

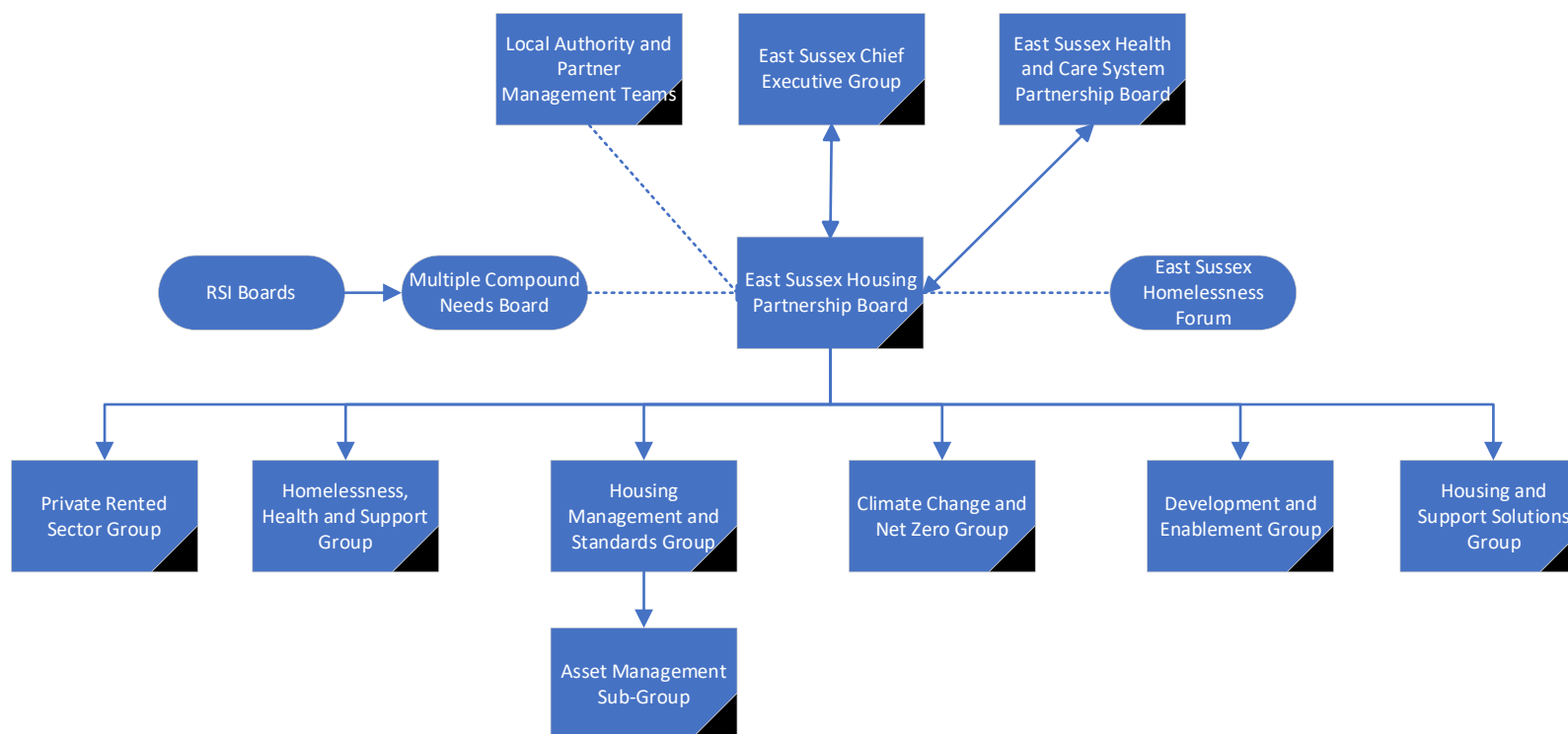
# East Sussex Housing Partnership Strategy

2025 – 2032

## What is the East Sussex Housing Partnership?

The East Sussex Housing Partnership is a network of multi-agency groups which include the 5 local housing authorities, housing providers, health and social care partners, voluntary and community sector organisations, probation and representatives from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and Homes England. The partnership comprises a strategic board and a series of specialist groups, themed around different parts of the housing sector.

## Partnership Network



## Why do we need a Housing Partnership Strategy?

The reason the partnership has developed this strategy to:

- Increase capacity to address shared priorities, challenges and opportunities across the sectors.
- To be a collective voice for housing in East Sussex, including lobbying government and ensuring housing specialisms are represented at local, regional, and national partnerships and forums.
- Set a medium- and long-term vision for the development of the housing sector locally.
- Support collaborative service commissioning and joint investment across sectors.
- Provide a strategic context for shared bids for additional funding that support existing projects and develop new joint initiatives.
- Make the best use of capacity, expertise and resources within the sector.
- Ensure short term activities and projects contribute to an overall strategic vision for the sector.

