

Cheltenham Borough Council

Housing Asset Management Strategy

2026 – 2030

Forward

Foreword by Cabinet Member

Cheltenham Borough Council is proud of its role as a provider of high-quality, affordable council homes that support the wellbeing of our residents and the strength of our communities. Our homes are not just physical assets; they are places where people feel safe, secure, and able to build their lives.

This Housing Asset Management Strategy sets out a clear and robust framework for how we will care for, invest in, and improve our housing stock over the coming years. It reflects our commitment to keeping residents safe, meeting our regulatory obligations, and ensuring that every council home in Cheltenham is well-maintained, energy-efficient, and fit for the future.

The return of housing services to the council has created an important opportunity to strengthen accountability, improve integration with wider council priorities, and place tenants and leaseholders firmly at the heart of decision-making. This strategy draws on improved stock condition data, long-term financial planning through the Housing Revenue Account, and lessons learned from previous investment and decarbonisation programmes.

We are clear that safety and compliance come first. Alongside this, we will continue to invest in meeting and sustaining the Decent Homes Standard, tackling damp and mould, improving energy efficiency, and preparing our homes for a low-carbon future. We will take a planned, evidence-based approach to investment, ensuring that limited resources deliver the greatest benefit for current and future tenants.

This strategy also recognises the challenges we face, including rising costs, an ageing housing stock, and increasing expectations from residents and regulators. By setting out clear priorities, governance arrangements, and performance measures, it provides transparency to tenants, leaseholders, Members, and partners about how decisions will be made and how progress will be monitored.

I would like to thank our tenants, leaseholders, staff, fellow councillors and partners for their ongoing engagement and commitment. Together, we will ensure that Cheltenham's council homes continue to provide safe, decent, and sustainable housing that our residents can be proud of.

Councillor Flo Clucas

Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services

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Scope and Purpose

This strategy aims to ensure that the overall portfolio of CBC housing stock and each individual home is proactively managed to reflect the needs of the council and our tenants, now and into the future. The strategy reflects a multitude of requirements and desires, including:

- Political and corporate drivers
- Regulatory requirements
- Resident insights
- Financial performance and best practice

Primarily, this strategy focuses on answering the question: ‘what do we need to do?’. It provides a collation of the principal considerations and sets a transparent and realistic approach to ensure the council can meet its ambitions.

The key outputs from this strategy are the creation for five Strategic Priorities to help guide the council over the coming years and a complementary Action Plan that highlights specific tasks that will contribute towards these priorities.

This strategy applies to all housing assets owned by Cheltenham Borough Council and held within the Housing Revenue Account, including:

- General needs council homes
- Flats, maisonettes, and houses
- Independent living and older persons’ housing
- Communal areas, estates, and shared building elements
- Asset components and building services associated with council housing

The strategy covers both existing homes and how asset management principles will inform future investment, remodelling, regeneration, acquisition, and disposal decisions.

What the Strategy Does Not Cover

This strategy does not set out:

- Detailed annual work programmes or individual scheme designs
- Day-to-day repairs policies or operational procedures
- Service standards for housing management functions
- Policies relating exclusively to homelessness, allocations, or tenancy management

These matters are addressed through separate operational policies, service standards, and delivery plans that sit beneath this strategy.

Context

Legislation and regulation.

Cheltenham Borough Council operates within a dynamic regulatory environment that has evolved in recent years, driven by post-Grenfell building safety reform, consumer regulation in social housing, and the national net-zero agenda. Key legislation that is currently driving housing policy is highlighted below.

The Building Safety Act 2022, reinforced by fire safety legislation and detailed the “Big Eight” compliance duties—covering fire, building safety, gas, electrical, asbestos, water/legionella, lifts, and damp & mould—sets the requirement for a pro-active asset management service to work in conjunction with the repairs and Empty Homes teams.

In parallel, the *Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023*, which includes Awaab’s Law, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), and strengthened Consumer Standards, increases expectations for transparency, timeliness, and the overall quality of homes and landlord services.

Looking ahead, a new *Decent Homes Standard* will set an improved baseline standard for all homes owned by the council. This will include, amongst other things, more stringent requirements relating to the condition of the property and energy efficiency standards. Whilst the new standards will not be mandated until 2035, it will require an extensive programme of work over many years to ensure all CBC properties are compliant.

