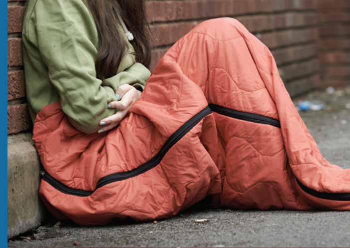
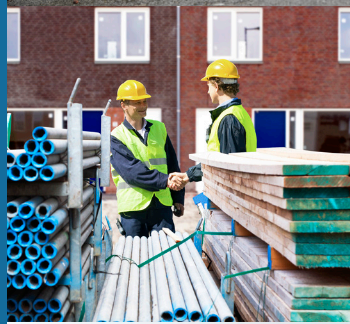
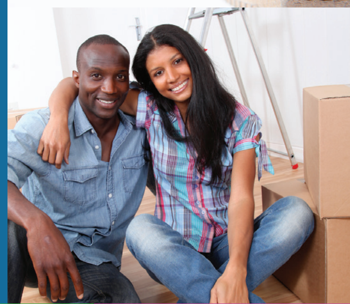
Housing matters:

West Berkshire's Housing Strategy 2020 - 2036







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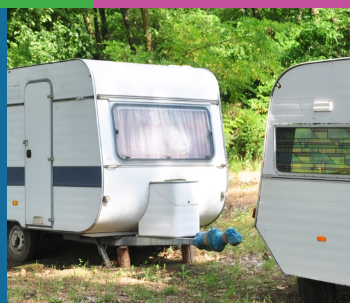
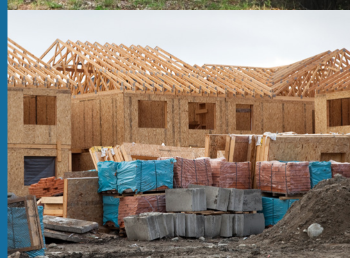




West Berkshire
COUNCIL

Contents

1 Foreword - why housing matters

Hilary Cole
Executive Portfolio Holder, Planning and Housing

Housing is a key cause of health with good quality housing having a positive impact on our health and well-being. This has become more apparent during 2020 when we have spent more time at home managing the impact of Covid-19 and the changes that we have adjusted to.

The pandemic has also highlighted the challenges faced by many residents in maintaining and accessing safe, secure and affordable housing for themselves and their families in order to live in stable communities and a place to call home while also exposing informal shared housing arrangements.

The Housing Strategy is a key strategic priority for West Berkshire Council, and this strategy is intended to be a high-level document that sets out how we will work with our partners and stakeholders to support a balanced housing market across West Berkshire that meets residents' needs. The strategy encompasses the period to 2036, which as well as aligning with the Council's other corporate strategies reflects the time it takes to influence and effect change within any housing market.

This strategy aims to provide strategic direction for the Council and our partners and will enable the delivery of the two challenging priorities these being;

- Enable every resident to have access to a home that meets their needs
- Reduce homelessness

While we want to lead and influence in the housing market, we recognise that the Council cannot successfully deliver this strategy alone and that our partners and stakeholders also have key roles to play. The delivery plan set out at the end of the housing strategy, details the key actions that will help us to achieve our strategic priorities in collaboration with our established strong partnerships in the district.

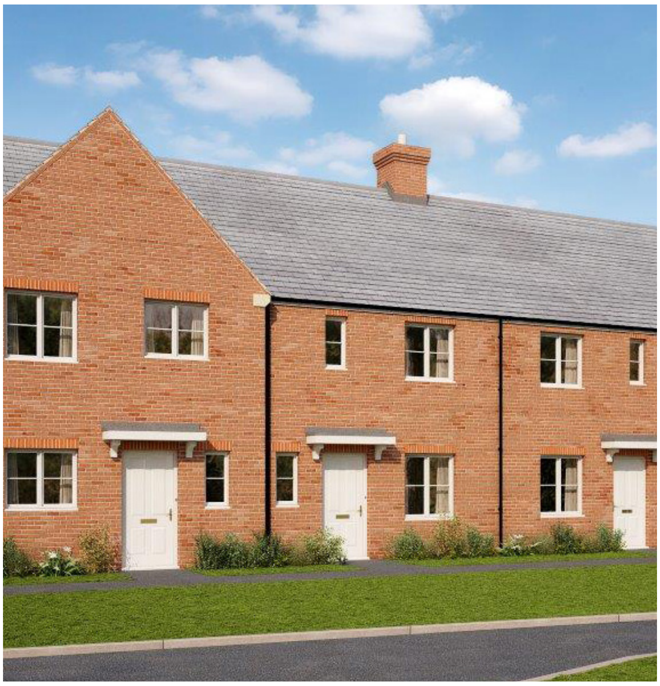
I would like to thank the many residents, partners and stakeholders who have taken the time to engage with us during the preparation of this strategy and whose thoughts and comments have helped to shape our vision for housing across West Berkshire.

2 Introduction

Housing is more than having a roof over our head or having somewhere to sleep – having a place to truly consider to be 'home' plays an essential role in all our lives. Our homes are acknowledged as being key determinants of our health, with poor housing impacting on poor health. The presence of a balanced housing market across West Berkshire is therefore critical to ensuring that residents' health and well-being is safeguarded and that their housing needs and aspirations are met in respect of the availability, location, size, and affordability of homes across all tenures.

This Housing Strategy sets out West Berkshire Council's strategic housing priorities and details a range of actions that the Council intends to take in partnership with relevant partners and stakeholders to support residents to access good quality housing while preventing homelessness and rough sleeping.

The strategy sets out the context – both nationally and locally – which, alongside the Council's strategic vision frame our priorities and the actions and interventions detailed within the delivery plan.



"The presence of a balanced housing market across West Berkshire is critical to ensuring that residents' health and well-being is safeguarded."

3 Our District

West Berkshire has an estimated population of

158,500

(2019)

1,616

older people and vulnerable adults accessing long term support (Mar 2018).

Healthy life expectancy at birth at 70.1 years for females and 66.4 for males are

higher

than the England average (2014-16). Similarly, life expectancy at birth, at 84.5 for females and 81.1 for males is higher than the national average.

West Berkshire covers an area of

272 square miles

which is over half of the geographical area of the county of Berkshire. Nearly three quarters of West Berkshire is classified as part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

In October 2018 there were

232

long term empty homes in West Berkshire

In 2018/19 the Council assisted

115 residents

secure a total of £1.1m Disabled Facilities Grant funding for aids and adaptations to live safely in their homes

The total number of households (in 2018) was

65,000

Since 2001 census, an average of

376 new homes

have been built each year.

149 Looked after children and more than

680 children in need supported (Mar 2018), both below England averages (as a rate per 10,000 children).

On average

2,200

households threatened with homelessness contact the Council each year.

It is estimated that the residential sector produced

18%

of the total national carbon dioxide emissions in 2018

Between 2012 and 2017 the level of private renting in West Berkshire reduced by

8%

while nationally it increased by 8%

In West Berkshire the median house price is

9.6

times the median income level (2019)

13.4%

of housing is owned and managed by housing associations and registered providers – lower than the national average of

17.1%

In November 2020 there were

9 people sleeping rough in West Berkshire

– a reduction from the 20 people sleeping rough in November 2017

4 The national context

The Government's 2017 White Paper – 'Fixing our Broken Housing Market[1]' – set out the Government's intention to boost housing supply and create a more efficient housing market over time, but also that the challenge of increasing housing supply could not be met by Government in isolation. The White Paper also acknowledged that in the shorter-term people's housing needs and aspirations needed to be addressed, including supporting people to buy or rent their own home, preventing homelessness, improving options for older people, and protecting the most vulnerable.

