

ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	Housing Strategy Review
Meeting date	20 May 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report provides the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the annual update on progress in delivering the Housing Strategy 2021–2027.</p> <p>Over the past year, delivery has continued across all five priorities, with a focus on increasing housing supply, strengthening homelessness prevention, improving housing options, and raising standards of safety and sustainability.</p> <p>The report summarises key achievements and highlights the main challenges and risks, including sustained housing demand, market and viability pressures affecting affordable housing delivery, ongoing pressure on temporary accommodation, and the capacity implications of regulatory reform. It also outlines proposed priorities for the year ahead and the intended approach and timetable for developing a new Housing Strategy, recognising that the commitment to meeting future growth needs is expected to remain a core priority and that the Council will need to continue to act as an enabler, partner and facilitator, as well as a direct deliverer of new affordable homes.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee;</p> <p>i. Note the progress, achievements and challenges set out in this report.</p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>To support the Committee in fulfilling its scrutiny role, consistent with the strengthened governance arrangements agreed at the 2025 mid-point review of the Housing Strategy (including priority-led officer delivery groups, the Member-led Housing Strategy Steering Group, and annual reporting to Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet). This report enables members to review progress, achievements, risks and regulatory assurance for 2025/26, and to</p>

	provide oversight and input on the proposed priorities for the year ahead and the approach and timetable for developing the new Housing Strategy.
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Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Update

Background

1. The Housing Strategy 2021–2027 sets out the Council’s long-term vision to provide a safe, secure and sustainable home where it is needed, enabling residents across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole to live well. The Strategy provides the overarching framework for housing-related activity and partnership working across the authority.
2. The Strategy is structured around five strategic priorities which together reflect the breadth of housing challenge and opportunity locally:
 - Meeting Future Growth Needs
 - Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping
 - Improving Housing Options, Opportunity and Choice
 - Empowering and Co-producing Neighbourhoods
 - Improving Safety and Sustainability Across BCP’s Housing
3. Delivery of the Strategy is coordinated through thematic work programmes aligned to these priorities and supported by formal governance arrangements, ensuring activity remains focused, coordinated and accountable.
4. A mid point review of the Housing Strategy was undertaken in 2025, which confirmed that the five strategic priorities remained appropriate and fit for purpose in the context of continued housing pressures. That review also set out a new governance model, including officer led delivery groups aligned to each priority and a cross-party, a Member-led Housing Strategy Steering Group to provide strategic

oversight, challenge and direction – and introduced annual reporting to Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet for improved oversight. At this time, it was also agreed that a revised 2 year Delivery Plan would be adopted, allowing further time for the commencement of the development of the new Housing Strategy from 2027. The Delivery Plan can be viewed at appendix a.

5. This annual update is provided within a wider strategic and policy context. Delivery of the Housing Strategy supports the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and aligns with the emerging Local Plan. The Strategy is closely linked to the Council's New Build and Housing Acquisitions Strategy (CNHAS) and acts as the overarching strategic framework for related housing and homelessness strategies, including the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the Specialist and Supported Housing Strategy.
6. Since the previous annual update, delivery has taken place against a backdrop of continued national policy change, legislative reform and sustained housing pressures, reinforcing the need for strong governance and early planning for the next Housing Strategy.

Summary of Key Delivery Achievements

7. Over the past year, delivery of the Housing Strategy 2021–2027 has continued to progress through coordinated thematic work programmes aligned to the five strategic priorities. Activity has focused on maximising housing supply, strengthening homelessness prevention, improving housing quality, responding to new Regulatory standards in our own council homes - and supporting inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods.
8. Notable progress has been made in relation to housing supply and enabling delivery. The Council has continued to work with registered providers, developers and partner organisations to unlock affordable housing opportunities, support regeneration programmes and bring forward new homes across the area.
9. Significant work has also been undertaken to strengthen homelessness prevention and reduce reliance on emergency accommodation. Service transformation activity across prevention, temporary accommodation and supported housing has improved system flow and access to timely intervention, reflecting the close alignment between the Housing Strategy and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
10. Activity to improve housing options, opportunity and choice has progressed through targeted work with private landlords, supported housing providers and specialist services. This has included measures to sustain tenancies, improve access to appropriate accommodation for vulnerable households and strengthen pathways into settled housing.

11. Work to empower and co-produce neighbourhoods has strengthened resident and stakeholder engagement and supported more coordinated, place-based partnership working to address issues earlier and improve access to advice and support. In parallel, action to improve safety and sustainability has progressed through strengthened compliance and assurance activity in relation to the council's own housing stock, closer cross-service working on property-related risks, and continued investment in stock condition and energy performance improvements.

