

Agenda item 5

'Right Homes, Right Places' Housing Mission Deep Dive

Item Presented by: Cllr Paul De Kort, Leader St Albans City and District Council, Claire Hamilton, Chief Executive St Albans City and District Council, Colin Haigh, Director of Growth and Place, Hertfordshire County Council

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 This item, together with an accompanying presentation, seeks to provide a deep dive into progress to date and the proposed approach to contribute to the delivery of the Right Homes, Right Places housing mission for Hertfordshire.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Growth Board support the proposed next steps for the Topic Expert Group as set out in Section 8 of the report.

3 Background

- 3.1 Hertfordshire has a number of well-understood housing challenges. There were nearly 5,400 built homes in 2023/24, which is the highest in any year since 2001, but the recently finalised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has set a new standard method target of 10,096 homes per year for the county.
- 3.2 The average house in Hertfordshire costs twelve times the average salary.
- 3.3 There are currently 18,500 households on housing waiting registers, about 5,200 households owed a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act and last year £16m was spent on temporary accommodation. Please refer to Appendix 1.
- 3.4 There are a number of already well-established housing partnerships across Hertfordshire, with stakeholders from both the public and private sector. Please refer to Appendix 2. The Right Homes, Right Places housing mission will link into these partnerships, leaning and drawing in their expertise to address the mission's strategic goals, seeking local solutions. The Right Homes, Right Places housing mission will have strategic oversight.
- 3.5 The Right Homes, Right Places housing mission must operate within the legislative and national framework, along with local policy and strategies. The mission will seek to employ solutions to address local challenges, and welcomes

the HGB's advocacy plan and opportunity for HGB to lobby central government over key issues.

- 3.6 The Right Homes, Right Places housing mission overlaps with a series of other HGB missions, notably Healthy and Safe Places for All and Transport for Hertfordshire. The missions are developing their collaborative working relationships.

4 Delivering the Goals

- 4.1 This report sets out how the Right Homes, Right Places housing mission group will contribute to deliver the agreed strategic goals.
- 4.2 While a number of housing partnerships were already in existence across Hertfordshire, encompassing a range of public and private sector stakeholders, the first year of the mission has focused on setting the governance and framework for future delivery.
- 4.3 The work programme for 2024/25 is set out in Appendix 3. As the end of the financial year approaches, the work programme for 2025/26 is being discussed and finalised. The key tasks will be (a) to create a 'One Knowledge Point' for public housing projects taking place in Hertfordshire, so there is greater opportunity for partnership working between districts, developers, housing associations and others (b) to prepare and maintain a pipeline of development sites, ready to bid for and secure public funding to help unblock any obstacles to their delivery, (c) to update the Development Quality Charter or ensure that aspirations for high quality and sustainable development are incorporated into planning policies and (d) to progress long-term strategic planning for the county.

5 Resourcing the Goals

- 5.1 Existing resources will be utilised to contribute to the delivery of the Right Homes, Right Places strategic goals. It is possible that additional ad-hoc resources may be required as the mission progresses, and these needs will be addressed at the time.
- 5.2 Resources are likely to be required for task and finish pieces of work, with an identified goal for a prescribed period of time. It is envisaged these resources will be of a general nature, and specialisms will be drawn upon from within the organisation and existing partnerships.
- 5.3 The Government's recent budget has introduced a number of measures to increase housing delivery and to provide more affordable and other specialist housing.

6 Data, Performance, Reporting

- 6.1 A number of existing datasets have been pulled into one dashboard to easily identify the influence of the Right Homes, Right Places housing mission across key areas. In addition, a series of new data sets have been requested, and these will be developed over coming months to ensure the mission has a clear set of performance indicators to measure all strategic goal outcomes.
- 6.2 As an aide memoire, the HGB agreed strategic goals and success measures are shared in Appendix 5.