The White Paper also set out the support to enhance the capacity of both local authorities and the industry to build the new homes that each local area needed, with the proviso that partners were required to turn the proposals into reality.

While building more homes is clearly a key contributor to balancing the housing market there are a range of other factors that influence the effectiveness of the market both nationally and locally.

The impact of Covid-19 and a potential post Covid-19 recession will be a significant factor on the housing market. It will affect supply and demand and over time the longer term implications will emerge.

Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping

Homelessness has the potential to touch any household, with a number of common drivers including loss of employment, relationship breakdown, and domestic abuse. In many cases residents threatened with homelessness may not be used to the welfare benefits system, and although vulnerable households are over-represented, the negative perception of homeless households is often unwarranted.

Nationally housing affordability remains a key driver for homelessness, with loss of private rented accommodation consistently one of the top reasons for homelessness across the country, often as a result of rent arrears or an inability to afford a proposed rent increase. And affordability also limits the ability for many households to access home ownership.

Since April 2018, the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has resulted in local authorities having additional powers and duties (in accordance with the relevant legislation) to assist residents who are threatened with homelessness, with the primary emphasis placed on the prevention of homelessness.

Homelessness legislation provides a safety net for those households who are impacted by homelessness, and in many cases, councils are obliged to provide temporary accommodation and other assistance until homelessness is relieved. Where the homeless household does not secure accommodation themselves, councils may secure accommodation either in the private rented sector or through 'affordable housing' let through a Registered Provider[2] to end homelessness.

Rough sleeping is often the most visible form of homelessness and regularly impacts on the most vulnerable residents who often have complex needs. Preventing rough sleeping is a key Government priority and in 2018 its Rough Sleeping Strategy was published[3]. The strategy set out the vision for halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending rough sleeping by 2027.

As part of this bold vision the Government have provided funding opportunities for local authorities to reduce rough sleeping through the Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) and the Rapid Rehousing Pathway (RRP).

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-our-broken-housing-market
[2] Registered Providers are registered and regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing. Registered providers include local authority landlords and private registered providers (such as not-for-profit housing associations and for-profit organisations)
[3] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy_WEB.pdf

Enabling the delivery of affordable housing

Social housing, originally provided by local authorities, is now more often delivered by Registered Providers following the transfer of council housing to them through Large Scale Voluntary Transfers (LSVTs). Registered Providers provide both affordable rented and home ownership products designed to assist households who are struggling to access market housing.

The key mechanism for the delivery of affordable homes is through the planning process, where developments of certain sizes are conditional on the delivery of affordable housing as set out in local planning policies.

The definition of affordable housing is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[4] and this was updated in 2018 to include a range of alternative products to supplement social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership including starter homes and build to rent.

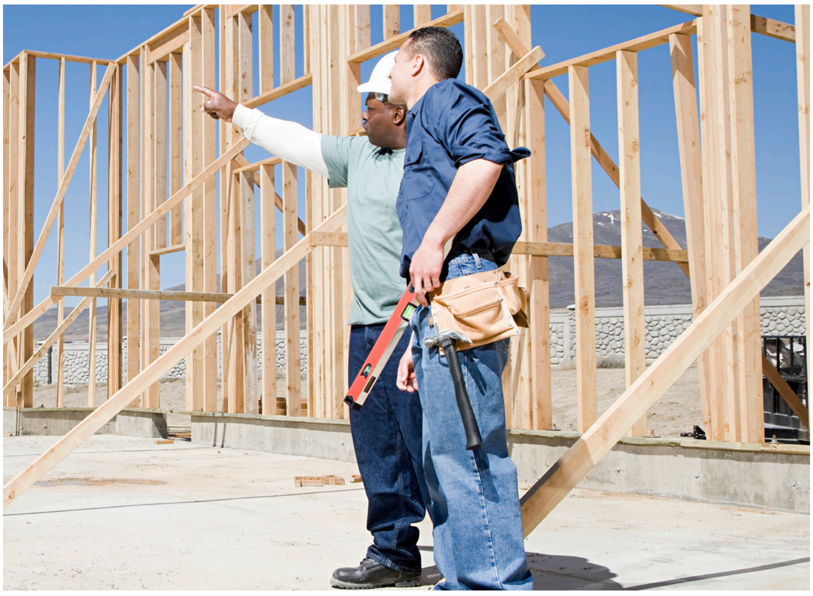
The Council is currently reviewing its Local Plan that sets out the Council's proposed position on affordable housing for new developments that will be examined by the Planning Inspectorate when the plan is formally submitted in 2022.

Supporting private sector housing

Across the country private housing represents the largest tenure, with 83% of homes privately owned in England and 17% owned by councils, Registered Providers and other public bodies[5].

Councils currently have a wide range of enforcement interventions to maintain and improve private sector housing standards. These powers are applicable across all tenures, and while most commonly used to improve private rented accommodation, they can also be utilised to improve owner-occupied and Registered Provider homes.

Empty homes are a wasted resource and councils have a range of powers to intervene and return properties back into use, while planning legislation can be used to tackle dilapidated empty homes that impact on the visual amenity of the neighbourhood. However, some empty homes are needed to ensure that the housing market operates as efficiently as possible. For those living with a disability, housing can have a greater impact on health and wellbeing, for example where access to facilities is difficult or even impossible. The statutory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and Home Repair Assistance Grants regimes provide the framework that enables Council's to administer grants for aids and adaptations to help residents remain independent in their own home for longer.



[4] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf
[5] Table 100: number of dwellings by tenure and district, England, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants

5 The local Context

This Housing Strategy aims to address the challenges and opportunities that present themselves across West Berkshire, and consequently considering the local context is essential to ensure that our strategic approach is fit for purpose and meets the needs of our residents.

Demographics

West Berkshire has a relatively young population at present however this is expected to change significantly in future years with the population becoming older and household size reducing. This will impact on the future requirements for the type and size of housing.

The demographic change during the life of this strategy will drive an increased focus on housing for older people, residents who need support to live independently, and for those with specialist care needs, as well as smaller homes to accommodate smaller household size.

As illustrated in Table 1, the population of West Berkshire is projected to contract by 0.9% over the next 16 years to 2036. However, of particular importance is the projected increase in older people across West Berkshire, with the cohort of people aged over 85 projected to double in size, while those residents aged over 75 will almost increase by half (46.9%) over the same period.

Table 1 – Projected demographic change across West Berkshire 2020-2036[6]

3. Age range	Population		
	2019	**2036**	**% Change**
0-4	8,800	7,655	-13%
5-9	10,300	7,964	-22.6%
10-14	10,400	8,925	-14.1%
15-19	9,400	8,749	-6.9%
20-24	7,000	6,955	-0.6%
25-29	7,900	8,266	4.6%
30-34	8,700	7,711	-11.3%
35-39	9,600	8,339	-13.1%
40-44	10,300	9,181	-10.8%
45-49	11,900	9,739	-18.1%
50-54	12,500	10,148	-18.8%
55-59	11,400	10,309	-9.5%
60-64	9,700	10,375	7%
65-69	8,500	10,860	27.8%
70-74	8,500	10,129	19%
75-79	5,800	8,226	41.8%
80-84	4,000	6,130	53.2%
85+	3,800	7,410	95%
Total	**158,500**	**157,070**	**-0.9%**

[6] ONS National population projections (from NOMIS)

Housing supply and demand

The Council's Local Plan[7] details local planning policies that support development across West Berkshire until 2026, and the Council is currently in the process of reviewing the Local Plan for the period to 2036[8].

The current Local Plan details a requirement to deliver 10,500 homes during the 20-year Local Plan period[9] – a net requirement of 525 new homes each year. It is expected that a similar housing supply requirement will be included in the emerging Local Plan in due course.

