

Belt boundary around the western edge of Wickford, it is sensible to make it defensible in the long term. The long term durability of this boundary will be guaranteed by 31.4 hectares (77.5 acres) of land immediately adjoining the revised boundary, becoming public open space with a range of recreation facilities. Some 22 hectares (54 acres) of the proposed open space is within the District boundaries. The remainder is located within Chelmsford Borough. Residential development shall take place in accordance with a Design Brief agreed by the landowner and the Council. Access to the land can be gained from 3 different roads, and infrastructure can be easily provided. In order to create a strong and defensible Green Belt boundary it is necessary to exclude Berne Hall from the Green Belt. This moated property is of significant archaeological importance and has considerable visual amenity value. Berne Hall is therefore not allocated for residential development.

ii. Land North of Dry Street

The site north of Dry Street consists of 35 hectares (85 acres) of undulating grazing land. The site formed part of the New Town Designated Area, and has never been part of the Green Belt. The land is bounded in the north by residential development, and in the east by Basildon College and Basildon Hospital. To the west is Langdon Nature Reserve (see para 5.5), which is also designated a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

An area of 24 hectares of the site is reserved for meeting long term housing needs. The remainder of the site, some 11 hectares would be used for open space purposes, together with the provision of the community centre, shops and health centre identified in Policy BAS S3. A primary school of adequate capacity should be provided in an appropriate located easily accessible to the main road network.

Vehicular access to the site shall be from Dry Street to the south and/or via the hospital roundabout on Nethermayne through the grounds of the adjoining hospital and Basildon College sites. Vehicular access to the site shall be optimal for the operation of bus services. A principal access from Dry Street will involve works to widen this highway east of the site access and new highway works will be required at the junction of Dry Street with Nethermayne which could be carried out in conjunction with the proposed hotel development adjacent to the golf club. Appropriate traffic management measures will be required to deter motor vehicles passing westwards along Dry Street beyond the principal access.

The highway network within the development will have regard to the principles of the Essex Design Guide; should be developed to encourage slower speeds (i.e. 20 mph maximum); and should include cycleways and footpaths to facilitate access by cycle and on foot to the town centre and surrounding areas.

The development of this site should accord with the principles of sustainability, and, wherever appropriate, use should be made of the site's natural contours to orientate the new dwellings so as to optimise solar gain and energy efficiency.

Affordable Housing

Policy BAS S5

In developments of 25 dwellings or more, or residential sites of 1 hectare or more, the Council will expect an appropriate provision of affordable housing on suitable sites.

In this context affordable housing means both low-cost market and subsidised housing, and the type of housing sought will depend on local housing need and the site suitability.

4.16 The Council's Housing Strategy also identifies a shortfall in the supply of affordable housing during the remainder of the Local Plan period. At present, there is an average of 475 households in temporary accommodation, with some 384 households placed in temporary accommodation in 1997/1998. Current projections indicate that by the year 2001 there will be a net shortfall of 880 dwellings for rent. The applications on the Housing Register predominately relate to 2 bedroom homes with consequential transfer applicants requiring larger 3 and 4 bedroom family properties.

Whilst the supply of 3 bedroom dwellings is matching demand, this apparent match is deceptive as a large proportion of the 3 bedroom home supply is met by upper floor flats and maisonettes, which are not considered suitable for family occupancy. There is a significant oversupply of 1 bedroom accommodation (with little demand), and an under supply of two bedroom units where there is the greatest demand. Therefore, the acute and priority need is for new 2 bedroom and family accommodation. To meet the local housing need, the Council will seek to negotiate 2 bedroom and family style housing, preferably rented at local Housing Corporation benchmark rents.

Policy BAS S2 identifies new residential development sites in the District during the Plan period. Not all of these sites meet the criteria in Policy BAS S5 and, therefore there is no guarantee that they will be developed for affordable housing. The remaining sites in themselves cannot accommodate enough affordable homes to meet the Council's requirements. Through the application of Policy BAS S5 the Council will be able to secure affordable housing on sites of 25 dwellings or more, or sites of 1 hectare more, which will contribute towards meeting the affordable housing needs of the District during the Plan period.