

# NOTICE OF MEETING

**Meeting:** HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

**Date and Time:** WEDNESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2020, AT 6.00 PM\*

**Place:** SKYPE MEETING - ONLINE

**Enquiries to:** Email: karen.wardle@nfdc.gov.uk  
Tel: 023 8028 5071

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

\*Members of the public may speak in accordance with the Council's public participation scheme:

- (a) immediately before the meeting starts, on items within the Panel's terms of reference which are not on the public agenda; and/or
- (b) on individual items on the public agenda, when the Chairman calls that item. Speeches may not exceed three minutes.

Anyone wishing to speak should contact the name and number shown above no later than 12.00 noon on Friday, 11 September 2020. This will allow the Council to provide public speakers with the necessary joining instructions for the Skype Meeting.

**Bob Jackson**  
Chief Executive

Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, Hampshire. SO43 7PA  
[www.newforest.gov.uk](http://www.newforest.gov.uk)

**This Agenda is also available on audio tape, in Braille, large print and digital format**

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# AGENDA

## **Apologies**

### **1. MINUTES**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2020 as a correct record.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To note any declarations of interest made by members in connection with an agenda item. The nature of the interest must also be specified.

Members are asked to discuss any possible interests with Democratic Services prior to the meeting.

**3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

To note any issues raised during the public participation period.

**4. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY (Pages 5 - 24)**

To consider the proposed draft Private Sector Housing Strategy.

**5. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

To receive a presentation on the draft Housing Development Plan to support the Housing Strategy.

**6. HOUSING STRATEGY / HRA PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION UPDATE**

To receive an update on the progress of the Housing Strategy and HRA property development and acquisition.

**7. HOMELESSNESS UPDATE**

To receive an update on homelessness.

**8. PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATES**

An opportunity for the Portfolio Holder to provide an update to the Panel on any issues.

**9. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 25 - 26)**

To consider the Panel's future work programme and make changes where necessary.

**10. DATES OF MEETINGS 2021/2022**

To agree the following dates of meetings for 2021/2022 (all Wednesdays, at 6.00 p.m.):

16 June 2021

15 September 2021

19 January 2022

16 March 2022

**11. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT**

## **NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL – VIRTUAL MEETINGS**

### **Background**

This meeting is being held virtually with all participants accessing via Skype for Business.

A live stream will be available on YouTube to allow the press and public to view meetings in real time and can also be found at the relevant meeting page on the Council's website.

### **Principles for all meetings**

The Chairman will read out Ground Rules at the start of the meeting for the benefit of all participants. All normal procedures for meetings apply as far as practicable, as the new Government Regulations do not amend any of the Council's existing Standing Orders.

The Ground Rules for all virtual meetings will include, but are not limited to, the following:-

- All participants are reminded that virtual public meetings are being broadcast live on YouTube and will be available for repeated viewing. Please be mindful of your camera and microphone setup and the images and sounds that will be broadcast on public record.
- All participants are asked to mute their microphones when not speaking to reduce feedback and background noise. Please only unmute your microphone and speak when invited to do so by the Chairman.
- Councillors in attendance that have not indicated their wish to speak in advance of the meeting can make a request to speak during the meeting by typing "RTS" (Request to Speak) in the Skype chat facility. Requests will be managed by the Chairman with support from Democratic Services. The Skype chat facility should not be used for any other purpose.
- All participants should note that the chat facility can be viewed by all those in attendance.
- All participants are asked to refer to the report number and page number within the agenda and reports pack so that there is a clear understanding of what is being discussed at all times.

### **Voting**

When voting is required on a particular item, each councillor on the committee will be called to vote in turn by name, expressing their vote verbally. The outcome will be announced to the meeting. A recorded vote will not be reflected in the minutes of the meeting unless this is requested in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

By casting their vote, councillors do so in the acknowledgement that they were present for the duration of the item in question.

### **Technology**

If individuals experience technical issues, the meeting will continue providing that it is quorate and it is still practical to do so. The Chairman will adjourn the meeting if technical issues cause the meeting to be inquorate, the live stream technology fails, or continuing is not practical.

### **Public Participation**

Contact details to register to speak in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Procedures are on the front page of this agenda.

In order to speak at a virtual meeting, you must have the facility to join a Skype for Business Meeting. Joining instructions will be sent to registered speakers in advance of the meeting.

The Council will accept a written copy of a statement from registered speakers that do not wish to join a Skype Meeting, or are unable to. The statement will be read out at the meeting and should not exceed three minutes. Please use the contact details on the agenda front sheet for further information.

To:

**Councillors**

**Councillors**

Steve Davies (Chairman)  
Ann Sevier (Vice-Chairman)  
Anne Corbridge  
Kate Crisell  
Jack Davies

Andrew Gossage  
Joshua Kidd  
Ian Murray  
Caroline Rackham  
Christine Ward

## HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL – 16 SEPTEMBER 2020

### PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report proposes a draft Private Sector Housing Strategy which identifies 5 key priorities to deliver safe homes, adapted living, tackle empty homes, increase partnerships and promote energy efficiency.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The draft of the proposed Private Sector Housing Strategy was produced in conjunction with the Private Sector Housing Task and Finish Group, and with regard to the Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024, which sets out the Council's commitment to a thriving private rented sector.
- 2.2 A District wide Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey was also carried out and completed in March 2020. This has been used to provide an evidence base for the Task and Finish Group to determine and finalise the key priorities of the Strategy.