In addition, to align with the private rented sector, the *Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)* will make it unlawful to let properties with an energy rating below EPC E. The government has also confirmed a target for all social homes to reach EPC C or above by 1st April 2030.

Strategic Context

This strategy sits within a wider library of plans and policies that the council uses to define its purpose and delivery mechanisms. Those that are a specific to this Asset Management Strategy are highlighted below.

<i>Corporate objectives</i>	CBC Corporate Plan 2025 - 2028			
<i>Delivery parameters</i>	HRA 30 - year business plan, HRA annual budget, Mission Statement			
<i>Delivery strategies</i>	Asset Management Strategy 2026-2030	Property Compliance Strategy 2025-2028	Tenant and Leaseholder Voice Plan 2025-2028	Housing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
<i>Key activities</i>	Planned Maintenance Stock improvement New Build development Regeneration Stock acquisition and rationalisation	Statutory compliance	Tenant and leaseholder engagement	Outlines key priorities for delivering more affordable homes, making best use of existing accommodation, preventing and tackling homelessness and improving health and wellbeing of our communities

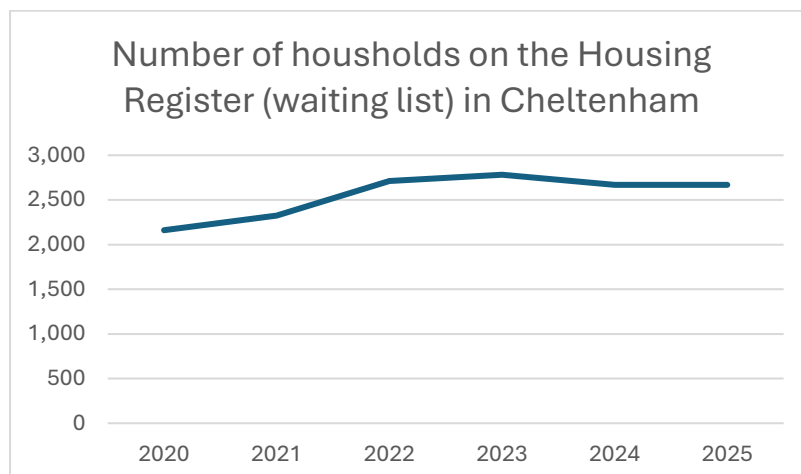
In developing this strategy, consideration has also been given to a variety of information sources from across the operations of the council, including feedback from residents, suppliers and council officers across a variety of departments and to external factors such as the Regulator of Social Housing consumer standards, legislation, climate change and Net Zero commitments and emerging new Decent Homes Standard.

Local Housing need

As with much of the country, Cheltenham Borough Council's Housing Register continues to trend upwards with more and more households being able to evidence 'housing need'. As such, it is imperative that the council plays its role – alongside Registered Provider partners – in efficiently managing its stock, increasing the number of Affordable homes and providing appropriate accommodation for all those in need.

The last Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) identified a need for 3,874 new affordable homes between 2021 and 2041 and there are over 2,500 households on the Housing Register. Households can wait many months and up to three years to be rehoused and the council is only able to accommodate those with the greatest need.

The graph below shows the change in the number of households on the Housing Register between 2020 and 2025. This shows that there has been an increase of just over 500 households (24%).



The Climate Emergency

Cheltenham Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and since then it has striven towards Net-Zero emission across all its activities, including the management of its housing stock. It is the ambition of the council to improve the energy efficiency of its housing stock and is already actively delivering a warm homes plan. Using the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund 59 properties were improved under wave 1 by utilising retrofit technologies such as external wall insulation, ground source heat pumps and high performing glazing. Under wave 2, 177 properties were improved (157 of which were externally funded). This included a mix of measures and property types, including some system-built properties with steel or concrete pre-cast frames (those built after the second world war to address the housing shortage).

Under wave 3 of the warm homes plan we aim to upgrade and improve the energy efficiency of 425 properties, through both fabric improvements and technological upgrades. Our works will target a 'fabric first' approach, and include measures such as:

- Upgrading loft insulation to 400mm. This is a significant number of properties on the project, as many are borderline EPC C/D and only require loft insulation to achieve a rating of C or above.
- Installation of wall insulation
 - External Wall Insulation
 - Cavity Wall insulation
 - Internal wall insulation where possible
- Sloped ceiling/Room-in-roof insulation
- Low carbon heating
- Solar PV
- Ventilation upgrades

Building and construction costs

In recent years, the cost of building and construction work, including those for Planned Maintenance, have increased at rates beyond inflation. At the same time, the investment required to transform much of the housing stock to meet new regulatory requirements is at historic highs whilst rental income remains below inflation. The pressure on capital budgets is therefore pronounced.