- Provide effective decision making for projects and services developed thorough the specialist groups and which operate across local authority boundaries.
- Ensure changes to legislation are implemented consistently locally.

## Our Vision

*“Healthy, safe and affordable homes for all, with a focus on preventing homelessness and ending rough sleeping. With a priority on accelerating housing delivery and increasing infrastructure.*

*For the partnership to drive innovation, through strong links to our communities, enabling partners to achieve more than they could alone.”*

## Developing the Strategy

This strategy is collectively owned by all members of the East Sussex Housing Partnership. The strategy has been co-produced with partners across the sector including:

- Producing an evidence base using data and information provided by housing and homelessness service providers, alongside the data and themes from the earlier Annual Public Health Report 2019/20 – Health and Housing. The updated data has guided scoping discussions and the priority setting process. The strategy has also benefited from links to research

and intelligence gathering already underway within the sector, including housing options service, the East Sussex Floating Support Service and an independent evaluation of the East Sussex Wellbeing and Employment Service and the baseline assessment of housing retrofit needs carried out at the end of 2023. The evidence base and strategy will also incorporate findings from the multiple compound needs assessment. This research has also provided the opportunity to gather qualitative insights through engagement with people with lived experience of using housing services. The partnership will produce an annual overview of key indicators to review progress and shape our annual implementation plan. The partnership will ensure there is meaningful lived experience involvement across the sector which informs the implementation of the strategy and ongoing improvement of our services.

- Housing Partnership Board and Specialist Groups – the partnership has formed a series of specialist groups, to ensure the strategy reflects the sector as broadly as possible and to support closer management level integration. In addition to working with the board to develop our strategic vision, the specialist groups have also developed key actions and deliverables within each priority area.
- Strategy Workshops – the partnership hosted a series of themed strategy development workshops throughout the summer to reflect on key findings from the evidence base, explore national and local examples of good practice and identify priorities for the strategy.

- Strategic level engagement: the partnership has been strengthening its senior level engagement, including with the East Sussex Chief Executives Group and the senior management teams in each of the five housing authorities.
- Engagement with specialist groups across housing and partner sectors.
- Partnership network: the partnership has also been engaging with partnerships across the sector, and partner sectors including, Developers East Sussex, East Sussex Homelessness Forum, Temporary Accommodation Action Group, SPACES Programme Board, Local Plan Managers Group, East Sussex Energy Partnership, Partnership Plus, East Sussex Health and Care System Partnership Board, Sussex Health and Care Mental Health and Housing Programme, Multi-Agency Financial Inclusion Steering Group.

## Strategic Themes

The following themes crosscut all our priorities:

***Collaboration*** – cross-sector working to achieve shared priorities is key to all aspects of our work.

***Regionally*** – several key partners including health and mental health, criminal justice and domestic abuse services operate on a regional basis. The aim of the partnership is to support effective engagement within these structures to reflect the needs and priorities in East Sussex. Regional-based working

also provides an opportunity to share good practice and learning, as well as creating strengthening our lobbying influence. The partnership works collaboratively with housing partnerships in West Sussex, Kent and Essex.

*County-wide* – there is a strong history of county-wide partnership working across East Sussex, including the East Sussex Rough Sleeping Initiative and SPACES programme. The strategy will continue to build on this approach. A range of county-wide groups have supported the creation of the strategy, including Developers East Sussex, East Sussex Homelessness Forum, Temporary Accommodation Action Group, SPACES Programme Board, Local Plan Managers Group, East Sussex Energy Partnership, Partnership Plus, East Sussex Health and Care System Partnership Board, Safer East Sussex Partnership and Multi-Agency Financial Inclusion Steering Group.

*Place-based* – the aim of the strategy is to complement the strategic priorities agreed by each of the 5 district and borough authorities and to ensure that the partnership is fully engaged with local stakeholders, including local authority management teams, elected members and strategic partnerships. Emerging community-based models within health, including Integrated Community Teams and Mental Health Neighbourhood Teams follow district and borough authority footprints, which provides an opportunity to ensure that housing is part of the core offer within these models.

**Evidence Based Decision Making** – the strategy will ensure that data and intelligence informs decision making within the sector. Each of the specialist groups within the partnership will be responsible for monitoring a key indicators for their part of the sector.

There is currently a gap in lived experience involvement across the local housing sector. The partnership will be responsible for developing and implementing an approach for meaningful lived experience involvement across the whole network, ensuring that these insights are valued equally alongside quantitative data.