Priority 1: Meeting Future Growth Needs

12. Progress under Priority 1 has focused on the Strategy's objectives to increase the supply of new homes (including affordable and accessible housing), enable delivery through effective planning and partnerships, and make best use of land and assets to meet future growth needs. Key achievements over the year are;

- The Council, registered providers, developers, and partners continue to support affordable housing supply through ongoing schemes and coordination. In 2025/26, the council delivered 36 affordable homes and registered providers delivered 109, totalling 145 new homes. An additional 243 affordable homes are planned for delivery in 2026/27.
- Supported delivery through alignment with regeneration and place programmes, helping to unlock sites and coordinate infrastructure and delivery considerations where housing is a core component.
- Development of an enabling environment to create the right conditions to unlock stalled sites which are controlled by third parties. This partnership approach allows for identification of the issues impacting on delivery and viability gaps to develop a site-by-site case for intervention. There are 9000 homes with planning consent which are yet to complete, presenting an opportunity for the Council to develop proposals to accelerate these homes and build an investment case for Homes England and private sector capital to deliver more affordable housing.
- Maintained focus on improving the quality and mix of new homes, including consideration of accessibility, space standards and specialist needs as part of wider enabling and commissioning discussions.
- Strengthened internal coordination between housing, planning and other council services to support delivery and ensure housing priorities are embedded in relevant strategies and programmes.

13. This work strengthens delivery against Priority 1 by expanding the pipeline of new homes that better reflect local needs, improving delivery certainty through stronger partnerships and programme alignment, and supporting improved affordability and availability over time. To maintain momentum, the Council will develop a new Housing Revenue Account (HRA) new build delivery programme in 2026, with an ambition to deliver up to 600 new homes over the next 10 years.

Priority 2: Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

14. Progress under Priority 2 has focused on the Strategy's objectives to strengthen prevention and early intervention, reduce rough sleeping, improve pathways and move-on, and reduce reliance on emergency and temporary accommodation through improved system flow. Key achievements over the year are;
- Maintained a position for over 12 months of having no families in Bed & Breakfast Accommodation over 6 weeks and reducing our overall dependency on temporary accommodation by 10% in the past 6 months
 - Progressed service transformation activity across prevention and temporary accommodation, improving how households access support and strengthening earlier intervention by 22% with 1142 households receiving help to avoid homelessness.
 - Continued targeted work with partners to improve pathways for people at risk of rough sleeping and to coordinate outreach, support and accommodation options. This has seen a 16% reduction in rough sleeping and a sharper decline in long term rough sleeping by 36%
 - Strengthened focus on move-on and system flow, including closer working with supported housing providers and other accommodation pathways to reduce bottlenecks and ensure peoples homelessness experiences are not repeated, with repeat homelessness rates at only 5% within 2 years
 - Maintained alignment with the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to ensure consistent priorities, shared governance and joint performance focus. The new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is now in its final stages, having been co-produced with partners and people with lived experience, and will challenge the Council and its partners to further embed prevention and upstream working over the next five years.
15. This work supports more households to be helped earlier and reduces the need for crisis responses, contributing to improved prevention and relief outcomes and, over time, reduced demand and cost pressures in temporary accommodation. Strong partnership working across BCP provides a solid platform from which to look to the future and further embed prevention and upstream working.

Priority 3: Improving Housing Options, Opportunity and Choice

16. Progress under Priority 3 has focused on the Strategy's objectives to widen housing options across tenures, improve access to suitable and supported accommodation for residents with additional needs, and strengthen pathways into settled housing through targeted partnership and market engagement. Key achievements over the year are;

- Continued targeted engagement with the private rented sector to support access to accommodation and sustainment, including work to improve relationships, confidence and available pathways. In person and online landlord conferences and forums now hold over 1000 local landlord contacts and more households than any previous recent years have been supported to access decent private rented sector housing to help meet their housing need.
 - Progressed work to strengthen supported and specialist housing pathways, improving how residents are matched to appropriate provision and supported to move on. This has been underpinned by approval of the Specialist and Supported Housing Strategy, a foundational framework that will create significant opportunities to address specific housing requirements and deliver benefits across housing, health and social care.
 - Developed and refined pathways for households with additional vulnerabilities, working across housing, adult social care, children's services and health partners to improve coordination and outcomes, such as a 100% improvement in settled housing outcomes for care experienced young people, helping 45 young people into permanent homes in the past year.
 - Improved the consistency of advice, assessment and decision-making across services to support fair access, clearer options and better customer experience.
17. This work helps residents to access a wider range of suitable housing options, improves stability for vulnerable households, and supports move-on into settled accommodation by strengthening pathways and improving matching to need.

