

31st July 2025

**HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY
MEMBER UPDATE 2025**

1. INTRODUCTION

The strategy sets out the council's approach to housing delivery, homelessness prevention and its role in maintaining good housing standards for residents.

The strategy supports the delivery of the councils HOMES FOR ALL priority and provides housing partners with clarity on its approach.

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress related to the implementation of the Housing & Homelessness Prevention Strategy published in October 2023 and previously presented to the group in June 2024.

2. BACKGROUND

The Housing & Homelessness Prevention Strategy was published in October 2023. It is a statutory requirement to have a homelessness strategy in place and good practice to have a wider housing strategy to support the delivery of new homes. The strategy underpins the operational framework for officers and partner agencies responsible for delivering housing and housing related services to residents.

The published strategy sets out the council's strategic approach in three themes:

Theme 1- Increasing the supply of good quality homes for residents, and prospective residents, for every stage of life.

Theme 2- Support residents to access affordable, well managed and maintained housing in the private and social sectors.

Theme 3- Work proactively to improve the condition and energy efficiency of housing in the borough.

The document provides an overview of the council's position for each theme and sets out objectives and deliverable action points to form a Delivery Plan.

In November 2024 the council published its Delivery Plan for 2025/26 within which is the priority [Homes for All: Quality Living, Affordable Housing - Rushmoor Borough Council](#). The existing Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy supports the delivery of the Homes for All Priority. The Delivery Plan progress monitoring is considered quarterly by Cabinet.

3. PROGRESS TO DATE

The table below sets out the progress that has been made in the year for each of the strategies three themes.

Objective 1 – Ensure up to date housing needs information to inform housing priorities in the Borough
<p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Utilise the council's housing allocation pool data to monitor the need for social rented and temporary accommodation.2) Source quarterly market information via Rushmoor Homes Ltd on need and demand for private rented and home ownership in the borough3) Access information from Registered Providers (RPs), Homes England and Hampshire Enabler's Network on need and demand for shared ownership and outright sale housing in the borough4) Engage with younger people (18–24-year-olds) on housing need and aspirations via colleges and other groups.
<p>Progress To date:</p> <p>The Homefinder website is updated quarterly showing the allocations for the year to date and a summary of those in the housing allocation pool. This information can be used to inform the demand of different house sizes in local plan making.</p> <p>Officers now source private market housing data directly from Office of National Statistics live tables rather than receiving report from external companies.</p> <p>The average private rent in the borough in June 2025 were:</p>

Property Size	Average Monthly Rent	Monthly Local Housing Allowance
1 bed	£901	£800
2 bed	£1173	£1000
3 bed	£1411	£1295
4 bed	£2025	£1699

HM Land Registry data shows that between April 2024 and April 2025 the average house price in Rushmoor increased by 1.7% to £319,000. This is lower than the general rise in the South East of 3.0%.

Information on the demand for shared ownership homes has proved difficult to source. This is due to the Help to Buy scheme ending, whereby the Help to Buy agent collected and issued demand information across Hampshire. Individual shared ownership schemes are marketed by individual developers and registered providers this link shows an example of how Aster Group are advertising homes in Farnborough [Buy New Build Homes by Aster](#)

Bridges are the estate agent for the shared ownership sales at Wellesley and confirm the continued demand for shared ownership homes. Of note is the challenge of meeting local housing demand as Bridges data show that sales to those with a local connection to the borough averages 60%-70%. Bridges Head of Land, Development & Shared Ownership has explained that this is mainly due to the large tranches of shared ownership homes being released at one time and that local housing demand and need is for 2 bed properties; for context the current phase provides 16x 1 bed flats and 7x 2 bed flats; 8x 2 bed houses and 8x 3 bed houses.

Applicants:	Number (June 2025)
Total Applicants for Wellesley	305
Applicants with local connection	202

There have been 611 enquiries for the last 4 houses to be advertised. Bridges data suggests there is local, immediate demand (Rushmoor residents who meet the affordability and mortgage ability criteria) for at least double the amount of shared ownership 2 & 3 bed homes currently being marketed.

Objective 2 – Implement plans and policies which encourage the delivery of a diverse range of housing types and tenures, and which supports the local housing market.

Actions:

- 1) Through the existing Local Plan policies and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
- 2) Through the emerging Local Plan policies

Progress to date:

Planning reforms, along with rent reform and improved levels of grant funding should assist in the delivery of more homes of all tenures going forward. Work preparing for the council's

new Local Plan has begun and subject to Government providing the necessary regulation and guidance will start to be progressed more formally later this year.