**Workforce** – building capacity within the local workforce is key to delivering our strategic priorities. Like many other sectors, housing faces significant challenges in respect of the recruitment and retention of staff. The partnership will develop a strengths-based workforce plan which will include:

- Housing needs – promoting a strengths-based approach to recruitment of staff within homelessness services. Facilitating operational partnership working through shared training opportunities with teams in partner sectors, such as health, care and criminal justice. Expanding trauma-informed working practices, including providing opportunities for reflective practice and staff development.
- Housing Management – supporting local partners to meet the new requirements for the professionalisation

of the workforce including providing training and development opportunities across partner housing providers. Ensuring that learning from tenant complaints and feedback is used to identify training needs.

- Development and Supply – addressing skills shortages which can support local authorities and housing providers to increase the supply of accommodation.
- Elected members – ensuring that housing is part of the core training offer for elected members, ensuring buy-in for the partnership strategy priorities.

## **Devolution**

In December 2024, the government published the English Devolution White Paper, setting out its approach to devolution and local government reorganisation.

The partnership is keen to provide consistency during the devolution and re-organisation process, recognising the strength of our existing partnership work and continuing to strengthen cross sector collaboration.

The partnership is also keen that the vision and priorities which stakeholders have developed through the strategy development process shape how housing services will be structured and delivered in the future.

## **Homelessness Prevention**

**Lead Specialist Group:** Homelessness, Health and Support Group

### **Our aims**

- **Preventing homelessness is a priority across all services. Recognising that investment in prevention services provides better outcomes for service users and the best value for money for the public sector.**
- **Services are accessible and delivered within the communities they serve.**
- **We have a collaborative, integrated approach to service delivery, including jointly commissioned activities.**
- **We identify people at risk of homelessness early and provide holistic support which reduces the risk of them becoming homeless again in the future.**
- **We improve standards, minimise costs and improve outcomes for people living in temporary accommodation.**
- **Needs within our homelessness services inform new developments of housing and accommodation.**

**Why is this a priority?**

Demand for homelessness prevention services is high across East Sussex, some areas of the county report rates of homelessness twice that of the England average. There are currently over 1,200 households living in temporary accommodation. This trend can have a significant negative affect on these households and is also creating an unsustainable financial pressure on the local system. The local housing authorities spent over £14,000,000 on temporary accommodation alone in 2023/24. The local authorities invest funding from their Homelessness Prevention Grant to provide support for people at risk of homelessness, but this funding is increasingly limited by the growing pressure on temporary accommodation. More recently, this approach has been supplemented by additional funding from Public Health reserves. Homelessness Prevention Grant allocations are confirmed for a 1-year period, the creation of a county wide service is intended to improve the resilience of the service. Early intervention has been shown to improve outcomes for individuals and families and will embed the good practice which has been created through the respective local authority housing needs services, East Sussex floating support service, wellbeing programme and ESTAR.

The incoming government has announced a range of legislative and policy changes which will impact homelessness services during this strategy, including the Renters' Rights Bill. The aim of the partnership will be to

create a consistent approach to these changes across all five housing authorities, sharing good practice and challenges.

Our priorities for ongoing delivery include:

- Early identification of people at risk of homelessness, reducing the risk of the need for them to access statutory services in the future. This will be achieved through an increased focus on home visiting and outreach-based roles.
- A county-wide approach to homelessness prevention, which includes holistic working practices to address the root causes of homelessness, including social isolation, poor physical and mental health and unemployment.
- Continue to support integration across health and social care systems.
- Reducing reliance on costly nightly paid temporary accommodation. Housing authorities have been investing directly in their own temporary accommodation, primarily focused on family-sized accommodation. There is scope to expand this to include accommodation with support as a shared resource across the county.
- There is limited capacity for proactive inspections of temporary accommodation, which would enable authorities to identify providers providing poor value for money or failing to meet the required safety standards. A county-wide policy will be developed based on the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

accompanied by a shared enforcement resource.

These inspections will contribute to the local authority's broader inspection targets.

- The partnership is working collaboratively with partners from across Sussex to develop a reciprocal arrangement for victims of domestic abuse. This is complemented by newly commissioned accommodation for victims with multiple and compound needs.

### **Key Outcomes:**

- A consistent approach to implementing national legislation and policy linked to homelessness, including the Renters' Rights Bill.
- Develop closer links with the integrated care system.
- A shared homelessness prevention service implemented from March 2026 with a holistic approach to homelessness prevention, which strengthens links to floating support, wellbeing services, employment and training.
- Number of successful homelessness prevention outcomes increased.
- Expanded multi-disciplinary hub and co-location opportunities.
- Reliance on costly nightly paid temporary accommodation is reduced, through investing in and developing direct provision.



