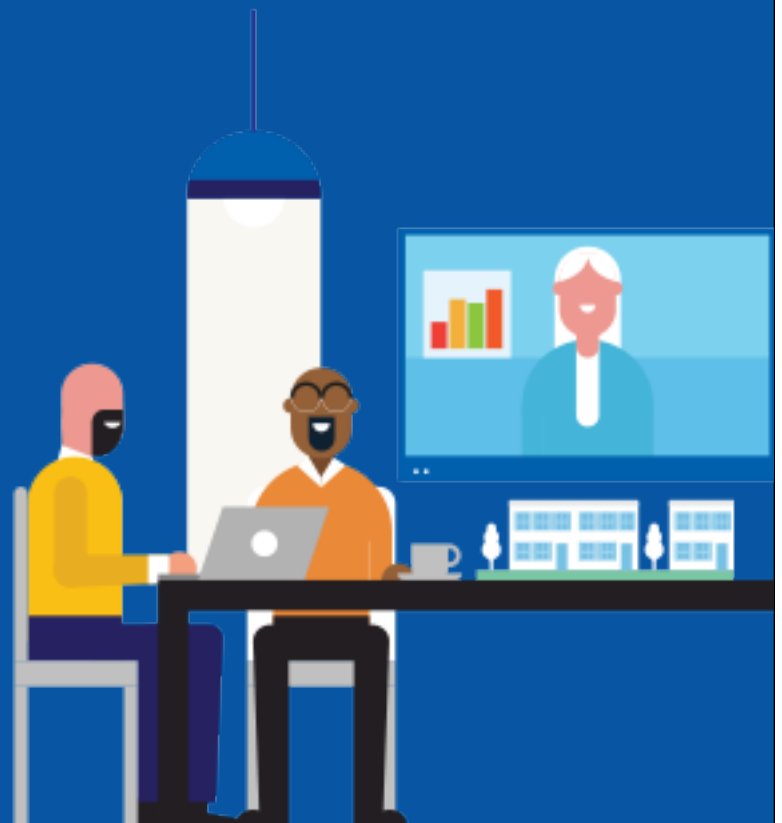


Housing Strategy 2024 - 2029

The right homes in the right places

Final (for adoption)

August 2024



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Housing Strategy sets out our vision and priorities for housing over the next five years. It provides an analysis of the current housing situation in Arun and then outlines the strategic housing priorities and the actions that will be taken to improve the provision of housing across the district.
- 1.2 It covers more than just the homes which the council directly owns and manages. As a council we are responsible for a range of housing functions, including preventing homelessness and rough sleeping, providing emergency accommodation, maintaining council-owned homes, and planning for the future growth of the district. This strategy is designed to show how we will fulfil these differing roles.
- 1.3 The document represents an update on our previous strategy and has been developed in parallel with a separate dedicated strategy on homelessness and rough sleeping. Since the previous strategy, we have seen various achievements:
- 2,772 new homes completed, of which 608 were affordable¹ (22%)²
 - 2,886 people supported, who were at risk of homelessness³
 - 366 empty homes brought back into use⁴
 - 579 homes in Arun retrofitted under the Sustainable Warmth Programme⁵
- 1.4 This strategy has been developed within an operating environment still shaped by the after-effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis which has placed significant strain on household finances. It is also being finalised following a General Election and change of Government. These circumstances necessitate a thorough review of our strategic approach to housing, ensuring that it remains aligned with current conditions and realities.
- 1.5 This strategy has been informed by various inputs, including:
- a comprehensive review of all relevant documents produced by the council and its partners, such as West Sussex County Council and neighbouring authorities
 - interviews with a broad range of stakeholders across the district, including representatives from housing associations, letting agents, community land trusts, private housebuilders, and the voluntary sector
 - an analysis of housing market trends and data from a range of sources
 - an assessment of key national policy drivers which will affect Arun's housing
 - an online consultation survey and public drop-in sessions at Bognor Regis Town Hall and Littlehampton Civic Centre

¹ The government definition of affordable housing includes social rented (rents set at between 50-60 per cent of market rents), affordable rented (rents set at up to 80 per cent of market rents) and intermediate housing provided to qualifying households whose needs are not met by the housing market.

² Authority Monitoring Reports, period covering 2019/20 to 2022/23

³ Detailed Local Authority Tables 2019/20 to 2022/23 – total households assessed as owed a duty

⁴ Arun Empty Homes Strategy 2023 to 2028 – data covers period 2018/19 to 2022/23

⁵ HECA Report 2023

2. Strategy on a page

- 2.1 Our vision is **for Arun’s residents to have access to the right homes in the right places which enable them to live a fulfilling life and contribute to the future growth and sustainability of the district.**
- 2.2 We will do this through a focus on the following five strategic priorities:



Delivering the right homes in the right places



Improving the quality of homes



Promoting environmental resilience



Providing housing options



Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping

- 2.3 Within each of these priorities is a series of specific actions which will be delivered in partnership with other organisations, such as the county council and other statutory partners for example health, housing associations, community land trusts, house builders, and the voluntary sector.
- 2.4 This Housing Strategy has also produced, in response to key policy drivers in the external environment, which will impact on the provision of new homes and management of existing homes in the district. It makes a positive contribution to the four pillars of the council vision:
- i. Improving the wellbeing of Arun.
 - ii. Delivering the right homes in the right places.
 - iii. Supporting our environment to support us.
 - iv. Fulfilling Arun’s economic potential.
- 2.5 This is a five-year strategy. It features a series of priority actions and proposed key performance indicators, which once finalised, will be monitored twice a year by council officers, with an annual update provided to the Housing and Wellbeing Committee.

3. Vision and priorities

- 3.1 Housing plays a vital role in the health and well-being of Arun’s residents. It provides a stable foundation that enables individuals to pursue personal growth, build meaningful

relationships, and unlock their full potential across all aspects of their lives. Adequate housing is not just a roof over someone's head, but a platform from which to thrive.

- 3.2 Our vision for housing is for **Arun's residents to have access to the right homes in the right places which enable them to live a fulfilling life and contribute to the future growth and sustainability of the district.**
- 3.3 The 'right home' is one which is affordable to local people and is of good quality. 'Growth' means both increases in the local population and wider efforts to support the local economy. 'Sustainability' refers to the environmental and social features which make places good to live in over time.
- 3.4 We will seek to achieve this over the next five years through an interrelated series of policies and actions aligned to the following five strategic priorities:
 - delivering the right homes in the right places
 - improving the quality of homes
 - promoting environmental resilience
 - increasing housing options
 - preventing homelessness and rough sleeping
- 3.5 We recognise that we cannot achieve this alone. Successfully implementing this strategy will depend upon the strength of our relationship with our communities, and partnerships with various stakeholders, to develop solutions that address housing needs and enhance the quality of existing homes. This will involve working closely with parish councils, neighbouring authorities, the county council, voluntary and community sector organisations, housing associations, community land trusts, and others who share our vision for Arun's future.
- 3.6 We will allocate the council's resources judiciously to address Arun's housing challenges – safeguarding the district's long-term financial sustainability while actively pursuing external investment from diverse sources to complement the council's own assets and resources.

4. About Arun

- 4.1 Arun has a diverse and varied landscape, comprising the coastal towns of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton, which contain nearly 80% of the district's households, alongside a large rural backdrop, consisting of villages and settlements each with their own distinct character. Nestled between the English Channel and the South Downs National Park, it is traversed by the River Arun. With its natural features and heritage assets, it has long history as a tourist destination with 2.8 million visitors annually.⁶
- 4.2 Generally, residents are satisfied with living in Arun, with 77% saying they are either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with their local area as a place to live. This is higher than the national average (73%), although it varies by area, with residents from the east of the district being the most satisfied.⁷
- 4.3 The local economy comprises a mix of industries and occupations, with potential for future growth and investment across a range of emerging higher technology and green sectors. Qualification levels and wages are lower than those of neighbouring districts, a significant portion of the working-age population is in part-time employment, and more than four in 10 of those employed commute out of the district to work. Although not considered deprived by national standards, there are significant disparities in wealth across Arun with some pockets of deprivation which fall within the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally.⁸
- 4.4 The population is growing, largely through internal migration from other parts of the UK. Much of the recent growth has been among older residents and Arun's population remains considerably older than the national average, with a median average age of 49 compared to 40 for the rest of England. Nearly a third of residents are now over the age of 65. Recent years have also witnessed a slight rise in cultural and ethnic diversity, notably among non-British White communities, from countries such as Poland.⁹
- 4.5 Arun has the highest concentration of households within the wider housing market area (which includes Adur, Chichester, and Worthing), and has experienced the greatest net increase of additional homes since 2011. Although Arun's housing market boasts lower values compared to neighbouring areas, owner occupation is on a downward trend due to affordability constraints, with average house prices over 12 times average local incomes.¹⁰ This decrease in owner occupation has taken place alongside a corresponding increase in the number of households renting, especially from private landlords.
- 4.6 Arun District Council remains the single largest provider of affordable housing, with around 3,400 rented homes, plus leaseholders. Housing associations of varying sizes operate about 60% of the affordable housing locally, many of which have added to the total number of homes through recent development. There continues to be massive demand for affordable

