

Tenancy Strategy 2026-2031



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Foreword

Stevenage has a long and proud history of providing social and affordable housing for Stevenage people. As the UK's first New Town, we recognise the important role that secure, well-managed homes play in helping people build good lives in supporting and strong communities.

Housing is about more than having a roof over our head. A settled home gives us the security we need to work, learn, care for those close to us and play an active part in our community. Managing our social housing fairly and effectively benefits not only the people who live in it, but Stevenage as a whole.

Demand for social housing continues to grow, while the number of homes available remains limited. At the same time, people's circumstances change throughout their lives and expectations of landlords continue to evolve. These challenges make it more important than ever that social housing is managed fairly, openly and in a way that makes the best use of the homes available.

This Tenancy Strategy sets out Stevenage Borough Council's approach to the management of

social and affordable housing tenancies across the Borough, working in partnership with Registered Providers. It provides a framework for the principles that should guide tenancy policies and decisions, while recognising the different roles and responsibilities of each housing provider.

The strategy supports a consistent approach to tenancy management, helping to ensure that homes are allocated fairly, tenancies are managed responsibly, and people receive the right support if their housing needs change. It also reflects our commitment to making the best use of our housing stock so that it continues to meet the needs of the people who rely on it.

By working with our housing partners, we will continue to ensure that social housing in Stevenage is managed fairly, used effectively and focused on meeting the needs of the people it is there to serve.



**Loraine
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Cabinet
Member -
Housing

Introduction

The [Localism Act 2011](#) requires local authorities, including Stevenage Borough Council, to develop a Tenancy Strategy in consultation with social housing providers within the borough. This strategy outlines the expectations for social landlords and offers guidance on the Council's preferred approach to tenancy types, tenure arrangements, and affordability standards.

This Tenancy Strategy for Stevenage Borough Council responds to that statutory duty, providing a clear framework for how social and [affordable housing](#) tenancies should be allocated, managed, and reviewed across the borough. It seeks to ensure that the use of tenancies contributes to sustainable communities, makes best use of limited housing stock, and supports residents through changing personal and economic circumstances.

For the purposes of this document, the term "tenants" refers to all persons occupying affordable housing, including those who pay both social and [affordable rents](#). "Affordable housing for rent" encompasses all housing offered at affordable and [social rent](#) levels.

As well as being a stock holding Local Authority, the Council works with other [Registered Providers](#); these are organisations such as housing associations that are registered with the [Regulator of Social Housing](#) to provide social and affordable housing.

A tenancy strategy is essential for ensuring that housing stock is managed efficiently by all housing providers including Registered Housing Providers and aligns with the Regulator for Social Housing's Tenancy Standard.

Stevenage faces a number of housing challenges, including growing demand for housing, affordability pressures, and the need to provide homes that are suitable for an increasingly diverse and evolving population. This strategy sets out our expectations for the type and length of tenancies granted, the circumstances under which tenancies may be ended or not renewed, and how we will support vulnerable households throughout their housing journey.

The goal of this strategy is to provide consistency, transparency, and fairness in how tenancies are managed, while allowing Registered Providers the flexibility to operate in a way that responds to the unique needs of Stevenage's residents.

Renters' Rights Act 2025

The [Renters' Rights Act 2025](#) received Royal Assent on October 27, 2025, and its provisions came into effect on 1st May 2026.

The Act has abolished fixed term [assured tenancies](#) and [assured shorthold tenancies](#) and has ended the [Section 21](#) 'no fault' eviction notice on private tenancies. The Act has also imposed obligations on landlords and others in relation to rented homes, [temporary](#) and [supported](#) accommodation. This strategy has been developed having consideration to this new act and as additional guidance is published it will review as required.

Strategic Aims

The Council's Corporate Plan 2024/2027, '*Making Stevenage Even Better*', clearly prioritises the provision of *More Social, Affordable, and Good Quality Homes*. This Tenancy Strategy turns that priority into practical choices about how we let, manage and sustain tenancies. It directly aligns with the two sub-priorities under this theme: Building New & Sustainable Homes and Maintaining Good Quality Homes.

These outcomes directly align with the Corporate Plan's theme and sub-priorities.

- Building New & Sustainable Homes is primarily advanced by increasing access to affordable homes and supporting moves that match the evolving needs of residents.
- Maintaining Good Quality Homes is advanced through continuous improvements to the quality, safety, and management of homes, as well as by involving customers in shaping services.
- Securing Funding is fundamental to both sub-priorities, enabling the long-term investment required to deliver and sustain housing provision in Stevenage.

