of a new Tenant Insight Panel, chaired by an Independent Chair ▪ Make available good quality, up-to-date performance data and information to those involved in scrutiny activities. ▪ Implementing a tenant's charter & introducing a new Tenant Engagement Strategy ▪ Collect, analyse and use tenant profile information in order to deliver tailored services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage residents in decisions which affect where they live ▪ Enable residents to make requests for improvements to their neighbourhood ▪ Develop an independent Decent Neighbourhood Guide ▪ Commit an annual budget which is dedicated to making improvements to the external environment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recording and communicating of lessons learnt from complaints ▪ Redesigning our housing management service to enable officers to know their estates and residents better, and tailor the service to individual needs 	
What difference does this make?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Giving you an active stake in the running of Housing Services rather than just being recipients of services will lead to better outcomes and standards for all residents ▪ We will rebuild trust with residents, embedding resident engagement throughout Housing Services ▪ We will empower you to scrutinise and shape the continuous improvement of your housing service ▪ Services will be shaped by resident voices to meet their needs ▪ Increased tenant satisfaction: Clear and consistent communication helps to build trust and ensures that you feel valued and respected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create neighbourhoods where residents are proud to live ▪ Increased resident satisfaction in neighbourhoods helps contribute towards more stable, less transient communities ▪ Improved living standards - Access to quality amenities, green spaces, and safe environments ▪ Creates neighbourhoods which support residents' physical health and mental wellbeing
What does success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved tenant satisfaction, evidenced by higher scores in overall satisfaction, responsiveness to tenant views, and perceptions of fairness and respect. ▪ Comprehensive baseline of tenant and household demographics in place. Demonstrating we know our tenants and enabling data-driven decision making for service improvements. ▪ An iterative approach to improving call answering times to get closer to best practice standards, through system upgrades and resource optimisation ▪ Conduct face-to-face tenancy checks at least once every five years. Building stronger relationships, identifying vulnerabilities, and ensuring our services are responsive to the diverse circumstances of our residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring neighbourhoods are modern and attractive ▪ Improved accessibility and connectivity to surrounding areas ▪ Address community safety concerns- including 'designing out' crime and anti-social behaviour ▪ Alleviate parking pressures

Priority 2: Increasing Quality Homes in the City

Strategic Aims and Context

Housing Supply

Increasing housing supply is important for Southampton. Small Area Population Forecasts (SAPF)¹⁸ suggest the city's population will grow by 16,821 people between 2025 and 2030, a 6.1% increase. Whilst housing affordability in Southampton is better than it is many other parts of Hampshire, there are still many who struggle to afford a home as reflected in the over 8,000 residents on the Council's housing register in 2024. When considering these factors against the backdrop of a national housing crisis, the delivery of more homes in the city, of all tenures, is vital.

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

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

The Government also sets a standard method for calculating housing need. Southampton's target as of May 2025 is 1,208 new homes per annum (note: this target will change at least annually). It is the role of the Local Plan to set out a vision and strategy for how the city will grow and develop, meeting all of the above needs, over a minimum 15-year period from adoption.

¹⁸ Small Area Population Forecasts are prepared by Hampshire County Council. The Southampton forecasts are available on the Southampton Data Observatory. See the population dashboard at <https://data.southampton.gov.uk/population/population-size-and-structure/> [accessed 08/04/2025]

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

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

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

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

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

Every Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) in England should develop a Local Growth Plan and, in this broader context, our Growth and Prosperity Plan (GPP) will help define and inform the city's position as a leading growth hub within the broader Mayoral sub-region. The Mayor will have responsibility for driving regional economic growth, strategic planning and infrastructure, strategic transport and other areas with powers and

funding passed down from government departments. Through Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the Government also intends to end the current two-tier system of counties and district councils by creating unitary councils across the whole country with populations of around 500,000. This change will mean a new council being established covering Southampton and a wider area, this will have implications for the extent and nature of the local housing market.