⁶ Arun Visitor Strategy

⁷ From Resident Survey 2023

⁸ Index for Multiple Deprivation

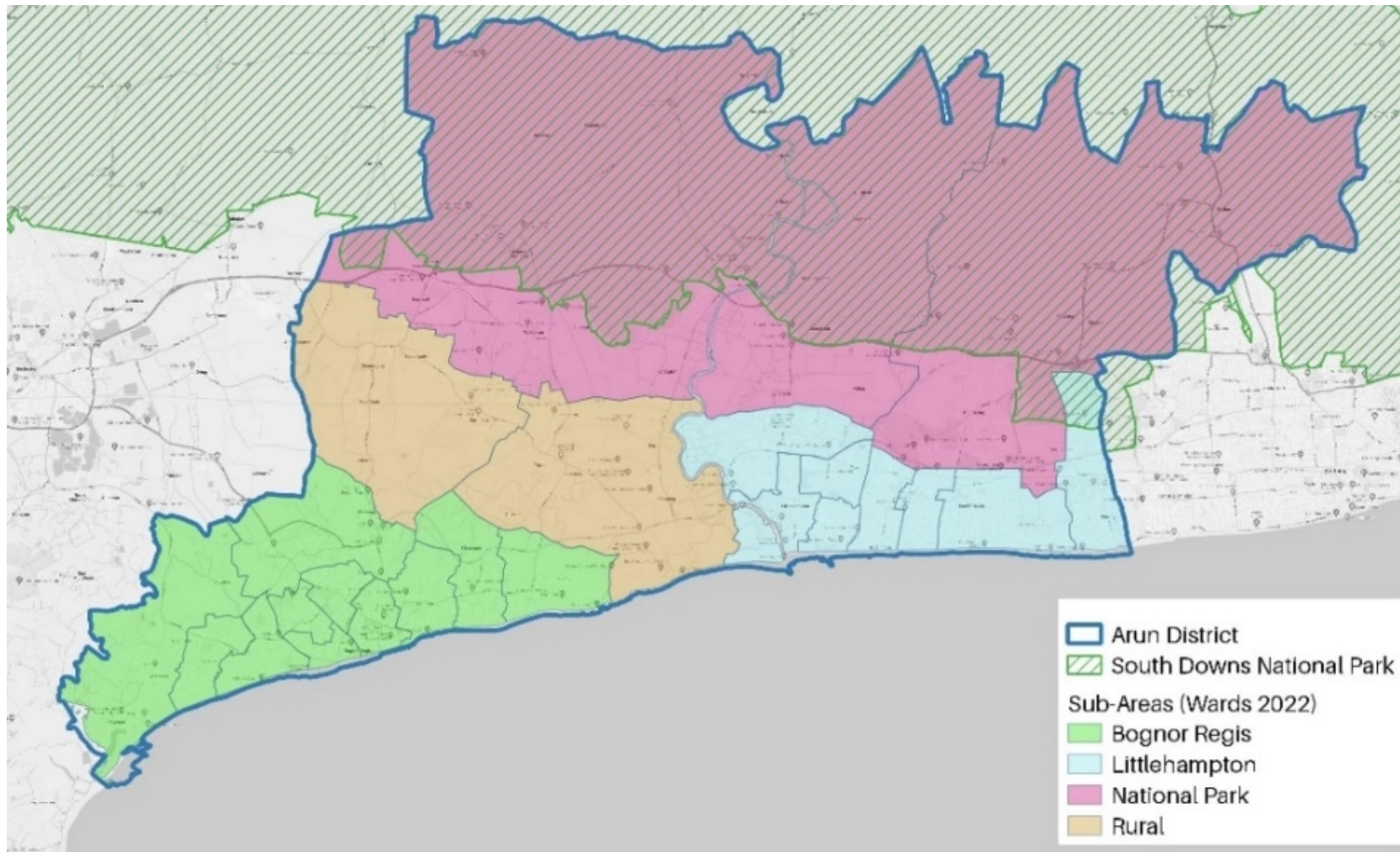
⁹ Census 2021

¹⁰ Based on an gross annual mean pay of £28,694 (Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings 2023) and a median price paid of £350,000 (Median house prices for administrative geographies 2023)

housing locally, as demonstrated by the size of the local housing register and increasing affordability pressures in the private rented sector.

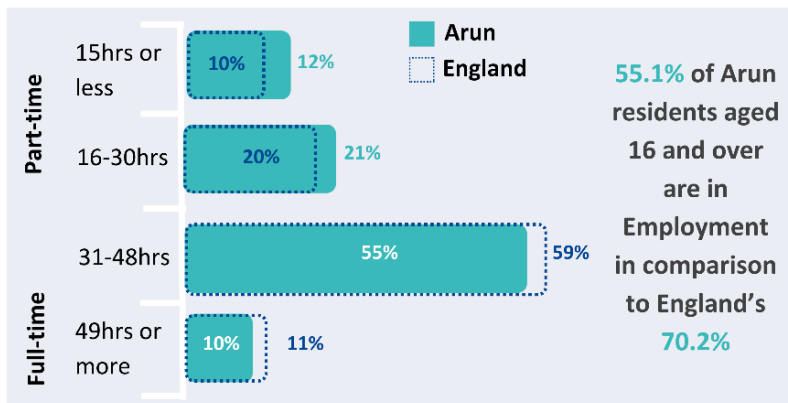
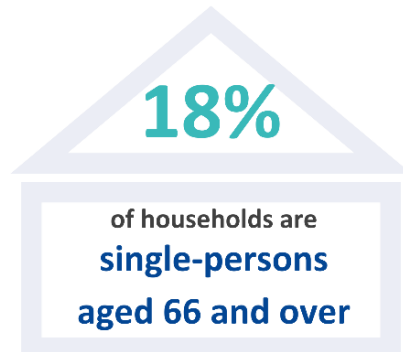
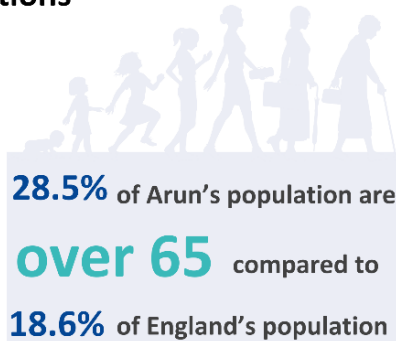
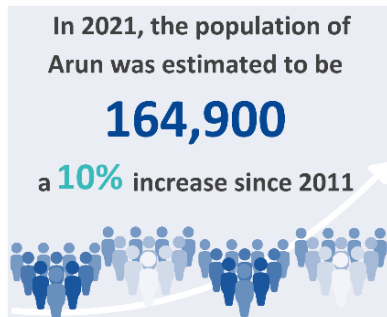
- 4.7 Recent years have seen significant additions to the number of homes in Arun, with 2,331 new homes built since 2021, many of which have been in rural parts of the district. Balancing the district's unique landscape and existing land usage with the imperative for new housing presents a formidable challenge, necessitating careful planning to ensure the provision of requisite infrastructure for new developments and protecting the character of local areas, including green spaces, flood plains and agricultural land.

Figure 1. Arun District map (source – Icen)

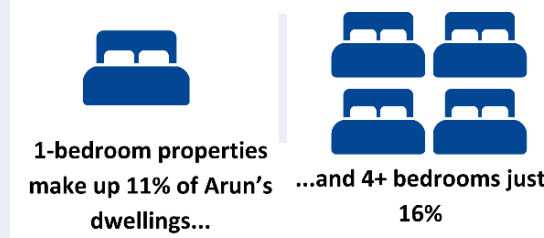
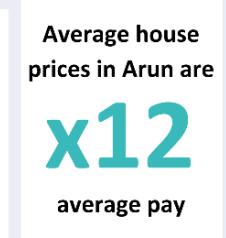


Arun at a glance

Demographics and Projections



Arun's Housing



5. Strategic Context

External

- 5.1 This housing strategy has been produced against a complex and evolving landscape which is influenced by a variety of factors. Global conditions are exerting significant pressure on the housing market. These issues are interlinked with economic factors such as higher interest rates and persistent high inflation which in turn increase the costs of borrowing, making it more difficult for developers and buyers alike. Additionally, these conditions also create challenges in accessing skilled labour, which can slow down housing development.
- 5.2 The General Election in July 2024 resulted in a change of national Government during consultation on this strategy. This will mean a number of changes in housing policy at the national level which will impact on Arun's housing, particularly the following Bills announced at the King's Speech¹¹:
- **The Planning and Infrastructure Bill** aims to improve the planning system at a local level and accelerate housebuilding and infrastructure delivery. It seeks to do this through streamlining the process for delivering critical infrastructure, reforming compulsory purchase rules, and improving local planning decision making / capacity.
 - **The Renters' Rights Bill** aims to give greater rights and protections to private renters. This includes ending Section 21 'no fault' evictions, reforming grounds for possession, applying a Decent Homes Standard and Awaab's Law (*see below*) to the private rented sector, and strengthening local councils' enforcement powers.
 - **The Draft Leasehold and Commonhold Reform Bill** aims to bolster leaseholders' rights, restrict the sale of leasehold flats, and address issues with ground rents.
- 5.3 In addition to these legislative changes, there is also currently consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework which propose to (re)introduce mandatory housing targets for local planning authorities through a new standard method of assessing housing needs, a new definition of 'Greybelt' land and greater scope for the release of Greenbelt land for future development where it is in the public interest to do so.
- 5.4 This strategy also responds to several key changes in tax and legislation that have occurred recently.
- 5.5 Tax rules on long-term empty homes have also been altered with the aim of controlling the number of short-term lets and bringing empty homes back into use. This may allow us to reinvest additional funds generated from charging higher council tax rates on second homes or properties that have been vacant for a year or more from the 2025/26 financial year.

¹¹ Further information available here - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6697f5c10808eaf43b50d18e/The_King_s_Speech_2024_background_briefing_notes.pdf

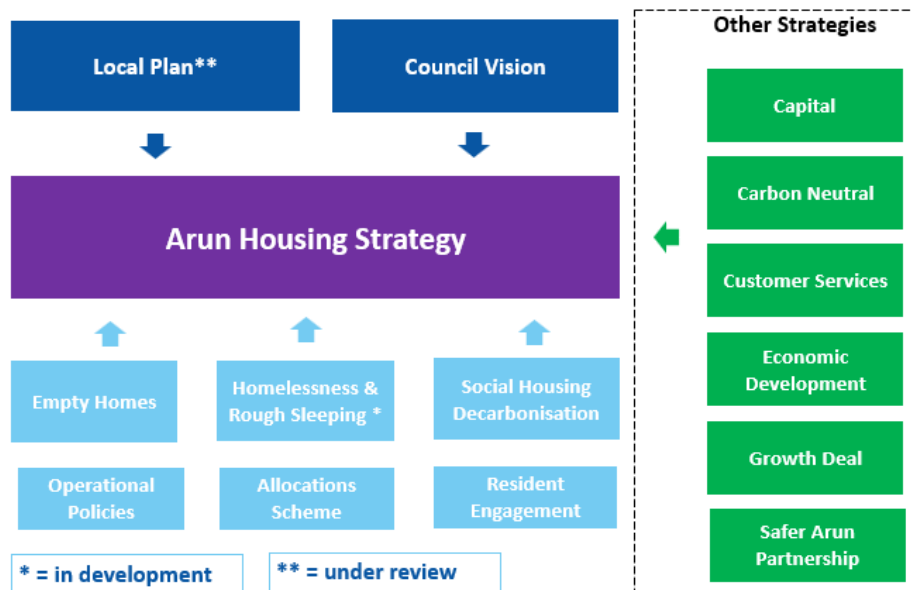
- 5.6 In the realm of planning, the introduction of '**environmental outcomes reports**' seek to simplify the environmental assessment process for planning applications whilst placing greater emphasis on outcomes such as biodiversity and air quality.¹²
- 5.7 Other social issues, such as the rise in rough sleeping and homelessness, and concerns over the quality of rented homes, have informed planned improvements in housing rights and standards. This has led to the introduction of new regulations like '**Awaab's Law**' which will entail mandatory timescales for the completion of certain repairs in the social rented sector. Other legal changes include the **Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023**, the **Building Safety Act 2022**, and the **Energy Act 2023**, which introduce new responsibilities and challenges for local authorities. These range from mandates for collaboration and enhanced safety controls to potential sanctions for non-compliance.
- 5.8 At the same time, local authorities are grappling with funding uncertainties for new homes. This in part stems from recent changes in terms for the use of **Right to Buy Receipts** and the expected new **Affordable Homes Programme**.

