

# HOUSING STRATEGY

2018-2023



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Appendices available at [www.basildon.gov.uk/hs](http://www.basildon.gov.uk/hs)

## 1. FOREWORD

**Basildon is the largest borough authority in Essex with a growing population of 183,000 people. It is a great place to live with vibrant town centres, beautiful open spaces and great community facilities. This is why considering the housing challenges faced by the borough and its communities in the next five years and determining what we plan to do about them is crucial in delivering the council's vision for the future.**

Our Housing Strategy looks forward to 2023 and prioritises four key areas of work. Meeting future growth needs, making the best use of existing homes, supporting residents to create communities they wish to live in and be part of and improving access to housing opportunities and choice.

The strategy will also outline the council's vision for all housing in the borough and make clear links to equally important issues such as health, crime, education, environment, economic development and social inclusion, all of which are critical to creating well designed and functioning places for our residents to live, work and play in.

These are challenging times for local government, however, we will continue to do our best to provide our residents with good quality housing options in the borough. We will build and unlock potential opportunities with our partners in a way that improves the lives of our residents and enhances our communities and neighbourhoods.



**Councillor Kerry Smith**

Housing and Community Committee Chairman

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**This Housing Strategy sets out how the council, along with its partners, will respond to the housing challenges faced by the borough in order to provide good quality housing options.**

The council's Corporate Plan 2017 – 2021 sets out the vision for the borough and contains high level promises it will focus on in order to deliver this vision. Promise one of the Corporate Plan makes a specific commitment regarding housing.

*'Strong, safe and healthy communities with access to quality homes'*

Corporate Plan 2017-2021, Promise 1

The Housing Strategy supports the delivery of this promise by setting out the vision for all housing in the borough. The Housing Strategy has the following vision;

*'We want to ensure Basildon Borough is the place in Essex people choose to live because there are a choice of homes, a pleasant environment and solid communities that can support their wellbeing and aspirations. A place that people feel proud to call home.'*

To achieve this vision we have identified four key priorities. There are challenges in achieving these priorities and the strategy identifies how we plan to overcome these to deliver our vision.



Bowers Terrace, Pitsea



Littlethorpe, Basildon



Victoria Road, Laindon

## MEETING FUTURE GROWTH NEEDS



### Key Challenges:

- Growing population increases housing demand
- Rising house prices and rents are a barrier to delivering genuinely affordable housing
- Need for homes to be attractive and well built
- Need homes for local key workers

### Some of the ways we will get there are:

- We will deliver a range of high quality market, intermediate and affordable homes via Sempra Homes
- Taking advantage of new and innovative ways of delivering housing including factory built homes supplied by the NU Living factory located in the borough
- We will introduce and keep under review Tenure, Type and Unit Size Guidance (Appendix 3) to provide clarity to developers on our expectations for new housing in the borough
- We will maximize on site contributions of affordable homes on new developments by reviewing our viability appraisal methodology and commuted sum policy and issuing guidance
- We will seek a balance between the supply of affordable housing for ownership and the supply of affordable housing for rent as guided by the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- We will put in place design guides and minimum space standards to encourage well designed and high quality homes
- We will set minimum requirements for provision of older peoples housing and lifetime homes which are accessible and easy to adapt
- Adding to the diversity of the market as stated in the White Paper 'Fixing our Broken Market', by encouraging self and custom built homes
- We are taking steps to deliver homes for applicants on the Homeseeker Register
- We are taking steps to deliver homes for key workers to support staff recruitment and retention via Sempra Homes.

## MAKING THE BEST USE OF EXISTING HOMES



### Key Challenges:

- Much of the housing in the borough is of similar age
- Maintaining our Council owned stock despite rent cuts
- Improving conditions in the growing private rented sector
- Tackling fuel poverty

### Some of the ways we will get there are:

- We will develop a proportionate and effective strategy for bringing empty homes back into use
- We will work in partnership with Morgan Sindall to ensure our council housing stock is safe and sound
- We will develop an asset management strategy which will take a more strategic approach to delivering improvements and look more widely at estate conditions
- We will review underused garage courts and other land assets for other purposes including parking provision and new housing
- We will determine how we can make best use of our homes for older people so that they meet the needs of both the current and future older population
- We will reduce under-occupation by marketing alternatives to our tenants and supporting the increase in supply of smaller properties
- Improve housing conditions, in respect of building condition, excessively cold homes, fuel poverty and the state of repair in the private sector
- We will rigorously enforce the legislation to secure improvements and ensure the health, safety and welfare of all private sector tenants
- We will take action to identify Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) within the borough and enforce licensing criteria
- We will work with Essex Social Care and Health Services to ensure prompt access disabled facilities grants
- We will ensure homes are given to those most in need by tackling tenancy and Right to Buy fraud.

## SUPPORT RESIDENTS TO CREATE NEIGHBOURHOODS THEY WISH TO LIVE IN AND BE PART OF



### Key Challenges:

- Delivering quality homes and neighbourhoods people want to live in
- Empowering communities to do more for themselves
- Addressing crime and antisocial behaviour

### Some of the ways we will get there are:

- We will explore alternative and new ways of engagement, such as virtual and online mechanisms
- We will support our communities to thrive on their own and be independent by supporting community volunteer groups, through the Strengthening Communities Policy
- We will deliver the Community Safety Partnership Strategy, Gangs and Serious Organised Crime Strategy and the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy to improve the safety of our residents, their families and communities
- We will ensure our regeneration schemes promote communities in which people wish to live by providing quality neighbourhood services and public realm improvements including the streets, pathways, right of ways, parks, publicly accessible open spaces and any public and civic building and facilities
- We will consider the delivery of community facilities as well as affordable housing via Section 106 agreements.