Development and regeneration programme

The council has an ambitious programme to deliver more affordable homes through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The table below shows that in the last 7 years the council has acquired or built over 260 new affordable homes. This is through a range of delivery routes including council led new build, s106 acquisitions and purchases via the open market or under a developer agreement.

	CBC New Build	CBC Acquisitions	Totals
2019/20	0	27	27
2020/21	11	26	37
2021/22	34	27	61
2022/23	0	18	18
2023/24	14	35	49
2024/25	0	29	29
2025/26	29	12	41
Totals	88	174	262

Between 2026 and 2030 the council has committed £93.7m to the delivery of new affordable housing. This includes the final phase of the Swindon Road development (41 dwellings) and 70 dwellings on the former Monkscroft school site, where work is due to commence in 2026/27.

The committed funding allows the council to bid for s106 homes as opportunities arise. These represent good value for money as the council buys them at a discount from the developer which forms part of their planning obligations. The council is under contract to buy a further 46 dwellings on the Regents Village site in 2026/27 and with over 5,000 new homes planned or approved across the district, there are significant opportunities for the council to acquire some of the affordable homes on these sites and add them into the HRA.

The council works closely with Homes England and under the last Affordable Homes Programme secured almost £3m to deliver 70 dwellings on Swindon Road. These are a mix of rented and shared ownership properties. The council meets regularly with the regional growth manager and keeps the pipeline of new homes up to date. Funding is applied for once schemes are firmed up and have planning permission and final costs. This is done under the continuous market engagement route. In 2026/27 the council will submit a bid for funding for the 70 dwellings on the Monkscroft former school site.

Other opportunities to increase the number of new council homes include ‘off the shelf’ or ‘turnkey’ schemes where the council enters a contract with a developer to purchase properties at a reduced market value with grant funding. The council is under contract to deliver 5 homes on the Cherrington’s Kidnappers Lane site under this delivery route.

The last delivery route is called ‘Acquisition and Works’. This is where the council buys back former council owned properties sold through the Right to Buy. One property is currently being acquired under this route, and further properties will be purchased as opportunities arise.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and stock profile

The Housing Revenue Account is a ring-fenced account used by local authorities to manage the income and expenditure for its housing stock. It is separate from the council's General Fund which, is used for wider council activities. The HRA operating budgets and capital budgets are approved by Councillors each February and published on the council's website.

Specific pressures on the HRA include:

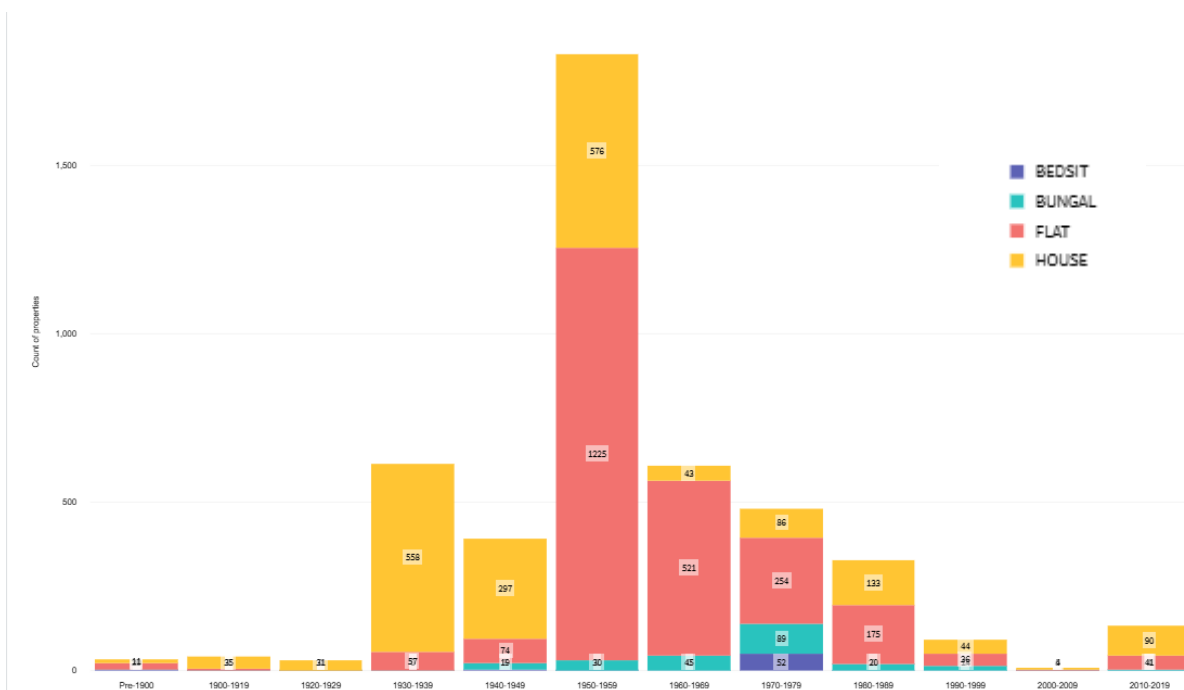
- Rising repair demand associated with stock age
- Increased compliance and building safety costs
- Interest rate and inflation pressures, reducing long-term HRA capacity