Internal

- 5.9 This strategy has been developed with reference to the council's existing suite of strategies, policies, and plans. It is designed to positively contribute to the four themes of the Council Vision, as follows:
- **improving the wellbeing of Arun** through the provision of better-quality housing options which support healthy lives, particularly for those with support needs
 - **delivering the right homes in the right places** through a focus on delivering more affordable homes and infrastructure which meet the needs of Arun's local areas
 - **supporting our environment to support us** through co-ordinating efforts to improve the energy efficiency of existing homes and promoting more sustainable new housing
 - **fulfilling Arun's economic potential** by improving the district's housing offer, attracting inward investment, and supporting the regeneration of town centres
- 5.10 This strategy is closely tied into the Arun Local Plan 2018 to 2031, which sets out the vision and objectives to shape the future growth of the district. The Local Plan is undergoing update at time of writing, with a new updated version scheduled for adoption during this Housing Strategy.
- 5.11 This new Local Plan will aim to support the sustainable development of the district and will be underpinned by a new evidence base that informs an updated position on future housing supply, including tenure mix and affordability. Any significant changes to housing policies which result from the Local Plan update will be reflected in later revisions to this strategy.

¹² [Shift from EAs to environmental outcomes reports considered in DLUHC paper \(pinsentmasons.com\)](https://www.pinsentmasons.com)

5.12 The below graphic illustrates the link between this strategy and key local plans and strategies.



6. Priority: Delivering the right homes in the right places

- 6.1 Our Council Vision commits to providing a mixed housing economy within the district for all, regardless of age or circumstances, where different types of homes are available, and people can choose to rent or buy. The rate of population growth and housing need requires more homes be provided, but crucially these must be the right homes in the right places.
- 6.2 We are determined to use our expertise to influence the local housing market, working with the right partners from all sectors, to develop the housing and infrastructure that we need. We will seek to maximise the delivery of affordable housing wherever possible and use the planning system to create great new places and improve existing places.

Meeting housing needs

- 6.3 Arun's population is forecast to grow by an additional 8,950 households between 2023 and 2033. Housing will be required to meet the needs of these additional households, as well as demand from existing households who may be inadequately housed.
- 6.4 The delivery of affordable homes remains a key priority for the council. Our current target is for 30% of new homes to be affordable, including those for rent and intermediate housing for those whose needs are not sufficiently met by the market. Many of these homes will need to be for single occupants to address demand from the housing register. The provision of one-bed homes, across a range of tenures, may also support older residents to downsize where appropriate, freeing up much-needed family-sized housing.
- 6.5 We know there are affordability pressures across the district and for large parts of our population. This is particularly the case for younger residents of Arun who are decreasingly likely to own their own homes. In many cases, a lack of affordable housing options for our younger residents has an impact on their ability to remain living in the area they grew up in.
- 6.6 Analysis of the local housing market shows the following:
- a shortage of larger properties (4 bedrooms or more), particularly in Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (17% each, compared to a national average of 21%)
 - owner occupation has been in decline, particularly among younger households, as house prices (already above the national average) have risen by two-thirds in the past decade
 - a growth in the private rented sector, which now accounts for almost one in five homes. Private rents are rising and only a small proportion are within housing benefit levels
 - there is less social housing in Arun than the wider South-East region, with a growing number of households joining the housing register and slow turnover of homes
 - One in ten social homes are over-occupied, whilst under-occupation (by two bedrooms or more) is by far the largest among owner occupiers (45% of such households)¹³

¹³ Census 2021

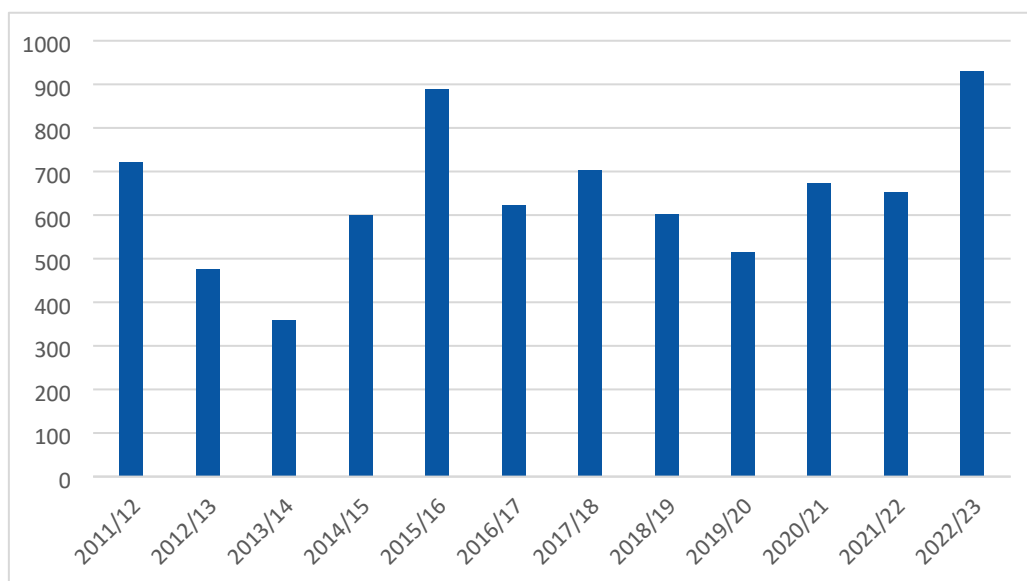
- 44% of those on the housing register are single households and the majority of households on the register (58%) fall within the ‘reasonable preference’ category¹⁴

6.7 These are local reflections of national trends, and they each require a response from the council and our partners. There are other more localised needs for an increase in tourist and student accommodation which arise from Arun’s role as a visitor destination and the expansion of the University of Chichester’s campus in Bognor Regis. There is also emerging need for keyworker housing to support the local healthcare sector.

Delivering new homes

- 6.8 The environment for delivering new homes is difficult at present. Although government grants and infrastructure funding are available to support development, the financial viability of schemes is increasingly stretched and the reliance on cross-subsidy from sales has become more uncertain of late. In addition, the inflation of building costs such as materials and labour impacts on the ability of housebuilders to raise capital to fund development.
- 6.9 Whilst Arun has experienced a higher rate of housing growth than the wider Southeast Region, or England as a whole, this is in the context of a historic under supply of new homes.

Figure 3 – Net Dwelling Completions in Arun (Local Authority Monitoring Reports)



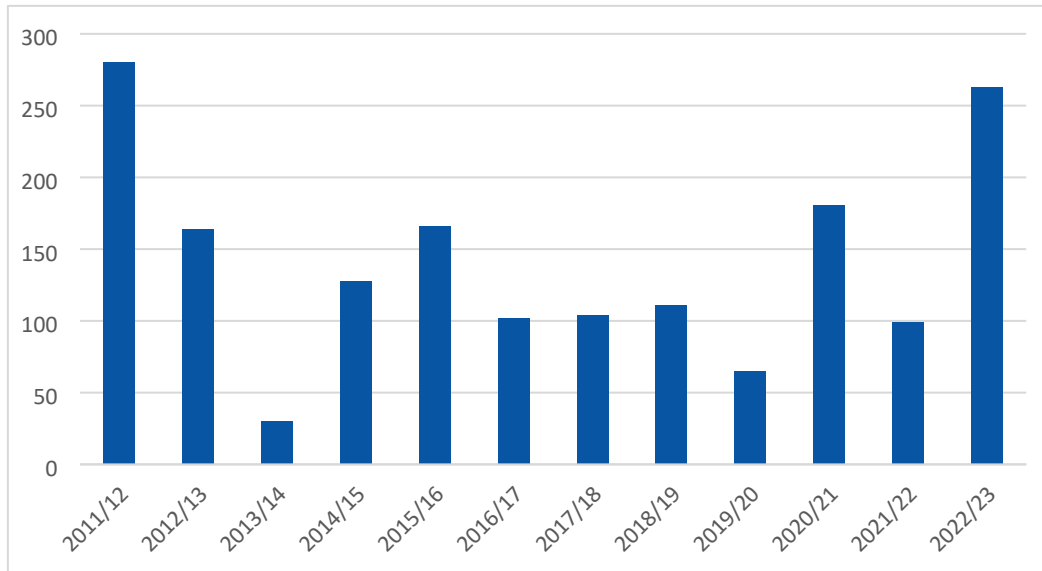
6.10 Arun's geographical attributes present specific challenges for future housing delivery. Many of the developable sites are large-scale, with long lead times and significant costs associated with providing enabling infrastructure such as transportation networks, educational facilities, healthcare services, and drainage systems. Our updated Local Plan will play a key

¹⁴ This includes people who are homeless, those occupying insanitary or overcrowded households, people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, and people who need to move to avoid hardship.

role in ensuring the provision of necessary infrastructure to support delivery of housing at appropriate densities whilst remaining deliverable and financially viable.