## IMPROVE ACCESS TO HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND CHOICE



### Key Challenges:

- Ensuring all residents can access housing which meets their needs
- Helping residents to improve their employment and earning potential
- Safeguarding access to supported housing
- Preventing homelessness in our borough

### Some of the ways we will get there are:

- We will make full use of our community hub located within the Basildon Centre. By working with our partners, such as the DWP, we will keep the borough's unemployment rate as low as possible by supporting residents into employment or skills training so they can improve their life opportunities
- We will work with our partners to identify ways to continue to deliver services to vulnerable people who require housing related support or specialist accommodation
- We will monitor and update the Homeless Prevention Strategy Action Plan to ensure it remains an effective tool
- We will invest in affordable housing to prevent homelessness
- We will manage customers' housing expectations from the start so they are clear about the type of housing available to them and how much it will cost. We will also help them to help themselves to find a solution that works for them
- We will explore housing options amongst young, low income single persons
- We will keep our housing allocation scheme under review to ensure it is meeting the housing needs of people we accept as having a need for affordable rented housing.

### 3. INTRODUCTION

**We want to ensure Basildon Borough is the place in Essex people choose to live because there are a choice of homes, a pleasant environment and solid communities that can support their wellbeing and aspirations. A place that people feel proud to call home.**

We know Basildon Borough has solid foundations on which to do this. It is already the biggest employment area in Essex. Its road and rail links make it commutable to the City of London, broadening access to different types of employment, education and cultural choices. Its close proximity to the M25 and M11 brings it closer to London. Stansted, City and Southend Airports, alongside Ebbsfleet International Station mean it is better connected to other places; a strength which will continue with the arrival of the new Elizabeth Line from nearby Shenfield in 2018.

We are well underway with our ambitious plans to redevelop and improve our town centres into more vibrant destinations, including the new market and South Essex College relocating to Basildon Town Centre, the replacement of retail and communities facilities in Laindon Shopping Centre, Pitsea Town Centre, and Wickford Town Centre, as well as making public realm improvements to Billericay.

We have invested in high quality open spaces that offer recreation, access to wildlife and environmental

management. We are the envy of our neighbours with top class sporting facilities and improving educational achievements in schools. All in all, we have the right building blocks in place to make sure Basildon Borough is able to fulfil its potential, however, it is important that we also consider our housing challenges going forward, in an ever changing national and local picture.

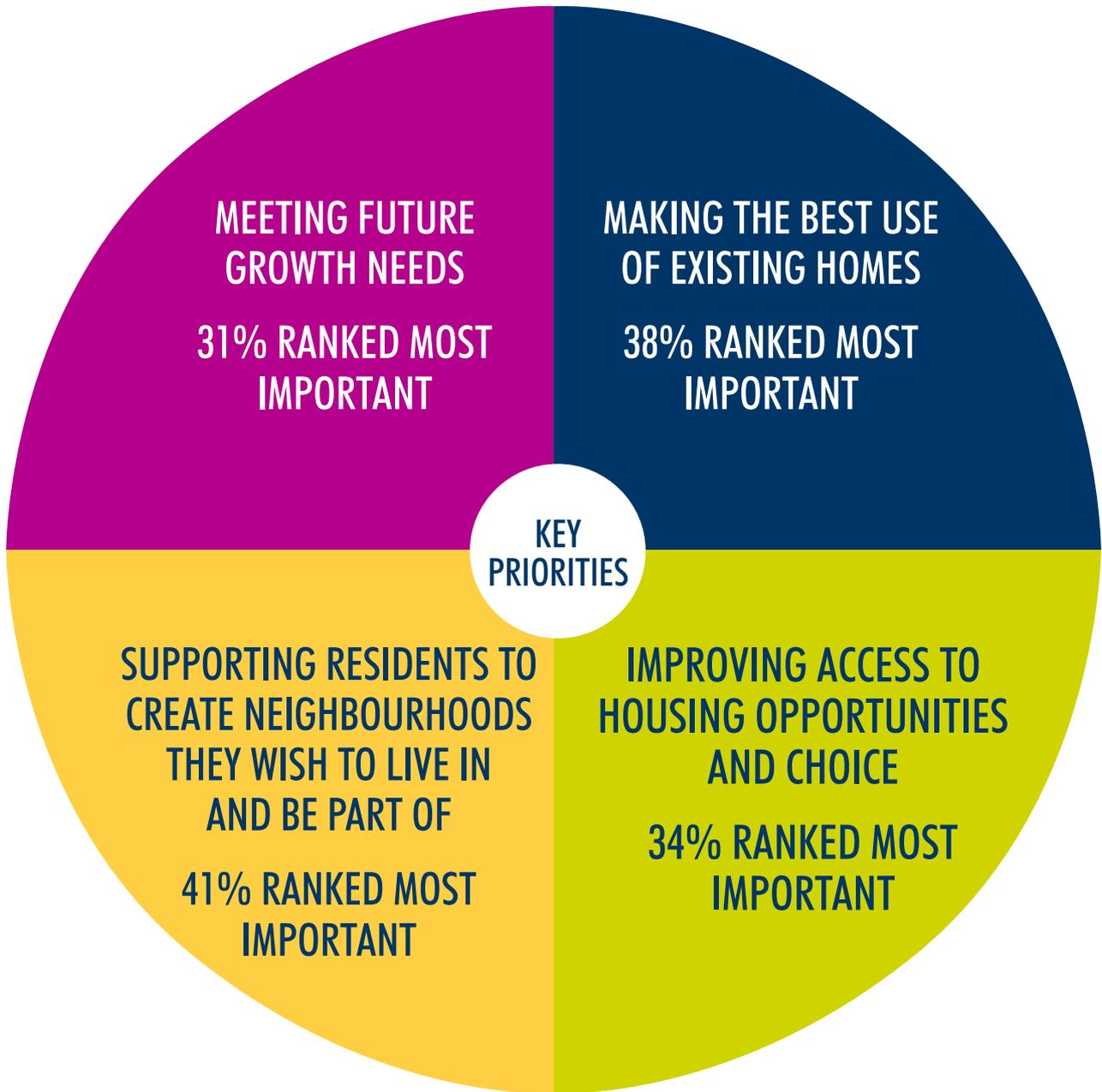
We have developed this Housing Strategy to ensure we have the right framework in place to shape how we, along with our partners, will achieve our ambitions. In particular, we establish how we will:

- Respond to our diverse housing needs
- Make the best use of our existing housing stock
- Enable more quality homes to be built in the right places, at the right time, with the necessary supporting infrastructure
- Secure the right housing support services so people can live safely and independently for as long as possible
- Develop, and maintain working partnerships with the right organisations that ensure we create and maintain places where people want to live.