The Council (and partners) have a clear ambition to deliver inclusive growth and shared prosperity across the city. The new City Plan also recognises the need for a 'Growth Mission' and the role that the Southampton Renaissance Board will play as a key growth sponsor and with the GPP providing the framework through which the 'Growing Southampton' mission is delivered. The vision is clear, for Southampton to be a thriving, inclusive and sustainable city with new homes built, good jobs secured, and vibrant places created for citizens to enjoy. We want the city to be a leading hub for innovation and culture, one that builds on key sectors such as marine and maritime technology – all of which contributes to a better quality of life, and better-quality outcomes, for communities across the city.

The GPP also provides a clear framework for the delivery of the Southampton Renaissance and the Asset Development and Disposal programmes with the deliverability and viability of housing-led, regeneration schemes being critical.

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

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

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

***We will:** Enable the delivery of more homes to meet growing demand by developing a new Local Plan, allocate land for housing, promote regeneration opportunities, and ensure a mix of housing options to support diverse community needs*

Quality of New Build Homes

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

Southampton's population is projected to grow from 268,643 in 2025 to 284,924 by 2030 — a 6.1% increase. This growth reinforces the need to deliver homes that are not only fit for purpose, but also capable of meeting future demand while supporting health, inclusion and climate resilience.

The emerging Southampton City Vision Local Plan, will set a strong framework for new development, guided by the following principles:

- **Design:** Ensuring high-quality design of buildings to ensure they work as intended and fit into the surroundings, encourage safe and inclusive neighbourhoods (e.g. via natural surveillance), use appropriate materials to ensure longevity, and that taller buildings are visually interesting and add positively to the cityscape
- **Amenity:** Setting minimum space standards for new homes, ensuring new developments fit well with existing neighbourhoods and don't negatively impact the quality of life of existing residents or future occupiers (e.g. via overlooking), and ensuring residents have access to adequate outdoor amenity space, all of which is important for mental and physical health and wellbeing

- **Sustainability:** Making homes environmentally friendly (e.g. sufficient heating and cooling, energy and water efficiency) and directing them to locations which are accessible and have the necessary services nearby to reduce the need for long car trips and encourage more walking and cycling

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

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

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

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

We will: *Ensure all new homes are well-designed, sustainable, and built to high standards to create safe, attractive, and long-lasting communities*

Delivery of Affordable Housing¹⁹

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

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

¹⁹ According to NPPF definition

The current focus is on progressing plots earmarked for estate regeneration in Townhill Park. The programme has faced challenges including around viability, site preparation, and tenant decanting. However, substantial progress is expected on a number of these plots within the lifetime of this strategy with four plots already awarded to two RPs, which will lead to the completion of a significant number of affordable homes.

In parallel, the council continues to secure Affordable Housing planning obligations through the planning system via Section 106 (s106) agreements. Delivery has been challenging for many years due to developers' routine use of viability assessment submissions, which we will independently appraise to substantiate the viability position of the individual development. If, as a result of this viability position the Council waives all or part of the Affordable Housing provision, we will seek further viability appraisal reviews secured within the Section 106 Agreement, based on development completion performance and/or fixed viability reviews at various points in the development process to understand how the viability position changes as the development comes forward and if the viability improves whether this improvement will allow for an additional Affordable Housing provision. Any such provision is secured within the various viability review mechanisms used in the Council's Section 106 Agreements and the nature of any provision will generally be defined by the point at which the development has reached at the time of the specific viability appraisal review.

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

This multi-pronged approach enables the council to:

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

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

We will: *Expand access to affordable housing by working with partners, using our council-owned land, and secure new developments meet the growing community needs.*

Maximise Private Renting Offer

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

The 2023–24 Scrutiny Inquiry into Private Renting confirmed that these issues are especially pronounced in Southampton and called for the council to take a more assertive and proactive approach. We understand that tackling poor housing conditions is essential to reducing waiting lists, preventing homelessness, and improving residents' health and wellbeing, that is why we will strengthen this area of work.