The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning document has had some minor amendments made to bring it up to date. The draft is currently being finalised and is scheduled for consultation in September 2025. This will ensure developers have appropriate and up to date guidance on the delivery of new affordable homes until the adoption of the new Local Plan.

Objective 3 – Work collaboratively with developers in the private and social sectors and other partner agencies to maximise a sustainable housing supply and overcome challenges

Actions:

- 1) The Council's housing enabling and planning functions will support developers to submit policy compliant applications through informal discussions and the pre application planning advice

Progress to date:

Delivery of affordable homes has been extremely challenging over the past few years with the council unable to meet its delivery target of 150 homes per year in 2023/24 and 2024/25. Officers are working to maximise every opportunity available to secure additional affordable housing supply, including supported housing, working with partners on capital funding bids, planning issues and legal work to secure long term nominations rights for Rushmoor residents.

There are 357 affordable homes in the council's current delivery programme of which 232 are expected to be delivered within the current municipal year. Of these 22 are for social rent, 182 are for affordable rent and 28 for shared ownership.

There are a further proposed 310 homes in the longer-term affordable housing delivery trajectory, including sites at Penmark and Progress House, Block 3 The Meads and Civic Quarter.

Two stalled sites are being considered as potential affordable homes. In both cases the developer is in administration.

Theme 2- Support residents to access affordable, well managed and maintained housing in the private and social sectors.

Objective 1 – Continue to focus resources on preventing homelessness

Actions:

- 1) Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) to be prioritised to resource specialist, homelessness prevention roles.
- 2) Working with statutory and voluntary partners to support people at risk of homelessness.
- 3) Plan for the changes to the Rough Sleeping Initiative Grant which ends in 2025.

Progress to date:

The council has recently recruited two specialist posts which support the prevention of homelessness:

- Domestic Abuse Worker
- Private Rent and Accommodation Officer

Officers continue to explore other, innovative options with partners, and learn from other authorities on best practice. The council is achieving above the national average for homeless prevention at 77.9% of cases compared with a rate of 51.9% nationally.

The service at Clayton Court has been maintained and secured until March 2028 with Society of St James taking over from Mears on 23/6/25.

Officers are working with Two Saints to look at options to secure the 20 unit supported Housing provision at Grosvenor Road in Aldershot as Hampshire County Council Social Exclusion funding is withdrawn at the end of the current financial year.

The Council is also working with Rolig Homes to deliver additional supported housing.

Objective 2 – Re imagine the housing advice front line to increase accessibility by proactively communicating information and advice to residents to prevent them getting into crisis situations

Actions:

- 1) Prepare a social media communications plan for specific groups at risk of homelessness, for example young people.
- 2) Further develop and promote the council's digital systems to increase the council's self-service provision, whilst continuing to support more vulnerable residents to access support services in more traditional ways

Progress to date:

The council's communications team have scheduled in a programme of work. Including working with the third sector and faith groups to harness their expertise.

The Housing Options team have recently provided Member training on how affordable housing is allocated to support Members with casework.

The Abris portal has been upgraded which provides residents with a better online service. Improvements include:

- Direct messaging with housing officers, making it easier to get updates and assistance
- Document uploading, making it easier for residents to submit forms online securely
- Self-service password resets, reducing barriers to access
- Mobile friendly design, allowing interaction from any device anywhere.

Going forward officers will explore how AI can help officers deliver a better service for residents however, the service remains committed to supporting residents with their preferred method of engagement, encouraging them to switch only if they are able to.

Objective 3 – Work collaboratively with partners in the private and social sector to ensure homes are accessible and well managed.

<p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ensuring households are aware of and able to access adaptations to support them to remain in their own home through the day-to-day work of the Private Sector Housing Team 2) Continue to run the Registered Provider Review Process of RP scrutiny
<p>Progress to date:</p> <p>Referrals and access to the DFG process start with Hampshire County Council who currently have a significant backlog of cases due to making changes to the way residents are assessed. Promotion of this scheme has been paused.</p> <p>The RP Review programme was carried out and a report presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12th June 2025. The format and purpose of the RP Review Group is under review.</p>

Theme 3- Work proactively to improve the condition and energy efficiency of housing in the borough.