The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)[10] details the key drivers for the local housing market including housing need. The SHMA also details that in order to meet housing need, new housing developments should provide an affordable housing mix comprising of 70% social rented homes and 30% shared ownership homes[11].

Across West Berkshire, currently planning policy requires that affordable housing delivered on all sites in excess of five homes with up to 40% of homes required to be provided as affordable housing on large green field sites[12].

The SHMA also sets out the need for affordable homes of different sizes, and tenure as set out in table 2, with an emphasis on the delivery of smaller affordable homes. This aligns with demographic change, however to ensure that smaller homes are fit for the future they should be designed with double bedrooms wherever possible.

Given the projected demographic change, and the increase in population of those aged over 75, it is likely that the need for smaller homes will strengthen during the period of this strategy. This is also likely to increase the demand for a range of specialist housing solutions to meet the needs of the ageing population.

Self Build and Custom house building

Self build and custom housebuilding is a key element of the Government's agenda to increase supply of new housing. Legislation has been introduced to support this initiative including:

- The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act (March 2015)
- The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding (Register) Regulations 2016 (Commenced 1st April 2016)
- Housing and Planning Act 2016

To help understand the demand for Self Build and Custom house building Local planning authorities should plan to meet this need. To meet this need West Berkshire Council maintains a register of individuals and associations of individuals who have expressed an interest in self- and custom-build homes and the Local Plan Review contains a specific policy promoting this provision. Furthermore the Council will work with partners to establish how serviced plots may be effectively provided to meet the demand.

Delivering affordable housing

West Berkshire Council does not own housing stock that is rented as social housing following the transfer of all Council-owned housing stock in 1989[14] to Sovereign Housing Association[15].

Table 2 - Housing tenure bedroom need in West Berkshire 2020[13]

Housing Tenure	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed
Market	5 – 10%	25 – 30%	40 – 45%	20-25%
Affordable	20- 25%	35 – 40%	30-35%	5 – 10%

[7] https://info.westberks.gov.uk/localplan
[8] https://info.westberks.gov.uk/localplanreview2036
[9] Core Strategy Planning Policy CS1
[10] https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=40949&p=0
[11] Core Strategy Planning Policy CS6
[12] https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=36374&p=0
[13] Table 140, SHMA 2016
[14] The stock was transferred by Newbury District Council
[15] Formerly known as West Berkshire Housing Association

This was one of the first large-scale voluntary transfers (LSVTs) and Sovereign now own and manage over 6,500 affordable homes across West Berkshire.

The Council actively works with a number of Registered Providers who operate within West Berkshire to deliver a range of affordable homes to meet the needs of our residents, and there are over 9,000 affordable homes managed by registered providers in the District[16].

The Council enables access to affordable homes managed by our Registered Providers through planning policies and the housing register. The number of applicants on the housing register has seen an increase from 2,029 to 3,624 in the year from March 2019 to March 2020. A rise of over 29%.

Housing and the economy

Employment opportunities are critical to delivering a balanced housing market, and across West Berkshire the number of jobs is higher than the south east average and similarly there is a greater proportion of adults who are economically active. However, there is a risk that where employment opportunities do not match the skills of local residents the inward employment migration that results can place pressures on the local housing market. In addition, the potential post-Covid-19 recession will also have an impact on unemployment, potentially removing housing opportunities for local people and increasing the reliance on social housing.

Housing affordability is inextricably linked to economic activity and West Berkshire Council's Economic Development Strategy 2019-2036 sets out how the Council intends to work with its partners to address economic challenges. This strategy should therefore be read in conjunction with the Economic Development Strategy.

Across the South East affordability is a critical issue in all segments of the housing market, with people struggling to secure affordable and sustainable housing, whether seeking home ownership or seeking to rent. In many areas the cost of home ownership relative to earnings is high, and in West Berkshire the £346,500 average cost of a home[17] is almost ten times that of average earnings[18].

For those seeking to rent their home, average private rents have increased by just over 20% to meet demand[19], which in West Berkshire is often driven by professionals seeking accommodation near their place of work, and this presents affordability challenges for local residents. People private renting pay the highest housing costs compared with home-owners with mortgages and social housing tenants[20].

The private rental value in West Berkshire show an increase in monthly rental from 2013 to 2019 (as illustrated in table 3.)

Table 3 - Private rental values in West Berkshire since 2013[21]

Monthly rental values (£s)	Year					
	2013/14	**2014/15**	**2015/16**	**2016/17**	**2017/18**	**2018/19**
Mean	870	941	1,014	1,007	1,041	1,050
Lower quartile	650	725	750	750	779	795
Median	795	850	880	895	925	925
Upper quartile	950	1,000	1,150	1,150	1,200	1,200

16 Table 100: number of dwellings by tenure and district, England, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants
17 Median house prices for administrative geographies: HPSSA dataset 9, https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/medianhousepricefornationalandsubnationalgeographiesquarterlyrollingyearhpssadataset09
18 ONS, House price to residence-based earnings ratio,Table 5b, https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoresidencebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian'
19 Valuation Office Agency: private rental market statistics, https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/private-rental-market-statistics#2019
20 MHCLG, English Housing Survey- Housing Costs and Affordability, 2018-19, 2020, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/898397/2018-
21 Valuation Office Agency: private rental market statistics, https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/private-rental-market-statistics#2019

For residents who are on low incomes and/or are in receipt of welfare benefits the continued low level of Local Housing Allowance (LHA)[22] reduces the availability of affordable accommodation. This is due to the resulting low value of housing benefit or (the housing costs element of) universal credit relative to market rent levels.

It is expected therefore that the affordability challenges facing many private renters will remain moving forward, unless there is a significant injection in the capacity within the private rental market.

Households affected by the under occupation charge often face affordability issues and the delivery plan sets out how the council can help to address this.

The private rented sector is characterised by a younger age profile than other forms of market housing with private renters in the 25-34 age group forming the largest group by age nationally[23]. At the same time the age of private renters is increasing[24] and can be attributed to the affordability challenges facing private renters in moving into home ownership.

Recent reforms relating to welfare benefits also have the potential to impact on housing affordability[25]. At the end of March 2019 there were 156 West Berkshire households affected by the welfare benefit cap, and there were also 481 households affected by the under-occupation charge – 416 households subject to a 14% deduction, and 65 subject to a 25% deduction.

Table 4 - Private rental and LHA values in West Berkshire - 2018/19[22]

Monthly rental values (£s)	Property size				
	Studio	**1 bed**	**2 bed**	**3 bed**	**4 bed**
Mean rental value	592	742	925	1,160	1,844
LHA rate (Newbury)	319.22	568.14	718.90	865.80	1,213.68
LHA rate (Reading)	351.61	682.98	865.80	989.91	1,365.52

The challenges relating to affordability are often felt hardest by key workers who may struggle to secure suitable accommodation local to their workplace. It is estimated that there are around 9.8m key workers across the country making up just over 30% of the workforce in the South East[26]. Women are twice as likely to be key workers as men, and younger and older people who are key workers are more likely to be in low-paid employment[27].

There are a range of definitions for key workers and West Berkshire Council defines a key worker using the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership definition as set out in Appendix 2.

The Council's Allocations Policy will provide additional preference to key workers to support their applications for social housing. This in addition to our collaborative work with our Registered Providers to enable a range of affordable housing will contribute towards addressing the affordability challenges that keyworkers face.