To address this, the council will:

- Expand enforcement activity and capacity, using the full range of legal tools to remove any financial benefit from non-compliance
- Increase prosecutions and penalties, including fines of up to £30,000, where appropriate
- Prioritise properties containing Category 1 hazards, which pose serious health and safety risks such as dangerous electrics or severe damp and mould
- Respond appropriately to Category 2 hazards, which are less urgent but still materially affect residents' wellbeing

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

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

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

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

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

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

We will: *Improve standards in private rented homes by enforcing regulations, expand licensing schemes, and hold landlords accountable to ensure safe and high-quality housing for residents*

Our Plan

Priority 2: Increasing Quality Homes in the City		
	Housing Supply	Quality of New Build Homes
What are our priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and addressing current and future housing needs by size, type, and tenure. Increasing the delivery of Council homes and enabling the delivery of affordable housing by Registered Providers (RPs) to reduce waiting lists and support vulnerable groups Completion and adoption of the Southampton City Vision Local Plan, which will include site allocations that will contribute towards meeting the Council's housing target and ensure an appropriate mix of types and tenures to meet local needs. Delivery of the Council's new Growth and Delivery Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering high-quality new homes whilst trying to meet the housing target we have been set by Government All council homes to meet Southampton Energy Guidance All private and social-developer-led schemes to be delivered to the same standards or better Improving integration of green Infrastructure and landscaping to sites in order to promote biodiversity and reduce flood risk
How are we going to do it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning consultants to produce the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA), with collaboration across the Council, with stakeholders and other local authorities. Aligning housing policies and strategy in the emerging Southampton City Vision Local Plan and Growth and Delivery Plan with wider Council aims and objectives, such as those relating to affordability and equality. Engaging with landowners, developers, residents, and voluntary groups to shape inclusive housing policies/strategies/developments. Working with stakeholders across the city and sub-regions to ignite housing delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New design-related policies to be adopted as part of the Southampton City Vision Local plan Explore opportunities to make the best use of the city's assets to enable innovative heat networks and solutions and local energy generation Utilise in-house Passivhaus expertise to provide RSH providers with guidance to enable highly energy efficient new homes Expansion of Green Space Factor for the whole city
What difference does this make?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased supply of homes which meet the needs of current and future residents and provide for a range of tenures, sizes, and types. Lower poverty rates and improved quality of life through access to affordable, well-designed homes. Certainty for developers and communities regarding new development. A robust, evidence-led approach to the provision of new and affordable housing that supports economic growth and sustainability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress towards Southampton Net Zero City 2035 ambitions. More sustainable, appropriately sized homes, with green settings which will help with reducing fuel poverty rates, water consumption and bills, as well as improved health and wellbeing

<p>What does success look like?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completion of the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) to inform emerging planning policy. ▪ Completion and adoption of the Southampton City Vision Local Plan, in accordance with statutory requirements, including policies to optimise housing delivery and ensure an appropriate mix of types and tenures which have been informed by appropriate evidence. ▪ Increased delivery of affordable housing, meeting diverse community needs and reducing housing poverty. ▪ Completion and publication of the Council's new Growth and Delivery Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Progress towards the aspiration for all new housing delivered in the city to meet national space standards and be net-zero in relation to carbon emissions ▪ Sustainable communities with more energy and water-efficient homes, reducing wasted heat and water as well as decreasing bills. ▪ Access to affordable and sustainable energy sources ▪ Integration of the natural environment into residential developments to provide healthy and pleasant places to live ▪ Homes that are either accessible and adaptable or suitable for wheelchair users
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Our Plan