The key priorities identified within this strategy are:



1. Meeting future growth needs
2. Making the best use of existing homes
3. Supporting residents to create communities they wish to live in and be part of
4. Improving access to housing opportunities and choice



NB Percentages do not total to 100% due to some respondents ranking priorities as equally important.

To meet these priorities we have identified a series of actions and activities which need to be undertaken. These will be included in a delivery plan and will be reviewed regularly to make sure our priorities are being achieved. The delivery plan is located in Appendix 1.

## How we have developed this strategy

Our housing strategy has not been prepared in isolation. To ensure it can help to address the borough's housing challenges, the strategy has been prepared collaboratively through focused engagement during 2016. This involved a range of internal and external stakeholders in line with the Council's adopted Community Engagement Strategy 2015. Discussions were held on a wide range of housing issues with Council teams in Community Involvement, Anti-Social Behaviour, Environmental Health, Sheltered Housing, Housing Choice, Housing Property Services, Inclusion and Diversity, Economic Development, Building Control, Housing Development and Investment, Finance, Corporate Intelligence & Planning Policy. We have also drawn from our work with external partners, for example, the homelessness charity St Mungo's, in respect of homelessness priorities and local Registered Providers (Housing Associations), as well as the South Essex Housing Group to consider alternative and best practice.

In addition, initial discussions took place with tenants and leaseholder representatives, young people living in the borough's Foyer and Parent and Child Scheme and the borough's Community Diversity Council.

## Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

A four week public consultation on the draft housing strategy took place from February to March 2017. The consultation sought participants' views on a range of issues, in particular:

- Which of the priorities were most important to the participant
- The housing issues that mattered most to the participant
- Challenges the participant feels should be given greatest priority to address
- Any other comments the participant wished to be considered.

Responses were collected via an online survey with additional direct engagement with the Community Diversity Council and students at South Essex College (Basildon Campus). The consultation was publicised in the local press and on social media.

A total of 338 responses were received which gave us a confidence rating of 95% +/- 5.98.

A separate Stakeholder Engagement Day was held on 27 April 2017. Over 30 organisations representing Registered Providers, housing developers, third sector representatives, the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Homes and Communities Agency came together to discuss the draft housing strategy. Delegates were given the local and national context in which the housing strategy was drafted and how the priorities and challenges were identified. Delegates then had the opportunity to contribute to the strategy via breakout groups, which helped us understand what we needed to all do differently to change the Borough's housing outcomes.

Additional presentations took place at the Borough Landlords Forum and the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel.

The outcomes of the public consultation and stakeholder engagement are provided in Appendix 5.

## How the housing strategy fits into the Council's wider work

### The Corporate Plan 2017 to 2021

The housing strategy is fundamental to the delivery of Basildon Council's corporate plan.

The Corporate Plan forms the cornerstone of the council's work by setting out its vision for the borough and the priorities it will focus on in order to deliver that vision. The Council's corporate plan identifies its vision as:



Basildon Borough Council is committed to improving the lives of all residents across our five towns and creating opportunity and prosperity for local people and businesses.

*This vision will be delivered via three promises:*

- 1. Strong, safe and healthy communities with access to quality homes*
- 2. Vibrant town centres and a thriving economy for everyone*
- 3. Enhanced local environment and increased Pride in our Borough*

This housing strategy will support the delivery of all three promises through its own strategic priorities and delivery plan.

### **Our Planning Function**

The Local Plan sets out a vision and a framework for the future development of an area. It has reviewed how much new development is needed in the borough over the next 20 years and where it will be built. It identifies which areas should be developed, what should be protected and how we might best mitigate the impacts and provide infrastructure to support development. Developing the Local Plan is a shared undertaking led by the local planning authority in collaboration with neighbouring councils, local communities and other interested parties. We are currently in the process of reviewing our Local Plan before it is submitted to the Government. We hope that it will be adopted in 2019.

The Housing Strategy and Local Plan have different responsibilities but are intended to work in tandem to ensure that both new and existing homes in the

borough meet the needs of current and future residents. Our emerging Local Plan proposes to delegate some decisions on how these homes are to be delivered to the Housing Strategy. These matters are set out in the Tenure, Type and Size guidance, in Appendix 3. By doing this we are able to keep these matters under review more frequently and be more responsive to the borough's changing housing needs.

### **Regulatory Services**

The Council's Development Management and Enforcement Teams are an important aspect of the delivery of major regeneration and development projects in the Borough. The Housing Strategy is also a consideration in the planning decision process. It will ensure that the appropriate type of housing that current and future residents need and desire are delivered through public and private developments.

The health and wellbeing of our residents is important to us. Through the planning process, new homes can play a role in residents' achieving and maintaining good physical and mental health. The provision of gardens and green open spaces enables activity, and accessible homes enables older and more vulnerable adults to remain independent for as long as possible.

### **Regeneration**

The regeneration of town centres is a key priority for the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan. Residents value local services and town centres and there is an aspiration to rejuvenate the town centres across the borough by working with partners to deliver regeneration and public realm improvements. Significant regeneration in our town centres will also deliver housing. This will grow housing choice in these areas and support economic success.