[22] Valuation Office Agency: private rental market statistics, 2019, https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/private-rental-market-statistics#2019
[23] ONS, UK private rented sector: 2018, 2019, https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/ukprivaterentedsector/2018
[24] ibid
[25] The Impact of Welfare Reform Bill measures on affordability for low income private renting families, Shelter, 2011, https://england.shelter.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/334726/Impact_of_Welfare_Reform_Bill_measures_on_affordability_for_low_income_private_renting_families.pdf
[26] A £10 minimum wage would benefit millions of key workers, TUC, May 2020, https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/ps10-minimum-wage-would-benefit-millions-key-workers
[27] ibid

Homelessness

In December 2019 the Council adopted a new Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy[28] based on a housing needs assessment underpinning and informing the interventions that the Council will take (with its partners) to prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping.

Homelessness is increasing across the country, and during 2018/19 1,765 households presented to West Berkshire Council as being threatened with homelessness, of which, just under one-third were assisted by the Council under our homelessness duties to prevent or relieve their homelessness.

Across West Berkshire in 2018/19, the most common reason for being threatened with homelessness was the loss of a private rented sector tenancy which impacted on 23% of households threatened with homelessness. The next most common reason for being threatened with homelessness was due to family or friends no longer being willing to accommodate.

During 2018/19 the lead applicant in homelessness applications (i.e. the head of the household) was most commonly aged 25-34 (29% of applications) and interestingly 10% of presentations were made by applicants over the age of 55.

In 2019 the Council adopted its own plan for preventing and reducing rough sleeping – 'Reducing Rough Sleeping in West Berkshire: A plan to ensure that no-one has the need to sleep rough'[29]. This plan sets out the actions that the Council will take to prevent and reduce rough sleeping working in partnership with a range of partners operating in the homelessness sector.

During 2018/19 the Council received £211k in Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI)[30] funding and this increased to £261k for 2019/20 and £475k for 2020/21. This funding has been used to deliver a range of interventions agreed with and monitored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Further funding of £102k was awarded to the Council in 2019 for delivery of Rapid Rehousing Pathway (RRP)[31] interventions.

Nationally rough sleeping has risen year on year since 2010 until a reduction in 2018, while across West Berkshire the number of people sleeping rough has fluctuated over the same period, falling from a peak of 23 in 2014 to 18 in 2018. A further reduction to 10 rough sleepers in November 2019 as illustrated in table 5 demonstrates the success of the strong partnership working. Whilst across West Berkshire, comparatively the number of rough sleepers in 2019 remained low as illustrated in table 6.

Table 5 - Rough sleeping in England and West Berkshire since 2010[32]

Area	**Year**									
	2010	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
England	1,768	2,181	2,309	2,414	2,744	3,569	4,134	4,751	4,677	4,266
South East	310	430	442	532	609	827	956	1,119	934	900
West Berkshire	5	6	11	8	23	15	14	20	18	10

[28] Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025, http://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=48320&p=0
[29] xxx
[30] MHCLG, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-government-initiative-to-reduce-rough-sleeping
[31] MHCLG, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rapid-rehousing-pathway-2019-to-2020-funding
[32] Rough sleeping snapshot in England 2019, Table 1, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2019

Table 6 - Rough sleeping across Berkshire 2019[33]

Local authority	Number of rough sleepers[34]	Number of rough sleepers per 1,000 households[35]
Bracknell Forest	22	0.44
Reading	28	0.40
Slough	25	0.45
West Berkshire	10	0.15
Windsor and Maidenhead	40	0.63
Wokingham	10	0.15

Specialist accommodation

There is a range of specialist accommodation that is required to meet individual's needs, and this includes extra care housing for those requiring a specialist health care setting, sheltered housing, young person's supported accommodation, hostel accommodation for single homeless persons, housing schemes for people with a learning disability, families of children with disabilities or for individuals with mental health needs.

The Housing Strategy in conjunction with West Berkshire Councils Market Position Statement 2020-23 Adult Social Care sets out how the Council will meet the needs for specialist accommodation. West Berkshire Council is also delivering a specialist Housing First scheme with partners to provide housing for rough sleepers with complex needs who would ordinarily be refused housing due to those needs, and for whom the provision of a tenancy enables support to be better provided to tackle specific complex needs.

Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showperson communities are often disadvantaged in accessing affordable housing solutions as suitable sites can be challenging to deliver. West Berkshire Council currently manages one Gypsy/Traveller site within the District and there is also a site accommodating Travelling Showpersons. The Council's specialist 'Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment' (2019) provides a detailed assessment of need for these groups.

Housing solutions

Councils use two main approaches to support residents who are homeless or threatened with homelessness into sustainable accommodation – allocations of social housing, and private rented sector tenancies.

Councils are required to adopt a housing allocation policy that sets out how social housing will be allocated to residents and setting out qualifying criteria and other details. West Berkshire Council's Housing Allocation Policy prioritises applicants based on individual circumstances with the aim of ensuring that applicants with the greatest need have the highest priority.

The scheme is delivered through a choice-based lettings scheme, whereby applicants are able to choose the social housing properties that they wish to place bids on, and then the applicant with the highest priority is offered the tenancy. This is in contrast to schemes where the Council allocates accommodation directly to the applicant with the greatest priority.

To further assist households who are threatened with homelessness, councils are able to secure private sector tenancies as an alternative to an allocation of social housing to end homelessness obligations. To achieve this councils will very often offer a range of incentives to improve partnership working with private landlords to increase supply of appropriate tenancies.

[33] Ibid
[34] Ibid
[35] Calculated using data from Table 100: number of dwellings by tenure and district, England, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants, and Rough sleeping snapshot in England 2019, Table 1, op cit

As well as providing mechanisms to support residents to access social and private rented sector homes, the council also enables residents to remain in their homes with the help of aids and adaptations and granting Disabled Facilities Grants. Table 7 illustrates the number of DFG's awarded from 2015-2019.

Table 7 - Number of DFG's awarded from 2015-2019

	Number of DFGs awarded
2015	145
2016	77
2017	103
2018	116
2019	117

The data is calendar years not financial

West Berkshire has a low number of empty homes, with 232 long-term empty homes as of October 2019. This is the lowest proportion (3.4%) in Berkshire with the next lowest proportion of empty homes being 5.5%, and the highest proportion being 12.0%.

These long-term empty homes have been empty for over six months. Properties that have been empty for over two years are subject to the Empty Homes Premium which enables the Council to apply a penalty under Council Tax legislation, and in West Berkshire this can result in the owner of a long-term empty home paying up to four times the Council Tax for an occupied property in the same band.

Park homes provide an important housing solution for many residents, who are often older residents in their retirement. Park homes are in effect temporary, moveable structures and owners lease pitches on often large sites, paying a site fee and being responsible for ensuring that their home is kept in good repair.

Privately-owned park home sites are required to be licensed by the local authority and following historical poor practices within the park home industry that in some cases resulted in residents being significantly disadvantaged, the government strengthened the regulation of park home sites through the Mobile Homes Act 2013.

"To further assist households who are threatened with homelessness, councils are able to secure private sector tenancies as an alternative to an allocation of social housing to end homelessness obligations."

Environmental considerations

West Berkshire Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019, and the Council's Environment Strategy 2020 – 2030 sets out approaches to tackle the current climate crisis and achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. This strategy should therefore be read in conjunction with the Environment Strategy.

Housing is a key contributor to national carbon emissions through both the initial carbon footprint associated with delivering new-build housing, refurbishing existing housing and through energy use in homes. Energy use in homes alone accounts for 14% of UK emissions.

Whilst there are challenges of energy efficiency across the housing stock, there are specific challenges relating to park homes and gypsy / traveller sites. These homes often have poor energy efficiency due to thin and uninsulated building fabric and the solutions to create efficient homes tend to be more expensive.

Approximately 12% of West Berkshire is at risk of flooding, whether that be from groundwater, surface water, or river water. While the planning process provides appropriate mitigation for new housing development and the provision of new flood alleviation measures for certain areas (Thatcham), flooding remains a concern for existing housing stock in areas identified as remaining at risk.