Priority 2: Increasing Quality Homes in the City		
	Delivering Affordable Homes	Maximise Private Renting Offer
<p>What are our priorities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help address housing needs in the city and assist as many applicants on our housing register as possible ▪ Deliver a variety of accommodation types and tenures to meet diverse needs, including M4(3) wheelchair-user homes and extra care/ supported living options ▪ Progress regeneration projects in Townhill Park to create more affordable homes ▪ Increase the supply of temporary homeless accommodation to reduce pressures on emergency housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improving the safety & conditions of all private rented properties, HMOs & high-rise residential buildings in the city ▪ Increasing landlord and letting agent compliance with regulations & safety standards and ensuring properties meet the new decent homes standard & energy efficiency standards ▪ Conducting a city-wide stock condition survey to assess housing conditions ▪ Reducing the number of empty private residential properties in the city

<p>How are we going to do it?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthen partnerships with existing and new Registered Providers (RPs) to expand affordable housing delivery ▪ Advocate for affordable housing prioritisation within council initiatives and decision-making processes ▪ Fully utilise available resources like council-owned land, Right to Buy receipts, and Section 106 monies, and maximise investment in the city by RPs themselves and through RP allocation/use of Homes England grant ▪ Keep the effectiveness of the Affordable Housing Framework under continuous review (both in terms of RP interest & performance and in terms of making improvements to our mini-tendering process) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing a Private Rented Sector Strategy that aligns with the Renters Rights Act & an Empty Residential Property plan to actively address long term empty homes in the city. ▪ Strengthen proactive enforcement through licensing schemes, exploring the introduction of Selective Licensing, and expanding enforcement capacity through staff training, apprenticeships, enforcement targets, seeking out new funding initiatives and , increasing the use of financial penalties of up to £30,000 or prosecuting offenders ▪ Proactively using the full range of existing and new enforcement powers to improve compliance with housing safety and conditions standards, HMO licensing schemes, energy efficiency standards, and protect the rights of tenants ▪ Provide information and support to tenants to enable them to be more aware of their rights
<p>What difference does this make?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the supply of affordable housing, addressing the needs of residents on lower incomes who cannot access market housing ▪ Reduce waiting lists for residents who need affordable homes and ensure vulnerable groups find suitable accommodations ▪ Improve residents' quality of life with greater physical and mental well-being through secure housing solutions ▪ Foster inclusive and thriving communities where people can live independently in safe, affordable homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raised safety, fire & amenity standards result in a safer, healthier private rental sector with fewer hazardous homes. ▪ Improved living conditions, leads to better health outcomes for tenants, ▪ Greater community stability by reducing poor-quality housing and tenant turnover ▪ Working with partners on reducing fuel poverty & increasing energy efficiency helps the private rented stocks to meet the minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) & helps provide healthier homes. ▪
<p>What does success look like?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased numbers of affordable homes delivered by Registered Providers (RPs) ▪ Delivery of s106 affordable housing in line with the Southampton City Vision Local Plan policies once adopted ▪ Schemes delivered which assist the council in making better use of its existing stock ▪ A healthy and continuous pipeline of development for future years ▪ Increase housing stock with larger sized family homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A well-managed sector that provides safe and suitable accommodation for Southampton tenants and meets the new decent homes standard ▪ HMOs and other private rented properties meet safety and amenities standards ▪ Landlords are held accountable for poor performance, and tenants feel secure in their homes

- Develop, implement and deliver design solutions that tackle the rise in damp and mould cases, especially to low and mid-rise buildings.

- All high-rise buildings are safe, free from dangerous cladding materials and free from damp and mould conditions.
- All mid and low-rise buildings are free from damp and mould conditions.

Priority 3: Supporting Strong and Resilient Communities

Strategic Aim and Context

Preventing Homelessness

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

Southampton has one of the highest homelessness rates in the country — 10.4 households per 1,000 were assessed as homeless in 2021/22, compared to the national average of 6.1 per 1,000²⁰. In late 2024, 603 homeless households with children were recorded locally. The most common reason for homelessness is family or friends no longer able to accommodate, accounting for 37.8% of cases — far above the national rate of 25.5%²¹.