We will also support neighbourhood regeneration in areas that require intervention in improving housing and place making. We will reflect on the successes of the regeneration of the Craylands estate into Beechwood Village when considering future neighbourhood regeneration projects.

## 4. KEY BOROUGH INFORMATION FROM THE EVIDENCE BASE

**The borough of Basildon is located in Essex in the east of England. The borough is 30 miles east of London and is part of the Thames Gateway South Essex sub-region.**

### Our people

- Basildon is the largest borough in Essex with a population of 183,000<sup>1</sup>. The population is predicted to increase to 210,000 by 2034
- Households are becoming smaller with 54% of the borough living as a single adult or as a couple with out children
- We have the largest Gypsy and Traveller population in Essex, who have distinct accommodation needs
- The median gross full-time salary earned by a person working in Basildon Borough is £29,848 a year<sup>2</sup>
- The median household income for a household living in the borough is higher at £32,147<sup>3</sup>.

### Basildon Borough Homes

- There are around 76,120 homes in the Basildon Borough<sup>4</sup>. The 2011 Census found that 48,629 households owned their property, 15,976 lived in a socially rented property and 7,448 households rented privately. Owner occupation remains the primary tenure in the borough, however there are signs that it is falling – from 70.6% in 2001 to 66.9% in 2011. The private rental sector on the other hand is growing, from 6% in 2001 to 11.1% in 2011. The proportion of residents living in social housing has fallen slightly from 23.4% in 2001 to 22% in 2011<sup>5</sup>
- 41.9% of homes in the borough contain three bedrooms. Only 11.9% contain one bedroom
- We have 315 long-term empty homes in the borough, a 42% decrease since 2005.

### Our housing costs

- The median house price in the borough is £326,389 an increase of almost 41% in the last five years<sup>6</sup>
- This average house costs nine times the median household income for a household who lives in the Basildon borough, assuming a 5% deposit

- The average house now costs over 10 times the median gross full-time salary earned by a person who also works within the Basildon borough, assuming a 5% deposit. This means that people who work locally are increasingly struggling to find affordable housing, or get on the housing ladder
- A lower quartile one-bedroom flat costs on average £125,000<sup>7</sup>, this is four times the median gross full-time salary earned by a person working in Basildon borough, assuming a 5% deposit; but this does not meet everyone's household needs.

### Our economy, employment prospects and skills<sup>8</sup>

- Parts of the borough are ranked within the country's most deprived 20% of areas, whilst other areas are ranked within the least deprived 20% of areas
- 8.4% of 16-64 year olds claimed out of work benefits which is slightly higher than the England level of 8.1 (Nov 16)
- In 2015, 51% of borough pupils achieved five GCSE's grade A\*-C including English and Maths which is below the Essex average of 57.6%
- Only 33.3% of the working age population have degree or higher national diploma compared to the England average of 37.9%.

### Health and Wellbeing<sup>9</sup>

- Basildon Borough has a significantly higher rate of under-18 conceptions than the UK average
- Basildon Borough has an estimated 17.9% of the population aged 16-74 with a common mental health disorder<sup>10</sup>
- Life expectancy in the most deprived areas in the borough is 8.8 years lower for men and 8.5 years lower for women than in the least deprived areas in the borough
- The Housing Stock Condition Modelling in 2016 estimated that there are 9,191 incidents where the minimum statutory standards for housing were not met (category 1 hazards). These were spread across 6,815 private sector properties.

## Council housing

- In 2016/17, 93 of our tenants bought their home through the Right to Buy. A decrease on recent years
- 1,255 households are on our housing register, of which approximately one third are existing social tenants seeking to transfer to other housing within the borough (April 2017)
- 699 council properties were let in 2016/17. A 6.5% turnover rate
- The greatest demand on the housing register is for one and two bedroom properties
- 18% of households on our housing register are seeking sheltered accommodation
- 98.8% of rent due was collected in 2016/17.

1123 households in social housing are subject to spare room subsidy. (Feb17)

This snapshot of the Basildon Borough is drawn from the Housing Strategy Evidence Base (Appendix 2), which provides further information on each of these snapshots.

## 5. OUR HOUSING CHALLENGES

**We are committed to improving the lives of our residents and creating opportunity and prosperity for local people and businesses. There is much to be celebrated in the housing services we deliver ourselves or with partners. However, we recognise that to maintain and build on our successes, we also have challenges to overcome.**

We have identified the following as the critical challenges that need to be tackled by this strategy. How we will meet these challenges is laid out in the delivery plan at Appendix 1.

## Challenge 1 – Delivering the homes the people of the borough need

- The forecast increase in population and changes to its demographic make-up presents us with housing supply challenges. We need to have a range of housing products that will meet these growth challenges and which also support our plans for economic growth. We need attractive, well built homes which people want to live in, as well as a range of homes to accommodate peoples' changing housing requirements (for example, when people have children, or grow older)
- We need to ensure that we maximise the number of affordable homes we secure on new developments. Where on-site provision of affordable homes has not been possible, we will seek to agree a financial payment from the developer which can be used elsewhere to provide affordable homes
- With the national definition of affordable housing expanding to include a range of rental and home ownership products, in addition to traditional social housing, we need to ensure that all residents of our borough can access housing that is more affordable to them
- Funding for housing development is a continuous challenge. We will always look at new and innovative ways of delivering housing in the borough and getting the most from our investments
- Although the private rented sector is still relatively small in the borough, it is a growing sector. Despite this growth it is not currently able to meet the need for homes that sit between those that are rented on the open market and social housing. Our challenge is to reduce this need with new intermediate rented housing products.