There remain a number of areas of challenge associated with reducing the negative environmental impact of housing, including:

- Reducing the reliance on steel and concrete based building materials;
- Increasing the use of engineered timber construction methods in the context of fire safety regulation;
- Reducing the reliance on oil and the gas network for heating and cooking appliances;
- Increasing the use of low-carbon sources of heating such as heat pumps and heat networks;
- Accelerating the uptake of renewable energy and energy efficiency and insulation measures
- Improving indoor air quality and ventilation associated with thermal insulation;
- Improving water efficiency;
- Improving flood protection for homes at risk of flooding;
- Improving the levels of green spaces associated with housing, including trees on streets, vegetation on roofs, and sustainable drainage systems, and;
- Providing for or pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and electric vehicle owners.

Many of the above measures are currently restricted through finance gaps, i.e. there is a cost associated with change. There is a risk therefore that the increased costs associated with embracing environmental considerations[36] may impact on future viability of housing development and in particular the delivery of affordable homes.

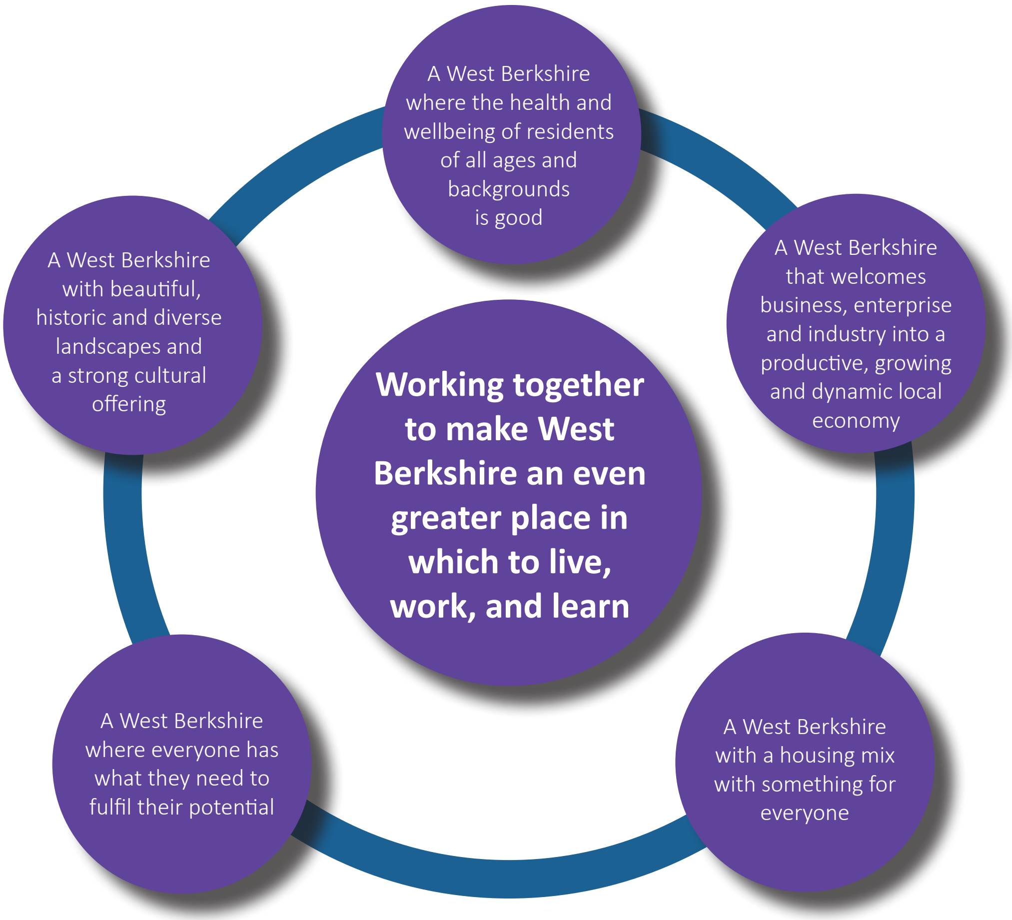
There are also opportunities to explore the potential savings associated with innovation, for example the speed of construction utilising modular timber-framed construction methods has the potential to offset the additional costs often associated with this approach and potential reduce costs when factoring in the additional revenue potential arising from earlier completions[37].

[36] CLG, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6288/1905485.pdf
[37] Smart construction, KPMG, 2016, https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/pdf/2016/04/smart-construction-report-2016.pdf

6 Our vision

West Berkshire Council's corporate vision- 'Working together to make West Berkshire an even greater place in which to live, work, and learn' – is supported by the West Berkshire Vision 2036 that details priorities for the Council across five key areas and commits to creating:

- A West Berkshire where everyone has what they need to fulfil their potential
- A West Berkshire with a housing mix with something for everyone
- A West Berkshire that welcomes business, enterprise and industry into a productive, growing and dynamic local economy
- A West Berkshire where the health and wellbeing of residents of all ages and backgrounds is good
- A West Berkshire with beautiful, historic and diverse landscapes and a strong cultural offering



These commitments aim to maintain West Berkshire's status as a great place to live, work and learn whilst rising to the challenges we anticipate facing in the future.

Building on our Strengths – the Council's Corporate Strategy 2019-23 – sets out six priorities that align with the Council's vision:

- Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes
- Support everyone to reach their full potential
- Support businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire
- Develop local infrastructure, including housing, to support and grow the local economy
- Maintain a green district
- Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships

7 Our priorities

This Housing Strategy aims to build on our previous successes and provide strategic direction for both the Council and our partners to continue to support a thriving housing market across West Berkshire through the following twin priorities:

Priority 1 **Enable every resident to have access to a home that meets their needs**

Priority 2 **Reduce homelessness**

The Housing Strategy priorities will be delivered through the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan as well as a range of strategies and plans that link to the Housing Strategy as set out below:

8 Delivering our priorities

This part of the strategy sets out what we are going to achieve and why. It also identifies areas for action and intervention and will frame our strategic priorities. Further detail and information is set out in the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan.

Priority 1 Enable every resident to have access to a home that meets their needs

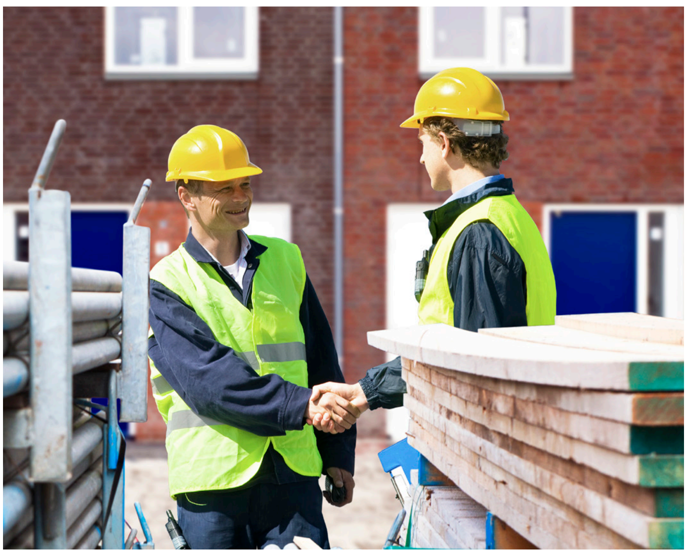
There is a shortfall in the provision of housing of all tenures across West Berkshire, and the current Local Plan details that 520 homes are required to be built year on year to meet local housing demand. The emerging Local Plan is likely to reach a similar conclusion, although the overall annual requirement has yet to be determined it is likely to be in the range of 525 – 600 dwellings per annum.