In April 2026 the council's HRA included 5,178 homes across the following tenures:

Tenure	Number of Homes	Percentage
Social Rent	4,365	84%
Affordable rent	254	5%
Shared ownership	51	1%
Leasehold	427	8.5%
No rent charge (pending development, regeneration, etc)	81	1.5%
Total	5,178	

This included 340 blocks of flats and bedsits, of which 5 are 5 storey buildings (below 11 meters in height). We have no blocks over 18 metres in height.

As the chart below shows, most of the stock was built between 1950 and 1979. Properties from this era can make it more difficult to meet the Decent Homes Standard due to size and layout which in turn, can make investment more expensive.

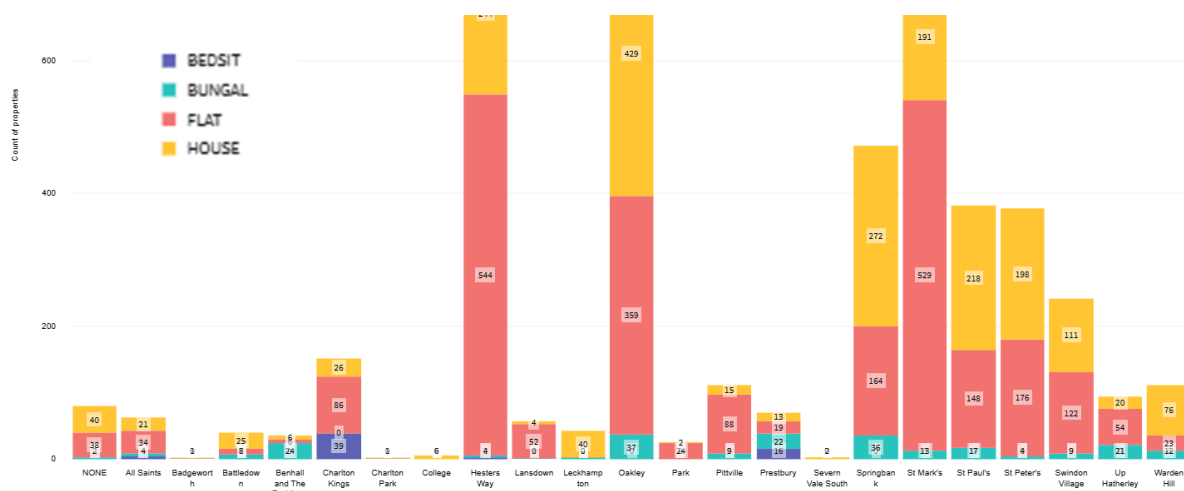


Of the actively managed rented stock, 4,137 are general needs and 492 are independent living schemes. The table below shows the breakdown of these by property type.

	General Needs	Independent Living
Bedsit	7	55
Bungalow	206	14
Flat	1,984	423
House	1,940	-

There is a shortage of larger, family sized accommodation (3 beds+) and an overconcentration of smaller (1 bed) properties in some areas.