<sup>1</sup>2014 based sub regional population projections

<sup>2</sup>Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2015. Median income is the amount that divides income into two equal groups, with half the population earning more and half earning less. Median was chosen to be consistent with ONS publications and to avoid distortion by minority very low or very high incomes

<sup>3</sup>TGSE Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016 sourced from CACI paycheck data

<sup>4</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

<sup>5</sup>2001 and 2011 Census. NB: does not total to 100% due to a small number of households living in alternative situations such as accommodation tied to employment

<sup>6</sup>Hometrack sales and valuations July 2017

<sup>7</sup>Hometrack Sales and Valuations Nov16-April 17

<sup>8</sup>Office of National Statistics, Labour Market Profile, <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk> and Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment May 16

<sup>9</sup>Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment May 16 unless otherwise specified

<sup>10</sup>(included Brentwood) Public Health England Area Profile – Basildon & Brentwood Clinical Commissioning Group – Jan 2017

- Despite having reliable numbers on the level of housing need in the borough there are people with a housing need in the borough for whom we have no data. This is largely due to these households being concealed such as those not eligible to be registered on the housing choice register, people living chaotic lives and extended families living in overcrowded homes. Our challenge is to identify these concealed households so their housing needs can be identified so we can ensure their needs contribute to the understanding of the types of housing we need in the borough
- Though numbers have reduced, we continue to have long-term empty homes in the borough, which is not maximising the effectiveness of our existing housing stock
- Following consultation with our health partners we recognise the difficulty key workers have in buying or renting a home in the Borough. This affects crucial staff recruitment and retention for workers who provide particular key roles in the borough. We need to look at ways this can be addressed
- We are working with other public authorities and providers to assess the quality and capacity of the required infrastructure to meet forecast demand. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan has been prepared to support this and will be delivered via the council's emerging Local Plan 2018-3034.

## **Challenge 2 – Ensuring quality housing and neighbourhoods**

- The quality housing and neighbourhoods' needs to be improved through good design of new homes, ensuring homes are energy efficient, effective place making, good quality new open spaces around homes and that good parking standards are in place
- The Council's housing stock and estates are a valuable asset and we have to provide quality neighbourhood services, maintain them well and make the best use of them to deliver new and improved homes
- We want to have a better understanding of the condition of the borough's private sector housing stock and the challenges that private home owners are likely to face in respect of improving the condition of their homes, particularly with many of them ageing at a similar rate
- Along with an increased knowledge of the private sector housing stock, we want to understand the impact that poor housing conditions are likely to have on the health and well-being of private sector residents and what impact this has on other service providers. This challenge includes how we can make the most of our collaboration with our health partners to address these risks early on and reduce this impact
- Evidence has shown us that some people living in the private rented sector have concerns over the condition of their home and how their tenancy is managed. Raising private tenants' awareness of their rights and responsibilities under landlords can improve their wellbeing and financial security
- As the private rented sector in the borough grows we need to be able to support private tenants to better protect themselves and their families against rogue landlords. We need to take robust and timely enforcement action against any such landlords operating in Basildon Borough
- We need a heightened awareness of all Houses in Multiple Occupation in the borough. HMO properties need to meet licence conditions where applicable and be free from serious hazards and we must respond to quality issues brought to our attention by tenants
- We need to comply with changes to the law and guidance about housing policy and programmes
- Over 98% of our housing stock meets the Decent Homes Standard. Our challenge now is to develop a local standard to ensure our stock continues to be safe and sound. This will be particularly challenging given a decrease in rental income following the 1% reduction in rents in 2016/17 and every year for the following three years
- We have over 1,700 homes within our sheltered housing stock. Our challenge is to make sure that this is good quality accommodation which meets the needs of our current older population but also for our residents who will make up our growing older population in the future

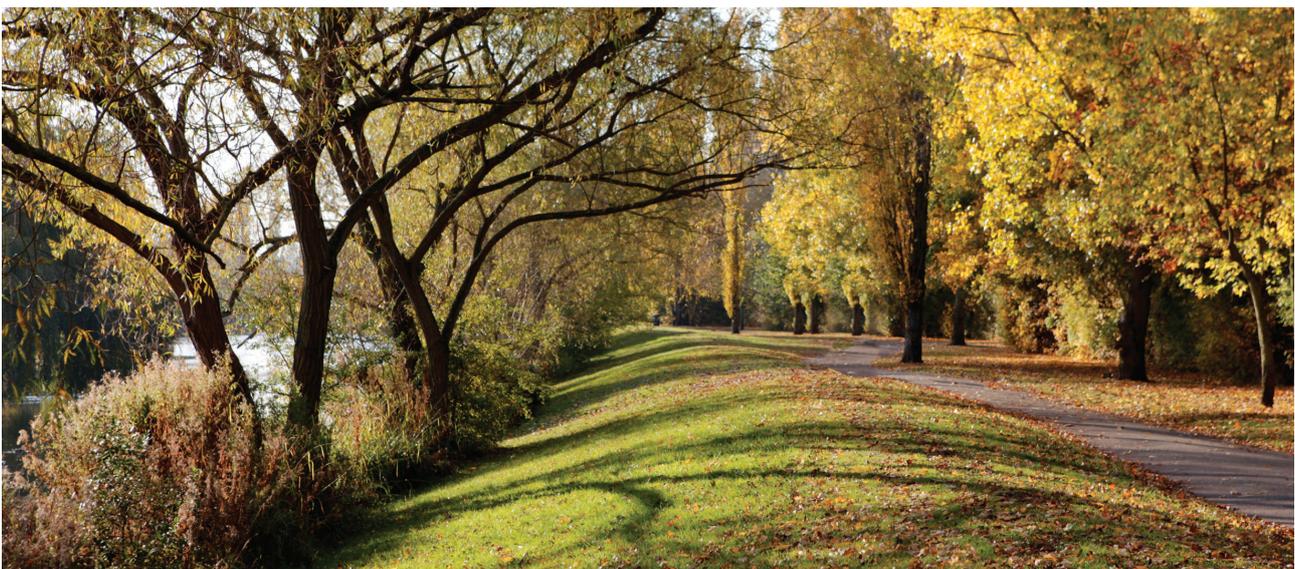
- Our estates are made up of owner occupied and private rented housing in addition to social housing. This poses a challenge to the Housing Revenue Account when delivering improvements to communal parts of flats and wider housing estates
- With rising fuel costs, we have a need to address fuel poverty and affordable warmth within our borough.