- A shared approach to the procurement of temporary accommodation implemented.
- A consistent approach to compliance and standards in temporary accommodation, through a shared policy and enforcement resource.
- Expanded links to financial inclusion, including insights from the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT), money and debt advice support.
- Aligning approaches to social housing allocation across the five areas.
- Improve meaningful engagement with people with lived experience of homelessness in ongoing service development.
- Co-produced Care Leavers Protocol with Children's Services adopted.
- Developing a pipeline of known service gaps and opportunities, which can be addressed through grant funded activities.
- Implementation of a pan-Sussex reciprocal arrangement for victims of domestic abuse.
- Duty to Refer protocols with partners reviewed and updated.

### **How will we monitor progress?**

Key performance indicators for this work will include:

- Successful homelessness preventions, as a proportion of homelessness presentations.

- Number of individuals engaged in wellbeing, employability and training support.
- Number of referrals from partner agencies increase under the Duty to Refer.
- An independent economic evaluation of homelessness prevention services, to show the systems benefits of early intervention.
- Spend on nightly paid temporary accommodation, compared to other solutions.
- Number of proactive inspections of temporary accommodation completed.

### **We will engage with:**

- East Sussex Homelessness Forum
- Temporary Accommodation Action Group
- Rough Sleeping Initiative Board
- Multiple Compound Needs Board

## Housing, Health and Care

**Lead Specialist Groups:** Homelessness, Health and Support Group and Multiple Compound Needs Board

### Our aims

- **Housing is embedded in work across health, mental health, social care and community sector partners to reduce health inequalities.**
- **Housing is an enabler for people to live healthy, independent lives for as long as possible.**
- **Housing is integrated in community-based models across health, mental health and care services.**
- **A whole system approach to supporting people with multiple compound needs, with a dedicated multi-disciplinary team.**

### Why is this a priority?

The Director of Public Health's annual report in 2019 highlighted the importance of housing as a determinant of health. The report included an overarching recommendation for all partners within our housing system to build more homes as well as recommendations to make all housing and neighbourhoods healthy, to make all homes healthy and to make people healthier in their homes. Since then, efforts have been underway to integrate housing and Public Health more closely as part of a shared ambition to reduce inequalities.

Nationally, the Marmot Places programme has recognised that health and health inequalities are mainly shaped by the social determinants of health. This includes principles to ensure a healthy standard of living for all and to create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities. In 2021, the Chief Medical Officer published a report on Health in Coastal Communities. The report highlighted housing as a significant consideration, particularly in areas with underlying deprivation, large private rented sectors or Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and shared accommodation where poor quality housing can have a significant impact on health.

Locally, the East Sussex Housing Partnership has strengthened its integration with the health and care system through a new reporting line to the Health and Care System Partnership Board (part of the broader Health and Wellbeing Structure) and is responsible for the delivery of a housing workstream within the refreshed NHS Shared Delivery Plan. The workstream is initially focused on the partnership strategy development and trends in homelessness, but the intention is that this will be expanded to reflect the sector more broadly – including links to housing standards, overcrowding and the supply of housing.

East Sussex is projected to see an aging population. 84% of total population growth expected to be amongst people aged 65 and over, with this population increasing from 151,559 people to 194,268 people between 2024 and 2034. The Housing Partnership is collaborating on the delivery of the

East Sussex Adult Social Care Strategy priority for a suitable home, including home equipment, adaptations and assistive technology to enable independence.

Work is underway across Sussex to mobilise community-based models, including Integrated Community Teams and Mental Health Neighbourhood Teams. The footprints of the new teams mirror the district and borough boundaries which will support integration with housing. It is essential that housing is part of the core offer for each team, including homelessness prevention services and housing occupational therapy. As the teams are mobilised, the housing partnership will provide a framework to share learning across the teams.

A Multiple Compound Needs Board (MCN Board) has been formed to lead a whole system approach to supporting people with multiple compound needs and embed learning from the Rough Sleeping Initiative and Changing Futures programmes. Multiple compound needs refers to people experiencing a combination of at least 3 of the following support needs; homelessness, poor mental health, substance dependency, domestic abuse and contact with the criminal justice system. The MCN Board has set the following priorities for ongoing delivery:

- Prioritise settled and stable housing for people with multiple and compound needs (including appropriate support as needed).

- Use a Team Around the Person approach with Lead Professional, taking a trauma informed approach, for all individuals experiencing multiple and compound needs.
- Better co-ordinate work towards a co-located preventative approach (and/ or other points of access) with multi-disciplinary working and outreach-based services.
- Utilise data and commit to improved data sharing for this cohort as an enabler (and proactively seeking out the input and scrutiny of people with lived and professional experience of the system).