Priority 4: Empowering and Co-creating Neighbourhoods

18. Progress under Priority 4 has focused on the Strategy's objectives to strengthen resident voice and co-production, build resilient neighbourhood partnerships, and ensure that housing-related support is accessible and responsive to local need. Key achievements over the year are;
- Strengthened resident and stakeholder engagement to deliver the objective of increasing co-production and ensuring that lived experience informs service design and delivery.
 - Maintained and strengthened partnership working between council services and external partners, supporting the objective of coordinated, place-based action to improve outcomes for households and communities.
 - Embedded a preventative, neighbourhood-focused approach through closer alignment between housing, homelessness, public health and community safety; reflecting the objective to identify issues earlier and coordinate support before problems escalate.

- Supported improvements to access routes for advice and support, contributing to the objective of more inclusive and responsive services through clearer signposting, strengthened referral pathways and earlier intervention for households at risk.
19. These actions have helped to strengthen local ownership and improve how services respond to neighbourhood need, with clearer access routes into advice and earlier, more coordinated support for residents at risk. This contributes to improved tenancy sustainment and prevention outcomes, and supports more resilient communities.

Priority 5: Improving Safety and Sustainability Across BCP's Housing

20. Progress under Priority 5 has focused on the Strategy's objectives to improve housing quality and compliance, reduce risks to residents through targeted intervention, and support healthier, more sustainable homes in line with wider climate commitments. Key achievements over the year are;

- Maintained a focus on housing standards and regulatory compliance, supporting the objective to raise housing quality and provide assurance that requirements are being met across relevant work programmes.
- Achieved a C1 (compliant) governance rating from the Regulator of Social Housing, providing independent assurance of the Council's approach to governance and regulatory compliance.
- In 2025, approved a refreshed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30-Year Business Plan, providing a clear long-term financial foundation and assurance that the Council can continue to maintain high quality and standards across its c.10,000 homes, while also creating capacity to invest in new affordable homes.
- Agreed a new 30-Year Asset Management Strategy to underpin delivery of the Business Plan, setting out how planned investment will be prioritised to keep homes safe and compliant, improve stock condition and energy performance over time, and deliver value for money through a clearer, evidence-led approach to maintenance, component replacement and retrofit.
- Worked with partners and landlords to promote safer homes and address hazards and poor conditions, aligning with the objective to reduce risk through targeted, risk-based interventions.
- Progressed activity that supports healthier and more sustainable homes, reflecting the objective to improve sustainability and reduce household costs where possible (including alignment with energy efficiency and wider climate initiatives).
- Strengthened cross-service links between housing, community safety and public protection functions to support a coordinated response to property-related risks and safeguard residents.

- BCP Homes' enhanced stock condition programme has improved our understanding of the Council's owned properties, with over 81% of homes now having a condition report within the last five years and zero non-decent homes.
 - During 2025/26, 880 properties were upgraded from being below EPC rating C to EPC rating C or above. As a result, approximately 80% of the housing stock is now rated EPC C or above, in line with our target for this point in the programme.
 - BCP Homes Property Compliance (Big 6) continues to operate at 100% compliant or within tolerable levels where access or parts are the dependent cause.
21. This work has supported safer homes and reduced risks to residents through targeted intervention and stronger joint working. It also supports healthier, more sustainable homes by promoting improvements that can reduce hazards and, where energy efficiency measures are progressed, help lower household running costs.

Key Risks and Challenges

22. Delivery continues to take place in a challenging operating environment. The key cross-cutting risks and challenges are summarised below.
- Sustained demand and affordability pressures, increasing the number and complexity of households requiring support.
 - Market volatility and scheme viability constraints (including build costs, interest rates and sales values), affecting the pace and scale of affordable housing delivery and the ability to secure policy-compliant contributions.
 - Ongoing pressure on temporary accommodation supply, availability and cost, driven by limited move-on options into genuinely affordable settled housing.
 - Private rented sector instability (high rents, limited supply and landlord exit), reducing housing options and increasing homelessness risk.
 - Capacity and availability challenges within supported and specialist housing pathways, which can constrain prevention, delay discharge and increase pressure on temporary accommodation.
 - Regulatory reform and rising safety standards, creating additional assurance, compliance and delivery capacity requirements.
 - Workforce capacity and funding uncertainty, increasing the need for prioritisation and robust programme governance.
 - Constraints on retrofit and energy efficiency delivery, including grant availability, supply chain capacity and the complexity of works, which can affect progress towards climate and fuel poverty objectives.