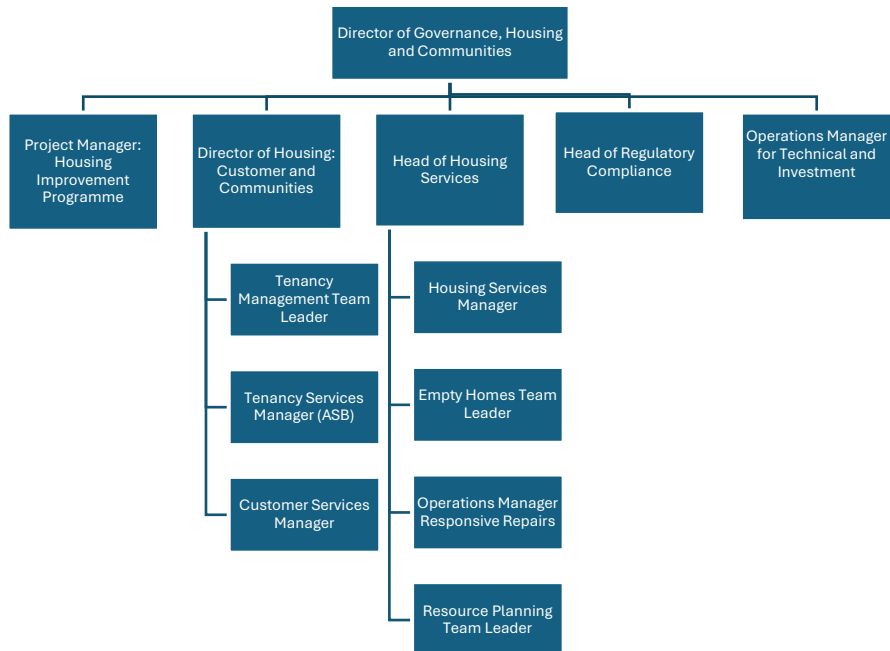
Wards with the greatest concentration of properties include Hesters Way, Oakley, St Marks and Springbank.



Of the councils rented dwellings, 4,124 have an energy performance certificate. There is a plan to obtain an EPC for the properties without one but in the meantime, we use software to model their energy performance and identify future improvement works. This shows us that 81% of dwellings are assessed as having an energy efficiency rating of C or above. We anticipate that all properties will have an EPC by end March 2027 and we have a target to achieve C or above by 2030 for all our properties (unless they qualify for an exemption).

Managing our services

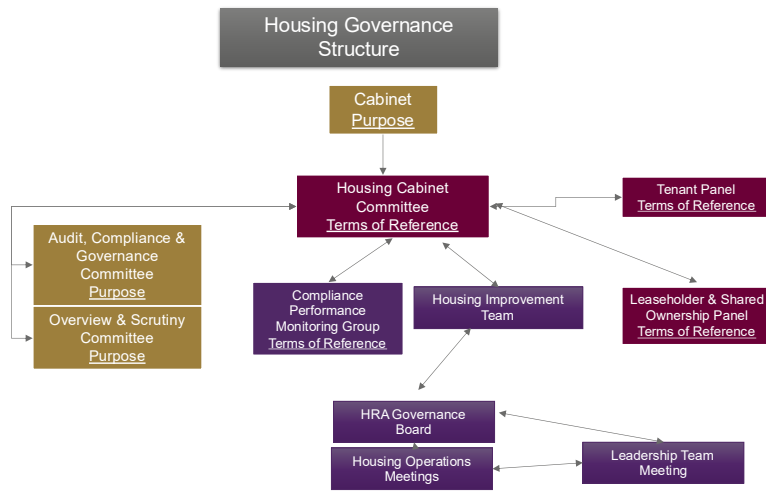
Housing services is currently structured as follows:



Existing stock is managed by our Technical and Investment Team who have responsibility for planned maintenance and capital improvements and our Responsive Repairs Team whose role is carry out reactive repairs and cyclical maintenance to our properties. The Compliance Team ensures that properties meet statutory regulations, including fire safety, gas, electric, asbestos, and water testing as well as monitoring compliance with the time frames for tackling hazards as set out in Awaabs Law.

Acquisitions, new builds and section 106 acquisitions are managed outside the formal Housing Services structure by the Major Development and Regeneration Team, although the Director of Governance, Housing and Communities is the Senior Responsible Officer for all affordable housing delivery projects.

