



# Housing



The type of homes we live in is a major factor in assessing our quality of life. Housing provides shelter, warmth and security, which are essential for our health and wellbeing. Housing also provides us with a place to do the everyday things we take for granted like sleeping, eating and watching TV.

In Hertfordshire the majority of housing is owner occupied, the rest is made up of local authority/housing association and privately rented properties.

Housing in Hertfordshire	%
Privately Owned	79.6
Local Authority	15.3
Housing Association	4.4
Other	0.7

Source: Eastern Region Housing Statement 2001

House prices in Hertfordshire are among the highest in the country, due to our proximity to London and the scarcity of suitable land for development. Current planning policy favours further development on brown-field sites rather than development on greenfield sites or in the Green Belt. Therefore alternative methods for finding new housing sites are currently being explored.

## Average house prices

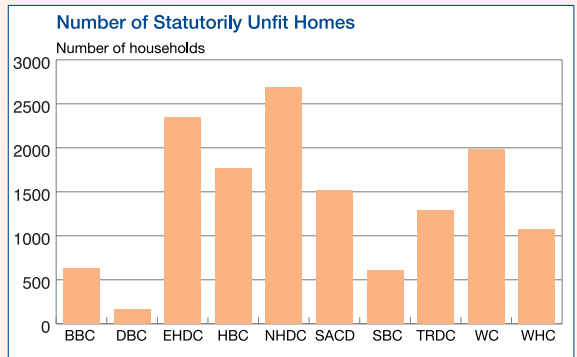
Property type	Hertfordshire	England & Wales
Detached house	£385,950	£220,695
Terraced house	£163,052	£108,684

Source: HM Land Registry average house prices July-Sept 2002

The high price of renting or buying houses in Hertfordshire has many knock-on effects such as problems with staff retention, a reduction in the carrying capacity of our transport infrastructure and a high cost of living. The government has acknowledged the problem by encouraging local authorities to assist lower income workers with 'affordable housing'. Affordable housing is usually rented accommodation, offered at a subsidised rate. Local authorities in Hertfordshire are striving towards providing more affordable housing, through current planning legislation, such as that which requires private developers to build new affordable housing as a proportion of the housing provided on a site.

## INDICATOR HS1 - Statutorily Unfit Homes

Local authorities estimate the number of homes in their district/borough which are unfit for human habitation. Though the number of homes in this category is relatively low, local authorities are continuing to try to reduce the number further as part of their overall housing strategies to improve quality of life. The following graph shows the estimated figures from the most recent surveys carried out by each council, which are not all in the same year.



## INDICATOR HS2 - Homelessness

Earlier this year the government introduced a new act relating to homelessness, which called for local authorities to review their approach. As part of the Homelessness Act 2002, local authorities are also required to produce a strategy with the aim of providing support for and preventing homelessness, through securing accommodation for people who are homeless.