This Tenancy Strategy operates within the wider framework of the Council's key housing documents, including the Adopted Local Plan, Corporate Plan, HRA Business Plan, HRA Asset Management Strategy, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, and the [Allocations Policy](#). Progress towards these strategic aims will be monitored through the Council's corporate performance arrangements to ensure we are on track to deliver the goals set out in the Corporate Plan.



Local Context

Stevenage is a vibrant town in Hertfordshire, known for its strong sense of community and high quality of life. According to the 2025 Resident Survey, 83% of those surveyed reported being 'satisfied with Stevenage as a place to live'. This reflects the town's excellent local amenities, well-established infrastructure, and ongoing efforts to improve the community's well-being.

Whilst house prices are the lowest in Hertfordshire these, in common with rents in the private sector, they continue to rise beyond the reach of many residents. Stevenage experiences significant levels of housing need and demand is high for housing of all tenures. As of the latest data, there are over 1,500 households on the Council's [Housing Register](#), and the demand for homes continues to outstrip supply.

As of April 2026, of the 1,552 households on the Register 1,541 of these are in [Reasonable Preference](#) groups, this means that they are households that the Council has a duty to assist as they are in greatest need. This housing need can be met through a number of ways including the provision of new housing by either the Council or our partner landlords.

On average, about 500 homes are available for letting each year from Registered Providers, including the Council, and approximately 75% of these being [general needs housing](#) and the remainder being [supported housing](#).

Stevenage Borough Council works with a number of Registered Providers to meet the housing needs of the borough's residents. These partnerships are key in providing both social and affordable housing options, ensuring that housing is available to those who need it most.

The main Registered Providers working with Stevenage Borough Council include:

- The Guinness Partnership
- Genesis Housing Association
- Sovereign Network Group
- Hastoe
- Peabody
- Clarion
- First Garden City Homes
- Origin
- Metropolitan Thames Valley
- SettleParadigm

These organisations work alongside the Council to deliver a range of affordable homes, including general needs housing, supported housing, and homes for those with specific needs, helping to ensure that housing supply keeps pace with demand.

Stevenage has one of the highest proportions of social housing in the country, reflecting the Council's long-standing commitment to affordable housing provision. There are currently over 9,000 social housing units managed by the Council and other Registered Providers working in the borough.

Housing Needs in Stevenage as of April 2026:

- Total households on the housing register: 1,552
- Households in reasonable preference: 1541
- Total lettings in General Needs housing: 275
- Total lettings in Supported Housing: 92
- Total lettings through nomination agreements: 92
- Total lettings across all categories: 459

This Tenancy Strategy has been developed in response to the growing housing need within Stevenage. Statistical information used to inform this Tenancy Strategy is given throughout the text, and in more detail in the Appendix below. Further details are also available in the Combined Strategic Housing Market Assessment report published in partnership with North Herts published in November 2023.

Affordability and Suitability of Housing

Affordability and suitability are core principles in the provision and management of affordable housing, particularly within the context of a Tenancy Strategy.

Affordability ensures that households can access and maintain housing without experiencing financial hardship or compromising other essential needs such as food, utilities, healthcare, and education. When housing costs are proportionate to income, tenants are more likely to sustain their tenancies. Which in turn, reduces the risk of arrears, evictions, and homelessness. This stability of maintaining a tenancy not only benefits individual households but also supports broader community wellbeing and reduces pressure on public services.

Based on the Office of National Statistics Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), the Median gross salary for full-time employees living in Stevenage is around £38,900. The average price for a 1-bedroom social tenancy property in Stevenage is £773.51, rising to £1,247.40 for a 3-bed family home.

The average monthly private sector rent for a 1 bed property is £967.00, rising to £1,466.00 for a 3-bed property.

The Council's priority is to ensure affordable housing is as accessible as possible to local people. While the Council cannot directly set rent levels, it expects Registered Providers and private landlords to consider affordability when setting rents and service charges.

At the same time the Council understands that the cost of running a home may be relevant when assessing affordability, and that higher rents may be



partly offset by high levels of energy efficiency providing good levels of affordable warmth.

The impact of [welfare reform](#) on housing affordability has been significant. As a result, the Council will continue to review and improve its affordability data to ensure it reflects the changing economic landscape.

Stevenage Borough Council is actively managing and monitoring rent levels along with other associated factors to keep housing affordable within the borough.

Suitability, on the other hand, ensures that housing meets the specific needs of tenants in terms of size, accessibility, location, and condition. A suitable home is vital for tenants' physical and mental health, educational attainment, and employment opportunities. For instance, overcrowded or poorly maintained housing can exacerbate health issues and hinder children's development.