The housing partnership will be responsible for leading the rough sleeper outreach and accommodation pathway which will report to the MCN Board.

Partners in health have identified gaps in accommodation provision with ongoing support as a barrier to hospital discharge. The housing partnership is support SPFT mobilise a supported tenancies pilot in East Sussex. It is intended that will also lead to the development of a broader Housing First programme for people with additional needs.

### **Key outcomes**

- Successful delivery of the housing workstream within the NHS Shared Delivery Plan.

- Strengthen links between housing and governance structures in health and care
- Responding to the needs of an aging population, ensuring housing can be an enabler for people living independent lives for as long as possible.
- Housing and homelessness prevention will be a core offer within community-based health models, including Integrated Community Teams and Mental Health Neighbourhood Teams. The Housing Partnership will provide a governance framework to share learning across the teams in East Sussex.
- A collaborative approach to Disabled Facilities Grants, expanding links to occupational therapy services and reducing the number of people discharged to temporary accommodation.
- Workstreams within the Suitable Home priority for Adult Social Care Strategy and the Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy implemented.
- Strengthening links with primary care to improve early identification for people at risk of homelessness.
- Co-produced hospital discharge protocol and collaboration between housing and hospital discharge hubs.
- Develop preventative approaches, to reduce admissions from those already homeless or insecurely housed.

- A system response to multiple compound needs, including a core-funded multi-disciplinary team.
- Building on work begun through the pan-Sussex Changing Futures Programme to expand trauma informed working practices across the local system.
- Expanding jointly commissioned Housing First models for people with ongoing health and mental health needs.
- Ensuring learning from serious case reviews through the Safeguarding Adults Board informs service development within the housing sector.
- Tailoring access to services for vulnerable groups, including people living in temporary accommodation and migrant communities.

#### **How will we monitor progress?**

- Carry out an annual baseline assessment against the NICE baseline assessment for the integration of health and social care for people experiencing homelessness.
- Review findings from the multiple compound needs assessment carried out by Public Health and agree an approach to refresh these findings.
- Review annual spend from Disabled Facilities Grants.
- Regular monitoring of delays to hospital discharge linked to housing and housing outcomes for people referred from health settings.

- Regular monitoring of admissions to hospital for people who are homeless or insecurely housed.

**We will engage with**

- Health and Social Care Assembly
- East Sussex Health and Care System Partnership Board and Health and Wellbeing Board
- Sussex Health and Care Mental Health and Housing Programme
- Mental Health Housing and Supported Living Accommodation Board

## Housing Standards

**Lead Specialist Group:** Management and Standards Group

### Our aims

- **For the partnership to provide a network to share learning and good practice, challenges and opportunities promoting consistency across local housing providers.**
- **For our work to be guided by the voice and experience of people living in our homes.**
- **To have a culture of ongoing improvement against the national consumer standards.**
- **To support providers to make the best use of resources, including jointly commissioning services to meet shared needs.**

### Why is this a priority?

This priority is guided by the consumer standards and required outcomes for social housing providers implemented on 1 April 2024.

- Safety and Quality Standard (stock quality, decency, health and safety, repairs, maintenance and planned improvements and adaptations).
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard (fairness and respect, diverse needs, engagement with tenants, information about landlord services, performance information, complaints).

- Neighbourhood and Community Standard (safety of shared spaces, local co-operation, anti-social behaviour and hate incidents, domestic abuse).
- Tenancy Standard (allocations and lettings, tenancy sustainment and evictions, tenure, mutual exchange).

The Management and Standards Group will develop an action plan to support partners implement each of the consumer standards, this will include the recommendations from the Better Social Housing Review carried out by the Chartered Institute for Housing.

The membership of the wider partnership, including health and social care partners as well as links to the Safer East Sussex Team is beneficial in supporting local housing providers to meet the requirements to proactively meet tenants support needs and ensure the safety of residents.

The Management and Standards Group has developed and adopted a Tenant and Engagement Charter based on an example from the National Housing Federation and local good practice. The group will continue to embed the charter and share learning from tenant involvement and complaints.

The recommendations of the Grenfell Inquiry have now been published. The report includes a series of cross-sector recommendations for the government, regulators, construction industry and emergency services. In relation to social housing providers, the report notes that the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 enables the Regulator of Social

Housing to play a more active role in setting standards and ensuring they are met. The inquiry specifically notes the requirements for the competence and conduct of those involved in housing management for social housing providers and priorities around safety.

The partnership will also carry out a strengths-based training needs assessment to support providers meet the requirements for the development of the housing workforce. This is intended to enable knowledge is shared within the partnership, promote consistency and enable housing providers to benefit from economies of scale. In addition to the requirements of the regulations, the programme will also include collaboration with local partners to tailor the approach to the needs in East Sussex.