23. The Council and its partners will continue to tackle these challenges through the priorities for the year ahead, strengthened partnership and governance arrangements, and the development of the new Housing Strategy. The new Strategy will maintain a clear focus on prevention and upstream working, delivery of affordable homes, and improved safety and sustainability, and will be aligned with the emerging Local Plan to ensure that policy, evidence, infrastructure planning and delivery programmes are coordinated to address local housing requirements over the longer term.
24. The following section outlines the high level risks and challenges associated with each of the current priorities in the Strategy;

Priority 1: Meeting Future Growth Needs

- Viability constraints and market volatility (build costs, interest rates and sales values) may reduce the pace and scale of delivery and can impact affordable housing contributions and tenure mix.
- Site availability and delivery complexity (land assembly, infrastructure requirements and utilities capacity) may delay schemes and increase costs, particularly on regeneration and brownfield sites.
- Planning policy and consenting timescales, including alignment with the emerging Local Plan and related evidence, may affect delivery certainty and the ability to bring forward a balanced pipeline.
- Capacity and funding to support enabling work (including feasibility, business cases and programme management) remains a risk, alongside dependence on external partners and grant programmes.

Priority 2: Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

- Sustained demand pressures (including affordability, PRS instability and cost-of-living impacts) increase presentations and complexity, creating a risk that service capacity cannot keep pace.
- Limited move-on options into settled housing can prolong stays in temporary accommodation, reduce system flow and increase financial pressures.
- Availability and cost of temporary accommodation, including availability of accessible housing and use of out-of-area placements when local capacity is constrained, remains a significant operational and budget risk.

- Legislative and policy change (including reforms affecting the PRS, welfare and statutory homelessness duties) may create implementation and demand risks that sit largely beyond local control.
- For rough sleeping, risks include limited availability of appropriate supported accommodation and the need for coordinated responses to health, substance misuse and safeguarding needs.

Priority 3: Improving Housing Options, Opportunity and Choice

- Ongoing pressure in the private rented sector (rent levels, supply constraints and landlord exit) reduces available options for households and can increase the risk of homelessness and repeat presentations.
- Limited capacity and availability within supported and specialist accommodation pathways may lead to mismatches, delayed hospital discharge and increased use of temporary accommodation for households with complex needs.
- Market engagement and incentives may be insufficient to secure the scale of access required, particularly for larger households and those requiring adaptations or intensive support.
- Ensuring consistent assessment and decision-making across services while maintaining customer experience improvements remains a challenge, particularly during periods of high demand and workforce change.

Priority 4: Empowering and Co-producing Neighbourhoods

- Sustaining meaningful engagement and co-production at pace can be challenging, particularly where communities experience consultation fatigue or where expectations cannot be met due to wider supply constraints.
- Ensuring participation is inclusive (including seldom-heard communities) requires time, skills and resources; there is a risk that engagement does not fully reflect the diversity of local need without targeted approaches.
- Delivery relies on effective coordination across services and partners; changes in partner capacity, priorities or funding can reduce the ability to deliver neighbourhood-based activity consistently.
- Data-sharing, information governance and system interoperability can limit the ability to coordinate support and track outcomes across organisations, creating a risk that impact is not fully evidenced.

Priority 5: Improving Safety and Sustainability

- Regulatory reform and rising standards increase demand for specialist capacity, assurance activity and training; there is a risk that compliance activity displaces wider improvement work without sufficient resourcing.
- Poor housing conditions in parts of the private rented sector remain a risk, requiring sustained enforcement and partnership working; limited capacity can affect response times and proactive interventions.
- Delivery of energy efficiency and retrofit improvements is constrained by funding availability, supply chain capacity and the complexity of works; this affects the ability to reduce fuel poverty and meet climate-related ambitions.
- Building safety, fire safety and broader property-related risks require strong cross-service coordination; fragmentation of responsibilities can create assurance and accountability risks if not well governed.

Priorities for the Coming Year and Development of the New Housing Strategy

25. The coming year represents both a pivotal final phase of delivery for the Housing Strategy 2021–2027 and a transition period towards the development of a new Housing Strategy. Activity will focus on maintaining momentum on key delivery priorities while ensuring that learning, evidence and partnership insight are embedded into the next strategic framework.
26. Proposed priorities for the year ahead are set out below and are intended to maintain momentum against the current Strategy while laying the foundations for the next Housing Strategy.
 - Maintain a strong focus on meeting future growth needs by expanding and de-risking the affordable housing pipeline, including continued enabling work on stalled sites, alignment with regeneration and the emerging Local Plan, and development of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) new build delivery programme.
 - Strengthen homelessness prevention and reduce reliance on temporary accommodation through continued service transformation, earlier intervention, improved move-on pathways, and targeted partnership action (including work with the private rented sector and supported housing providers).
 - Improve housing options, opportunity and choice by widening access routes across tenures, strengthening specialist and supported housing pathways for residents with additional needs, and sustaining targeted market engagement to secure suitable accommodation.
 - Embed neighbourhood-based approaches by sustaining meaningful resident engagement and co-production, strengthening place-based partnerships, and improving access to advice and support—particularly for seldom-heard communities.