Image: Stantec

By prioritising suitability in housing supply and management, our Tenancy Strategy will promote long-term sustainability, tenant satisfaction, and community cohesion. Together, affordability and suitability form the foundation of a responsive and equitable housing system that supports diverse needs and fosters resilience.

The Council acknowledges that to meet the challenges of housing demand and supply, it must work closely with Registered Providers who operate within the borough. This partnership is crucial for achieving a balance between increasing the housing supply and ensuring that rented homes remain both affordable and suitable for those who need assistance in meeting their housing needs.

Housing Need and Partnership Approach

An independent housing needs assessment for Stevenage projects that an additional 110 households will require affordable housing annually from 2022–2031. This reflects the rising demand from households unable to access market rent housing, highlighting the Council's priority to increase the supply of affordable housing.

The Council plays a central role in identifying housing needs, allocating land, and shaping developments through planning policies and partnerships. Working closely with Registered Providers, the Council ensures new homes align with local priorities and community needs, particularly through Homes England grant funding, which helps make affordable developments financially viable.

Developers also contribute significantly, particularly through planning obligations such as [Section 106 agreements](#), ensuring that affordable housing requirements are met in new developments. However, the Council remains focused on maintaining rent levels to ensure these homes stay genuinely affordable.

Between 2019 and March 2024, over 550 new homes were completed in Stevenage, exceeding the target of 500 by 2025, in partnership with developers and Registered Providers.

The Council and providers work together through [nominations agreements](#) to ensure suitable tenants are allocated to affordable homes. Under these agreements:

- Registered Providers are required to consider applicants nominated by the Council, ensuring compliance with their rules, and must notify the Council of any changes to these rules.
- Nominations are assessed based on factors such as household size, health, ability to meet rental commitments, and willingness to live in the area.
- If an applicant is rejected, the provider must inform the Council, providing reasons for rejection (excluding discriminatory grounds such as race, gender, or disability).
- Providers must notify the Council within five working days of vacancies, with the Council then providing a list of suitable nominees. If insufficient nominations are made, the provider can offer the property to someone else after three attempts at advertising.
- The Council has the right to provide nominations for both initial lettings and relets, with specific timelines for submission and actions in case of vacancies or rejections.

Not all properties are covered by nominations agreements, Registered Providers will retain some properties for allocation and management of current tenants, for example management moves or specialist housing schemes. In these cases, the Council works with providers to maintain fairness, and ensure allocations

continue to support local needs and the objectives of the Tenancy Strategy.

Operational Expectations of Registered Providers

This Tenancy Strategy sets out the Council's position as a Strategic Housing Authority, it expects and requires that all registered providers operating within the Borough to develop their own Tenancy Policy, this policy should align with the Localism Act 2011 and the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy Standard have regard to the following principles when developing and applying their tenancy policies:

1. Types of Tenancy

- Clearly set out the types of tenancy to be offered and ensure they are appropriate for the household's needs and the purpose of the accommodation.

2. Circumstances for Granting Tenancies

- Explain when different tenancy types will be used, including any probationary arrangements (e.g., starter tenancies) and how these support tenancy sustainment and community stability.

3. Length of Tenancy

- The policy should clearly set out terms that will be used, when these will be used and details of how they will promote security and improve sustainability.

4. Renewal and non-renewal

- Set out clear criteria for reviewing and renewing tenancies at the end of the term, including how decisions will be communicated and how vulnerable households will be supported.

5. Affordability and Suitability

- Ensure rent levels comply with the [Rent Standard](#) and take account of local incomes and affordability. Properties should meet household needs in terms of size, accessibility, and condition.

6. Tenancy Sustainment

- Provide advice and support to help tenants maintain their tenancy, including early intervention for arrears, budgeting support, and referrals to specialist services.

7. Under-Occupation and Best Use of Stock

- Work with the Council to tackle [under-occupation](#) and [overcrowding](#), offering [downsizing](#) incentives and [mutual exchange](#) options where appropriate.

8. Compliance and Monitoring

- Share data on lettings, tenancy types, renewals, and evictions to support strategic monitoring and ensure transparency.

Type and Length of Tenancy

A Tenancy Agreement is an important document; it is a legal contract between the landlord and tenant. The agreement gives certain rights to both parties, including the tenant's right to occupy the accommodation and the landlord's right to receive rent for letting the property.

A clear and fair tenancy agreement ensures that both parties understand their obligations, helping to prevent disputes and fostering stable living arrangements for tenants. All agreements provided must meet the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards including the requirements of the Tenancy Standard, with all providers completing the [CORE](#) Statistical returns.