#### 3. THE NEW PROPOSED PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY

- 3.1 The new proposed draft Private Sector Housing Strategy is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The main aim of the Strategy is to improve access to safe and healthy homes within the private sector housing stock of the New Forest District.
- 3.3 The Private Sector Housing Strategy identifies five key priorities:
  - 3.3.1 Achieving high standards in the private rented sector
  - 3.3.2 Enabling safe independent living
  - 3.3.3 Tackling privately owned empty homes
  - 3.3.4 Energy efficiency
  - 3.3.5 Create a fully integrated Private Sector Housing Service
- 3.4 The Private Sector Housing Strategy sets out the various housing challenges that are being faced within the New Forest District, in relation to the private sector; the importance of improving access to safe and healthy homes and enabling safe and independent living.
- 3.5 In early 2019 the Council set out that it would be reviewing its Private Sector Housing functions through the adoption of a new Strategy, which would set out a new vision for the District. A Task and Finish Group of Members and senior officers, led by the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services, reviewed provision and performance to establish the set of key priorities listed within the proposed Strategy.

- 3.6 High priority is given to achieving high standards in the private rented sector by strengthening our relationship with private landlords and Letting Agents in the New Forest and working with them to deliver what is required to reduce the number of hazards identified within private rented homes.
- 3.7 The Council has a role in protecting the rights of tenants so it must also ensure that awareness is raised of tenant rights, responsibilities and the support available. The Strategy ensures the Council places an emphasis on delivering a service which meets the needs of private residents, working with other Council departments and external partners to deliver the aims. This will include promoting the Council's services and ensuring that residents understand they can contact the Council to tackle poor quality private rented housing and landlords who breach their legal responsibilities.
- 3.8 In order to achieve this, the Strategy requires a robust enforcement policy to be developed where co-operation and a supportive approach with landlords has failed.
- 3.9 The District Wide Stock Condition Survey highlighted that 12% of households in the New Forest have at least one family member who is affected by a long-term illness or disability. The majority of these households also experience problems moving around their homes. The most common mobility problems relate to climbing steps and stairs, using bathroom amenities and access to gardens. The Strategy highlights the importance of the Council's work to deliver Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). The Council is committed to deliver these both in the private sector and its own Social housing stock, and to increase the awareness of Disabled Facilities Grants and ensure that those who need adaptations receive the appropriate advice, support and assistance.
- 3.10 Although the Stock Condition Survey evidences that the New Forest District does not have a significant issue with empty properties, it includes objectives to tackle the empty properties that do exist. The Strategy has regard to the Corporate Plan, to ensure long term empty properties are identified and provide support and advice to the homeowners to bring the empty property back into use.
- 3.11 The Strategy also highlights the importance of energy efficiency within the private sector, by ensuring we are providing advice and assistance on energy efficiency measures to both private rented tenants and homeowners.
- 3.12 The final priority of the Strategy is to create a fully integrated Private Sector Housing Service to work with other departments within the Housing Service, Council and external partners to ensure the Private Sector Housing Team plays their part in meeting the priorities within the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the Housing Strategy.
- 3.13 Progress against the key priorities of the Private Sector Housing Strategy will be monitored through annual reports to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

#### **4. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 To deliver the Strategy, there will be a requirement for extra resources in the form of a full time post, particularly to deal with Priority 2. This will take the form of a new additional Housing Adaptations Surveyor.

- 4.2 This additional resource will enable the objectives of the Strategy to be achieved, recognising that an improved and more timely offering to vulnerable people will be the result.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The cost of the additional post referred to in paragraph 4.1 amounts to £44,000 and will form a bid during the budgetary setting process. It is proposed that the cost will be split equally between the Housing Revenue Account and the General Fund.

## **6. PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S COMMENTS**

- 6.1 Following on from the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey the new draft Private Sector Housing Strategy provides a concise summary of the many housing challenges private residents face within the New Forest. It provides a number of key actions and priority objectives which aim to improve Housing standards across the sector and place renewed importance on raising awareness of the many services available to vulnerable people, such as Disabled Facilities Grants, which benefit more than 400 households each year.
- 6.2 I fully support the Strategy and look forward to seeing positive outcomes being delivered to residents, working alongside our own officers and partners in the private and public sectors.

## **7. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are none.

## **8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The Private Sector Housing Strategy is for the benefit of all the District's residents and will have a positive impact by improving housing standards of private sector accommodation, increasing the awareness and delivery of disabled adaptations, bringing empty homes back in to use, promoting energy efficiency and improving the performance and outcomes of the Private Sector Housing Service.
- 8.2 Consideration has been given to the needs of those who identify with the protected characteristic groups of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, who may find it difficult to access safe and healthy homes in the private sector.
- 8.3 This Strategy should be read alongside the Council's other key housing initiatives, including the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, the Tenancy Policy and the new Allocations Policy which collectively all provide a means to meet the housing needs of those within these protected characteristic groups. It is recognised that the way in which the Strategy is implemented and the impact on those with a protected characteristic will need to be regularly monitored to ensure that those residents are able to take advantage of the Strategy's key objectives.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel consider the Private Sector Housing Strategy.