The government has stated that it intends to expand several of the requirements for social housing providers to landlords in the private rented sector. The Management and Standards Group will support the sharing of learning and good practice to partners in the sector. The partnership network will be expanded to include a dedicated specialist group for the private rented sector.

### **Key outcomes**

- Good practice and learning from inspections by the Regulator of Social Housing shared through the partnership.

- Embedding the East Sussex Tenant Voice Charter across local housing providers. Ensuring tenants in social housing are engaged in partnership approach to lived experience involvement.
- Developing and embedding tenancy and management principles across local housing providers.
- A dedicated Asset Management Sub-Group formed to lead work on improving building compliance.
- An action plan for each consumer standard developed and reviewed on an annual basis.
- Developing and implementing a local plan for implementing any further recommendations of the Grenfell Inquiry.
- A partnership approach to ensuring information gathered through local authority application process is transferred to social housing providers to enable ongoing support planning.
- A shared county wide workforce development and training programme developed to meet the requirements for the professionalisation of the workforce.
- Developing a partnership approach to validation of stock condition surveys to promote consistency across local housing providers.
- Developing a partnership approach to hoarding, including collaborative working with partners in safeguarding, health and adult social care.

- Strengthening links between the housing partnership and Safer East Sussex partnership.
- Expanding learning from partnership working with social housing providers to the private rented sector.

### **How will we monitor progress?**

- Annual review of progress against the partnership action plan for each consumer standard and Better Social Housing Review.
- Annual review of tenant engagement and complaints data.

### **We will engage with**

Housing and Support Solutions Group

Asset Management Sub-Group

Chartered Institute for Housing



## Development and Enablement

**Lead Specialist Group:** Development and Enablement Group

### Our aims

- **Coordinate a thriving local development market by promoting the voice of our communities within the development process, so that localised housing needs are clearly identified and investment targeted to meet local needs, maximising the delivery of all housing and affordable housing, in particular.**
- **To work with Developers East Sussex to maximise the development of new homes by creating a cross-sector approach to housing development, with collaboration across local authority housing teams, planning services, registered providers and developers.**
- **To work with stakeholders to identify regional infrastructure challenges, collaborating across local planning authority boundaries to improve local infrastructure and unlocking land for housing development.**
- **To lobby for the Affordable Homes Programme to be funded at the level required to meet identified housing and affordable housing needs within East Sussex**

- **To work with regional and national planning colleagues to ensure that the National Planning Policy Framework is continuously improved to support the sector to deliver more housing and affordable housing.**
- **To make the best use of existing housing stock and public sector assets.**
- **For housing to enable regeneration, by alleviating deprivation, ensuring investment in infrastructure and providing employment opportunities within the sector.**

### Why is this a priority?

The incoming government has emphasized the importance of housing delivery, with a national target to build 1,500,000 homes within the current parliament.

The government has consulted on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, which are intended to support collaboration between housing and planning services. The proposed changes will also introduce new mandatory housing targets for each local authority. The proposed targets are set out below:

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Original Target</b>	<b>Proposed Target</b>	<b>Change</b>
Eastbourne	735	717	-2%
Hastings	490	722	+47%
Lewes	777	828	+7%

Rother	727	880	+21%
Wealden	1,186	1,397	+18%
Total	3,915	4,544	+16%

The partnership will support collaboration with planning services at a local level, including promoting understanding local housing needs to inform new development plans and ensuring housing development is an enabler for broader infrastructure improvements and regeneration.

Housing delivery in East Sussex has remained relatively static over the past 5 years, with a total of 9,131 net housing additions. In line with national trends, affordable housing is making up a smaller proportion of overall delivery.

Affordable housing providers have been highlighting a market failure in affordable housing delivery, this has been caused by a combination of higher interest rates, increasing cost of materials and labour, a lack of certainty over future affordable rent policy and expectations about investment in existing stock to meet the new compliance requirements and energy performance standards. The key ways in which the partnership can influence this sector include:

- Collective lobbying on key issues such as rent policy and Affordable Homes Programme .
- Facilitating early conversations between housing developers, local authorities and registered providers to

protect affordable housing delivery especially on Section 106 sites.

- Work collaboratively with the Climate Change and Net Zero Group to maximise external funding opportunities through the new East Sussex Retrofit Strategy, including facilitating joint bids between providers, to offset these costs.
- Enabling providers to benefit from economies of scale when planning their approach to compliance, for example in terms of staff training schemes, through the work of the Management and Standards Group.

The Housing Partnership has been working collaboratively with the SPACES programme on a share priority to maximise housing delivery on public sector owned sites. A joint research project has been undertaken to map assets, within public sector ownership which may be suitable for development in the future, this information can be used to create a pipeline of new developments.