Secure Tenancy

This is a long-term tenancy granted usually by the Council that provides tenants with strong rights and protections, including the right to remain in their home indefinitely as long as they comply with the tenancy conditions.

The Council's preference is for secure tenancies (lifetime), as they promote settled lifestyles, achieve and maintain sustainable communities. These types of tenancies follow an introductory tenancy and give tenants' additional rights in some circumstances and can include:

- The right to mutual exchange with other tenants, for relevant properties.
- The right to succession.
Whilst this doesn't guarantee that, for example, a spouse would succeed the property should the tenant die, it does give reassurance that the spouse will have a tenancy.
- Tenants may have a joint tenancy.

These rights enhance tenants' security and contribute to fostering stable, cohesive communities where persons can thrive.

A secure tenancy can be demoted to a tenancy with fewer rights and less security in the event of [anti-social behaviour](#) or breaches of tenancy conditions. In other cases, usually in the case of rent arrears the court may also decide to "suspend" an eviction, but the tenant is required to adhere to specific conditions enabling them to reside in the property. If they breach these conditions the landlord can apply to the courts for a warrant to evict.

The Council believes that tenants should be given an opportunity to maintain their tenancies through adherence to tenancy conditions. However, where behaviour is disruptive or rent arrears are not addressed, action may be necessary to ensure fairness to other tenants.

Introductory Tenancy

An Introductory Tenancy is usually a 12-month probationary tenancy granted to new tenants, normally for those in Council owned properties. If the conditions of the tenancy are met during this period, it will typically convert to a secure tenancy. The introductory tenancy can be extended for a further six months if the tenant fails to comply with the terms of the agreement during the initial 12-month period.

Introductory tenancies allow the Council to assess the suitability of tenants for long-term housing while ensuring that those new to the system are given the chance to demonstrate their ability to meet the terms of their tenancy.

Non-Secure Tenancy

A Non-Secure Tenancy is generally granted in cases where temporary accommodation is provided as part of the Council's duties under the Housing Act 1996, for example, when someone applies for Council housing due to homelessness.

A non-secure tenancy does not offer the same rights as a secure tenancy. For example:

- The tenant cannot mutually exchange as a non-secure tenant.
- The tenancy can be ended after 4 weeks following the issue of a valid notice to quit the accommodation.

Non-secure tenancies are used for temporary housing solutions, often in emergency or transitional circumstances. The lack of long-term rights is in line with the temporary nature of the accommodation and the need to prioritise those in longer-term need.

Licences Used for Homeless Temporary Accommodation

Licence Agreements are for emergency and temporary placements where the Council provides accommodation under homelessness duties (Housing Act 1996, Part VII).

These agreements do not grant exclusive possession, making it easier for the Council to move households between rooms or properties as needed and are typically used in hostels or other accommodation with shared facilities.

Licences can usually be ended with short notice (often 7–28 days), depending on the agreement terms and statutory requirements.

Assured Shorthold Tenancy

An Assured Shorthold Tenancy is a type of tenancy typically granted by Registered Providers or private landlords. It is a 6 to 12-month probationary tenancy offered by housing associations. After the allocated months, the tenancy should transition to an Assured Tenancy, providing tenants with more long-term security.

Assured shorthold tenancies help Registered Providers assess the suitability of tenants while giving them the opportunity to establish long-term tenancies after a successful probation period, contributing to tenant stability.

With the enactment and implementation of the Renters Rights Act on 1st May 2026, Assured/Assured Shorthold tenancies have become Assured Periodic tenancies rolling from month to month, abolishing the Section 21 notice to evict and giving tenants more security. The change aligns with national housing reforms aimed at enhancing tenant protection and ensuring greater housing stability, which the Council supports in fostering long-term tenancies and community sustainability.

Agreements for Sheltered and Supported Housing

Due to the nature of this type of accommodation the agreements will vary to reflect the individual requirements of the accommodation and the residents but will generally be expected to adopt the following formats.

- **Secure Tenancy:** For sheltered housing owned by the Council, offering long-term security and rights.
- **Assured Tenancy:** For sheltered housing managed by Registered Providers, providing similar security.
- **Licence Agreements:** Used in supported housing where accommodation is linked to care or support services and may involve shared facilities. Licences allow providers to manage placements flexibly.
- **Short-Term Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST):** Sometimes used in transitional supported housing where the intention is to move residents on to general needs housing.
- **Specialist Agreements:** For schemes regulated under the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023, agreements may include enhanced terms linked to care plans and compliance with local licensing standards.