We will engage with landowners and developers to deliver the level of new homes as required through the Local Plan

We will utilise the Council's joint venture delivery vehicle to contribute to the delivery of new homes

We will deliver a Council-owned housing company to procure private rented accommodation let at rents that are affordable for residents

A thriving housing market is reliant on a buoyant economy across West Berkshire to lever in appropriate housing investment across all tenures and sub-markets. A strong local economy supports demand for housing and promotes West Berkshire as a place to live.



The provision of employment opportunities also improves income levels and helps to mitigate the negative impact of welfare benefit reforms.

For West Berkshire to be a place where businesses choose to invest in housing, we need to ensure that our systems and processes are fit for purpose and interactions with businesses are effective and efficient, and our policies and decision making are robust and efficient to improve deliverability of development proposals.

We will proactively engage with developers and Registered Providers to provide advice in respect of development opportunities with the aim of removing unnecessary burdens and to be more responsive to business needs

The Council and its housing partners utilise a range of resources when assisting residents with housing-related interventions. This can range from delivering aids and adaptations to enable a vulnerable resident to remain in their own home, through to securing temporary accommodation to relieve homelessness.

These transactions have the potential to contribute positively to the local economy providing local businesses are utilised wherever practicable.

We will promote the use of local businesses in delivering value for money housing-related services wherever practicable

A vibrant and well-balanced housing market relies on West Berkshire providing the housing solutions that our residents want and can afford across all tenures and all affordability segments within the housing market.

Given the real affordability challenges in the local housing market, young people and key workers experience particular challenges in securing affordable housing in West Berkshire both through renting or home ownership products.

We will ensure that key workers are afforded priority within our Housing Allocations Policy to assist with securing low-cost housing

We will undertake research to identify the level of demand for affordable rent and discounted home ownership products from young people and key workers

For vulnerable residents this includes the provision of a suitable range of supported housing within the District that is affordable having regard to welfare benefit.

We will review the delivery of supported housing solutions across the District

West Berkshire has an ageing population and the number of residents requiring alternative housing solutions to enable them to live longer healthy lives will increase year on year. While the use of aids and adaptations will provide sustainable solutions for some residents to remain in their own homes, there will be a growing demand for innovative housing suited to the lifestyle of older residents.

We will review the delivery of Extra Care and Older Persons' housing schemes to meet the needs of an ageing population

The private rented sector across West Berkshire is not balanced and there is insufficient supply of smaller homes and in particular single-person shared accommodation to meet the demand. This is in part due to the housing typology within the District but also due to competing demands from professional renters who are often able to pay a premium to secure accommodation.

We will engage with private sector landlords to increase the supply within the private rented sector, and in particular within the HMO (houses in multiple occupation and shared houses) sector

Demand within the social housing sector is also high, driven by the affordability challenges facing many residents due to the disparity between housing costs (i.e. mortgage and rental payments) and their salaries.

The position is compounded by the low level of social housing stock that is present within West Berkshire that further increases demand for affordable accommodation.

We will engage with developers and Registered Providers to maximise delivery of affordable homes to meet the needs of residents within mixed tenure and inclusive neighbourhoods

Housing is a key determinant of health and poor housing directly impacts on poor health and well-being. This is obvious when considering health and safety hazards that may be present within the home (e.g. trip hazards resulting in physical injury) but is less obvious when considering psychological hazards (e.g. poor security resulting in a fear of crime and resultant stress and anxiety).

Poor housing can also have a negative impact on future life chances, for example children who grow up in overcrowded homes are less likely to attain high levels of educational achievement and this then limits future employment prospects and risks them living in poor housing in adult life.

Nationally the worst housing conditions can be found within the private rented sector. This is not the case for all private sector rented homes, indeed the majority of private rented properties are in excellent condition, however due to the size of the sector the small minority of homes that are in poor condition represents a large portfolio.

We will deliver a private sector stock condition survey to better understand the housing conditions within the private sector housing stock in West Berkshire

The majority of private landlords seek to comply with the diverse array of regulatory requirements that govern their business, however often they are simply unable to keep pace with regulatory change. This often restricts landlords from meeting their legal obligations despite their best intentions

We will deliver a private sector landlord forum as a vehicle for providing regulatory updates and sharing best practice as a means of improving standards within private rented accommodation

Self-regulation of the private landlord sector is a valuable method of improving both the image of the sector and providing residents with a valuable indicator as to whether a private landlord is likely to act professionally. There are a number of private landlord accreditation schemes that operate across the country and they provide training and development for landlords as well as enforcing proportionate codes of practice to ensure that landlords act professionally in their business.

We will introduce a private landlord accreditation scheme across West Berkshire to promote the business of being a professional landlord

The Council's private sector housing regulatory service is currently provided as part of the Public Protection Partnership which delivers environmental health and trading standards services across West Berkshire, Bracknell Forest and Wokingham. As such there are competing demands for resources to focus on private sector housing conditions and consequently capacity to improve the private rented sector is limited.

We will review enforcement of poor housing conditions within the private rented sector in accordance with the Public Protection Partnership's Private Sector Housing Policy to ensure that we are maximising our ability to improve private sector housing conditions

West Berkshire has an ageing population and the need to support independence is expected to grow year on year as residents become less able to lead healthy lives within their homes. There is currently limited information available to inform the future delivery of housing for older people and the needs of disabled residents across West Berkshire.

We will undertake a needs assessment to determine estimated future need for housing that meets the needs of older residents, disabled residents, and other residents whose needs are not suitably met by general needs housing

As well as homes needing to be affordable in terms of mortgage and rental payments, they need to be efficient and affordable to live in when it comes to heating and energy costs. This is particularly important for those on low incomes or who are vulnerable for other reasons. Fuel poverty can be tackled through a range of solutions that can help to make homes more energy efficient and bring down monthly costs for residents. These solutions also play an important part in the meeting of carbon reduction targets set out in our Environment Strategy.

We will promote measures available to residents that will help reduce their heating and energy costs.

We will take opportunities to bid for funding to deliver improvements in energy efficiency particularly focusing on low income households and vulnerable residents.

Priority 2 Reduce homelessness

The prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping remains a clear focus for the Council as the most effective intervention to secure housing solutions for residents who are threatened with homelessness. The interventions required to maximise performance in this area are discussed in detail in the Council's Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

We will deliver the actions set out in the Council's Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

The loss of private rented accommodation is the main driver for homelessness within West Berkshire and alongside the high demand for private rented accommodation local residents face significant challenges in securing affordable private rented accommodation.

We will introduce a package of measures to incentivise private landlords to accommodate residents who are threatened with homelessness to reduce the need for the Council to secure temporary accommodation under its homelessness obligations

Newbury is a key hub for many housing services that support our most vulnerable residents. However, the delivery of these services can result in other vulnerable people migrating from other local authority areas and in its extreme form can increase the incidence of rough sleeping.

Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness and within West Berkshire is largely found in and around Newbury town centre and consequently can have a negative impact on the perceptions of both local residents and visitors to the town which may influence future shopping behaviours.

We will continue our work with our partners to reduce rough sleeping through a range of interventions focussed on supporting individuals to access accommodation pathways appropriate to individual needs

We will continue to deliver Rough Sleeping Initiative projects as agreed with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government to reduce the number of people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough

The provision of services for single homeless people are currently focussed in Newbury, and this has the potential to disadvantage service users in both the western and eastern areas of the District. Similarly, as the need for services has increased the Council has commissioned services largely within the Newbury area, including hostel provision.

We will review the provision of support services for the single homeless, including the provision of smaller units of hostel-type accommodation distributed throughout West Berkshire to better meet local need.