Developing public sector assets in this way also provides an opportunity to tailor provision to meet broader service needs. A county wide supported accommodation strategy will be developed collaboratively between the Development and Enablement Group and the Homelessness, Health and Support Group setting out projected need for supported accommodation and a plan to address gaps in provision.

In addition to enabling new development, the partnership are keen to ensure we are making the best use of existing housing stock. In 2023, there were estimated to be 2,477 long term vacant properties across East Sussex. The partnership will develop a county wide incentive model to bring these properties back into use for those in housing need, this will include co-ordinating with the local authority's enforcement action where required.

The East Sussex Prosperity Strategy has been adopted. The strategy includes priorities for young people to stay and build their careers and to build a skilled workforce, including through returners to the county. Key to this is rebalancing cost pressures in the local housing market, including affordable solutions for young people and a range of housing tenures to support people at all stages of their career. The Housing Partnership will work collaboratively with economic development teams to create an action plan to meet the place workstream priorities within the strategy.

### **Key outcomes**

- A partnership approach to meeting the new housing delivery targets for East Sussex.
- A pipeline of public sector assets to be brought forward to accommodation development.
- A county wide Empty Homes Programme, with shared resource.

- A county wide Supported Accommodation Strategy developed, in line with new regulations.
- Strengthening engagement between local authorities, developers and registered providers to support delivery of affordable housing on Section 106 sites.
- Expanding Local Employment and Skills Plans to build capacity in the local construction workforce, including links to Section 106 processes.
- A collaborative approach with local planning services to shape new developments to meet local needs and support shared priorities for infrastructure development.
- Supporting local authorities to engage with parish and town councils, landowners, developers and stakeholders to bring forward sites for development.
- Maximising funding opportunities through Homes England and One Public Estate to support affordable housing delivery.
- Identifying skills gaps to support development locally and exploring opportunities to address these across housing providers in the partnership.
- Supporting affordable housing providers to access opportunities through the East Sussex Retrofit Strategy, to free up capacity for investment in new developments.
- To support broader work across Public Health to strengthen a health in all policies approach.

### **How will we monitor progress?**

- Number of new units delivered each year
- Number of affordable units delivered each year
- Number of affordable units delivered on Section 106 sites each year
- Number of long-term empty properties brought into use
- Number of pipeline sites brought to planning consent stage and development

**We will engage with**

- Developers East Sussex
- Local Plan Managers Group
- SPACES Board
- Employment and Skills -Construction and Built Environment Group

## **Tackling Climate Change**

**Lead Specialist Group:** Climate Change and Net Zero Sub-Group

### **Our aims**

- **To create a cross-sector strategic approach to domestic retrofit which will support partners to meet their carbon reduction targets.**
- **To ensure new developments are delivered to a high standard of energy performance, reducing future retrofit demands.**
- **To maximise resources in the sector through a combination of grant funding and direct investment.**
- **Building capacity in the local workforce to deliver retrofit.**

### **Why is this a priority?**

Housing providers and local authorities across East Sussex have agreed commitments to reduce their carbon emissions. Housing is the largest source of carbon emissions across the county and vital to achieving these targets. There is a strong history of collaborative working in this part of the sector, particularly in terms of grant funded projects to deliver deep retrofit measures to support households at high risk of fuel poverty.

A baseline assessment was carried out by Parity Projects at the end of 2024, which found that 31% of homes in East Sussex has a SAP rating of A-C compared to the England average of 47%. This trend reflects the higher proportion of rural homes in the areas.

Scoping has taken place with key stakeholders for a partnership approach to retrofit, and identified the following priority:

- Building capacity within the local workforce to deliver retrofit.
- Improving access to small and medium-sized retrofit providers to public sector procurement frameworks.
- Improving data and understanding of local housing stock and retrofit requirements.
- Developing a business case for core investment and pipeline of grant funding opportunities, including collaborative bids between housing providers.

Public Health are investing additional funding until June 2026 to support the development of a Retrofit Strategy. The Climate Change and Net Zero Group is facilitating engagement with housing providers to co-produce the strategy and will jointly own the priorities. The group is also supporting links to other priority areas of work, such as building compliance, damp and mould within the Management and Standards Group.

An East Sussex Retrofit Skills Strategy was developed in 2024, in partnership with the Employment and Skills Team.

The strategy includes a priority to increase knowledge amongst housing providers, by improving access to training. A retrofit sub-group of the Construction and Built Environment Group, facilitated by the Employment and Skills Team, is developing a programme of pilot projects to be delivered over the next 18 months.