Factors contributing to housing instability include rising living costs, employment insecurity, and welfare changes. These push many households toward crisis. Mental health challenges, substance use disorder, and domestic abuse further complicate pathways to secure housing. Relationship breakdowns — particularly eviction from shared accommodation — are frequent triggers. Meanwhile, a shortage of affordable homes and the complexity of navigating support systems leave some residents unable to access timely help. Based on the average deprivation

²⁰ Strategic Assessment

²¹ Homelessness Strategy

rank of its neighbourhoods, Southampton is now ranked 76th (where 1 is the most deprived) out of 296 local authorities (IMD 2025), having previously ranked 55th most deprived (IMD 2019). There are now 37 neighbourhoods in the 20% most deprived (previously 43 in IMD 2019).²².

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

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

Improving access to social and affordable housing is vital. We are increasing supply by bringing empty homes back into use, supporting sustainable new developments, and enhancing temporary accommodation.

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

We are also expanding support services. Improvements to housing advice access, mental health and substance recovery investment, and cross-sector coordination are underway. Outreach initiatives connect rough sleepers and those in unstable housing to timely support, while multi-agency partnerships deliver integrated care. Nationally, there has been an 83% increase in people with mental health needs accessing homelessness services²³ — a trend we're responding to locally through enhanced support networks.

Rough sleeping remains an urgent concern. Using data-led identification, we are increasing access to safe accommodation and coordinating care across agencies. In autumn 2024, there were 19 people recorded for rough sleeping in Southampton. In the 2025 snapshot there was an increase to 24²⁴.

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

²² Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC), Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), 2025

²³ Homeless link

²⁴ [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2024 - Official statistics announcement - GOV.UK](#)

We will: Provide early support and expand housing options to prevent homelessness, this ensures stability, and help residents to access secure, long-term homes.

Housing as a Building Block of Health

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

Nationally, 3.7 million homes in England are classed as non-decent, with hazards such as mould, poor insulation, and unsafe electrical systems costing the NHS an estimated £1.1 billion annually (Health Foundation). Half of all falls requiring hospitalisation occur at home²⁵ whilst 450,000 A&E visits and 40,000 emergency admissions amongst under-5s in England are the result of accidents at home²⁶. Notably, injuries like these are much more likely to happen to individuals and families living in deprived areas or who are otherwise disadvantaged. In Southampton, many residents live in older housing stock that fails to meet modern standards, with increased risk of accidents, exacerbating respiratory conditions, mental health challenges, and fuel poverty. The tragic death in Rochdale of two-year-old Awaab Ishak in 2020 from exposure to mould exposure underscores the urgency of addressing housing-related health risks.

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

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

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

²⁵ The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

²⁶ UK Health Security Agency

We are also embedding health equity into housing development. New homes will be designed to support ageing in place, disability access, and mental wellbeing — with features such as natural light, green space, and community connectivity. This approach will help support the implementation of Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England which aims to support greater care at home and reduce the need for hospital stays. The Council’s commitment to net zero by 2035 ensures that future housing will be both sustainable and health-promoting (Southampton 2035 City Plan).

Cross-sector partnerships are central to our approach. We are working with NHS providers, public health teams, and VCSE organisations to align housing delivery with health priorities. Initiatives such as social prescribing, neighbourhood health centres, and integrated care pathways are being developed and expanded to support residents to be cared for in their own communities (NHS England).

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

We will: Improve housing quality, affordability, and accessibility, we are tackling health inequalities and creating homes that support physical and mental wellbeing across all life stages.

Enabling Independence

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

We are increasing housing options for adults with learning disabilities, mental health conditions, and multiple complex needs. In February 2025, 2,548 residents were engaged with long-term adult social care services, with further growth expected as the city’s population increases by 6.1% between 2025- 2030²⁷. Supported living arrangements — including shared houses and flats — are being expanded to reduce reliance on residential care and enable individuals to lead fulfilling lives.