Services are overseen and scrutinised via a robust governance structure which includes tenant and leaseholder engagement:



Our position as of April 2026

At the start of this strategy our position is as follows:

- We have directly delivered £92.4m of capital investment to the housing stock between April 2021 and March 2026. This includes £38.6m investment in the acquisition and development of new homes.
- Between 2026 and 2030 we have allocated £69.6m towards investment in the existing housing stock and over £77.7m towards new affordable homes.
- We hold good asset data, but there are further improvements that can be made to enhance this data and introduce additional validity checks and fill any gaps in information to strengthen our decision making and investment planning.
- Previous and current investment decisions have been based on age, condition and repairs data, but there is an opportunity to strengthen this further and ensure this is recorded and evidenced.
- Use of sustainability modelling and option appraisals is limited, with opportunities to expand the application of active asset management.
- Governance arrangements relating to asset management have been significantly enhanced with the housing service coming back under the council's control and we want to continue to build on this.
- Tenant and resident engagement in some investment decisions have been undertaken, although there are opportunities to enhance and evidence this further.
- 80% of the domestic housing stock has received a physical stock condition survey in the last 5 years and we are targeting as close to 100% by September 2026, as possible.
- 100% of communal areas in blocks of flats have received a physical stock condition survey in the last 5 years.
- 98.6% of the domestic housing stock meets the current decent homes standard. The council will work with tenants of the 1.4% of homes that fail the standard to complete necessary works in-year.
- Identified 468 hazards through stock condition surveys since October 2024 (49 Cat 1s and 419 Cat 2s). Of these, all the Cat 1s have been addressed and most of the Cat 2s. There are 20 outstanding category 2 hazards across the domestic stock that are in the process of being rectified.
- We have a robust process for defending disrepair claims and currently have 17 open cases, although at least half of these have been dormant for more than six months.
- We are seeing a sustained high demand for condensation, damp and mould inspections from our customers with 76 cases open in March 2026.

- 81% of the domestic housing stock is at EPC C or above. A proportion of these are within 5 SAP points of achieving EPC C so could reach the standard with relatively minor measures (e.g. loft insulation top up).
- As measured through our Tenant Satisfaction Measures, 81.8% of our tenant's surveyed were satisfied with repairs to their home in the last 12 months.
- As measured through our Tenant Satisfaction Measures, 79.9% of our tenant's surveyed felt that their home is well maintained.
- As measured through our Tenant Satisfaction Measures, 78.8% of our tenant's surveyed felt their home is safe.
- We have directly acquired 94 properties from private developers since 2022 to add to the housing revenue account. This is in addition to 43 affordable homes built on council owned land.
- We are under contract to deliver a further 140 new homes by March 2027.

Strategic priorities for 2026-2030

To build on our starting position this strategy highlights five priorities to help guide and drive activity over the coming years.

1. Safety and compliance first

Our number one priority will always be safety and compliance, ensuring all our homes are fully compliant with statutory and regulatory requirements.

We will do this through:

- Delivering against our [Compliance Strategy](#)
- Implementing our [Housing Improvement Programme](#) which contains the Safety and Quality workstream.
- Scrutinising performance at the Compliance Monitoring Group which meets every two months.
- Learning from data to identify early action that can be taken or planned improvements made to prevent properties from falling into disrepair.

2. Informed decisions

Effective decision making relies on robust and relevant data. As the financial investment into our homes increases, it becomes even more important to ensure prudent decisions are taken and investment is targeted to obtain maximum impact.

We will do this through:

- Completing our Stock Condition Surveys and ensuring all data is collated within the QL management system.
- Collating planned maintenance and repairs cost information to establish full property costs and identifying those house types with higher expenditure.
- Bringing together key metrics from Planned maintenance, Housing Services, Repairs and Development teams to use in decision making.
- Developing a disposal policy which will include a set of core metrics to assist in identifying underperforming properties or those suitable for disposal.
- Working with Registered Provider partners to map the location of all Affordable Housing in Cheltenham and consider the opportunity for stock swaps, purchases and disposals.
- Benchmarking our costs against other social landlords, where possible

3. Decent, healthy and energy efficient homes

An effective and efficient planned maintenance programme is essential to ensure that we meet current and upcoming national standards, including MEES and the new Decent Homes Standard, and to ensure our homes are fit for 21st century living.