Around 69% of housing in East Sussex is owner occupied, urban areas of the county also have large private rented sectors. The partnership will be developing a tenure-specific communications plan to help build awareness and confidence to support retrofit in this part of the sector.

The partnership will also work with Developers East Sussex to optimise the energy performance of new developments to reduce future retrofit interventions. This will include developing a package of incentive measures to support additional retrofit measures on new developments. Strengthening links to development strategies and planning policy in each district and borough.

The partnership will also facilitate collaboration with environment leads on the wider effects of climate change, including flooding, changes to biodiversity and overheating.

### **Key outcomes**

- Housing impacts fully explored in Climate Change Health Impact Assessment commissioned by Public Health.

- Housing considerations included within a broader Local Area Energy Plan (or similar).
- Initial baseline assessment of housing stock expanded to provide an evidence base for the East Sussex Retrofit Strategy and future funding bids.
- Co-produced East Sussex Retrofit Strategy adopted by the end of March 2026.
- Developing a tenure-specific communications plan to support the East Sussex Retrofit Strategy.
- Developing a pipeline of potential bids, to be matched to funding opportunities, including facilitating collaborative proposals between housing providers.
- Ensuring links to complementary pieces of work, such as the partnership approach to hoarding, is included within
- Annual implementation plan developed for housing priorities within the East Sussex Retrofit Skills Plan.
- Scoping a partnership approach to improving the energy performance of new developments with Developers East Sussex.
- Scoping broader opportunities to promote environmental sustainability, including biodiversity.
- Supporting links between programmes to improve energy performance and linked priorities to reduce fuel poverty and promote financial inclusion.

### **How will we monitor progress?**

- SAP score of properties in East Sussex
- External grant funding secured to support retrofit
- Retrofit training courses delivered
- Number of owner occupied / private rented households engaged in support

**We will engage with**

Environment Group

Employment and Skills – Construction and Built Environment  
Group

Developers East Sussex

Management and Standards Group

## **Private Rented Sector**

**Lead Specialist Group:** Private Rented Sector Group

### **Our aims**

- **A network of private sector landlords and agents to support cross sector working.**
- **Sufficient capacity within statutory partners to implement the expanded enforcement duties.**
- **A consistent approach to compliance and standards across providers in the social and private rented sector.**
- **A shared incentive package to improve sustainment and access to accommodation for people in housing need.**

### **Why is this a priority?**

The private rented sector makes up 19.7% of the total housing stock across the county, however, the size of the sector in each district and borough varies considerably:

Eastbourne – 26.7%

Hastings – 28.7%

Lewes – 17%

Rother – 16.2%

Wealden – 13.5%

Most of the accommodation in the private rented sector is in coastal, urban areas of the county.

Key to our partnership approach will be creating a network of private sector landlords and agents, working closely with the National Residential Landlords Association and other partners. The network will enable a consistent approach to planned legislative changes and support work across partners organisations in relation to compliance and access to housing. The network will also engage private landlords in key areas of work elsewhere in the partnership, such as our strategic approach to domestic retrofit.

The government has announced an intention to extend several of the compliance measures which have been introduced for social housing providers to the private rented sector. This will include applying the Decent Homes Standard to privately rented homes and applying Awaabs Law to the sector, which will set legal expectations about the timeframes in which landlords must take action to make homes safe where they contain serious hazards. Legislation will also strengthen the powers for local authorities to carry out enforcement, including expanding civil penalties and investigatory powers. Some local housing authorities are considering licensing arrangements for the private rented sector in their areas. The partnership can support this activity by sharing learning from the implementation of the reforms with social housing providers with other parts of the sector, creating a network of private landlords and agents to share



learning and good practice in implement the changes and gathering evidence from partner sectors in health and care on links between housing and health.

Local housing authorities have been working to improve access to the private sector for households in housing need. The sector is increasingly unaffordable for many households and local housing allowance has failed to keep pace with rising costs. Many authorities offer incentive programmes, and the partnership will look to develop a consistent offer for people in housing need across all 5 areas, we will also strengthen collaboration with private sector leads in each area. This may also include the expansion of longer-term leasing options.

### **Key outcomes**

- Network of private landlords and agents established.
- Consistent approach to implementing planned legislative changes.
- Sharing of learning and practice in relation to compliance standards across the social and private rented sector.
- Scoping capacity requirements across statutory partners to deliver the planned additional duties for local authorities in relation to enforcement and inspection.
- A shared incentive package to support people in housing need access the sector.

### **How will we monitor progress**

- Membership and engagement of new landlords forum.
- Private rented sector inspections.
- Number of households using homelessness services accessing accommodation in the private rented sector.

### **We will engage with**

Environmental Health Officers Group

National Residential Landlords Association