### Challenge 3 – Supporting stronger communities

- If we are to continue to provide high quality services we need to do so in a way that improves outcomes for individuals, communities and places. Individuals, families and communities have an important role to play in taking responsibility for what happens in their area. We need to change the way we support our communities so they can thrive on their own and be independent
- By working with our partners we need to meet the challenge of supporting the health and wellbeing of residents through healthy housing initiatives such as reducing fuel poverty or preventing falls in the home. This in turn helps people stay in their homes and community for longer
- An important challenge is keeping the borough's unemployment rate as low as possible by working with our partners in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to support residents to take up employment or gain new skills to

improve their employment prospects

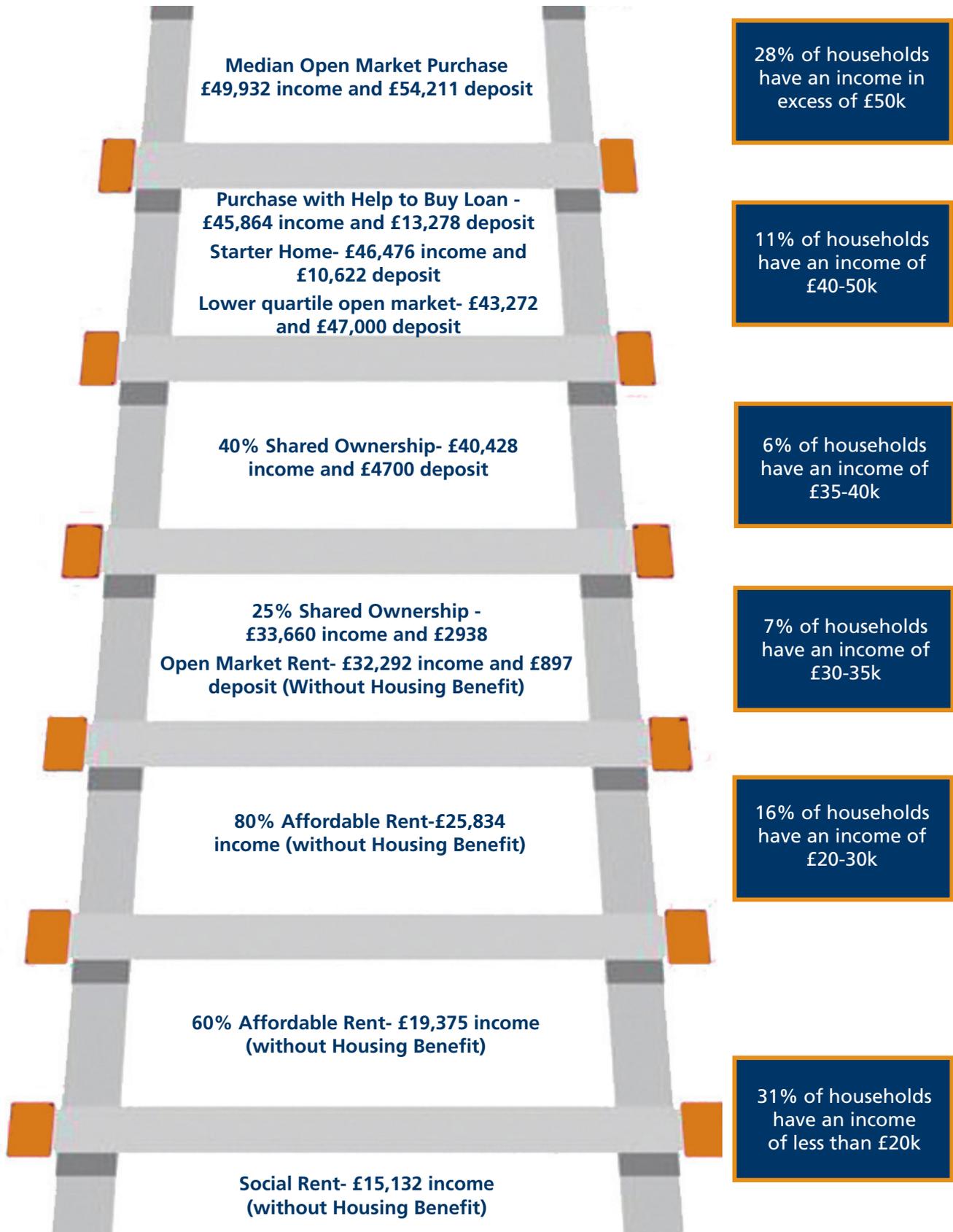
- We need to manage customers' housing expectations from the start so they are clear about the type of housing available to them and how much it will cost
- Welfare reform has caused some of our residents to experience difficulty in meeting their housing costs. We need to look at new ways to support and help our residents to improve their financial situation
- Housing Related Support funding comes from Essex County Council and is used to support vulnerable people to maintain their tenancies and increase their independence. Following a review of their budget priorities, this funding has been greatly reduced. This reduction leaves us with a challenge as to how we ensure vulnerable people remain supported
- We want to support residents to feel safe in their neighbourhoods and play our part in delivering the Community Safety Partnership strategy 2015-18
- We need to work with our partner agencies to ensure that services can still be delivered despite wide ranging budget reductions
- We need to ensure contracts for housing maintenance, construction and related services also create opportunities for local residents by providing employment, apprenticeships and other training opportunities.



## The Housing Ladder in Basildon Borough

The following housing ladder illustrates the income a household seeking a two bedroom property would need to be able to access a range of rental and home ownership options. Illustrations for one, three and four bedroom properties are available in Appendix 2 Evidence Base.