Image: Archant: Archer Road, Stevenage

Tenancy Management & Sustainment

Stevenage Borough Council's Tenancy Support Service offers one-to-one support through a dedicated Tenancy Advisor, aimed at helping tenants sustain their tenancies and prevent eviction. Services provided include:

- Budgeting assistance
- Discretionary housing payments support
- Bill management
- Access to welfare benefits
- General life skills support

These efforts are designed to ensure that tenants are equipped to maintain stable tenancies, avoiding rent arrears and potential eviction. Ensuring that tenants have access to the right support services is critical for reducing tenancy breakdowns and preventing homelessness.

They also conduct tenancy visits as part of an audit programme; visiting all Council homes to check property conditions, identify safeguarding concerns, spot early risks of tenancy issues (including potential fraud), and naturally build rapport between tenants and housing officers.

Proactive tenancy visits help identify and address issues early, ensuring that tenants have the support they need and that properties are properly maintained. This approach supports long-term tenancy sustainability. Any cases of Suspected fraud are referred to the Shared Anti-Fraud Service (SAFS) to investigate and prevent fraudulent activities that could undermine the housing system.

The Council offers targeted support for specific groups who may need additional help, including:

- **Care Leavers:** Under the Hertfordshire Joint Housing Protocol, care leavers are supported through their introductory tenancy, with continued support through the Tenancy Sustainment Service if required.
- **Moving on from Supported Living:** Persons transitioning from supported living arrangements receive tenancy sustainment support for one year, with longer-term assistance available if needed.
- **Hoarding Support:** Specialist officers assist tenants with hoarding concerns, helping with decluttering, improving safety, and collaborating with fire services and other agencies to enhance wellbeing.
- **Domestic Abuse:** Specialist officers provide tailored support, including housing and tenancy advice, home security measures, debt/benefits advice, legal referrals, emotional support, and drop-in sessions.
- **Supporting the Armed Forces Community Covenant:** We are proud to support the Armed Forces Community Covenant. This means we are committed to

making sure that people who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly. When it comes to housing, we understand that members of the Armed Forces can face unique challenges, such as moving frequently, being away from home, or needing support when leaving the service. As part of our Tenancy Strategy, we will:

- Make sure that veterans and serving personnel are not put at a disadvantage when applying for social housing.
- Give priority to former members of the Armed Forces who have urgent housing needs under our Allocations Scheme.
- Work with registered providers to support the Covenant.
- Help Armed Forces individuals and families to sustain their tenancies, especially during times of transition or hardship by offering support and or signposting them for help to partner agencies.
- Our goal is to ensure that no one is unfairly treated because of their service, and that the Armed Forces community can access secure, suitable, and long-term housing in Stevenage.

Providing tailored support ensures that vulnerable groups are equipped to manage their tenancies and overcome specific challenges, improving housing stability and preventing tenancy breakdown.

The Council expects Registered Providers to proactively manage tenancies to ensure long-term sustainability and support residents in maintaining their homes. This includes providing timely advice and early intervention for tenants facing financial, social, or health challenges, addressing rent arrears, tenancy breaches, and anti-social behaviour promptly and fairly, and promoting tenancy sustainment through tailored support and community engagement. Registered Providers are also expected to work collaboratively with the Council and partner agencies, participate in monitoring and reporting on tenancy outcomes, and ensure compliance with the Tenancy Strategy and [local lettings plans](#). Through these measures, the Council aims to maximise tenancy stability, prevent homelessness, and foster safe, resilient communities.

Best Use of Stock

Lettable Standards

The Council's Lettable Standard and Voids Management Policy focuses on turning around empty homes swiftly, maintaining quality, reducing income loss, and ensuring value for money. It sets clear standards for outgoing tenants, contractors, and new occupants, and tracks performance and tenant satisfaction. Efficient [void](#) management reduces the time properties remain vacant, ensuring that homes are re-let quickly and that rental income is maximized. It also ensures homes are maintained to a high standard before being re-occupied.

Registered Providers are expected to maintain properties to a lettable standard, ensuring homes are safe, clean, and in good repair before they are offered to new tenants. This helps to improve tenant satisfaction, reduce void times, and make efficient use of housing stock.

Downsizing

As of April 2025, approximately 660,000 working-age social housing tenants in England are subject to the under-occupation charge, which reduces benefits by 14% for one spare bedroom or 25% for two or more. While it is unclear how many social rented homes in Stevenage are currently under-occupied, the Council will support tenants who wish to downsize.

The Council seeks to work more closely with Registered Providers (RPs) in the town to make better use of existing housing stock and support tenants who are affected by the under-occupation charge.