### Further Information:

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### Background Papers:

Public documents



# Private Sector Housing Strategy

2020 - 2024

**DRAFT**



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# Foreword

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**The Council's Corporate plan 2020-2024 renews our commitment to a thriving private rented sector, reinforcing the priority commitments given in the 2019 Housing and Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategies.**

We are keen to maintain confidence in the sector and improving access to safe and healthy homes. I am proud to introduce this strategy which identifies 5 key priorities to deliver safe homes, adapted living, tackle empty homes, increase partnerships and promote energy efficiency.

Including the Private Sector Housing Team within my housing portfolio in 2019 opened the door for several joint working opportunities to prevent homelessness, make the best use of the council's housing stock, inform design standards for our new temporary accommodation and gain an improved understanding of where our resources should be prioritised.

We recognise that poor quality private housing and fuel poverty can have a detrimental effect, not only on the health and wellbeing of the people living in poor quality and badly managed homes, but also on the general quality of life in an area. In a year where private rented sector legislation has significantly changed, we are therefore committed to providing a range of advice and assistance to improve the provision, quality, management and energy efficiency of homes within the District.

We must also respond to increasing demand for adaptations to enable our residents to remain living independently in their homes, or to support them move to a previously adapted home.

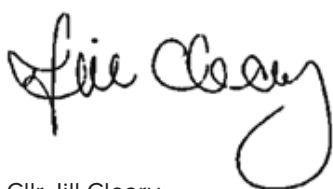
Issues with long term empty homes, whilst not a major issue in our district, must also be given prominence to ensure they are brought back in to use in an area with high demand for housing.

We know that to make the outcomes of this strategy a success we need to build effective relationships with private rented sector landlords and agents, as well as owner occupiers. A Landlord Forum will provide the platform for positive outcomes to our actions, as well as full integration of the team with the wider housing service.

I look forward to working with all those involved in the sector to help achieve improved outcomes for our residents.

## Strategic Private Sector Housing Priorities 2020 - 2024

- Achieving high standards in the private rented sector.
- Enabling safe independent living.
- Tackling privately owned empty homes.
- Energy efficiency.
- Create a fully integrated private sector housing service.



Cllr Jill Cleary  
Portfolio Holder for  
Housing Services



# National context

The number of households in the Private Rented Sector (PRS) in the UK increased from 2.8 million in 2007 to 4.5 million in 2017, an increase of 1.7 million (63%) households. Overall 23.9% of private sector dwellings in England in 2018 were private-rented.

Households in the PRS are getting older; between 2007 and 2017, the proportion of head of household aged 45 to 54 increased from 11% to 16% while those aged 16 to 24 dropped from 17% to 12%. 29.6% of households nationally are aged 65 years and over.

In 2017, 62% of households in the PRS in the UK had spent under three years in the same accommodation and only a small proportion (4%) had been in the same residence for 20 years or longer.

In terms of meeting the Decent Homes Standard 19% of private sector housing nationally (2018) is non-decent. With the exception of Category 1 hazards the reasons for Decent Homes failure are no longer presented at national level. In 2018, 11.7% of private dwellings in England exhibited Category 1 hazards.

Nationally, 17.3% of owner-occupied dwellings are assessed as non-decent with an equivalent figure for the private-rented sector of 24.6%.

Significant national growth in private-renting in England has been recorded since 2003, with the private-rented sector overtaking the size of social rented sector for the first time since 2012-13. Increases nationally have been related to the removal of rent controls, the introduction of assured short-hold tenancies, the growth in buy-to-let and the shortage of affordable properties for purchase.

This rapid expansion of the PRS has been recognised and subsequently reflected in a number of national strategies and the introduction of new legislation in the last few years.

## Legislative context

Private Sector Housing must comply with a number of statutory provisions, which over the last five years have increased the duties on landlords to improve property standards within the district.

These include but are not limited to:

### Housing Act 2004

This Act came into force in April 2006 and reformed housing legislation for landlords, owners and occupiers. The Act places both mandatory duties on housing authorities as well as giving a range of discretionary powers. These include: The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), mandatory licensing scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and powers to return empty properties back into use.

### Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002

This legislation empowers local housing authorities to provide financial assistance for housing renewal in the form of grants, loans or other assistance to tenants and private owners in accordance with a locally determined policy.

### Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, Disabled Facilities Grant Regulations 2008 and Disabled Facilities Grant General Consent 2008

The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, amended by the Regulatory Reform Order 2002, provides the primary legislation governing mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). The Disabled Facilities Grant General Consent 2008 covers discretionary grant assistance, the current scope of DFGs and sets out the conditions in which a local authority can place a charge on a property in respect of DFGs.

### The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015

This Order identifies the requirements, obligations and actions required by a relevant landlord and the Council in relation to smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in privately rented properties.

### Housing and Planning Act 2016

The Housing and Planning Act introduced a wide new package of measures affecting Local Housing Authorities and Local

Planning Authorities. The principal matters covered by the Act relevant to this Policy Framework are:

- Introducing the framework for Civil Penalties in respect of certain housing offences .
- Allowing Local Authorities to apply for Banning Orders .
- Creating a national database of Rogue Landlords and Letting Agents.
- Allowing tenants or Local Authorities to apply for Rent Repayment Orders where landlords have committed certain offences.

### Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018

The Act is to help drive up standards in rented homes in both the social and private sectors and provide an alternative means for tenants to seek redress from their landlord if their rented property presents a risk of harm to the health and safety of the occupiers.

### Tenant Fees Act 2019

Landlords or agents are no longer able to require tenants in the private rented sector in England, or any person acting on behalf of the tenant or guaranteeing the rent, to make certain payments in connection with the tenancy.