### The Housing Ladder (Two Bedroom)



The following table sets out the full costs and income required to access various housing products as illustrated on The Housing Ladder (Two Bedroom)

Product	Purchase Price	Deposit	Annual Mortgage/Rent	Income Required
Social Rent			£5044	£15,132
Affordable Rent 60%			£6458	£19,375
Affordable Rent 80%			£8611	£25,834
Open Market Rent		£897	£10,764	£32,292
25% Shared Ownership	£58,750	£2938	£11,200	£33,660
40% Shared Ownership	£94,000	£4700	£40,428	£40,428
Purchase with Help to Buy Loan	£265,550	£13,278+ £53,110 HTB loan	£15,288	£45,864
Starter Home	£212,440	£10,622	£15,492	£46,476
Lower quartile Open Market Purchase	£235,000	£47,000	£14,424	£43,272
Median Open Market Purchase	£271,057	£54,211	£16,640	£49,932

### Conditions and Assumptions

- The median purchase price on open market is £271,057
- The lower quartile purchase price on open market is £235,550
- New build properties attract a premium of 13%
- Help to Buy loans and Starter Home discounts are only available on new builds
- The median market rent is £879 per month (Hometrack)
- Median social rent is £97 per week
- Open market purchase is on a 25 year repayment mortgage, 5.8% interest and 20% deposit
- Shared ownership purchase is on a 25 year repayment mortgage, 7.2% interest, rent set at 2.75% remaining equity
- Housing cost should not exceed 1/3 household income and mortgage cannot exceed 4.5 x income
- Median purchase price is used unless otherwise specified to avoid distortion from occasional very high or low value properties and to be consistent with ONS.

## Initiatives to help people access more housing

We want everyone to be able to find a home that is affordable to them. The term affordable housing is defined as one of a range of housing products for sale or rent, to those whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

However, for all housing to be genuinely affordable we want to ensure housing costs do not exceed one third of net income. This principle has guided our recommendations on affordable rent levels and affordable home ownership options.

### Affordable Housing Products

#### a) Starter Homes

These are designed to enable first time buyers to purchase new build homes. Outside London, they are sold with a minimum 20% discount on the market value with the price capped at £250,000.

However, higher relative house prices in the borough, in relation to household income levels, may limit the effectiveness of Starter Homes as an affordable housing product in the borough. We will need to keep the impact of Starter Homes under review to ensure that homes provided in the borough are truly affordable for local people.

#### b) Expansion of Shared Ownership

The Government has an ambition of delivering an additional 135,000 shared ownership properties by

2021. A shared ownership home enables a potential buyer to purchase a share in a property, (outright or with a mortgage), and pay rent on the remaining share. There are also specialised shared ownership schemes for older people who may be looking to downsize. Sempra Homes has been successful in securing £1.7 million in funding for shared ownership.

#### c) Help to Buy Equity Loan

With a Help to Buy equity loan, the Government lends the buyer up to 20% of the cost of a new-build home, to be repaid within 25 years, or on the sale of the property if sooner. We know this is proving popular as in 2015/2016, 154 people purchased a property in the borough with the assistance of a Help to Buy loan.

#### d) Affordable Rent

Affordable Rent housing is defined as housing that is let at up to 80% of the market rent, and form an intermediate market that rests between Social and Open Market rents. Appendix 4 gives further guidance on Affordable Rent.

#### e) Rent to Buy

Rent to Buy homes are let to working households who have not previously owned their own home. They are let at an intermediate rent of up to 80% market rent to give the tenant the opportunity to save for a deposit. The tenant is able to ultimately purchase the property. Additional capital funding has recently been made available with the ambition of delivering an additional 10,000 properties for Rent to Buy by 2021.

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## 6. OUR BROADER WORK LOCALLY

### Sempra Homes – our contribution to house building

**To help meet the challenge of delivering the new housing we need in the borough we have set up our own housing company, Sempra Homes. Through it we will develop homes in the borough for sale and rent to:**

- contribute to the development of a diverse housing offer
- contribute to the levels of affordable housing stock in the borough
- maximise the council's financial returns subject to achieving the company's overall objectives

- encourage economic activity through the use of local business supply chains
- maintain control of design and density of schemes
- provide the borough's residents with training and learning opportunities through apprenticeships in partnership with local education providers and specialist schemes
- Champion low-cost energy use and sustainable developments for those occupying the new homes.

### Supporting our health partners

The strategic review of Basildon Council's Sheltered Housing Service undertaken by the Chartered Institute

of Housing in 2016 has made recommendations on making best use of this service and its assets to meet changing needs. We are already working with Basildon and Thurrock University Hospital to determine if we can support them in making best use of their medical beds during seasonal pressures by enabling people to be rehabilitated within some of our specialist stock in the community, rather than in hospital.

We work with the Clinical Commissioning Group to identify where new health facilities are required to meet increased demand resulting from housing development and regeneration schemes. Where appropriate we will seek contributions to the provision of health care facilities from housing developers.

Basildon Council has appointed a Health Regeneration Programme Manager, who will facilitate this partnership working.

### **Community Safety Partnership**

Basildon Council Housing department is committed to improving Community Safety. Our Antisocial Behaviour Team leads the Basildon Community Safety Partnership which consists of Basildon Council, Essex County Council, police, fire and rescue, probation services and the clinical commissioning group. The partnership has adopted the Community Safety Strategy which sets out the partnership work programme in respect of:

- gangs and serious organised crime
- hidden harms including domestic violence
- child sexual exploitation
- reducing re-offending
- early intervention and prevention
- Community engagement and reassurance.

The key strategic objectives of the Community Safety Partnership are to:

- reduce antisocial behaviour
- reduce crime
- reduce re-offending.