Downsizing helps to address under-occupation in the social housing stock, maximising the use of available properties and providing tenants with homes better suited to their needs, while also helping to reduce the impact of the under-occupation charge.

We expect that our Registered Partners also should actively encourage and support tenants who are under-occupying larger homes to move to smaller, more suitable properties. This helps free up larger homes for families in need and ensures stock is used effectively to meet demand.

Overcrowding

The Council understands that overcrowding can have significant impacts on health, wellbeing, and community stability, so we are committed to identifying households at risk and supporting moves to more suitable accommodation. We will actively manage and match available properties to household needs, optimising the allocation of larger homes. Improving the use of our existing stock, we aim to reduce pressure on temporary accommodation, enhance

housing outcomes for residents, and ensure that homes are allocated efficiently and fairly.

The expectation is that our Registered Providers prioritise re-housing and property moves for households experiencing overcrowding, ensuring that homes are allocated fairly, based on household size and need.

Aids and Adaptations

The Council supports tenants to move into homes that already meet their accessibility needs, offering a faster and more cost-effective solution. In addition, Independent Living and Flexi-care housing schemes are available for further support with suitable living arrangements.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on landlords to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, although the Act expressly states that this does not require the Council to remove or alter the physical features of a building, where possible, the Council prioritises tenant independence by installing aids and adaptations in properties. Adapted properties are then strategically let to households whose needs they meet, optimising the use of housing stock and funding.

This work is carried out in close collaboration with Adult Care, Children's Services, and the NHS, ensuring a joined-up, effective approach.

Collaborative working ensures that tenants receive the most appropriate support, with resources and services being used effectively across agencies.

We expect that our Registered Providers will also ensure that properties are adapted appropriately to meet the needs of tenants with disabilities or mobility issues.

Mutual Exchange

Tenants can apply to exchange homes with other Council tenants, or even tenants of other Registered Providers, subject to landlord permission. This allows occupants to move voluntarily to more suitable properties without creating additional vacancies.

Mutual exchanges provide tenants with greater flexibility in choosing homes that suit their needs, while also freeing up homes for those in greater need, without placing additional pressure on the housing waiting list.

We expect Registered Providers to facilitate mutual exchanges between tenants as a way to match households to properties that better suit their needs. Promoting this approach increases tenant choice, helps address overcrowding or under-occupation, and improves overall stock utilisation

Reviews and Appeals

Stevenage Borough Council is committed to ensuring that all housing allocation and letting decisions are fair, transparent, and consistent with the Council's Housing Allocations Policy. Applicants have the right to request a review or appeal if they believe a decision has been made incorrectly or unfairly.

Reviews may be requested in relation to decisions about eligibility, qualification for the Housing Register, priority banding, medical assessments, or property offers. Requests must normally be made within 21 days of the decision.

Applicants are notified of the outcome in writing, with clear reasons provided. This process helps maintain fairness, transparency, and public confidence in the Council's approach to social housing lettings.



Image: Ripon Road, Stevenage

Consultation

Stevenage Borough Council has worked closely with its partner Registered Providers to ensure that the allocation and management of tenancies is both fair and transparent.

As part of the development of this Tenancy Strategy, the Council undertook a four-week consultations with local residents and Registered Providers to review and refine the proposed approach, ensuring it reflects local housing needs and priorities.

The consultations considered housing allocation, alongside best practice in tenancy management, with a focus on sustaining tenancies and addressing issues such as rent arrears, under-occupation and anti-social behaviour. Resident feedback highlighted the need for more affordable and accessible housing, improved access to suitable homes, effective tenancy support, responsive repairs, financial and welfare advice, and clear communication throughout the allocation process. Respondents also supported stronger partnership working between the Council and Registered Providers to deliver more joined-up housing services. Registered Providers agreed that the draft strategy reflects current housing challenges and supports an effective approach to tenancy sustainment and partnership working.

The outcome of the consultation is a jointly agreed framework for tenancy allocation, underpinned by fairness, transparency and inclusivity. The framework ensures that tenants are provided with clear information on how decisions are made, and that the process remains responsive to changes in local need. This collaborative approach enhances the tenant experience and ensures that available social housing is used effectively.

An important aspect of this partnership is that the Council retains 75% of allocation rights for any Registered Providers it collaborates with on subsequent lettings. This ensures that properties, whether managed directly by the Council or through a housing association, are allocated in accordance with local priorities and needs. The remaining 25% of subsequent lettings are retained by Registered Providers for management purposes, such as management moves or specialist housing schemes.