### Minimum Energy Standards

From 1 April 2020, all rented properties are required to have a minimum energy performance certificate rating of E or above.

### The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Renter Sector (England) Regulations 2020

Landlords are required to have the electrical installations in their properties inspected and tested by a person who is qualified and competent, at least every five years. The regulations apply to new tenancies from 1 July 2020 and existing tenancies from 1 April 2021.

More detailed information on the National Context can be found in the Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey report.

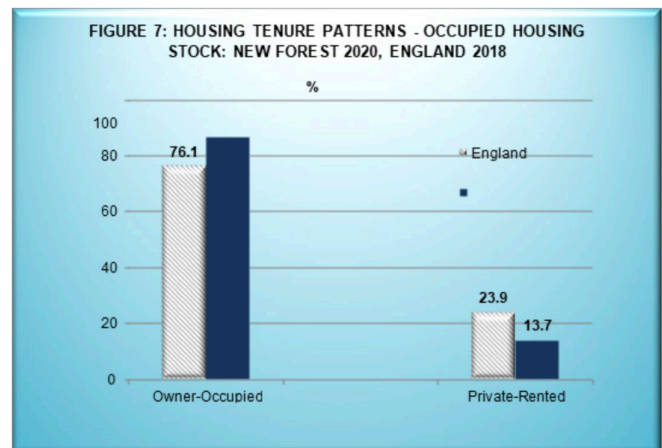
# Local context

New Forest District contains a private sector housing stock estimated at 76,464 dwellings. In January 2020, 94.5% were occupied with the remaining 5.5% being vacant.

Houses and bungalows comprise 68,414 dwellings (89.5%) with the remaining 8,051 dwellings (10.5%) in flats.

The age of a home is strongly associated with its condition and energy performance. The oldest homes (pre-1919) generally perform less well in these respects than newer homes. Private sector housing in the New Forest is representative of all building eras but is predominantly of post Second World War Construction.

The highest concentrations of older housing (pre-1919) are recorded in the National Park HMA (37.1%), while rates of post-1980's housing are highest in the South Coast HMA (38.2%).



## Tenure

Housing tenure patterns in New Forest differ from the national profile from England. 23.9% of private sector dwellings in England in 2018 were private rented compared to 13.7% locally. Rates of owner-occupation locally of 86.1% compared with 76.1% owner occupation nationally.

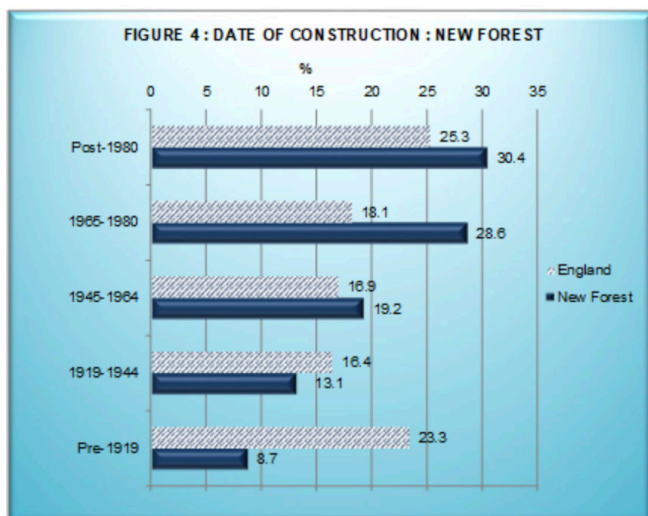
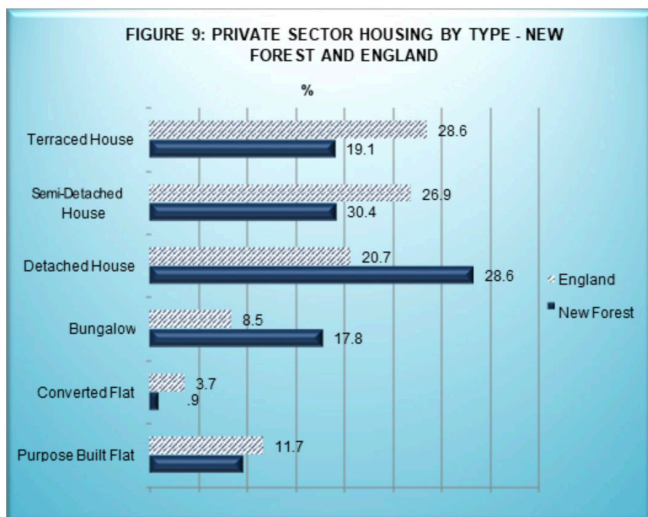
Private sector households are typically small in size and in line with national trends exhibit an ageing profile. 13,112 households (18.1%) are single person in size, an additional 36,540 households (50.6%) contain two persons. Only 2,829 households (3.9%) contain five or more persons. The average age of heads of household is estimated at 57 years; 27,350 households (37.8%) are headed by a person aged 65 years and over.