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

²⁷ Census 2021

To help residents live independently, we will:

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

We will: *By provide accessible and adaptable housing, we are supporting residents to live independently with the right care, facilities, and community support.*

Enhancing Neighbourhood

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

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

Our priorities include:

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

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

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

We will: *Create cleaner, safer and more connected communities by tackling problems like anti-social behaviour, and fly-tipping while strengthening community engagement.*

Our Plan

Priority 3: Supporting Strong and Resilient Communities		
	Preventing Homelessness	Housing as a Building Block of Health
What are our priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on prevention by implementing systems that identify and support individuals at risk of homelessness before they lose housing ▪ Deliver intervention measures that provide immediate assistance to those experiencing homelessness, ensuring pathways into secure accommodation ▪ Build and enhance partnerships with voluntary organizations, housing providers, and other stakeholders to create a unified approach to tackling homelessness ▪ Expand and diversify housing options, such as temporary shelters and permanent accommodations, to meet varying needs effectively ▪ This includes increasing the availability of larger family homes to release more homes for the homeless and those on the waiting list. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southampton homes are warm, safe and free of mould, damp, physical hazards and indoor pollutants ▪ There are enough homes, with specialist provision where required, to meet the health needs of the city's current and future population ▪ Homes are part of wider healthy neighbourhoods that connect residents with communities, services, and places of work and learning ▪ Taking a 'Health in All Policies' approach that integrates housing improvements with wider health objectives to enable a comprehensive approach to reducing health inequalities

<p>How are we going to do it?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish the Homelessness Prevention Board to oversee and coordinate efforts across the city ▪ Develop and implement detailed action plans focused on early identification of risks, rapid intervention, and long-term housing solutions ▪ Strengthening partnerships with local agencies and stakeholders to pool resources and expertise for a more robust response ▪ Promote and increase access to temporary support services, advice centres, and accommodations tailored to individual needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage and support those involved in housing to deliver healthier homes, including by providing responses to relevant planning applications ▪ Combine an evidence-led approach and the voices of residents and partners to develop interventions that bring about the maximum possible health gain ▪ Learn and share best practices locally and nationally to ensure continuous progress and improvement ▪ Implement a process of Health Impact Assessment for large-scale housing development including the preparation of guidance for developers
<p>What difference does this make?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vulnerable residents will experience greater stability, reducing the impact of homelessness on families and individuals ▪ Homelessness rates will decrease through proactive measures and enhanced housing solutions that address the root causes ▪ Improved quality of life for residents as they gain access to secure, stable housing and tailored support services ▪ Stronger, more resilient communities where individuals are supported to overcome housing challenges and live independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key indicators of health, such as life expectancy, will improve and the gap with the national and regional averages will narrow ▪ Residents' health needs can be better met in their own homes reducing the time that may otherwise be spent in institutional care settings ▪ Pressure on health and social care services will be alleviated as housing is more effective in addressing residents' health needs ▪ Southampton will become a model for integrating housing and health policies, creating stronger, healthier communities
<p>What does success look like?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By March 2027, the Council will implement a proactive and early intervention approach that aims to reduce new homelessness cases by 20% through targeted prevention work, including early identification of at-risk households and improved access to advice and support services. ▪ We will provide swift and effective support to individuals experiencing homelessness, including rough sleepers, to ensure they transition into stable and sustainable housing at the earliest appropriate opportunity ▪ We will strengthen collaboration across partner agencies and organisations to deliver a coordinated and seamless support system for people at risk of homelessness, ensuring clear referral pathways and shared action plans are in place. <p>We will work to improve access to sustainable housing options by collaborating with registered providers and private landlords to better meet the needs of vulnerable households and help reduce homelessness across the city</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better housing has led to an improvement in health outcomes and a reduction in health inequalities ▪ Housing supports residents to live healthier throughout their lifetime and is appropriate for meeting their changing health needs ▪ Enhanced community wellbeing through the availability of warm, safe, and suitable homes for all ▪ A measurable improvement in key health indicators so Southampton can meet, and ultimately exceed, national and regional averages