By retaining the majority of allocation rights, the Council can better manage housing demand, target resources effectively and ensure that those in greatest need have access to available homes. This also strengthens partnership working and supports a joined-up approach to tenancy management across the borough.

The strategy was considered by Members of the Community Select Committee, it was suggested strengthening references to tenant engagement within the strategy and that officers seek reassurance regarding support for tenants, improvements to the management of void properties and measures to encourage downsizing. Officers confirmed that tenancy audits, revised downsizing incentives and continued partnership working with registered providers formed part of the Council's approach.

Monitoring and Review

The Council will continue to monitor the impact of affordable rents, national and local policies on the housing market, both internally and through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. We will actively encourage the input of providers into this process, to ensure that sufficient and appropriate information is available. This strategy will be reviewed periodically in light of this market information. As standard, the strategy will be reviewed every five years, but an earlier review will be undertaken to reflect the implications of the Renters (Rights) Act.

Effective monitoring and review are central to ensuring that partner Registered Providers are delivering in line with the Council's Tenancy Strategy. The Council will engage regularly with Registered Providers to ensure tenancies are being awarded appropriately and that nominations are being made in accordance with agreed arrangements. As part of this engagement, Registered Providers will be asked to provide reports detailing their local lettings activity, including total lettings, nominations made to the Council, tenancy types, issues identified through inspections, and compliance with local lettings plans. This approach will allow the Council to assess performance beyond rent policies and tenancy impacts, ensuring transparency, accountability, and that the Council's nomination rights are effectively exercised.

Equalities and Data Protection

Under the Equality Act (2010) the Council has a legal duty to fulfil the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Through this duty and in the application of this strategy, the Council will carry out its functions in a way that:

- a. Removes discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is unlawful under the Equality Act (2010)
- b. Promotes equal opportunities between people who have a protected characteristic(s) and those who don't
- c. Encourages good relations between people who have a protected characteristic(s) and those who don't

Further information on the Council's fulfilment of the Equality Act (2010) is set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy and Reasonable Adjustment Policy.

The Council regards respect for the privacy of individuals and the lawful and careful treatment of personal information as very important to delivery of services.

The Council will ensure that it treats personal information lawfully and proportionately as set out in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act (2018). For further information on the Council's approach to handling information please see [Data Protection Act \(stevenage.gov.uk\)](https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/data-protection-act).

Glossary

Term	Suggested glossary definition
Affordable Housing	Housing provided to households whose needs are not adequately met by the open market. This includes social rent and affordable rent housing.
Affordable Rent	A rent charged by Registered Providers that is subject to national rules and is generally set at a level below the relevant market rent.
Allocations Policy	The Council's policy setting out how social housing is allocated, including who qualifies, how priority is determined and how properties are offered.
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	Behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm, distress or nuisance to other people.
Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST)	A type of tenancy traditionally used in the private rented sector that provided limited security of tenure.
Assured Tenancy	A tenancy that provides tenants with long-term security of tenure and is commonly used by Registered Providers.
CORE	The national system used to collect information about social housing lettings and sales in England.
Downsizing	Moving from a larger social housing property to a smaller home that better meets the household's needs.
General Needs Housing	Social housing that is not specifically designed or allocated for a particular support or specialist housing need.
Housing Register	The Council's register of households applying for social housing.
Local Lettings Plan	An agreement that sets out specific allocation arrangements for a particular area, development or group of properties.
Localism Act 2011	Legislation that introduced requirements for local authorities to develop a Tenancy Strategy setting out their approach to social housing tenancies.
Mutual Exchange	An arrangement allowing tenants to exchange their homes with another social housing tenant, subject to the relevant landlord's approval.

Term	Suggested glossary definition
Nomination / Nominations Agreement	An arrangement under which the Council puts forward applicants for properties owned or managed by Registered Providers.
Overcrowding	A situation where a household does not have sufficient space or bedrooms for the number and needs of the people living in the property.
Reasonable Preference	The priority that must be given under housing legislation to certain groups of people in housing need when councils develop their allocation schemes.
Registered Provider (RP)	An organisation registered with the Regulator of Social Housing to provide social housing, including housing associations and local authorities.
Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)	The organisation responsible for regulating registered providers of social housing in England and setting regulatory standards.
Rent Standard	Regulatory requirements governing how Registered Providers set rents for social housing.
Renters' Rights Act 2025	Legislation introducing changes to the private rented sector, including changes to tenancy arrangements and security of tenure.
Section 106 Agreement	A legal agreement associated with a planning permission that can require developers to provide affordable housing and/or make other contributions to address the impact of development.
Section 21 Notice	A legal notice historically used by landlords to end an Assured Shorthold Tenancy without giving a specific reason.
Social Rent	Rent charged by social landlords in accordance with the Government's rent-setting framework for social housing.
Supported Housing	Housing that provides accommodation alongside support, supervision or care to help residents live independently or meet particular needs.
Temporary Accommodation	Accommodation provided to households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness while a longer-term housing solution is being considered.
Under-Occupation	Where a household occupies a property that has more bedrooms than it needs according to the relevant bedroom requirements.
Void / Void Property	A property that is empty between tenancies and is being prepared for re-letting.
Welfare Reform	Changes to the benefits system introduced by Government which can affect household income and housing affordability.