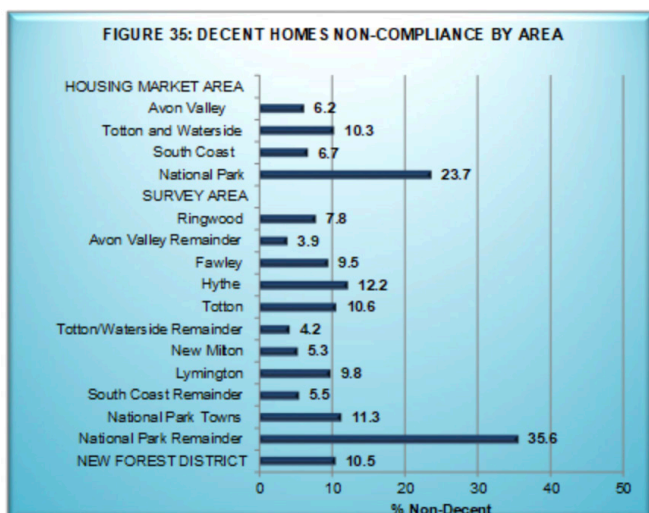
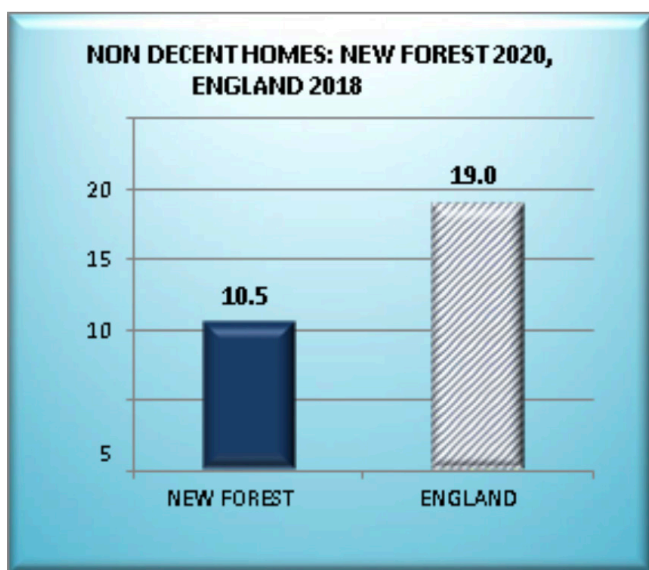
## Housing Conditions

Housing conditions against national standards can only be measured fully within the occupied housing stock. Information from the English Housing Survey enables housing conditions in the New Forest district to be placed in a national context. Housing conditions locally, with regard to the Decent Homes Standard, are significantly better than the national average. Locally, 10.5% of occupied private housing fails the Decent Homes Standard compared to 19% of private sector housing nationally (2018). With the exception of Category 1 hazards the reasons for Decent Homes failure are no longer presented at national level. In 2018, 11.7% of private dwellings in England exhibited Category 1 hazards. The equivalent figure in the New Forest district is 2.2%.

Within the Decent Homes Standard itself the following pattern of failure emerges:

- 1,555 dwellings (2.2%) exhibit Category 1 hazards within the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS);
- 3,504 dwellings (4.8%) are in disrepair;
- 195 dwellings (0.3%) lack modern facilities and services; and
- 4,220 dwellings (5.8%) fail to provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.





## Environmental conditions

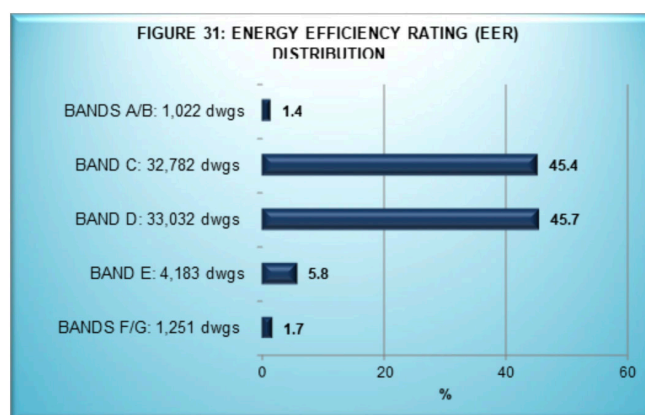
Overall, 2,427 dwellings (3.4%) are located in residential environments experiencing liveability problems (Decent Places). Problems with upkeep affect just 109 dwellings (0.2%), traffic problems affect 1,749 dwellings (2.4%) while utilisation issues affect 569 dwellings (0.8%). As an overall assessment, surveyors were asked to grade the visual quality of the residential environment. Surveyors assessed the environment as below average for 3,342 dwellings (4.6%), as average for 56,832 dwellings (78.6%) and as above average or good for 12,096 dwellings (16.8%). Visual environment quality issues are more significant in areas of private-rental, pre-1919 housing and around dwellings constructed between 1975 and 1981. At an area level they are most significant within the Totton and Waterside HMA.

## Energy efficiency and fuel poverty

Home energy efficiency levels are encouraging and above the national average. 68,049 dwellings (94.2%) comply with Decent Homes thermal comfort requirements and the occupied housing stock has an average SAP rating of 66.1

compared to the English private sector average of 62.2 (2018). Average SAP ratings increase for modern properties ranging from 53.7 for dwellings constructed pre-1919 to 71.3 for dwellings post-1981. Average SAP ratings at 69.6 are also higher within the private-rented sector. At the sub area level, the lowest average SAP ratings are recorded in National Parks Remainder (53.6) and National Parks Towns (62.4).

66,836 occupied private dwellings (92.5) fall within the highest Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) bands (A, B and C) compared to 81.2% of private housing nationally. Conversely the proportion of private dwellings in the lowest EER bands (E, F and G) is below the national average. 6.5% of private dwellings in the New Forest (5,434 dwellings) fall within EER bands E, F and G compared to 18.8% of private dwellings nationally.