- 6.11 We need to ensure that new housing developments positively contribute to the local area through the principles of placemaking, design quality, and sustainability. This is essential in a constrained area with a sensitive environment and existing communities. When delivered at the appropriate time and in suitable locations, new housing and infrastructure can help achieve significant benefits.
- 6.12 In addition to housing, it is imperative that we retain sites for employment and other uses, while the presence of the National Park restricts the general availability of sites. Where possible we will seek to prioritise brownfield sites. We understand the significance of safeguarding land between existing settlements, and substantial efforts have been dedicated to collaborating with local parishes on the development of local neighbourhood plans which seek to achieve a reasonable balance of future growth across the district.
- 6.13 Delivering new homes can help support our main population centres of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton to fulfil their economic potential. Changes in shopping habits and the increasing flexibility of many jobs have resulted differing patterns of retail and office use, which may suggest a greater role for residential development as part of a more sustainable mix of uses to support the future of our town centres. This may include new forms of housing, such as Build to Rent and Purpose-Built Student Accommodation where higher densities could be supported in key locations.
- 6.14 Delivering affordable homes remains a key priority of the council. Since 2011, 1,693 affordable homes have been completed in Arun, accounting for around 22% of all new homes. Our preference is for affordable homes to be delivered onsite wherever possible, rather than through commuted sums, and we will seek to work with developers, housing associations and other stakeholders to support the delivery of affordable housing across a range of locations to meet local housing need. Through a stronger viability process we will seek to ensure that developers fulfil their obligations to provide affordable housing.
- 6.15 Many of these affordable homes will be delivered by registered providers of social housing, including those currently operating in the local area. As a Council we are keen to explore how we might best contribute towards the supply of new affordable housing, using our resources and skills, but we recognise that our role in direct delivery of new homes is likely to remain modest during the period covered by this strategy.
- 6.16 We also recognise the positive role being played locally by Community Land Trusts in bringing a range of sites forward for residential development. These projects come with additional benefits beyond just housing and help to ensure close connection between developments and the local community, particularly in rural locations.

Figure 4 – Affordable Housing Completions in Arun 2011/12 – 2022/23 (Annual Monitoring Report)



- 6.17 We have grown our own housing stock at a modest rate in recent times through a series of acquisitions from new developments, adding a further 22 homes to our stock in the last year. Much of this has been focused on replacing homes sold through the Right to Buy – with receipts generated through the sale of the 139 council homes sold through this policy between 2013/14 and 2022/23. Most of the Council’s homes date from the post-war period during which there was a boom in local authority housebuilding. Across the country, many councils are returning to the role of delivering new homes and this is something we will explore over the course of this strategy.
- 6.18 As well as delivering new homes, we also recognise that empty homes, buildings and other sites have a potential role to play in meeting local housing needs. We will continue to work with owners of long-term empty homes to bring them back into use, including as affordable housing, and will explore opportunities for other types of unused properties to be repurposed as housing where appropriate and of sufficient quality in terms of space standards, light, energy efficiency etc. and where this does not result in a loss of employment space. There are also opportunities for us to explore the ‘meanwhile’ use of sites awaiting redevelopment for temporary accommodation and enlarging existing affordable homes through extensions.

Priority Activities

- **Delivering Affordable Homes**

- Promote a mixed economy of housebuilding, including housing associations, Community Land Trusts, institutional investors, and others who share our vision.
- Seek to attract additional investment in new homes through strategic engagement with potential developers and funders, such as Homes England and for-profit Registered Providers.
- Provide practical support and policies to encourage Community Land Trusts to bring forward affordable homes, particularly in rural locations.
- Explore the potential role of the council in delivering new affordable homes, including different funding and partnership arrangements to leverage expertise and resource.
- Carry out an estate capacity review of sites within the council's Housing Revenue Account which could support the delivery of new homes.
- Explore the potential opportunities to increase quality affordable housing supply through permitted development (e.g. conversion of retail, office and business premises), meanwhile sites and extensions to existing homes.

- **Ensuring a Mix of Homes**

- Increase the supply of 1 and 4-bedroom social homes to meet the need for affordable housing for single occupants, downsizers and larger families on the housing register.
- Provide more low-cost home ownership options, particularly in Bognor Regis and Littlehampton, to support younger households into home ownership.
- Promote the development of more accessible and adaptable homes, as well as new housing which is built to Lifetime Homes or HAPPI standards.¹⁵
- Work with partners in higher education to ensure sufficient supply of student accommodation to support future needs.
- Develop a visitor accommodation prospectus – identifying potential opportunity sites and making the case for investment in new hotel accommodation.
- Explore options to bring forward more housing options for keyworkers in healthcare.
- Develop new town centre masterplans for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton to support a mix of uses, including residential and flexible employment spaces.

- **Providing certainty through Planning**

- Use updated evidence to inform credible housing targets that support sustainable development that meets housing needs, is well-designed, creates mixed and integrated communities, and can be supported by enabling infrastructure.
- Review the scheme viability assessment, seeking to adopt best practice in ensuring delivery of affordable housing onsite.
- Use planning policy, design guidance, and pre-application advice to positively shape future developments in terms of placemaking, tenure, mix, and sustainability.

¹⁵ Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) standards are a set of design criteria relating to older persons' housing which are able to adapt over time to meet changing needs.

- Secure development that is resilient to the adverse effects of climate change and is protected from flooding.
- Seek to provide a high performing, well-resourced and consistent planning service.

KPIs

- Number new homes started / completed
- % of new homes which are affordable
- £ investment in new housing
- % major planning applications determined within timescales

Delivering the Right Homes in the Right Places – Wings Wood, Aldingbourne

Wings Wood is a recently completed housing development at Woodgate, in the south of Aldingbourne. It was completed in late 2023 by Southern Housing in collaboration with the Sussex-based housebuilder, Thakeham Partnerships, and the Aldingbourne, Barnham & Eastergate Community Land Trust (ABE CLT).

The site was first identified by Aldingbourne Parish Council in 2021 when drawing up its Neighbourhood Plan. The development is set within the picturesque West Sussex countryside and seeks to make a positive contribution to the surrounding environment through its integrated landscaping and inclusion of eco-friendly design features.

It features 71 affordable homes, comprising a mixture of one-bedroom flats and two and three bedroomed houses. All the properties are affordable tenures, available through shared ownership, affordable rent, and social rent.

ABE CLT were centrally involved in the development from the beginning and have been granted allocation rights in perpetuity to 34 of the homes available for rent to those who live, work, or have strong family connections in the local area. This ensures that these homes will continue to meet the need for affordable housing locally.

7. Priority: Improving the quality of homes

- 7.1 Our Council vision commits to ensuring that the existing housing stock in the district - whether owned by the council, private landlords, housing associations or owner occupiers – is maintained to a high standard.
- 7.2 We will work with residents and partners to improve the quality of homes, looking to draw in funding and share best practice. Where necessary we will use our legal powers and financial disincentives to ensure that properties remain suitably occupied, are free from hazard and fit for habitation. At the time of writing, the Renters Rights Bill is yet to be published, which will confer additional powers to local authorities to regulate privately rented housing, which we will implement as appropriate.

Private Sector Housing

- 7.3 We recognise that a good quality, well-managed private rented sector (PRS) is vital for the economic prosperity and wellbeing of Arun, offering flexibility to parts of the population such as students and seasonal workers. There are, however, aspects of the private sector housing market which need active monitoring and may require future intervention.
- 7.4 Analysis of the local private sector housing market shows the following:
- The PRS now accounts for almost 1 in 5 of Arun's homes – an increase of over 8% since 2011, representing the largest PRS market of the wider housing market area.¹⁶
 - The proportion of households living in the PRS (18.3%) is now twice that of social housing (9.3%), with a significant concentration of this located in the two coastal towns.¹⁷
 - Younger households and those who identify as 'White Other' are particularly likely to live in the PRS. Of this latter group, 56% live in the PRS.
 - Private rents have increased by 50% over the past decade, a faster rate than other local housing market area, with the greatest price changes being for smaller properties.
 - There has been a recent fall in transactions, as tenants stay in their homes for longer.
 - Less than 10% of private rented homes are affordable to those in receipt of the housing benefits as set by the Local Housing Allowance.¹⁸
- 7.5 The growth of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) is a subject of particular interest, with approximately 1,400 HMOs in the local area.¹⁹ HMOs are clearly in demand and serve to meet housing need among those new to the area and/or on a low income. A high

¹⁶ According to the Census 2021, the Private Rented Sector now accounts for 18.3% of households in Arun, compared to 15.3% at the time of the previous census in 2011.

¹⁷ Census 2021

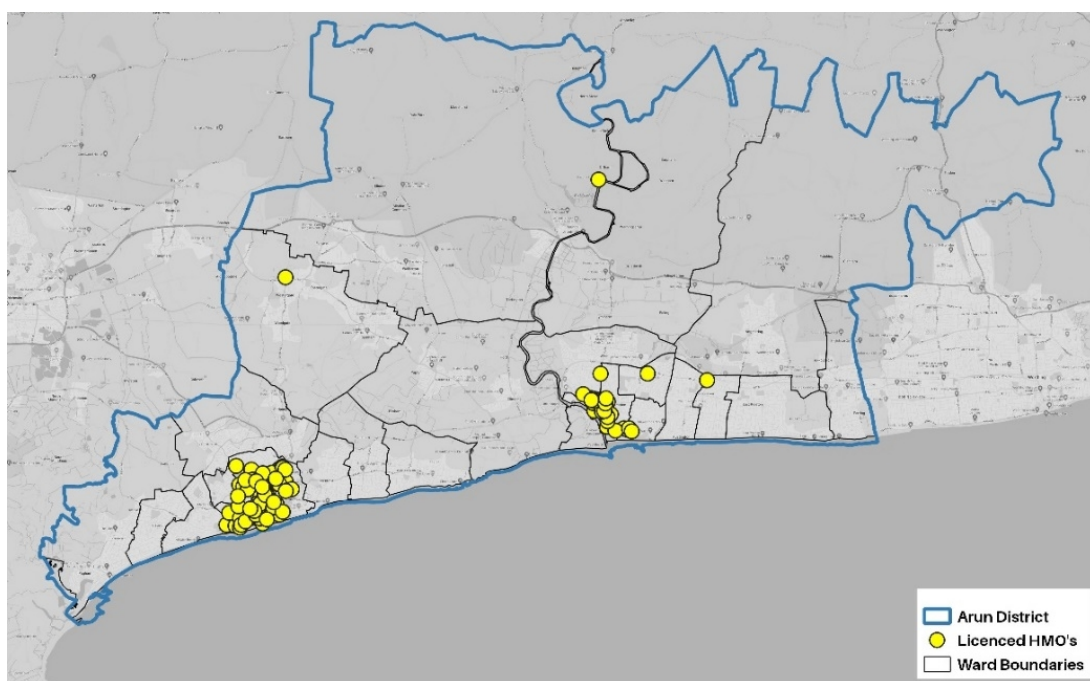
¹⁸ Only 8% of the available properties were affordable on the local housing allowance rate for Chichester LHA and 5% at the Worthing LHA rate

¹⁹ There are two types of HMOs. A small HMO (use class C4) is a property which is let to between three and four people who form more than one household and share a toilet bathroom or kitchen facilities. Where there are more than five unrelated individuals sharing amenities, this is termed a large HMO (Use Class Sui Generis).

concentration of HMOs in particular wards, however, can negatively impact on the character of local areas, with their denser occupation patterns and more transient inhabitants.