"The Housing Strategy Delivery Plan will provide the full detail of how the Council intends to deliver on the priorities set out in this strategy"

Appendix 1 – Key achievements from the previous Housing Strategy

We have reflected on our achievements through the previous Housing Strategy period and these are set out below grouped by theme:

Homelessness prevention

- Prevented 1,835 households from becoming homeless through early intervention between April 2010 and March 2015 with an average of 2,200 each year since
- Housing Options service awarded NPSS Silver Award for operational good practice
- Introduced a Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) partnership to challenge systemic barriers impacting on residents with complex needs, including rough sleeping, offending, mental health and substance misuse

Rough sleeping

- Working with partners the number of rough sleepers has reduced from a peak of 23 in 2014 to 10 in November 2019
- Introduced the Rough Sleeper Task and Targeting Group in 2014 to tackle rough sleeping through multi-agency working
- Successfully bid for Rough Sleeper Initiative funding resulting in an allocation of £211k in 2018/19, and a further £261k for 2019/20 to tackle rough sleeping
- Successfully bid for Rapid Rehousing Pathway funding of £102k for 2019/20 to improve the housing pathways for people sleeping rough

Delivery of affordable homes

- Delivered 336 affordable homes between April 2010 and March 2015 with an average of 127 each year since

Provision of Housing Assistance

- Approved on average over 100 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) each year to assist disabled residents to live independently in their homes
- Processed 1,798 applications for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) to support residents receiving Universal Credit or Housing Benefit to remain in their homes at a point of crisis
- Introduced the West Berkshire Collective Energy Switching Scheme in 2016, saving over 660 households a total of £148,916 since the scheme started.

Providing support to vulnerable residents

- Introduced the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) approach in 2017 to break down barriers preventing vulnerable adults from accessing key Council services

Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs

- Allocated 8 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers at New Stocks Farm, Aldermaston
- Allocated 24 plots for Travelling Showpersons at Long Copse Farm, Enborne
- Approved 2 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers at Woolhampton
- Delivered the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment 2019
- Completed preparatory work to enable the refurbishment and redesign of the Council's Gypsy/ Traveller site

Partnership working

- The Homelessness Strategy Group formed to represent the diverse range of strategic partners working within West Berkshire to prevent homelessness and/or support homeless households
- Introduced a Housing First partnership providing sustainable accommodation with targeted support for entrenched rough sleepers with complex needs.

Appendix 2 – Key worker definition

The Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership definition of the job roles that are considered to be key workers comprises:

- Clinical staff employed by the NHS (excluding doctors and dentists)
- Teachers, including further education teachers and Early Years/nursery teachers
- Police officers and community support officers
- Frontline police staff (civilians) may also be eligible in some areas
- Prison officers and some Prison Service staff in prisons
- Probation officers (senior or not) and, for intermediate rent only, trainee probation officers
- Local authority (LA) or local education authority (LEA) or NHS social workers
- LA therapists (including occupational therapists and speech and language therapists)
- LA social care assessment staff
- LA educational psychologists
- LA/LEA/NHS nursery nurses
- LA planners
- LA clinical staff
- Uniformed staff, below principal level, in fire and rescue services
- Armed forces personnel and some civilian Ministry of Defence (MoD) personnel (i.e. clinical staff, MoD police officers and uniformed staff in the Fire and Defence Service), also including some discharged personnel
- Highway Agency traffic officer staff
- LA environmental health officers/practitioners.
- All care staff working in care homes, supported living and Extra Care Housing settings.
- All care staff providing domiciliary care (care at home)

Appendix 3 – Glossary Explanation of terms

Glossary

AONB- Area of Outstanding National Beauty

DFG- Disabled Facilities Grant

LSVT- Large Scale Voluntary Transfer

RP- Registered Provider

RRP- Rapid Rehousing Pathway

SHMA- Strategic Housing Market Assessment

RSI- Rough Sleeper Initiative

RRP- Rapid Rehousing Pathway

LSVTs- Large Scale Voluntary Transfers

NPPF- National Planning Policy Framework

LHA- Local Housing Allowance

MHCLG- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Affordable housing- housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Climate Emergency - West Berkshire Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and thus committed to the creation of a strategic plan to work towards carbon neutrality in the district by 2030.

Corporate Vision - West Berkshire Council's corporate vision is 'Working together to make West Berkshire an even greater place in which to live, work, and learn'.

Disabled Facilities Grant - The statutory Disabled Facilities Grant regime provides the framework that enables the Council to administer grants for aids and adaptations to help residents remain independent in their own home for longer.

Discretionary Housing Payments - A Discretionary Housing Payment is a discretionary and short-term payment made in the United Kingdom that helps people in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit with their housing costs.

Hostel Accommodation - Hostels are generally non-self-contained and cater for an identifiable group of people, such as people who would otherwise be homeless. They are defined as a building with domestic accommodation.

Housing Market- The Housing Market refers to the supply and demand for houses/properties, usually in a particular country or region in this instance West Berkshire.

Large Scale Voluntary Transfers - A Large Scale Voluntary Transfer involves the council transferring ownership of its homes with the agreement of its tenants to a new or existing Registered Provider (RP).

Local Housing Allowance- Local Housing Allowance was introduced on 7th April 2008 to provide Housing Benefit entitlement for tenants renting private-sector accommodation in England, Scotland and Wales.

Local Plan - A plan that sets out detailed policies and specific proposals for the development and use of land in a local area, authority or district and guides most day-to-day planning choices and decisions.

Long Term Empty homes- These long-term empty homes have been empty for over six months. Properties that have been empty for over two years are subject to the Empty Homes Premium which enables the Council to apply a penalty under Council Tax legislation, and in West Berkshire this can result in the owner of a long-term empty home paying up to four times the Council Tax for an occupied property in the same band.
Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM)- Making Every Adult Matter is a coalition of national charities working together to support local areas across the country to develop effective, coordinated services that directly improve the lives of people facing multiple disadvantages.
Public Protection Partnership- Delivers environmental health and trading standards services across West Berkshire, Bracknell Forest and Wokingham.

Rapid Rehousing Pathways - The Rapid Rehousing Pathway was launched as part of the Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018. The pathway brings together 4 policy elements (Somewhere Safe to Stay, Supported Lettings, Navigators and Local Lettings Agencies) that will help rough sleepers, and those at risk of rough sleeping, access the support and settled housing they need to leave the streets for good.

Registered Provider - The term registered provider is defined in Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 as a provider of social housing.

Rough Sleeper Initiative- The Rough Sleepers Initiative is designed to accommodate homeless people with emergency hostels.

Shared Accommodation - Shared accommodation is when renters share specific spaces in the property. Typically, each renter has their own bedroom and shares other rooms like the living area, kitchen and sometimes the bathroom.

Sheltered Housing- Sheltered housing is a term covering a wide range of rented housing for older and/or disabled or other vulnerable people.

Social Housing- Social housing is the term given to accommodation which is provided at affordable rates, on a secure basis to people on low incomes or with particular needs. Social housing properties are usually owned councils, or by non-profit organisations such as housing associations also known as Registered Providers.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment - A Strategic Housing Market Assessment is an assessment of future housing requirements in an area.

Under occupation charge- If someone is assessed as having more bedrooms in their accommodation than is necessary, they will be under-occupying that property. This means they will get a reduction on their Housing Benefit. Under-occupying is also known as 'Bedroom Tax'.

Welfare Benefit Cap - The benefit cap is a British Coalition government policy that limits the amount in state benefits that an individual household can claim per year.