7 Challenges and Risks

- 7.1 A key risk is the availability of staff and their resources within the HGB member organisations.
- 7.2 Ensuring that the housing mission links into the other missions. This will be mitigated by regular meetings between mission leads to ensure that strategic goals align but do not overlap or contradict one-another.
- 7.3 Partnership working across established groups such as Herts Planning Group (HPG), Herts Infrastructure and Planning Partnership (HIPP), Herts Infrastructure and Development Board (HIDB), Herts Property Partnership (HPP) and Herts Heads of Housing (HHH), as well as with Homes England, housing associations and others will be crucial to the delivery of this mission.

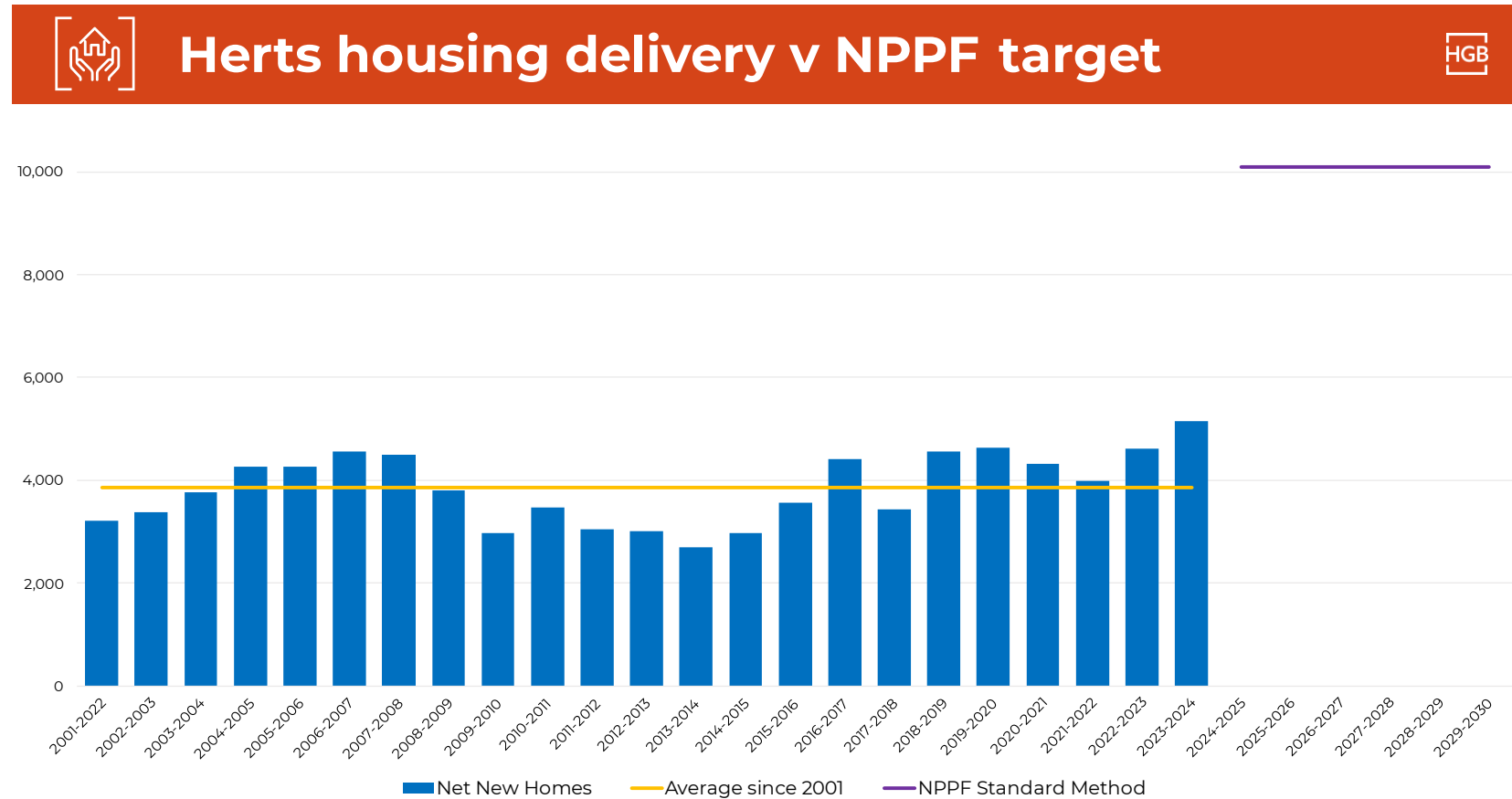
8 Next Steps

- 8.1 The next steps and work programme for the Right Homes, Right Places housing mission are in Appendix 4. This includes evolution of the 'One Knowledge Point' idea for public sector housing projects, reviving the *Housing First* initiative, updating the Development Quality Charter and progressing Joint Strategic Plans.