Our Plan

Priority 3: Supporting Strong and Resilient Communities		
	Enabling Independence	Enhancing Neighbourhoods
What are our priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand supported living options for adults with learning disabilities and those with mental health needs, addressing specific needs such as autism, challenging behaviour, and complex health conditions ▪ Develop a mixed portfolio of housing, including shared houses and flat complexes, with features such as communal areas, accessible facilities, and spaces for support staff ▪ Implement individual housing needs assessments during transition planning from children to adult services, ensuring tailored support for young people with disabilities ▪ Increase allocations from Southampton's housing stock and Housing Associations' properties to adults requiring supported living arrangements ▪ Assistive technology (telecare) is delivered at scale across all tenures and property types, giving residents and their loved one's peace of mind and reassurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reducing ASB in the city by identifying issues and solutions to reduce these, through multiagency meetings, Task and Finish groups. ▪ Reducing homelessness in the city which will lead to reducing abandoned items and reducing the recurring issues of the ABS related to homelessness ▪ Empowering neighbourhoods to be part of the solution by engaging in consultations / events and with other organisations to achieve a better neighbourhood ▪ Increasing the number of residents attending Police and Community together meetings ▪ Raising awareness of the importance of reporting crimes including Hate crime and Domestic abuse
How are we going to do it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work collaboratively with housing developers, associations, and care providers to design and deliver new housing provisions aligned with priority needs, including specialised accommodation like wet rooms, hoists, and wheelchair-accessible facilities ▪ Incorporate the Inclusive Lives framework to establish a core-and-cluster model of supported living care providers based on local geography ▪ Leverage Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and other funding sources to implement housing adaptations and ensure accessibility across private and council-owned homes. ▪ Utilize housing needs assessments to forecast future demand and align resources effectively for adults with learning disabilities and mental health needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Actively promote and increase attendance at the Police and Community Together meetings (PACT), allowing for residents to raise issues and concerns with Police and other Council staff where required. These will be in every ward and will be at least quarterly ▪ Deliver Love Where You Live events, with community organisations to identify the needs of the neighbourhood and to create an action plan suitable for the neighbourhood and working with the community to achieve this ▪ Work closer with the Police and other organisations and internal teams to identify areas that require a multi-disciplinary approach including monthly Partnership Action Group meetings for each area of the city ▪ Actively work with the Prevention strategy and to ensure residents feel listened too about the needs in their neighbourhoods. This will

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to develop a telecare service that offers value for money as well as keeping up with new technologies and advances in the diverse range of products and solutions 	<p>be ensuring consultations are done and we will feedback to the community</p>
<p>What difference does this make?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Residents will benefit from tailored housing solutions, allowing them to live independently while having access to care and support as needed ▪ Adults with learning disabilities and mental health needs will experience improved long-term outcomes, including better access to education, employment, and community participation ▪ Families of vulnerable individuals will have greater peace of mind, knowing their loved ones are safe, supported, and living fulfilling lives. ▪ The Council will achieve cost efficiencies by reducing reliance on residential care and focusing on supported living options that empower independence ▪ People remain independent and able to live in their home with minimal support. This will make a significant positive impact on people's quality of life by enabling them to live the life that they choose to live. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Residents feel part of the solution and can see we are listening and respecting their needs in each neighbourhood ▪ Reducing ASB in our neighbourhoods, fostering a safer neighbourhood where people are proud of where they live ▪ Neighbourhoods where people want to live ▪ Community cohesion, and community pride
<p>What does success look like?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adults with learning disabilities and mental health needs have access to secure, well-managed, and affordable housing that supports their independence ▪ Strong partnerships with housing developers, landlords, and care providers ensure a steady supply of homes that meet diverse needs, including those requiring specialised accommodations ▪ Increased availability of supported living placements each year for both adults with learning disabilities and mental health needs ▪ Reduction in residential care placements and a shift toward less restrictive, supported living environments ▪ People are able to remain living independently in their own home for longer, with less reliance on care and support services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Residents feel safe and proud of the neighbourhoods they live in ▪ Working collaboratively with internal and external partners to ensure neighbourhoods are safe, vibrant and somewhere to be proud of living with good services on offer in their neighbourhoods ▪ Reducing ASB in neighbourhoods and increasing reporting of issues. March 2024 – Feb 2025 saw 3055 reported ASB incidents according to Southampton data observatory ▪ Reduction of reports regarding homelessness and drug paraphernalia found

