

housing



Good quality living accommodation that provides shelter from the elements, warmth, security and a base for everyday activities is a basic requirement without which health and happiness would be severely compromised, yet most of us take for granted.

In Hertfordshire over 80% of housing is owner occupied, the rest is made up of local authority/housing association and privately rented properties.

Housing in Hertfordshire	%	% change in year
Privately owned	80.5	+0.5
Local Authority	13.1	-1.7
Housing Association	5.9	+1.4
Other	0.5	-0.2

Source: Office of National Statistics 2002

House prices in Hertfordshire are among the highest in the country, mainly due to our close proximity to London and good motorway and rail links. Demand for housing in the county continues to exceed supply and there is a scarcity of suitable land for further development. Current planning policy favours development on brownfield sites rather than greenfield sites or within the Green Belt, therefore alternative methods for finding new housing sites are currently being explored.



With a new semi-detached house in Hertfordshire costing an average of £237,449, and prices continuing to increase year on year, many people are finding themselves priced out of the market. 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.

In addition, local authorities are working to address the problem through the development of new affordable housing, including some earmarked specifically for key workers, such as those in health, teaching and other public services, who currently cannot afford to live and work in the county.



Indicator HS1 - Statutorily Unfit Homes

Neglect and a lack of maintenance will, over a period of time, lead to a property falling in to disrepair or becoming unfit for occupation. The responsibility for carrying out the necessary repairs lies with the owner of the property who may be a private individual, a local authority, a housing association or other social landlord. However, in cases where homeowners are not able to fund these works, assistance is needed to prevent inadequate housing conditions. Consequently, local authorities make available loans and grants to help people in difficult financial circumstances.

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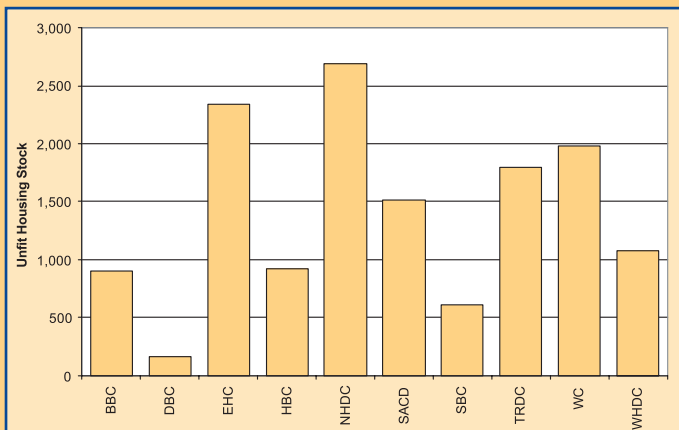


Average House Prices

Property Type	Hertfordshire		England & Wales	
	Average Price	%change in year	Average Price	%change in year
Detached House	£413,056	+ 6.35%	£250,695	+13.98%
Semi-detached House	£237,449	+12.66%	£145,576	+15.11%
Terraced House	£183,551	+11.59%	£120,685	+11.09%

Source: HM Land Registry average house prices July-Sept 2003

Each year local authorities estimate the total number of homes in their areas that are unfit for human habitation and address the problem of those that do not come up to the Decent Homes Standard as part of their own housing strategies. Though the overall number of homes in this category is relatively low, local authorities are continuing to try to reduce the number further 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.



Source: Office of National Statistics 2002

Indicator HS2 - Homelessness

In July 2002, the Government implemented the Homelessness Act, which required all local authorities to undertake a review of homelessness within their areas and to produce homelessness strategies by July 2003. These strategies set out the local authority's objectives for providing support for homeless people and to prevent the incidence of homelessness by securing appropriate accommodation.