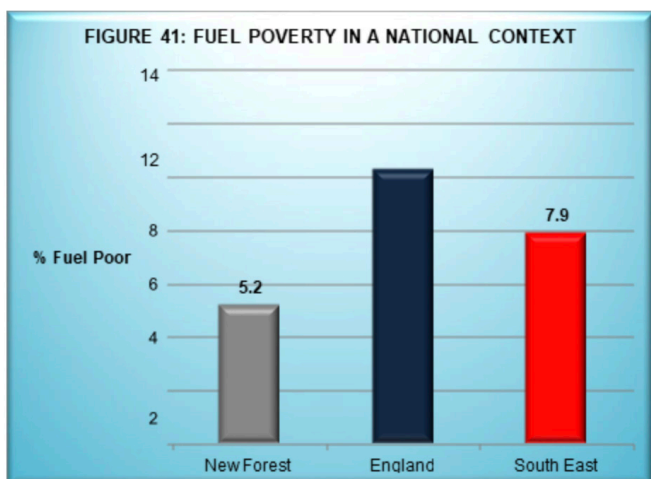


With the exception of the National Park energy efficiency ratings show limited variation geographically. Average SAP ratings of 59 for the National Park HMA are significantly below the District average of 66 and impact particularly on the rural remainder of the National park where the average SAP rating is 55.

Fuel poverty in England is now measured using a Low-Income High Costs framework (LIHC). Under this definition a household is considered to be fuel poor where:

- They have required fuel costs that are above average: and
- Were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

Under the definition, 3,777 households in New Forest (5.2%) have low incomes and high fuel costs and are in fuel poverty. Rates of fuel poverty are below the current average for England (10.3%) and the South East regional average of 7.9%; national and regional figures refer to 2018.

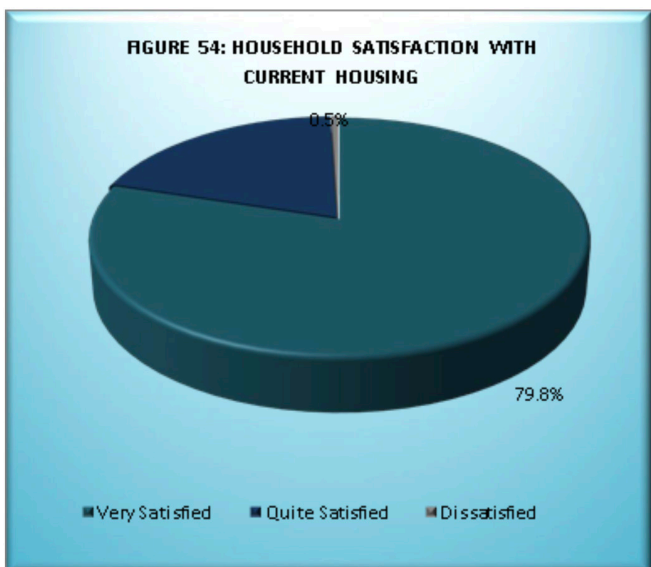


### Household illness/disability

8,673 households in New Forest (12%) indicated that at least one family member was affected by a long-term illness or disability.

Household illness/disability is strongly age related. 6,827 of the households affected by illness/disability (78.7%) have a head of household aged 65 years and over.

The majority of households experiencing illness/disability also experience mobility problems within their existing dwelling – 7,553 households (87.1%). The most common mobility problems relate to climbing steps and stairs, using bathroom amenities and access to gardens.



### Household attitudes

Housing satisfaction levels are very good. 57,667 households (79.8%) are very satisfied with their current home, an additional 14,235 households (19.7%) are quite satisfied. Only 366 households (0.5%) expressed direct dissatisfaction with their home. Household satisfaction with their local areas is also high. 58,958 households (81.6%) are very satisfied with the area in which they live, an additional 13,119 households are quite satisfied (18.2%). Just 191 households (0.3%) expressed dissatisfaction with their local area.

The majority of households – 68,836 households (95.3%) – regard their area as unchanging over the last five years; 1,991 households (2.8%) think their local area has improved while 1,440 households (2.0%) think their local area has declined. Almost 90% of households (1,290) who thought their area had declined in the last five years reside within the Totton and Waterside HMA.

### Empty homes

At the time of survey 72,269 dwellings (94.5%) were occupied; the remaining 4,195 dwellings (5.5%) were vacant. The majority of vacant dwellings (2,592 dwellings – 3.4%) have been vacant under 6 months and are expected to return to occupancy in the short-term. These will typically include dwellings for sale or rent and those currently undergoing major repairs and/or improvements.

A further 685 vacant dwellings (0.9%) were assessed as vacant for over 6 months and are typically regarded as problematic in occupancy terms; the remaining 918 vacant dwellings (1.2%) were deemed to be either holiday lets or second homes. Short-term vacancy rates are in line with normal housing market turnover expectations.

More detailed information on the local Context can be found in the Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey report.

# Corporate context

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## **The provision of a strong and healthy private rented sector features heavily in the Council's corporate vision for the next four years.**

Our 2020-2024 Corporate Plan aligns with the Housing and Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategies to reinforce a number of key activities which will produce better outcomes for residents in the private rented sector.