- 7.6 Such issues have led to the council introducing Additional Licensing for HMOs in the River ward of Littlehampton, plus Marine and Hotham wards of Bognor Regis. This is in addition to the Article 4 direction in these wards which requires any change of use to HMOs to receive planning permission. These areas were selected because of data which shows a concentration of HMOs and higher presence of poor property conditions.²⁰

Figure 5 – Licensed HMOs in Arun (February 2024)



- 7.7 The evidence also suggests the potential for the introduction of property licensing to several other wards in Arun where the size of PRS is now above the national average, and where there is a higher proportion of property hazards, disrepair, and anti-social behaviour.
- 7.8 Such evidence reveals significant issues with the condition of owner-occupied homes too. An estimated 5.7% of homes across Arun feature Category 1 hazards²¹, equivalent to 4,208 properties. Of these, over 80% are owner occupied which indicates the need for us to explore potential options for supporting those owner occupiers who may be 'asset rich and cash poor' to upgrade their properties.

²⁰ BRE Private Rented Sector Stock Modelling Report 2022

²¹ A 'Category 1 hazard' is assessed through the Housing Health & Safety Rating System as being a feature of the property which poses a serious and immediate risk to a person's health and safety.

Empty Homes & Short-term Lets

- 7.9 Our Empty Homes Strategy outlines Arun's approach to bringing long-term empty homes back into use for the benefit of the community. We believe empty homes – those that are unfurnished and unoccupied (excluding second or holiday homes) – represent a wasted resource in the current climate of high housing need and their neglect can attract crime, vandalism and other issues which can have a negative impact on local communities.
- 7.10 In the first instance we will engage and encourage empty homeowners to bring homes back into use by providing advice, guidance, and financial assistance. Where informal action has been unsuccessful then a range of enforcement action may be taken to facilitate re-occupation of homes. Where possible, we will work with empty homeowners to bring homes back into use to solve Arun's need for temporary accommodation for those in housing need.
- 7.11 Arun's role as a longstanding visitor destination entails a demand for tourist accommodation, much of which is provided through traditional hotels and B&Bs. Throughout this strategy we will seek to monitor and understand the extent of short-term holiday lets in operation throughout the district, including any hotspots. Such data will be used to inform our long-term approach to managing the existence of short-term lets which seeks to balance the needs to the local economy with the impact on the local community.

Social Housing

- 7.12 The proportion of households living in social housing in Arun (9.3%) remains lower than in neighbouring districts, the wider Southeast (13.6%) or the national average (17.1%). This position has in fact improved since 2011, with the number of households living in social housing having increased by over 15% – a faster rate of growth than neighbouring districts and a reflection of some of the recent housing development across the district.²²
- 7.13 Over the course of this strategy, we want to increase the overall number of social homes and to safeguard the existing supply of social housing to ensure we are able to meet our local housing needs. We will develop an acquisitions and disposals strategy to ensure that the council makes the best use of resources to increase affordable housing, and to acquire, in partnership, or to develop where appropriate Council owned Temporary Accommodation (TA) provision to meet the varied needs of homeless households in Arun.
- 7.14 Arun District Council continues to be the single largest provider of social housing in the district, with approximately 3,400 tenants. This accounts for around 40% of the overall supply of affordable homes. As a landlord, we are responsible for effectively managing and maintaining these homes, while operating within the resources available through the Housing Revenue Account as funded through rents and services charges.

²² Census 2021

- 7.15 Our homes require significant investment to be fit for the future, particularly to meet higher standards of energy efficiency and more rigorous requirements around building safety. Such investment will be informed by data and an increased understanding of the condition of our homes through our planned programme of updated stock condition surveys.
- 7.16 We are in the process of bringing our responsive repairs service back in-house. This will give us more control over the repairs journey, allowing for better performance management, quality assurance, and cost control. We are confident it will result in an improved service that we can all take pride in, whilst delivering significant cost savings which will enable us to focus on improving the quality of our properties going forward.
- 7.17 Our Resident Engagement Strategy outlines how we will work to improve the way we engage with our tenants and leaseholders, offering a wider range of opportunities to shape and influence the way we deliver services. This includes identifying improvements to our services based on insights derived from resident feedback through our tenant satisfaction survey, plus a series of transactional surveys linked to specific services. As part of this we will aim to improve our communication with residents across a range of channels.
- 7.18 In addition to the council, there are 35 housing associations operating in district, who are collectively responsible for around 4,700 tenanted homes – equivalent to 60% of Arun’s social housing. These housing associations range significantly in size and scale, with the majority of these homes under the ownership of a handful of organisations. In the future we aim to build a closer working relationship with those housing associations with a large local presence to ensure more consistent standards of service delivery, sharing of good practice, and alignment of efforts on issues such as community investment.
- 7.19 There are also a number of Community Land Trusts operating across the district, of varying sizes but with the common objective of supporting the development of new quality affordable homes in their parishes. This is often being delivered in partnership with housing associations. The council will continue to help facilitate such activity in recognition of the additional value it creates, including in terms of community cohesion, and the extent of local support for such plans.

Priority activities

- **Enhancing our landlord service**
 - continue to drive improvements in service delivery through better complaint handling, enhanced customer experience and deeper resident engagement
 - review the council’s housing policies and strategies to ensure alignment with best practice, legal and regulatory requirements, and evolving customer needs
 - ensure successful roll-out of the newly in-sourced responsive repairs service
 - conduct a full stock condition survey, using the outputs to inform the production of a new Asset Management Strategy to guide future capital works

- ensure full compliance with new social housing regulations, including Awaab's Law²³, and health and safety requirements around gas safety
- deliver upon our resident engagement strategy and review how we can best make a positive contribution to the community
- **Working with Housing Associations**
 - foster closer working relationships with housing associations with a large local presence through regular liaison
 - develop an acquisitions and disposals strategy and develop or acquire council owned temporary accommodation to meet the varied needs of homeless households
- **Improving conditions in private housing**
 - proactively enforce housing standards through inspections and licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)
 - work with landlords and homeowners to reduce hazards and promote best practice through the Landlord Forum
 - monitor the impact of additional HMO licensing and explore the case for introducing licensing schemes more widely, subject to evidence
 - prepare for legislative changes to be introduced through the Renters Reform Bill
 - offer landlords and homeowners advice on EPC ratings and retrofit measures to improve the energy efficiency of their homes
- **Bringing empty homes back into use**
 - continue to bring long-term empty homes back into use through engagement, encouragement, and enforcement
 - monitor the extent of short-term holiday lets and keep approach under review

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- number of Category 1 hazards
- number of empty homes brought back into use
- percentage council homes meeting Decent Homes Standard
- percentage repairs completed in time

²³ Awaab's Law, which was introduced in the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023, requires landlords to investigate and fix reported health hazards within specified timeframes.

Improving the quality of homes – bringing empty homes back into use

Arun District Council has been leading the way in addressing long-term empty homes. Such properties may be empty for a range of reasons, but each one represents a wasted resource in the current climate of high housing needs.

If properties are allowed to remain unused and neglected, they can cause issues within the community by attracting anti-social behaviour, vandalism and fly tipping, causing damage to neighbouring properties, and generally being an eyesore.

Our latest Empty Homes Strategy (2023 to 2028) outlines our approach to tackling long-term empty homes. This is based on a three-pronged approach of engage, encourage, and enforce. Through this we seek to engage with the homeowner and encourage them to bring the home back into use by offering advice, guidance, and financial assistance where appropriate. Enforcement action will be taken where a home has been empty for more than a year, where it is dangerous or seriously dilapidated, or where the owner has not co-operated with the council.

The success of our approach is shown in our performance. Over the four years to 2022, we exceeded our targets, bringing 366 long-term empty homes back into use.

8. Priority: Promoting environmental resilience

- 8.1 We are committed to tackling climate change and promoting sustainability, biodiversity, and the environment in everything we do, as well as encouraging our communities and partners to do the same.
- 8.2 In 2020 we declared a 'climate emergency' with a target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 (or 2050 for our Housing Service).²⁴ Reaching our net-zero goals will have a positive impact on our residents, and the housing sector has a significant contribution to make in cutting carbon emissions and boosting our resilience to climate change. Through partnerships aimed at improving the energy efficiency and sustainability of homes, we can support households in reducing their living costs, promoting their health and well-being, and limiting their exposure to extreme weather conditions.

Housing and energy efficiency

- 8.3 Houses are a significant contributor to carbon emissions locally. The principal way of measuring the energy efficiency of homes is through the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) assigned to a particular home when it is sold or let. This consists of a grading (A-G) based on a numerical Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) score (92-1). Current government policy aims for as many homes as possible to achieve at least an EPC C – equivalent to 69-80 SAP score.
- 8.4 Analysis of data on the energy efficiency of Arun's housing shows the following:
- an average SAP of 67 (equivalent to EPC D), across homes of all tenures. This is similar to the national average (68), with 43% of Arun's homes achieving a C rating or higher
 - Arun has fewer 'fuel poor' households compared to the national average (8.4% vs 13.1%), but there are seven areas where fuel poverty rates are higher
 - most homes rely upon mains gas (84%) as the primary heating source, but this is lower among privately rented homes, of which 3 in 10 rely upon electric heating
 - social housing performs better than other tenures – with a SAP score of 71 compared to 65 for both owner-occupied and privately rented homes
 - other features commonly associated with poor energy performance are detached homes (63) and those built pre-1930 (59)
- 8.5 Such data indicates the need for a widescale programme of energy efficiency improvements across the district's homes. This should focus on those properties with the worst energy efficiency, particularly where additional support can be provided to households in areas with the highest rates of fuel poverty. We will build upon the successes of our Home Energy Adviser Service to identify and work with households suffering from fuel poverty.

²⁴ This covers the council's scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. Scope 1 being emissions generated through the heating our buildings and running our fleet, scope 2 being produced when we purchase our electricity and scope 3 from the upstream and downstream activities of the Council, including our supply chain, business travel and staff commuting, as well as a few others.

- 8.6 Measures to improve the insulation and ventilation of properties should be prioritised, in recognition of the benefits in reducing household utility bills, providing a foundation for future efforts to switch to more low-carbon heating sources. We also recognise the benefits of retrofit in terms of improved health and wellbeing of Arun's population, lower living costs and future employment opportunities.