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan

	Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management: Risks	Risk management: Mitigation	Start	Completion	Owned by
	Priority 1	**Enable every resident to have access to a home that meets their needs**						
1.1	**Engage with landowners and developers to deliver the level of new homes as required through the Local Plan**	Annual delivery of new housing to exceed published Local Housing Need (currently 507 dwellings per annum)	Planning consents and the delivery of new homes matches the Local Plan requirement	Reduction in scale of planning application received for housing development	Current land supply provides for 7.8 years of housing delivery	April 2021	March 2036	Housing Service Manager/Planning Policy Service Manager
1.2	**Utilise the Council's joint venture delivery vehicle to contribute to the delivery of new homes**	Increase the number of additional homes delivered by 2036	Annual delivery of new homes	Insufficient viable development opportunities	Mixed tenures considered to cross-subsidise delivery	April 2021	March 2036	Housing Board
				Delays in obtaining planning consent	Development forward plan reviewed by Housing Board			

	Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by
				Risks	Mitigation			
1.3	**Deliver a Council-owned housing company to procure private rented accommodation let at rents that are affordable for residents**	Housing company established	Incorporation agreed by Housing Board	Business case not agreed	Review feasibility and project brief	In progress	December 2022	Housing Board
1.4	**Proactively engage with developers and Registered Providers to provide advice in respect of development opportunities with the aim of removing unnecessary burdens and to be more responsive to business needs**	Reduction in time taken to reach planning decisions for major developments	Time taken to make decisions in respect of major development applications	Resources	Review resources and submit a pressure bid if required	April 2021	March 2022	Development Control/Planning Policy Service Managers

	Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by
				Risks	Mitigation			
1.5	**Work with registered providers to establish and implement schemes to assist with under occupation.**	Increase in under-occupied homes released	Number of under occupiers identified and provided with support and assistance	Under-occupiers do not want to move	Investigate reasons for not moving and implement support package to assist with moving	June 2021	March 2022	Housing Board
1.6	**Promote the use of local businesses in delivering value for money housing-related services wherever practicable**	Procurement exercises for housing-related services promoted to local businesses	Percentage of procurement exercises promoted to local businesses	May need a procurement exercise to ensure housing related service are delivered	Market research and support from Procurement Team	April 2021	January 2022	Housing Service Manager

Action		Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by
				Risks	Mitigation			
1.7	**Ensure that key workers are afforded priority within our Allocations Policy to assist with securing low-cost housing**	Allocations Policy sets out priority for key workers	Number of housing allocations made to key workers	The emerging housing Allocations policy is not adopted.	Revise policy to ensure adoption.	In progress	March 2021	Housing Service Manager
1.8	**Undertake research to identify the level of demand for affordable rent and discounted home ownership products from young people and key workers**	Key worker review completed	Review reported to Housing Board	Resources	Use of external consultants to deliver review	July 2021	March 2022	Housing Board
1.9	**Review the delivery of supported housing solutions across the District**	Supported housing review completed	Review reported to Housing Board	Resources	Use of external consultants to deliver review	March 2021	September 2021	Housing Board
1.10	**Review the delivery of Extra Care housing schemes to meet**	Extra Care housing review completed	Review reported to Housing Board	Resources	Use of external consultants to deliver review	June 2021	January 2022	Housing Board

	Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by
				Risks	Mitigation			
	the needs of an ageing population							
1.11	**Engage with private sector landlords to increase the supply within the private rented sector, and in particular within the HMO (houses in multiple occupation and shared houses) sector**	Increased number of high-quality HMOs within the private rented sector	Number of licensed HMOs	Resources	Increase staffing through utilising enforcement income	April 2021	March 2024	Public Protection Partnership
1.12	**Engage with developers and Registered Providers to maximise delivery of affordable homes to meet the needs of residents within mixed tenure and**	Increase in number of affordable homes completed by 10% each year	Number of affordable homes completed	Site viability	Facilitate use of external funding, e.g. through Homes England	April 2021	Annually	Housing Service Manager

	Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by
				Risks	Mitigation			
	inclusive neighbourhoods							
1.13	**Deliver a private sector stock condition survey to better understand the housing conditions within the private sector housing stock in West Berkshire**	Private sector stock condition survey completed by specialist contractor	Survey reported to Housing Board	Budgetary pressure	Subject pressure bid	June 2021	December 2021	Housing Board
1.14	**Deliver a private sector landlord forum as a vehicle for providing regulatory updates and sharing best practice as a means of improving standards within private rented accommodation**	Quarterly private landlord forum established	Landlord forum dates	Lack of interest from private landlords	Devise forum in conjunction with a national landlord association to increase relevance and market the forum to a larger audience	April 2021	April 2022	Public Protection Partnership

	Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by
				Risks	Mitigation			
1.15	**Introduce a private landlord accreditation scheme across West Berkshire to promote the business of being a professional landlord**	Private landlord accreditation scheme launched	Number of accredited private landlords	Lack of interest from private landlords	Devise forum in conjunction with a national landlord association to increase relevance and market the forum to a larger audience	June 2021	September 2021	Public Protection Partnership
1.16	**Review enforcement of poor housing conditions within the private rented sector in accordance with the Public Protection Partnership's Private Sector Housing Policy to ensure that we are maximising our ability to improve private**	Increase private rented sector dwellings improved each year	Number of private rented sector dwellings improved	Resources	Review use of civil penalty income to increase resources	April 2021	March 2024	Public Protection Partnership

	Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by
				Risks	Mitigation			
	sector housing conditions							
1.17	**Undertake a needs assessment to determine estimated future need for housing that meets the needs of older residents, disabled residents, and other residents whose needs are not suitably met by general needs housing**	Housing needs assessment completed	Review reported to Housing Board	Resources	Use of external consultants to deliver review	June 2021	January 2022	Housing Board
1.18	**Implement a review mechanism regarding eligibility for a DFG application.**	The number of DFG applications subject to review, will be approved and evidenced by eligibility will increase.	Review of DFG applications will form part of performance report	Accessibility of service and ability to provide information as part of the review due to circumstances out of our control i.e. Pandemic	Developing recovery plans to address risks posed from circumstance out of our control.	February 2021	December 2021	Housing Service Manager

	Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by
				Risks	Mitigation			
	Priority 2 Reduce homelessness							
2.1	**Deliver the actions set out in the Council's Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy**	Actions detailed in the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy delivered	Project update reports considered by the Housing Board	As detailed in the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy action plan		In progress	March 2025	Housing Service Manager
2.2	**Introduce a package of measures to incentivise private landlords to accommodate residents who are threatened with homelessness to reduce the need for the Council to secure temporary accommodation under its**	Private landlord incentives implemented	Number of households threatened with homelessness prevented from becoming homeless through use of landlord incentive	Poor take up of incentives by landlords	Use private landlord forum to promote incentive scheme	In progress	March 2021	Housing Service Manager

	Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by
				Risks	Mitigation			
	homelessness obligations							
2.3	**Continue our work with our partners to reduce rough sleeping through a range of interventions focussed on supporting individuals to access accommodation pathways appropriate to individual needs**	Eliminate rough sleeping by 2027	Number of rough sleepers as identified at the annual November count	External factors influence rough sleeping	Ensure the service is flexible to meet changing demands	In progress	November 2027	Housing Service Manager
2.4	**Continue to deliver Rough Sleeping Initiative projects as agreed with the Ministry of Housing and**	Rough Sleeping Initiative projects delivered as agreed with MHCLG	Annual reporting to MHCLG	Change in needs of rough sleeping cohort	Projects under continuous review with MHCLG with the ability to flex projects to meet emerging need	In progress	March 2021	Housing Service Manager

	Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by
				Risks	Mitigation			
	Local Government to reduce the number of people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough							
2.5	**Review the provision of support services for the single homeless, including the provision of smaller units of hostel-type accommodation distributed throughout West Berkshire to better meet local need.**	Review of support services completed	Review reported to Housing Board	Resources	Use of external consultants to deliver review	July 2021	March 2022	Housing Board

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