Appendix 1: Current Data

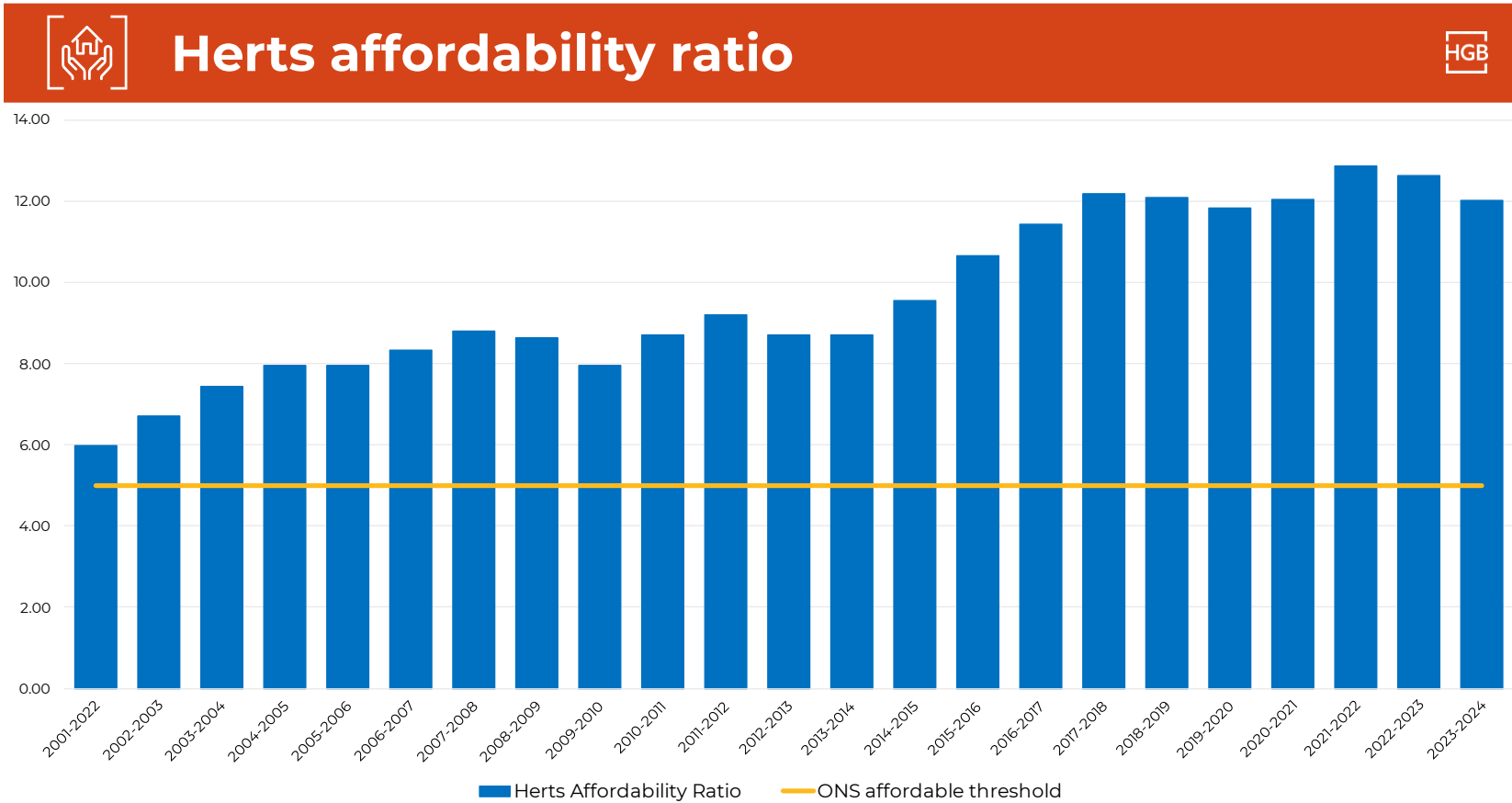
Herts housing delivery v NPPF target

Herts build more homes in 23/24 than in any year since 2001, but it is less than half the target set by the new NPPF.