Appendix A

2025/2026

Social Housing Data

Bedrooms	Average Monthly Rate
Shared accommodation (room)	£435.41
1-bed self-contained	£773.51
2-bed self-contained	£973.24
3-bed self-contained	£1,247.40
4-5 bed self-contained	£1,597.50

Private Housing Data

Bedrooms	Average Monthly Rate
Shared accommodation (room)	£640–£775
1-bed self-contained	£950 – £1,250
2-bed self-contained	£1,400 – £1,600
3-bed self-contained	up to £1,785
4-5 bed self-contained	£2,338

Local Housing Allowance Data

Bedrooms	Average Weekly Rate
Shared accommodation (room)	£100.38
1-bed self-contained	£178.36
2-bed self-contained	£224.38
3-bed self-contained	£287.67
4-5 bed self-contained	£368.22

Number of applications on the Housing Register: 1,552

1,541 of these applications are in Reasonable Preference groups.

The main **reasonable preference groups** are:

- People who are homeless or owed a homelessness duty.
- People occupying insanitary, overcrowded, or otherwise unsatisfactory housing.
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including disability-related needs.
- People who need to move to avoid hardship to themselves or others (for example, to access employment, education, or support networks).
- People occupying accommodation secured under homelessness legislation.

Social Housing Stock for Stevenage Borough Council

Studio Provisions	297
1 Bed Provisions	1219
2 Bed Provisions	2019
3 Bed Provisions	2948
4 Bed Provisions	350
Homeless/Emergency Provisions	147
Sheltered Accommodation Provisions	937
Total:	7,917

Property Size Needs

	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3
1 Bedroom	75	156	436
2 Bedroom	27	124	255
3 Bedroom	35	72	210
4 Bedroom	18	38	66
5+ Bedroom	8	28	4

This does not include other Stevenage Social Housing Providers

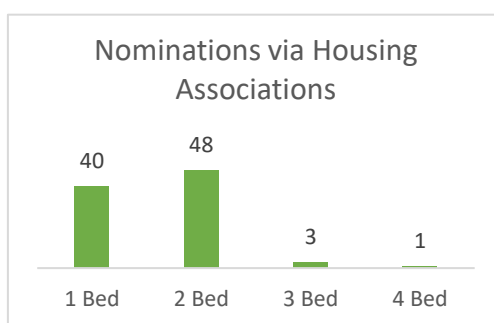
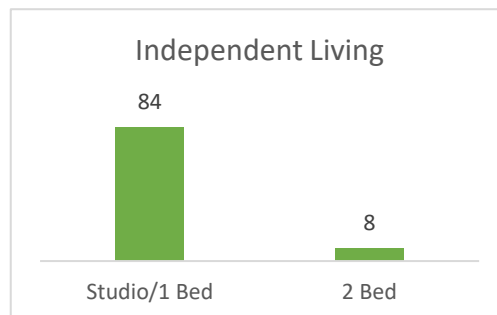
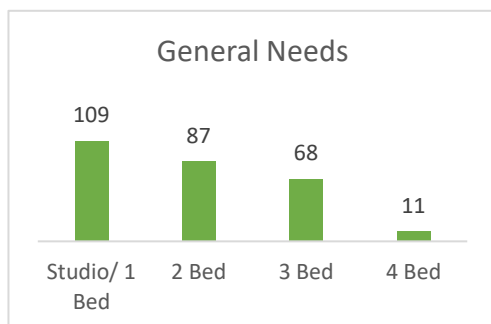
Stevenage Lettings Data

During 2025/2026 there were 459 Lettings which are broken down as follows:

General Needs: 275

Independent Living: 92

Nominations via Housing Associations: 92



National turnover for Social Housing

Statistics from the [English Housing Survey](#) for 2023/24 show the national turnover rate for social housing in England was roughly 4.2% for Local Authority properties. Average length of residence for social renters was 11.7 years.

Length of Tenancy	% of Social Renters
10+ years	61%
3-10 years	23%
Less than 3 years	15%