<p>Objective 1 – Focus staff resource on enforcing standard and housing conditions in the knowledge that good housing conditions usually means good thermal efficiency</p>
<p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Continue the regulatory and enforcement work of the Private Sector Housing Team 2) Scrutinise our RP partners through the work of the Annual Registered Providers Review Group
<p>Progress to date:</p> <p>Regulatory & enforcement work continues and the RPs attending the Review meetings are appropriately challenged by members where the level of service to residents is unsatisfactory</p> <p>Staffing resource will need to be reviewed considering The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 and the statutory requirement coming into force in June 2026 to for licensing Supported Housing in the borough.</p> <p>Members continue to work with officers on overcoming problematic complaints.</p>
<p>Objective 2 – Communicate effectively, including via digital platforms to residents and landlords about the support, advice, and funding available to them to install energy efficiency measures in the existing, older stock</p>
<p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Seek to ensure funding is focussed on the properties and households most in need. 2) Implement an annual communications plan so that landlords and residents are aware of their rights and responsibilities, how to get help accessing grants and loans available to assist them to improve housing conditions. 3) Ensure website information is up to date and linking to appropriate energy efficiency information and schemes
<p>Progress to date:</p> <p>Rushmoor is part of the Portsmouth Consortium which as been awarded funding for energy performance and low carbon heating upgrades to low-income households.</p> <p>The council is part of the Warmer Homes Consortium, led by Portsmouth City Council to deliver energy efficiency measures in private domestic properties, this is published on the</p>

council's website. The consortium has targeted off gas properties with an Energy Performance Certificate rating of D or below. Data for Rushmoor shows increased take up and spend in the last 2 financial years.

	2023/24	2024/25	Combined
Applications received	18	22	40
Properties partially completed	0	0	0
Properties completed	1	6	7
Active Measures	7	7	14
Measured completed	1	7	8
Funding Spent	£7,275.00	£45,888.20	£53,163.20

The council awaits further information for the next phase referred to as Warmer Homes: Local Grant, a government-funded scheme delivered by Local Authorities. It will provide grants for energy performance upgrades and low carbon heating to low-income households to achieve energy bill savings and carbon savings. These upgrades will be open to all fuel types, including on gas households and off gas households (the previous scheme targeted off gas properties only). In the meantime, residents can register their interest on the warmer homes website and information for this service is available on the councils website [Energy efficiency in homes - Rushmoor Borough Council](#).

Objective 3 – Work with partner organisations to improve energy efficiency, reduce fuel poverty and seek innovative to achieve retrofitting (for example working with businesses to carbon offsetting through carbon credits to RPs for retrofitting) to improve residents health and wellbeing and reduce carbon emissions.

Actions:

- 1) Ensuring that the communications plan promotes the services and funding packages available to partner organisations.
- 2) Explore the development of the Carbon Offsetting Scheme currently being piloted by RP partners and HACT

Progress to date:

The Communications team promoted the Home Upgrade Grant (phase2) have scheduled work into their Service Plan.

Officers will pick up with HACT on conclusion of the pilot scheme to explore the benefits of carbon off setting for RP partners in 2026/27, this is likely to be with other Local Authority's in the context of Local Government Reorganisation.

4. SUPPORTED HOUSING ACT- New Statutory Duties

The Supported Housing Act 2023 places new statutory obligations on local authorities to review supported accommodation in their borough, publish a Supported Housing Strategy and set up a Supported Housing Licencing scheme by June 2026. It is a requirement that the Supported Housing Strategy will inform the Local Plan and Housing and Homelessness Strategies thereafter. MHCLG requires a joint approach with involvement from adult services, neighbouring service providers and neighbouring authorities.

New burdens funding will be available in 2026/27 to cover set up costs, thereafter Licence Fees are expected to cover future costs of the service. Further guidance is awaited from MCHLG, in the meantime officers are starting to work through the most appropriate way to deliver this work within the timescales and context of Local Government Review.

5. CONCLUSION

The council's strategic approach to housing and homelessness prevention is being delivered well across the three housing service areas. The delivery of the strategic objectives supports the Homes For All council priority and demonstrates updates on how the council is meeting its statutory housing duties.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the progress that has been achieved in the year.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Housing & Homelessness Prevention Strategy [Rushmoor Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2023 - 2027](#)

CONTACT DETAILS:

Report Author –Zoë Paine Housing Strategy & Enabling Manager
zoe.paine@rushmoor.gov.uk

Head of Service – Tim Mills: Executive Head of Property and Growth
tim.mills@rushmoor.gov.uk