Herts affordability ratio

The affordability ratio of average house prices to average salary has doubled in the last twenty years, and is significantly about the 5.0 threshold suggested by the Office for National Statistics.



National Planning Policy Framework

The recently finalised NPPF sets a standard method target of 10,096 homes per year for Hertfordshire.

	Previous method	Consultation method	New method
Broxbourne	634	735	775
Dacorum	1,016	1,313	1,355
East Herts	1,041	1,173	1,265
Hertsmere	731	959	1,034
North Herts	910	992	1,018
St Albans	885	1,544	1,660
Stevenage	470	498	478
Three Rivers	640	739	832
Watford	850	800	831
Welwyn Hatfield	910	834	848
Herts total	8,087 per year	9,587 per year	10,096 per year

Appendix 2: Established Housing Partnerships

Housing Partnership	Lead Officers	Purpose
Herts Planning Group (HPG)	Sara Saunders (East Herts)	Meeting for heads of planning to discuss countywide planning matters.
Herts Infrastructure & Planning Partnership (HIPP)	Sara Saunders (East Herts), Colin Haigh (HCC)	Meeting for executive members for planning, infrastructure, transport to discuss countywide matters. HIPP often coordinates responses to government consultations on the NPPF and other changes to the system.
Herts Infrastructure & Development Board (HIDB)	Forogh Rahmani (HGB), Colin Haigh (HCC)	Meeting for councils and developers, to discuss all issues affecting development and infrastructure.
Herts Property Partnership (HPP)	Sajida Bijle (Hertsmere), Tom Pike (Stevenage), Tom Dobrashian (Watford), Mike Evans (HCC), Kevin Clark (Broxbourne)	Meeting for heads of property to discuss development projects and One Public Estate initiative.
Herts Heads of Housing (HHH)	Darren Welsh (Dacorum), Natasha Beresford (Dacorum), Karen Dragovic (St Albans)	Meeting for heads of housing to discuss development projects and countywide housing matters.
Herts housing associations	Tina Barnard (Watford Community Housing Trust)	Meeting for housing associations and others, to discuss issues of common interest.

Appendix 3: Strategic Goals and Outcomes

Strategic Goals	Outcomes
<p>1. Seek to increase the provision of housing for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social and affordable tenures; - Specialist homes for young adults and older people - Homeless and temporary accommodation - People experiencing other housing vulnerabilities 	<p>Number of social/affordable homes built Number of specialist homes built Temporary accommodation units Homelessness numbers Number of other specialist housing units</p>
<p>2. Create a pipeline of development sites</p>	<p>List of pipeline sites Progress of pipeline sites through planning system (i.e. allocation, masterplan, permission) and ultimately number of homes built Amount of Government / Homes England funding secured</p>
<p>3. All new homes to achieve high quality design, sustainability and healthy places principles</p>	<p>Number/ percentage of new homes that exceed building regulation sustainability standards Number of existing homes retrofitted to decent homes and higher sustainability standards</p>
<p>4. To prepare Joint Strategic Plans (JSPs) for the North-East-Central and South-West areas of the county</p>	<p>Progression of North-East-Central JSP to formal stages and preparation of associated evidence Progression of South-West JSP to formal stages and preparation of associated evidence Successful use of Government, council and developer funding to deliver infrastructure</p>