Improving the energy efficiency of Arun's homes

- 8.7 We have been relatively successful in recent years in terms of working with partners, such as the county council and partnerships of other local authorities, to secure a range of external investment sources to retrofit²⁵ homes to improve their energy efficiency. This is an approach we will build upon, using our partnerships and data to effectively target our efforts and support the business case for investment.
- 8.8 We recognise the significant upfront costs involved in retrofit and will look to promote a blended range of finance options appropriate to household circumstances. This could include a potential future role in the provision of low-cost loans to some households.
- 8.9 Our future retrofit strategy will look at how to effectively achieve energy efficiency improvements across a range of property types and tenures. We will learn from best practice and determine models which can be repeated at scale. This must consider how to retrofit some of our heritage assets, including homes which are listed and those in conservation areas, whilst preserving their historic features.
- 8.10 For our own homes, we will use the insights gained from the latest stock condition surveys and other recent data sources to produce an accurate view of the scale of retrofit required to reach an average of EPC C by 2030, as well as the future aspiration of net zero by 2050. Initial estimates suggest costs of £70-100 million to reach EPC C, and we will seek to cover such costs by leveraging external funds using the Housing Revenue Account to match fund applications, such as via future waves of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
- 8.11 Retrofitting our own homes also provides the opportunity to trial technologies and showcase successful approaches to the wider district. This will include best practice in working with households, supporting them through the process of installing measures, adapting to new technologies, and capturing the broad range of benefits to household finances and wellbeing.
- 8.12 We will aim to support community-led retrofit initiatives wherever possible and will engage with our local businesses and colleges to ensure that Arun's residents can gain from the skills and employment opportunities which will be associated with delivering retrofit at scale.

Promoting climate resilience

²⁵ The term 'retrofit' refers to making improvements to the energy efficiency of a building and/or reducing its carbon emissions. This typically consists of measures to improve the building's insulation, plus other measures to generate cleaner energy such as through solar panels and heat pumps (or alternative technology)

- 8.13 Recent years have seen increasing occurrences of drought, flooding, and storms in Arun. Our location on the coast with a fast-flowing river gives rise to a high-water table with propensity for surface water flooding across much of the district, which can have a significant impact on homes and communities. This can be mitigated through adaptations to existing homes and gardens, such as through increased shading, permeable surfaces, green roof and rain gardens, and water harvesting.
- 8.14 We will also seek to promote higher standards of sustainability on new developments. The introduction of the government's Future Homes Standard from 2025 will ensure that new homes produce 75-80% less carbon emissions than those built under current building regulations. Other new regulations on Biodiversity Net Gain for new developments will also make a positive contribution to the sustainability of the local environment, as will new developments served by wastewater networks and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, and the siting of new homes close to public transport networks.²⁶
- 8.15 Housing also has a wider role to play in promoting more climate conscious behaviours. The majority of Arun's waste is generated through residential uses, so there is an opportunity for us to work with housing providers to encourage more recycling and reduce waste through improved infrastructure as well as campaigns focused on behaviour change. This includes where promoting more active travel through the provision of infrastructure such as Electric Vehicle charging points and bicycle stores.

Priority actions

- **Working with partners to retrofit homes**
 - continue to work in partnership to secure external funding to support retrofit at scale across a range of tenures and property types
 - determine the council's offer to different households, including support to access grants, loans, advice, and information, based on their personal circumstances
 - seek external funding to support retrofit of the council's housing stock and showcase successful projects to the local community and partners
 - support community-led retrofit approaches and engage with businesses and education providers to support local job creation and skills development

- **Promoting climate resilient behaviours and measures**
 - promote climate mitigation measures to households to decrease their exposure to severe weather events such as drought, floods, and heatwaves
 - work with our housing partners to promote more climate conscious behaviour around waste and active travel

- **Encouraging more sustainable development**

²⁶ The Environment Act 2021 has made it mandatory for new major developments to achieve at least 10% net gain in biodiversity on site to deliver an improved position for nature than before development started.

- encourage sustainable construction techniques and materials through the updated Local Plan, related design guidance and supplementary planning documents
- minimise the impact of new developments through adoption of the Future Homes Standard, promotion of sustainable drainage, biodiversity, and low-carbon heating
- provide capacity-building opportunities for local contractors, builders, and tradespeople to enhance their knowledge and skills of sustainable construction

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- additional funds (council vs all tenures)
- number homes retrofitted (council vs all tenures)
- percentage homes above EPC C (council vs all tenures)
- jobs created in retrofit

Promoting environmental resilience – Home Energy Adviser service

Our Home Energy Advisor service helps to support Arun's residents to stay warm in their homes and to reduce their fuel bills. We do this by offering residents free advice to manage their energy bills, help with practical changes at home to keep warm, and help with applying for heating and insulation grants.

The service is open to all those that live in the district, are on a low income, live in a home with an EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) rating of D or lower and/or have high fuel costs. We recognise that many of our residents are more at risk of fuel poverty due to factors such as unemployment and ill health and can find it harder to engage with the council and/or energy providers to manage their homes.

Home energy advice is promoted through posters and leaflets distributed to libraries, GP surgeries, Jobcentre Plus, Citizens Advice, Age UK, food banks, and other local services and organisations. It is also promoted in the Arun Times publication and to front line workers such as the Occupational Therapist services.

Advisers undertake approximately 180 home visits per year, of which 75% of residents save around £200 or more per year. This not only benefits the individual resident but also makes a wider contribution to reducing carbon emissions locally.

9. Priority: Providing housing options

- 9.1 One of the objectives of our Council Vision is ‘improving the wellness of Arun’. This includes a commitment to supporting those in the community that need help, providing a safety net where necessary and working with people and organisations to meet different needs.
- 9.2 We know some of our residents’ needs are not effectively served by the housing market. Wherever possible we will look to provide opportunities for people to live independently in the community with the right level of support in place – recognising that this has the potential to be more cost-effective and better for the individual’s wellbeing.
- 9.3 Our relationship with West Sussex County Council is critical as they are responsible for commissioning a suitable range of housing options to meet the needs of residents with support needs across the county. There is also a major role for our local voluntary and community sector partners who continue to support our residents to live independently.

Housing for older people

- 9.4 We know Arun is home to a substantial number of older people, with three in ten residents over the age of 65 and one in five households now comprising a single person over retirement age. Older people accounted for almost half (48%) of the population growth between 2011 and 2021 and will drive much of the district’s future population growth.²⁷
- 9.5 Most older people living in the district live in their own homes, with 79% of those aged 65 and over owning their own homes outright. We will seek to ensure that older people can remain living in their own homes wherever possible, including through the provision of aids and adaptations to help install measures such as installing ramps and stairlifts, widening doors, and through downstairs bathrooms.
- 9.6 There will, however, be many circumstances where older people require more support in their day-to-day living arrangements. The district has an existing supply of approximately 2,320 residential and nursing care spaces, as well as a further 2,607 sheltered housing spaces and 141 Extra Care spaces. Given population growth, we will need to ensure this supply expands in line with increased needs. Our most recent assessment suggests the need for an additional 50 bedspaces per year in residential and nursing care settings as well as the need for an additional 113 units per year of Extra Care/Sheltered each year up to 2031.²⁸
- 9.7 In future, we wish to see a transition away from residential and nursing care wherever possible, in a favour of a wider array of housing options which allow older people to live with more independence. This includes through support with downsizing into smaller and more accessible accommodation where appropriate, as well as the exploration of more innovative older people’s housing models such as community co-housing and intergenerational living which are more supportive of independence, wellbeing and community cohesion.

²⁷ Census 2021

²⁸ Based on Housing LIN research which suggests a prevalence rate of 170 extra-care/sheltered units per 1,000 head of the population aged over 75.

- 9.8 As a council we own and manage around 700 units of supported housing / housing for older people, plus a further 600 units which are managed by housing associations. We know that some of our own sheltered housing provision needs improvement, and we will seek to explore potential opportunities to refurbish such schemes, or remodel existing provision to meet a wider range of needs, including where external funding could be used to support this.

Meeting support needs

- 9.9 There are residents across the district who require additional support in meeting their housing needs, such as those with experience of living in care settings, domestic abuse, or where they have a physical or mental health need which requires additional support.
- 9.10 One in ten of Arun's residents identify as disabled²⁹ and anecdotal evidence from stakeholders suggests a growing number of individuals with mental health conditions, often combined with drug and alcohol dependency, a history of family breakdown and/or domestic abuse. The relatively cheaper cost of housing in Arun may draw in more vulnerable residents who have been priced out of other parts of the local housing market.
- 9.11 Through the planning system we will seek to ensure that design standards of new homes address sustainable access, including the needs of all sections of the community (e.g. for people with a disability, those reliant on wheelchair use and mobility scooters or design that aids people with hearing or visual impairments).
- 9.12 Our colleagues at West Sussex County Council are in the process of reviewing the supported housing they commission, and we will work with them to help ensure it meets the needs of Arun's residents who require it.
- 9.13 Traditionally supported accommodation has been provided by local authorities, charities, and housing associations, with care, supervision or support provided to the occupants. More recently, there has been a growth in so-called Exempt Accommodation, which is exempt from standard limits on housing benefit.
- 9.14 The rise of this type of housing has led to national legislation (such as Supported Housing Regulatory Oversight Act) owing to concerns about the quality of accommodation and/or support provided, as well as the over-concentration of such housing in particular locales. Evidence to date does not show a significant issue with Exempt Accommodation in Arun³⁰ but we will develop a strategy to help understand the extent of this market and ensure sufficient standards of service provision and make use of licensing powers as appropriate.
- 9.15 Increased turbulence across the world has led to a rise in the number of displaced people, including those from countries which the UK has offered asylum (i.e. Afghanistan, Hong Kong, and Ukraine). Much of this population has been housed in hotel accommodation provided through the Home Office, which has proven costly and unsustainable. Local authorities across the country are facing increased demand from this cohort and Arun

²⁹ Census 2021

³⁰ In the 2023/24 year Arun District Council received 768 claims for Exempt Accommodation

District Council has sought to be proactive in providing options, including through the Government's Local Authority Housing Fund in which we have acquired a small number of homes to support refugee resettlement and demand for additional temporary accommodation, saving on costs and providing better quality housing for vulnerable individuals.

- 9.16 Meeting the range of support needs from across our population is only possible with a dedicated and skilled workforce in the health and social care sector. We recognise that relatively low rates of pay combined with high costs of local housing can cause affordability pressures for households employed in these sectors. During the course of this Housing Strategy, we will look to engage with partners to explore the business case for providing keyworker housing at below market rates to support the recruitment and retention of our local health and social care workforce.