- Maintain strong assurance on housing quality, safety and sustainability, including delivery of regulatory requirements and proactive compliance programmes, continued progress on stock condition and energy efficiency, and targeted action to tackle poor conditions and hazards in the private rented sector.
27. Alongside these delivery priorities, work will continue to strengthen the evidence base and stakeholder engagement needed to develop the new Housing Strategy. This will include capturing learning from delivery performance, refreshing needs evidence, and ensuring that cross-cutting themes such as affordability, accessibility, health and climate resilience are embedded. As the new Strategy emerges, the commitment to supporting growth is expected to remain a key priority; the Council will therefore continue to act as an enabler, partner and facilitator, as well as a direct deliverer of new affordable homes.
 28. The new Housing Strategy will be developed using the established approach adopted for other corporate strategies: an initial scoping and evidence phase (including refreshed housing needs evidence and a review of delivery learning), followed by an evidence-based Issues and Options stage. The Issues and Options stage will form the basis for structured discussion and input with residents, Members, partners and stakeholders, ahead of the development of a consultation draft which will be subject to public consultation.
 29. Work will be closely aligned with the emerging Local Plan, ensuring that the Strategy both informs and is informed by the Plan's housing requirement, spatial strategy and site pipeline, and that there is clear alignment on key issues such as affordable housing policy, tenure mix, specialist and supported housing needs, infrastructure planning and viability. Governance will build on existing arrangements, with Member oversight through the Housing Strategy Steering Group and reporting to Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet at key milestones. Detailed timescales for each stage are not yet confirmed while resource challenges are addressed; however, the intention remains to complete the new Housing Strategy in spring 2027.

Summary of Financial Implications

30. Delivery of the Housing Strategy is supported through a combination of existing revenue and capital budgets and external grant funding. Activity is managed within approved financial frameworks and subject to ongoing monitoring through established budget governance processes.
31. The Council continues to maximise opportunities to secure external funding and investment to support housing delivery and homelessness prevention. Financial pressures associated with temporary accommodation, regulatory compliance and market conditions are actively managed and will inform future strategic planning.
32. No additional direct financial implications arise from noting this update or endorsing the proposed approach to developing the new Housing Strategy.

Summary of Legal Implications

33. The Housing Strategy operates within the context of statutory housing duties and relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks. Delivery activity is aligned with the Council's legal responsibilities, including those relating to homelessness, housing standards and equality legislation.
34. Emerging legislative reform and regulatory change continue to be monitored to ensure compliance and inform future policy development. There are no additional legal implications arising directly from this report.

Summary of Public Health Implications

35. Housing is a key determinant of health and wellbeing. Delivery of the Housing Strategy contributes positively to public health outcomes through improved housing quality, stability, safety and access to appropriate accommodation.
36. Close working with public health colleagues supports a preventative approach, particularly in relation to homelessness, poor housing conditions and vulnerable groups. The ongoing focus on safe and sustainable homes aligns with wider wellbeing objectives.

Summary of Equality Implications

37. An Equality Impact Assessment has informed and continues to inform delivery of the Housing Strategy, including a formal midway review completed in 2024. This ensures that activity supports fair access to housing and services for all residents, with particular consideration given to households with protected characteristics and those facing multiple disadvantages.
38. Equality implications are monitored through an ongoing action plan and individual service level assessments, and no adverse equality impacts have been identified through the delivery of the Strategy to date. Equality implications will continue to be monitored through delivery activity and inform the development of the new Housing Strategy, ensuring compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty throughout.

Summary of Risk Assessment

39. Key strategic risks associated with housing supply, homelessness pressures, funding uncertainty and regulatory change are identified and actively managed through the Strategy's governance arrangements.

40. Risks are kept under regular review through delivery groups and the Steering Group, with mitigation actions agreed where required. This approach enables the Council to respond to emerging issues while maintaining delivery focus.

Background papers

- BCP Council Housing Strategy [Housing strategy | BCP](#)
- Housing Strategy Mid Point Review [Housing Strategy Review Cabinet Report.pdf](#)

Appendices

Appendix A - Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2025 - 2027