Appendix 4: 2024/2025 Work Programme

Strategic Goals	Q1 Milestones	Q2 Milestones	Q3 Milestones	Q4 Milestones
<p>1. Seek to increase the provision of housing for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social and affordable tenures - Specialist homes for young adults and older people - Homelessness and temporary accommodation - People experiencing other housing vulnerabilities 	<p>Creation of 'One Knowledge Point' for public sector housing projects, utilising HPP and One Public Estate.</p> <p>Explore <i>Housing First</i> initiative for temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Present actions to Herts Housing Association conference on 13 May 2025.</p>			
<p>2. Create a pipeline of development sites</p>	<p>Prepare first list of pipeline sites.</p>	<p>Maintain list of pipeline sites as appropriate thereafter.</p> <p>Present to Gov and Homes England at regular intervals to seek funding/support.</p>		
<p>3. All new homes to achieve high quality design, sustainability and healthy places principles</p>	<p>Lobby government to incorporate Future Homes Standard into building regulations.</p> <p>Review Charter or prepare new SPD(s) once building regulations are updated during 2025.</p> <p>Liaise with Healthy and Safe Places Mission to consider other updates to Charter or new SPD(s).</p> <p>Consider high quality design as districts start preparing local design codes.</p>			
<p>4. To prepare Joint Strategic Plans (JSPs) for the North-East-Central and South-West areas of the county</p>	<p>NEC visioning consultation in early 2025.</p>	<p>Ongoing spatial studies and other evidence base work for both JSPs.</p> <p>SW JSP working towards Regulation 18 issues and options consultation in 2026.</p> <p>Future of strategic planning to be debated as part of devolution agenda.</p>		

Appendix 5: Performance Indicators

HGB Success Measure	Proposed Indicators
Number of homes built	Not formally part of the Right Homes, Right Places housing mission, but important to monitor against NPPF standard method and housing delivery test.
Number of social/affordable homes built	No indicator selected, but an upward trend would imply success. Current performance is 30% of gross homes built in 23/24. Most Local Plans have policies for 40% affordable housing on sites of 10+ homes or 0.5+ ha.
Number of specialist homes built	No indicator selected, but an upward trend would imply success. HCC need to build 820 supported living units by 2030.
Temporary accommodation numbers, homelessness numbers and spend	No indicator selected, but a downward trend and reducing in spending would imply success.
List of pipeline sites	Existence of up-to-date and well maintained list.
Progress of pipeline sites through planning system (i.e. allocation, masterplan, permission) and ultimately number of homes built	Number of homes built on sites included on list of pipeline sites.
Amount of Government / Homes England / OPE funding secured	No indicator selected, but desirable for Herts to secure as much funding as possible.
Number/percentage of new homes that exceed building regulation sustainability standards	No indicator selected but desirable for it to be as high as possible. Data to be collected from Herts Building Control Ltd and St Albans/Watford shared service.
Number of existing homes retrofitted to decent homes and higher sustainability standards	No indicator selected, but desirable for it to be as high as possible. Data to be collected from Herts Building Control Ltd and St Albans/Watford shared service. Data to be collected from housing associations.

Progression of North-East-Central JSP to formal stages and preparation of associated evidence	Success of reaching key stages. Completion of spatial study. Regulation 18 issues and options. Regulation 19 preferred options. Submission. Public examination. Adoption.
Progression of South-West JSP to formal stages and preparation of associated evidence	Success of reaching key stages. Completion of spatial study. Regulation 18 issues and options. Regulation 19 preferred options. Submission. Public examination. Adoption.
Successful use of Government, council and developer funding to deliver infrastructure	Target is 100% successful spending of funding secured from Government, Homes England and other sources.

Appendix 6: Emerging National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Finalised version was published in December 2024 [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK](#).

English Devolution White Paper

Finalised version was published in December 2024 [English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK](#).

New Towns Taskforce

Tasked by Government to identify new town opportunities. Expected to report back in 2025.

Right to Buy & Receipts

Government have consulted on right to buy reforms, including the ability for councils to retain 100% of sale receipts and combine with other funding such as S106, reduced discounts to purchase social properties and an aspiration of like-for-like replacement of the same type and in the same area.

Homes England

Homes England have identified their expectations and priorities as: accelerate development and delivery; support the New Homes Accelerator; support new towns and other major schemes; maximise the number of social rent homes; reform and diversify the housing market; and achieve best value for money for the taxpayer.

Appendix 7: Right Homes, Right Places Housing Mission Structure