Priority actions

- **Housing for older people**
 - work with the county council and our housing association partners to develop the business case for more Extra Care schemes to be delivered
 - assess the potential for remodelling some of the council's sheltered housing schemes to meet a wider range of needs
 - diversify housing options for older people via an Older People's Housing Strategy, exploring options such as intergenerational housing, co-housing and support to downsize
 - promote new housing suitable for older people through the updated Local Plan, such as inclusive design features and best practice, such as the HAPPI principles³¹
- **Housing for people with support needs**
 - conduct a supported housing (exempt accommodation) needs assessment and develop a system for licensing supported housing providers
 - work with the county council to support the recommissioning of supported housing, sharing information on local needs
 - continue to promote Disabled Facilities Grant with the county council and explore how to improve the referrals process
 - explore the case for keyworker housing to be provided for those working in health and social care sectors

KPIs

- number of new Extra Care Schemes /bedspaces
- number of aids and adaptations installed
- number of new accessible/adaptable homes built

³¹ Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) principles are a set of design criteria which seek to ensure that homes adapt over time to meet the changing needs of occupants.

Providing housing options – Abbotswood Extra Care Housing, Littlehampton

Abbotswood is an extra care housing scheme in Rustington, Littlehampton, developed and managed by Saxon Weald housing association. Built in 2011, the development features 62 spacious one- and two-bedroom apartments for over-60s who may need support with day-to-day living.

The scheme encourages residents to live independently whilst giving support where it is needed. Each property has its own front door and is fully self-contained with its own kitchen and bathroom, but with additional care and support available on-site 24/7.

It also features a lounge, restaurant, guest facilities, garden, community centre, hobby room, activities room, hairdressing salon, library, and assisted bathing facility. The scheme is set close to a range of local amenities too, including good transport links.

Abbotswood consists of a mixture of homes available for social rent and shared ownership, providing a range of options suited to individual circumstances. Rented homes are available for individuals following an assessment of their care needs and local connections. Shared ownership homes are available for those who do not own additional properties and whose assets fall below a certain financial amount.

10. Priority: Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping

- 10.1 Homelessness in Arun is in line with the regional and national picture. We are finding it harder to prevent families in particular, from becoming homeless. Rough sleeping is also rising slowly and is a major concern for the health and wellbeing of some of our most vulnerable citizens.
- 10.2 We were recently awarded over £1million of grant by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government as part of the Local Authority Housing Fund to acquire seven additional temporary accommodation homes to fulfil our statutory homeless duties. The allocation provides for up to 40% of the cost and will require the council to fund the remaining 60%. This allows us to support Afghan refugees currently occupying bridging hotels and to relieve our homelessness pressures.
- 10.3 Our vision as set out in this strategy is as follows:
- make homelessness rare: we will do everything we can to make sure homelessness is prevented from happening in the first place, making it a rare occurrence
 - make homelessness brief: when homelessness does occur, we will make sure that people and families are quickly connected to housing and other support
 - make homelessness non-recurring: where homelessness cannot be prevented, we will find a long-term solution, so that people and families do not experience multiple experiences of homelessness
- 10.4 We have engaged with a wide range of statutory and voluntary sector partners to develop a separate **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy**, which contains more substantial detail on how our services are performing in terms of preventing and relieving homelessness and rough sleeping and where these could improve.
- 10.5 The key themes of this strategy are:
- **prevention of homelessness** through the use of discretionary housing payments to prevent evictions, family mediation for young people who are homeless, reviewing the pathway from prison to the community, working with housing associations to ensure effective tenancy sustainment services, and developing more strategic relationships with private sector landlords to prevent homelessness
 - **develop more permanent solutions to homelessness** by encouraging the development of more affordable housing, keeping our allocations policy under review, developing a private rented leasing scheme to provide more cost-effective temporary accommodation, and developing a move-on programme for single homeless people.
 - **build on partnerships** through building on the excellent working relationships we have locally, working with commissioners at West Sussex County Council and the Integrated Care System to ensure that future commissioning of services will meet the needs of our most vulnerable citizens, developing new relationships with private sector landlords, and building on relationships with housing associations.

Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping – homelessness hubs

Stonepillow in Bognor Regis, and Turning Tides in Littlehampton, both provide homelessness hub services in the town centres. These locations provide housing advice, case management, and serve as link locations for partners including drug and alcohol services and mental health services. The hubs also provide basic assistance with food, laundry, and showers.

Both services are open several mornings a week and offer group activities where these can be funded in the afternoons. The hubs are important in enabling working people who are rough sleeping to maintain their employment (by providing laundry and shower facilities). They also enable services to make contact with people who are rough sleeping or in precarious living situations and provide them with advice, assistance and assessments for access to health and drug and alcohol services if they need them.

Case study

K, a man in his twenties, had been sleeping rough in a secluded location outside Bognor Regis for nearly six years, whilst accessing the hub in the town. He refused assistance or to reveal his sleeping site due to his concerns over his safety and mistrust of services. After a health emergency where he was found by the outreach team, he finally accepted help, and took a temporary accommodation bedspace in Bognor Regis. He stayed there for four months before being supported to access a private rented sector tenancy, which he has sustained. He is now attending catering college and hopes to find work as a chef.

11. Monitoring and delivery

- 11.1 The final version of this strategy will be accompanied by a detailed action plan with key milestones and targets.
- 11.2 Reporting of progress against the action plan will take annually with a progress report to be presented to the Housing and Wellbeing Committee for scrutiny.
- 11.3 This strategy will be subject to further updates in response to significant changes in government policy or local authority strategy.

Consultation & Engagement

This strategy was developed following consultation with the below stakeholders.

A draft version of the strategy was published for consultation via online survey between 10 July 2024 to 4 August 2024 which received 47 responses. Two in-person drop-in sessions were also held at Bognor Regis Town Hall and Littlehampton Civic Centre, and a presentation was given to the Arun Landlords' Forum in July.

Internal stakeholders

Meetings were held with officers across Arun District Council which included the following roles.

Director of Environment and Communities
Director of Growth
Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer
Group Head of Legal and Governance
Group Head of Planning
Group Head of Housing, Wellbeing and Communities
Group Head of Organisational Excellence
Group Head of Environment and Climate Change
Group Head of Technical Services
Group Head of Business and Economy
Business Improvement Manager
Repairs and Maintenance Manager
Neighbourhood Services Manager
Climate Change and Sustainability Manager
Development Manager
Energy Efficiency Officer
Principal Environmental Health Officer

External stakeholders

Meetings were held with representatives of the below organisations:

- ABE CLT
- Action in Rural Sussex
- Angmering CLT
- Arun and Chichester Citizens Advice
- Arundel CLT
- Aster Group
- Clarion Housing Group
- Ford CLT
- Hyde Housing Association
- Places for People
- Saxon Weald
- Southern Housing
- The University of Chichester
- West Sussex County Council
- Worthing Homes
- Vistry
- Vivid Homes
- Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester

Reference was also made to stakeholder engagement undertaken as part of the separate but related work which Campbell Tickell has carried out on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Document review

This strategy was developed following a review of the below council documents:

- Arun Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019-2021 (extended to 2023/24)
- Arun, Our vision: A better future 2022-2026
- Arun Local Plan 2011 – 2031
- Local Plan – Direction of Travel Document Consultation – March 2024
- Arun Growth Deal 2024 – 2029
- Capital Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28
- Carbon Neutral Strategy
- Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty Strategy 2020-2025
- Social Housing Decarbonisation Strategy
- Home Energy Conservation Act Report 2023
- Customer Services Strategy 2021 to 2026
- Resident Engagement Strategy 2022 to 2026
- Tenancy and Lettings Policy
- Housing Allocations Policy
- Arun Empty Homes Strategy 2023 to 2028
- Residents' Survey 2023
- Safer Arun Partnership update
- 'Creating our Future' – Arun Economic Development Strategy 2020 to 2025
- Arun Visitor Strategy – 2023-2028
- Icen, Arun Housing Need Review – May 2023
- Icen, Housing Market Absorbtion Study – December 2022
- Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment - January 2022
- BRE Private Rented Sector Stock Modelling Report 2022

Various committee reports, including performance and funding reports, were reviewed too.

Relevant documents were reviewed from the county council relating to planning, supported housing, and fuel poverty, plus, current Housing Strategies of other local authorities in West Sussex where they are in place (such as. Adur and Worthing, Chichester, and Horsham), plus the draft Housing Strategy for Brighton and Hove which was being consulted upon at time of writing.

Snapshot of Arun

Demographics and projections

Population – According to the 2021 Census, the population of Arun was 164,900. This is broken down to 72,650 households. Arun’s population is older than the national average, with a median age of 49 years compared to England’s median age of 40 years. 28.5% of the population was aged over 65, which is much higher than the national average which is only 18.5%. Projected future population increase by around 900 households a year over the next decade.

Age – median average age of 49, compared to the national average of 40. The number of people aged 50 to 64 increased by over 15%, while the number of residents between 35 and 59 decreased by almost 6%. Almost three in ten residents are over the default retirement age, whilst around 15% are under 16.

Origin and ethnicity – small but significant number of residents born in Poland or countries that joined the EU between 2001 and 2011 (3.5%). 96% of residents identify as ‘White’. Single biggest other ethnicities were ‘Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh’ (1.6%) and ‘Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups’).

Health and disability – According to Census 2021³² data, 95.5% of Arun residents say they are in very good, good or fair health. 6.8% of people in Arun have a disability that impacts day to day activities a lot and 10.8% have a disability that impact day to day activities a little; this is in line with the national figure of 17.7%.

Household type – 18% of households are single-person households aged 66 and over. Arun sees the lowest percentage of owner-occupation at 57.8% in comparison to other neighbouring areas and the highest percentage of households renting, with 16.1% in social rental and 26.1% in the private sector.

Employment – over half of residents (55.1%) aged 16 year and over are in employment, whilst 32% are retired. Of those in employment, just over 30% work short hours - 15 hours or less (12.4%) and 16-30 hours (21.4%). – national or regional comparison

Poverty and deprivation – The index of deprivation (2019) measures relative deprivation. West Sussex was ranked as the 129th least deprived upper tier local authority out of 151 in England in 2019. Of the West Sussex districts and boroughs, Arun ranks the second most deprived. Compared to levels of deprivation across England Arun is not relatively deprived, however some wards are in most deprived 10%, so there are pockets of severe deprivation.