The Council's Housing Portfolio was enhanced in 2019 with the addition of the private sector housing team. We firmly believe that decent housing conditions, adequate supply and solutions for homelessness require the private rented sector to perform its part in responding.

The Council recognises its important role in supporting residents, landlords & letting agents in maintaining the provision of safe and healthy homes. In order to support and monitor this a number of key actions feature in the Corporate Plan; charging the Private Sector Housing Team with delivering the following actions within this strategy.

- Work with the Task & Finish Group to develop and deliver the new Private Sector Housing Strategy by the end of 2020/21.
- Improve standards by setting up a Landlord forum to meet six monthly during 2021.
- Implement a new strategy to tackle empty properties by the end of 2020.
- Protect the health and safety of tenants in private rented properties.
- Enabling the best use of housing to meet the needs of local people, including support for a strong high quality private rented sector.



# Actions to date and future direction of travel

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**Through 2018 to 2020 New Forest District Council has strengthened its strategic and operational approach toward delivering a robust housing service for residents in both the social and private sector.**

In early 2019 the Council recognised that its approach to Private Sector Housing in the district required a new vision to meet the requirements of the sector. A Task and Finish Group of members and senior officers, led by the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services, reviewed provision and performance to establish the set of key priorities listed within this strategy.

Since the start of 2019 the Council has:

- Re-branded the name of the team from Housing Grants and Improvements to Private Sector Housing.
- Moved the Private Sector Housing team to operate within the Housing Service to enhance joint working in order to prevent homelessness, improve property condition and improve co-operation with landlords.
- Ensured vacant adapted council dwellings are used primarily for applicants with disabilities.
- Amended bathroom refurbishment programmes in our three Extra Care facilities and bungalows to incorporate level access showers.
- Moved the Private Sector Leasing scheme from the homelessness team to Private Sector Housing, adapting the lead role to incorporate Landlord Liaison.
- Increased the number of Private Sector Leased properties by 8.
- Increased the amount of funding for disabled adaptations for our own housing stock to bring it in line with the amount provided for the Private Sector.
- Provided up to date training for the team to ensure they are equipped to carry out their roles at a time when new legislation is frequently being introduced.
- Taken a new approach to the recruitment of specialist officers to encourage applicants with transferable skills to apply to vacant positions.
- Utilised an improved Corporate IT infrastructure to move from paper-based processes to online processing, including the use of tablets to ensure site visits and follow ups are more efficient and flexible.
- Launched a private sector housing survey in December 2019 to establish the condition of homes in the district to inform this strategy and key priorities.
- Taken on the management of the Council's mobile home park at Stillwater Park.
- Procured new software to manage the day to day work of the Private Sector Housing Team.



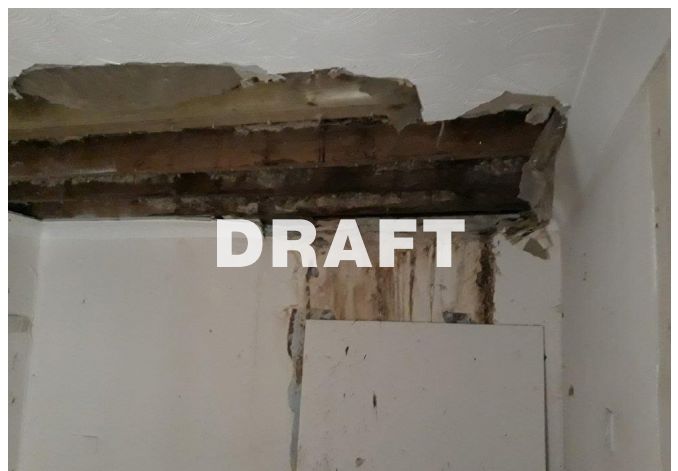
# Strategic priority 1

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## Achieving high standards in the private rented sector

### Actions

- Strengthen our relationship with Private Landlords and Letting Agents in the New Forest by:
  - Enabling our Private Sector Landlord Liaison Officer to be the first point of contact for Landlords and Agents.
  - Promoting the Council's Private Sector Lease Scheme.
  - Raising awareness of Council responsibilities and services.
  - Providing support to tenants at risk of homelessness.
- Set up and maintain a successful Landlords' Forum to:
  - Provide partnership working opportunities.
  - Co-operate with local landlord associations.
  - Launch initiatives with landlords such as energy efficiency or greener homes.
  - Improve access to training and learning.
  - Provide forums for discussion and networking.
- Encourage and support landlords and agents to reduce the number of hazards in private rented homes.
- Increase awareness of tenants' rights, responsibilities and the support available.
- Help tenants living in poor quality private rented properties by responding to their concerns quickly and effectively.
- Develop a robust enforcement policy, where co-operation with landlords has failed, to assist with proportional and consistent legal action.
- Adopt a charging structure for the serving of enforcement notices.
- Introduce the use of civil penalties.
- Pro-actively work to identify properties in multiple occupation that are licensable.
- Operate a high-quality mandatory HMO licensing scheme to ensure shared accommodation is safe and provides appropriate facilities to occupiers.
- Work closely with Registered Providers (RPs) to ensure good quality affordable housing is maintained and where necessary ensure appropriate follow up actions have been taken.