Delivering our strategy

A robust governance structure will be established to ensure the effective delivery of the housing strategy, placing the Housing Strategy Delivery Group at the centre as the master board. This group will provide overarching coordination and strategic direction, ensuring alignment across all activities and stakeholders.

Beneath the master board, three dedicated delivery groups will be formed, each focusing on one of the strategy's key themes. These groups will be responsible for driving progress within their specific areas, reporting regularly to the Housing Strategy Delivery Group to ensure a cohesive and integrated approach.

The governance model will be further strengthened through supplementary oversight and insight mechanisms. The Southampton Renaissance Board will offer a broader citywide perspective linked to the Renaissance masterplan and strategic vision (in line with the Local Plan), while formal Cabinet oversight, including annual progress updates, will maintain transparency and accountability at the highest level.

Additionally, the newly established Tenant Insight Panel and Housing Scrutiny Panel will provide residents with direct channels to shape services and scrutinise landlord performance. These panels will work alongside the delivery groups, ensuring tenant and community voices are embedded throughout the process and that continuous improvement is championed.

Through this layered governance structure—anchored by the Housing Strategy Delivery Group, supported by specialist delivery groups, and supplemented by the Southampton Renaissance Board, Cabinet, and tenant panels—the council will ensure coordinated, responsive, and accountable delivery of its housing strategy.

Link in with existing plans and strategies.

- Asset Strategy (forthcoming)
- Sustainability Strategy
- [Housing Allocations Policy](#)
- Downsizing Policy (due for approval in 2026)
- Adaptation Policy date (due for approval in 2026)
- Southampton Renaissance Vision
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy (due for approval in 2026)
- [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029](#)
- [Southampton Renaissance Prospectus - Southampton Renaissance](#)
- Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy (due for approval in 2026)
- Southampton Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2023-2028

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Affordable Housing	Housing let at below-market rents or sold at below-market prices, including social rent, affordable rent, and shared ownership.
Decent Homes Standard	Government standard for housing conditions including health, safety, and energy performance.
EPC (Energy Performance Certificate)	A rating that shows how energy efficient a home is. 'C' is the minimum target for council homes.
HENA	Housing and Economic Needs Assessment – evidence base for determining housing and economic needs.
PRS (Private Rented Sector)	Homes rented from private landlords (not councils or housing associations).
Section 106	A legal agreement that allows councils to secure developer contributions, including affordable housing.
Supported Housing	Housing that includes care, support, or supervision to help people live independently.
Void Property	A council home that is empty between tenancies.
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	Government funding to adapt homes for people with disabilities.
HRA (Housing Revenue Account)	Is a legally ring-fenced, self-financing account that records all income and spending related to a council's housing stock. It ensures rent and housing funds are used only for managing, maintaining, and developing council homes, separate from the General Fund.
LGR (Local Government Reorganisation)	The English local government wants to end the current two-tier system of county and district councils) in some areas. Instead, it will create a single tier of unitary councils.

[END]