We will do this through:

- Utilising government subsidy to upgrade the energy efficiency of our homes through the Warm Homes Programme.
- Establishing a core set of Key Performance Indicators for the Planned Maintenance team to deliver robust contractor performance and drive-up quality and value for money.
- Using information from stock condition surveys and estimates for upgrading our homes to set appropriate long-term budgets and renewing the 30-year business plan
- Subject to funding, achieving a minimum of EPC C across our stock
- Conducting a feasibility study on installing solar panels as part of our roofing programme

4. Aligning our homes with housing need.

As a social landlord, the council has a role – alongside other Registered Providers - in providing homes for those on the Housing Register. The needs of households continue to change over time, particularly as landlords grapple with the requirements of an ageing population. Whilst there is the ability to try and address this through the supply of new Affordable housing, landlords also need to review their existing stock and ensure it is managed to meet the needs of existing residents and those on the Housing Register.

We will do this through:

- Working with the Housing Enabling team to understand key demographic and cultural changes that are impacting on the needs of our residents today and in the future.
- Using stock condition data and other survey data to categorise stock (A-G) against accessibility standards based on the Homeseeker Plus Accessible Housing Register. This will assist applicants to identify properties that best meet their physical needs.
- Ensuring that the Aids and Adaptations requests are managed effectively and that a pro-active housing management approach is taken towards households with increasing needs.
- Building on the review of the Sheltered Housing portfolio undertaken in 2018 and develop a plan to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and financially viable.
- Establishing a new Acquisitions programme that utilises Right to Buy receipts to purchase homes for Affordable Housing.
- Introducing a high-level options appraisal to be undertaken prior to properties becoming void that considers the potential for disposal, improvement, development or re-let.

5. Establish a development and regeneration programme

An active development pipeline is essential to provide the HRA with new, purpose-built homes that meet the needs of our residents and works to reduce the number of households on the Housing Register. New homes have lower running costs (eg heating bills) and require less maintenance/improvement. These new homes will provide a key role in modernising the overall stock portfolio and reducing overall maintenance liabilities.

Additionally, the council must consider if there are specific locations where a regeneration programme could be more appropriate. This may be the case where there are more fundamental issues relating to the housing stock and/or social issues that cannot be address through upgrading the homes.

We will do this through:

- Reviewing all development opportunities that have been identified on QL and establishing if they represent viable prospects for the council.
- Developing a plan for the future of empty prefabricated (post-war) dwellings at the Reddings
- Embracing opportunities presented through the section 106 mechanism within the capital budget.
- Reviewing condition data for sheds and garages and developing a strategy to inform investment decisions

Action Plan

Action	Timescale
Complete our Stock Condition Surveys and ensure all data is collated within the QL management system	By the end of year 1
Collate planned maintenance and repairs cost information to establish full property costs and identify those house types with higher expenditure	By the end of year 2
Develop a disposal policy which will include a set of core metrics to assist in identifying underperforming properties or those suitable for disposal	By the end of year 1
Work with Registered Provider partners to map the location of all Affordable Housing in Cheltenham and consider the opportunity for stock swaps, purchases and disposals	By the end of year 1
Utilise government subsidy to upgrade the energy efficiency of our homes through the Warm Homes Programme.	As set out in the Warm Homes Programme Plan
Establish a core set of Key Performance Indicators for the Planned Maintenance team to deliver robust contractor performance and drive-up quality and value for money.	By the end of year 2
Achieve a minimum of EPC C across our stock, subject to funding	By the end of this plan
Conduct a feasibility study on installing solar panels as part of our roofing programme	By the end of year 1
Use stock condition data and other survey data to categorise stock (A-G) against accessibility standards based on the Homeseeker Plus Accessible Housing Register.	By the end of year 2
Build on the review of the Sheltered Housing portfolio undertaken in 2018, develop a plan to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and financially viable.	By the end of this plan
Introduce a high-level options appraisal to be undertaken prior to properties becoming void that considers the potential for disposal, improvement, development or re-let.	By the end of year 2
Review all development opportunities that have been identified on QL and establish if they represent viable prospects for the council.	By the end of year 3
Develop a plan for the future of empty prefabricated (post-war) dwellings at the Reddings	By the end of this plan
Review condition data for sheds and garages and develop a strategy to inform investment decisions	By the end of year 3