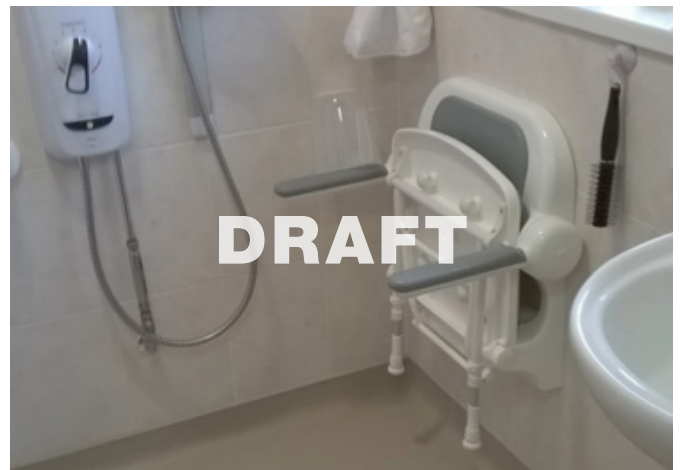
# Strategic priority 2

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## Enabling safe independent living

### Actions

- Increase awareness of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) through improved promotion and partnerships with charities and groups representing people with disabilities.
- Reduce the time taken to deliver adaptations in line with progressive targets which achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable people.
- Overhaul our response to hospital discharge cases by creating a new and responsive procedure alongside hospital discharge teams.
- Develop work with Hampshire City Council's adult/ children's services to improve working relationships with local hospitals and community teams to fast track adaptations to assist people home from hospital via a Hospital Discharge Grant.
- Ensure that those who need adaptations receive the appropriate level of advice, support and assistance; delivered in a prompt and timely fashion.
- Review the financial assistance policy to ensure it is aligned to our priorities.



# Strategic priority 3

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## Tackling privately owned empty homes

### Actions

- Implement a new strategy to tackle empty properties by the end of 2020.
- Pro-actively work to identify long term empty properties.
- Target owners whose empty homes continue to cause a significant detrimental impact to the neighbourhood.
- Provide support, advice and information to homeowners to bring empty properties back into use.



# Strategic priority 4

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## Energy efficiency

### Actions

- Provide advice and assistance on energy efficiency measures, alternative methods of heating and energy provider switching services to residents, including the new Green Homes Grant.
- Identify and bid for funds to promote energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty.
- Improve access for residents to information and advice to resolve situations of hardship.
- Explore partnerships with Citizen's Advice and other community support agencies.
- Ensure landlords are compliant with the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES).



# Strategic priority 5

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## Create a fully integrated Private Sector Housing service

### Actions

**Work with other departments within the Housing Service and the Council to help meet the priorities within the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the Housing Strategy:**

- Replace the IT Management System to enable integration with Housing Options systems and databases.
- Review all procedures and policies.
- Review all external communication templates.
- Joint approaches with the Housing Options team to tackling poor accommodation standards to prevent homelessness.
- Work to identify the links between poor private sector properties and homelessness.
- Provide training on legislation and property standards to empower Homelessness Officers to provide appropriate property advice.
- Provide training on homelessness legislation to empower Housing Standard Officers to provide appropriate Housing Options advice.
- Explore the best use of existing Council housing stock before assessing referrals for DFGs.
- Work alongside Allocations and Homelessness Officers to provide solutions to individual housing issues.
- Help facilitate a supply of safe, good quality affordable housing which is accessible and adaptable.
- Provide advice and assisting in designing and acquiring properties for temporary accommodation.
- Re-align job roles within the service to offer consistency of approach.
- Feed in to the design of new Council Housing and temporary Accommodation.



# Monitoring and review

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**Performance and progress against each of the actions within this strategy will be reviewed annually in conjunction with members and stakeholders.**

A transparent annual position statement will be produced to highlight our progress and how effective these measures have been in reducing homelessness and rough sleeping.

We are keen to understand the ongoing impact on our residents and our annual review will incorporate a full statistical analysis of approaches to the service. This will enable us to be responsive in tackling any emerging issues.

New actions and targets may be agreed if further changes are made to national legislation and policy. There is likely to be further legislation implemented over the next couple of years to increase safety and enhance security of tenure in the private rented sector.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing Services, working with the Executive Head of Governance & Housing and Service Manager – Housing Options, Rents, Support and Private Sector Housing will lead the review of the delivery plan.

In reviewing its strategy annually this council remains committed to embracing amended policy direction and incorporating it within annual updates.



**New Forest District Council**

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2020





## HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
<b>20 January 2021</b>			
Housing Revenue Account Budget and the Housing Public Sector Capital Expenditure Programme for 2021/22	To consider the HRA budget and the housing public sector capital expenditure programme for 2021/22.	Report to Panel	Kevin Green
Telecare Infrastructure Replacement Project	To receive a presentation on the Telecare Infrastructure Replacement Project	Presentation to Panel	Richard Fudge/ Ritchie Thomson/ Brian Byrne
Housing Strategy / HRA Property development and acquisition update	To receive an update on the progress of the Housing Strategy and HRA property development and acquisition	Update to Panel	Tim Davis
Homelessness Update	To receive an update on homelessness	Update to Panel	Richard Knott
<b>17 March 2021</b>			
Housing Strategy / HRA Property development and acquisition update	To receive an update on the progress of the Housing Strategy and HRA property development and acquisition	Update to Panel	Tim Davis
Compliance Update	To receive a presentation on the progress made against the new compliance policies now in place	Presentation to Panel	Ritchie Thomson/ Richard Fudge
Homelessness Update	To receive an update on homelessness	Update to Panel	Richard Knott

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