³² [Disability age standardised - Census Maps, ONS](#)

Arun's housing

Dwellings – Arun has the highest number of dwellings in the Housing Market Area (HMA)³³ accounting for approximately 35% of all HMA stock. Since 2011 Arun has seen the largest net increase in dwellings amongst neighbouring authorities at 9.3% which is higher than the regional and national percentage change (9.0% and 8.5% respectively).

Housing market – The most common tenure is owner-occupation across all areas. Arun (72.4%) sees a higher proportion within this tenure than the HMA average (69.9). All areas assessed are higher than the national average (62.3%). When considering rented properties, private rented dwellings (18.3%) are twice as common as social rented (9.3%). Analysis of the change in tenure between the 2011 and 2021 Census shows that owner occupation has decreased significantly in all areas, particularly in Arun (-2.3%). This decrease in Owner Occupation has led to increases in both private renting (+1.8%) and social renting (0.5%).

Property type – The most common dwelling type in Arun is detached dwellings (33%) followed by semi-detached (24%). In contrast flats make up 22% of dwellings in Arun followed by terraced houses (19%).

Property size – The type of properties in an area directly influences the number of bedrooms. Arun has a large proportion of three-bedroom properties (42%) although a relatively low number of four or more bedrooms (16%). One-bedroom properties make up just 11% of Arun's dwellings.

Occupation – Over occupation in Arun lies at 6%, matching that of Adur and Worthing but above the HMA average. This is below regional and national averages. Overcrowding in social rented homes stands at 9%. However, 31% of households which are categorised as under-occupied (at least two more bedrooms than are required by the number in the household) which is in line with regional and national averages.

Vacant dwellings in Arun account for 5.3% of homes which comprises of 4.7% vacant properties and 0.8% second homes. In 2023, Arun had 446 long-term vacant dwellings³⁴ (defined as properties liable for Council Tax that have been empty for more than six months and that are not subject to Empty Homes Discount class D or empty due to specific flooding events). Compared to its designated comparator authorities from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Arun has the second highest proportion of vacant homes and compared to the other West Sussex Districts and Boroughs, Arun has the highest proportion.

Affordability – Approximately 9.3% of households in Arun are affordable housing. The median house price in Arun is the lowest amongst its neighbouring authorities at £350,000. Prices for all types of housing in Arun are lower than its neighbouring authorities. The cost of flats in Arun are particularly low and falls below the national median. Overall rent costs for properties of all sizes in Arun have risen by 50% between 2014-2023. Rents have increased

³³ This also consists of Adur, Chichester and Worthing.

³⁴ [Live tables on dwelling stock \(including vacants\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants)

for smaller properties more so than larger properties. Room rents have grown by 54%, studios by 45% and one-bed rents by 40%. This compares to 22% growth in rent prices for properties with four or more bedrooms. Since the previous strategy 2,772 new homes completed, of which 608 were affordable (22%)³⁵

Demand – In 2022/23 there were 1,732 households on the Council’s housing waiting list. This was a 64% increase from 2020/21. Early indications of the figures for 2023/24 suggest that this number has risen to around 2,200 households.

Homelessness – presentations, rough sleeper count, temporary accommodation numbers and costs – Since the beginning of the financial year 2020-21 and the end of quarter 3 or 2023/24, there were a total of 3,488 homeless applications made. 3,093 (89%) of these applications resulted in a duty being accepted. The total number of households affected by homelessness, or the risk of homelessness increased from 832 (2021/22) to 919 (2023/24) representing an increase of 10% over two years. For single person households the equivalent figures were an increase from 539 to 612 (14%). For households with children there was an increase from 293 to 307 households – (5%).

Planning and development – Housing delivery in Arun has increased partly due to the adoption of the Local Plan which allocated specific sites for housing delivery therefore encouraging them to be built. The average delivery in the period 2017/18 to 2021/22 being 674 dwellings per annum(dpa). This is a 40 dpa increase from the 2012/13 to 2017/18 (635 dpa).

As of March 2024, the total number of dwellings in Arun stood at 79,000. A total of 8,794 new properties have been completed locally since 2011, amounting to a 12.5% growth in the number of dwellings and the largest net increase in dwellings of all local authorities in West Sussex. Since 2011 only 1,693 of these new properties are categorised as affordable dwellings - accounting for only 21.9% of all completions in this time period. More recently, the pace of new affordable house completions has picked up, with 546 new affordable dwellings completed (or acquired) between 2020/21 and 2022/23. A total of 468 (85%) of these new affordable homes are newly built. 59% of these dwellings were built for affordable rent, 24% were built for sale, 15% for first-time buyers and 2% for intermediate rent.

Energy efficiency – Since 2007, all constructed, sold or let dwellings have required an EPC assessment. In Arun the average EPC rating of all constructed, sold or let dwellings is 67 which places them within the energy efficiency rating band D.

HMOs – Census 2021 data records 1,334 households of multiple occupancy (HMOs) within Arun excluding all student households which equates to approximately 1.8% of the households in the district. Local Authority Housing Statistics suggests there were 391 Licensed HMOs in Arun in 2022/23; an increase of approximately 312 since 2012/13 when the number of HMOs stood at 79.

³⁵ Authority Monitoring Reports, period covering 2019/20 to 2022/23

Strategic context

Strategic housing is at the heart of achieving social, economic and environmental objectives that shape a community, however, this is not without its challenges.

The impact of higher interest rates on the UK and global economy have been and continue to add pressure to a market that has been experiencing persistently high inflation, higher costs of borrowing and challenges in accessing skilled labour. There is a need for substantial investment in existing homes to improve quality, building safety, and energy efficiency, as well as the need to deliver new social housing. This is coupled with considerable scrutiny of the social housing sector's performance and significant changes on the horizon for local planning authorities.

A summary of key forthcoming legislation is included in Section 5 of this strategy. Other key developments in policy and legislation under the previous Government are summarised below.

The **Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023** includes planning reforms to empower local leaders and communities with stronger regeneration powers and a stronger framework for protecting and enhancing the environment.

The new non-negotiable, locally determined **Infrastructure Levy (IL)** allows councils to determine contributions according to the local context. Affordable housing previously generated through section 106 agreements³⁶ will form part of the new IL. There has been some concern about the impact the levy is likely to have on affordable housing delivery due to the change in how housing is funded, the time taken to achieve consents and the potential increase in the administrative burden local authorities feel.

In an effort to help young people and local families rent or buy in their communities and control the number of short-term lets, the government has changed rules about tax **premiums on long-term empty homes**. This affords Arun District Council the opportunity to reinvest additional funds generated from charging double the standard council tax rate on second homes or properties that have been vacant for a year or more from the 2025/26 financial year. Homeowners who want to bring a property back into use but are currently unable to do so due to properties undergoing major repairs or structural alterations, properties being actively marketed for sale or let or inherited properties will have a 12-month exemption from the premium.

New '**environmental outcomes reports**' aim to simplify the environmental assessment process for planning applications, focusing on defined outcomes such as biodiversity, air quality, and cultural heritage³⁷. The approach aims to strengthen the role of mitigation and introduces a robust monitoring system which local planning authorities have to adjust to, potentially requiring additional resources or changes in current practices.

³⁶ Legal agreements between a planning authority and a developer that ensure extra work related to development are undertaken.

³⁷ [Shift from EAs to environmental outcomes reports considered in DLUHC paper \(pinsentmasons.com\)](https://www.pinsentmasons.com/news/shift-from-eas-to-environmental-outcomes-reports-considered-in-dluhc-paper)

Digitalisation and standardisation of data processing in the planning system aims to lead to more informed decision-making by local planning authorities. The new system aims to be more efficient and user-friendly, facilitated by modern digital tools enabling a wider range of people to engage with the planning system, potentially transforming the relationship between communities, planning authorities, and developers³⁸. However, those without successful funding bids from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will not achieve this work in the same way or the same timeframe considering current constraints on resources.

Rough sleeping in England has increased by over a quarter for two consecutive years, with 3,898 people estimated to be sleeping rough in 2023. Homelessness in temporary accommodation has also reached a record high, with 109,000 households and 142,490 children affected³⁹. Insufficient **Local Housing Allowance (LHA)** rates can make it difficult for individuals to afford housing in high pressure areas, increasing the risk of homelessness. Housing emergencies of this calibre require investment in social rent homes, secure and affordable private rented accommodation, improved standards of rented homes, and improved housing rights.

'Awaab's Law' provides the Regulator for Social Housing with enforcement powers on councils and requires prompt action from social landlords after receiving a report of a hazard. Investigation and remediation timescales place additional liability on councils, which may present challenges especially during colder and wetter months when reports of hazards such as damp and mould might increase. These may be exacerbated by resource constraints and issues with access to properties to carry out repair work.

Under the **Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023** local authorities will be receiving new burdens funding to set up supported accommodation licensing schemes. It will also fall to local authorities to undertake strategic planning duties which include collecting data on the supply of homes, forecasting future need, and delivery plans.

Post-Grenfell, the **Building Safety Act 2022** enhances safety controls for high-risk buildings, assigns the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) as the new authority, and mandates collaboration among local authorities and other entities. Local authorities are tasked with changes in their project roles, building control processes and assisting in exceptional cases. Arun District Council is in the process of adapting to a more regulated process.

The **Energy Act 2023** aims to transform the UK's energy system, enhancing energy security, supporting net-zero goals, and ensuring long-term affordability of household bills. The Act introduces regulations for energy usage and efficiency assessment and publicisation, with potential sanctions for non-compliance. However, the enforcement of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) poses challenges for local authorities due to resource constraints and competing priorities for local communities.

³⁸ [Digital Planning Policy and Legislation | Local Digital](#)

³⁹ [Sharp increase in rough sleeping and child homelessness: the next government cannot afford to ignore the housing emergency | Shelter](#)

Funding for new homes is being impacted on multiple fronts. Local authorities are facing uncertainty on the terms which will replace **Right to Buy Receipts** and the succession of the **Affordable Homes Programme** (AHP) which has less than two years remaining. Right to buy receipt incomes and AHP funding have contributed to the costs of building new homes and districts may be facing reduced funding for housebuilding potentially exacerbating housing shortages and homelessness.

Data review

See separate Housing Baseline Report

CAMPBELL TICKELL

Telephone +44 (0)20 8830 6777
Recruitment +44 (0)20 3434 0990

info@campbelltickell.com
www.campbelltickell.com
[@CampbellTickel1](https://twitter.com/CampbellTickel1)