### **Morgan Sindall Maintenance Partnership**

We have recently entered into a long-term contract with Morgan Sindall to supply maintenance services for our homes and non-residential buildings. A system of a fixed payment per property, to carry out all repairs and capital works, has been implemented. This will

provide a more efficient service to tenants by reducing the need for repeated visits and is expected to be more cost effective.

The contract includes the creation of a Social Enterprise Scheme, which will help deliver external redecorations and estate improvement works. This will work in conjunction with local college PROCAT and Jobcentre Plus to target long-term unemployed residents who will be trained and mentored by Morgan Sindall engineers and staff. The Social Enterprise will be a not-for-profit organisation and any surplus will be re-invested back into the business or the local community. The contract will also provide apprenticeship opportunities.

### **Co-location of Community Services**

We have created a community hub in the Basildon Centre. This will bring together a range of services, including the Department of Work and Pensions, Job Centre Plus and Citizens Advice Basildon. Residents will benefit from this single location where they can find a range of services including help with finding a job, advice and assistance with budgeting and debt management and advice on tenancy rights and responsibilities.

### **Economic Development**

Our Economic Development team supports local business, economy and skills development through a number of initiatives and partnership working. These include:

- Education, Employment and Skills group which works to improve the employment prospects, education and skills of local people
- Disability employer engagement roadshow which aims to increase disability employment opportunities and to cultivate the relationship with disability employment organisations across Essex
- Your Future, annual careers and education event
- Young Entrepreneur event
- Basildon Business Education Consortium, which raises the ambitions and aspirations of the borough's young people, ensuring they have the knowledge and skills to be 'work ready' to facilitate entry into work. It also strengthens connections between local job opportunities and the educational and skills provision offered by education and skills providers.

## 7. NATIONAL POLICIES AND HOW THEY AFFECT US

**Much of the way we deliver housing services in Basildon Borough is governed by legislation and national policies. However, the legal framework we operate within is frequently changing and so we must be innovative and flexible in finding ways to continue to deliver our housing vision for the borough. To put this into context, some of the main legislative and policy changes to have occurred in the last couple of years are summarised below, alongside an insight into what they could mean for the borough.**

### Welfare reform

The Government has been undertaking a significant programme of welfare reform as part of its austerity agenda. The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 is expected to introduce the following measures, which will have an impact on housing management and delivery:

- The benefit cap is the maximum amount that a non-working, non-disabled household can receive from state benefits. This has been reduced from £26,000 PA to £20,000 PA (£13,400 PA for single adults) for claimants living outside of London. The 30 percentile annual rent for a three bedroom home in Basildon Borough is £11,960 PA resulting in around 60% of income being spent on rent. This has seriously affected larger families renting in the borough
- The LHA is a payment which assists low income households, in private rented housing, with their rent. From April 2015, the rates of the LHA were frozen until 2019. Private rents in Basildon Borough are continuing to increase, with lower quartile rental properties already costing between £30-60 per week more than the LHA provides for. The impact of this is that low income households are increasingly unable to access private rented accommodation and may turn to the Council, Registered Providers or friends and families to secure housing that they can afford
- Universal Credit replaces a range of benefit payments with one flexible payment. It is expected to be rolled out to all claimants by the end of 2018. The claimant is then responsible for managing their money including paying their rent, which increases the risk of rent arrears. The

advantage of Universal Credit is that it makes it easier for people to take on temporary or part time employment, as the payment can be varied to reflect changing income

- Young people, aged 18-21 are no longer automatically entitled to housing benefit

The impact of these reforms is that it is becoming much harder for unemployed and low income households to afford housing in the borough. Therefore, as part of our housing strategy, we will look to prioritise helping people into employment to help them maximise their income, so they can afford to pay their rent.

### Changes to funding streams

A) The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is the account which records all revenue expenditure and income relating to council homes.

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 legislated that Social Landlords and Registered Providers had to deliver a 1% reduction in rents in 2016/17 and every year for the following three years. By 2019/20 the average weekly Basildon Council rent will therefore be £14 less than was forecast. This, combined with changes to the Right to Buy rules, has resulted in a £13.5m shortfall in the resources available to the Council until 2019 and significantly affects our 30-year financial housing investment strategy. We will therefore need to review our spending plans, whilst maintaining service standards and investment in our housing stock.

B) Housing Related Support Funding is used to support vulnerable people to maintain their tenancies and increase their independence.

As part of Essex County Council's budget priority reviews, there has been a reduction in Housing Related Support funding which will impact on our housing service delivery. This reduction will affect services we directly deliver, (such as sheltered housing, care line and dispersed alarm services) and the specialist housing we use to accommodate vulnerable people.

In light of this, we will have to review the way some of these services are funded and provided to make them more efficient and to ensure we can continue to deliver support services to the people that need them the most.

C) New Homes Bonus – the money we receive from Central Government when new homes are built in the borough

The New Homes Bonus (NHB) brings additional revenue for local authorities following the completion of new private homes, gypsy or traveller sites or affordable homes in their area. In addition, we receive payments when long-term empty homes are brought back into use. Currently, the Government matches the council tax raised on each new home built for a period of six years. However this was reduced to five years in 2017/18 and four years in 2018/19. There will also be a requirement for housing growth to be greater than a baseline, currently set at 0.4%. The government are also considering withholding NHB when homes are built following a planning appeal.

### Reforming adult social care

Some adults need supported housing. This might be due to old age, mental health issues or learning disabilities. Due to additional running costs supported housing rents are generally higher than the average social rent. We will work with our partners at ECC and supported housing providers to ensure supported housing remains available to those who need it.

### The Housing and Planning Act 2016

This legislation is going to overhaul parts of the housing and town planning systems and is designed to support the Government's ambition to develop one million new homes by 2020. Some of these changes include:

- Measures to increase the supply of new starter homes for sale in England – but this is likely to mean less affordable homes for rent being built
- The expansion of the self-build and custom-build sector, which should open up a new way of entering the housing market for those who want to build their own home
- The introduction of additional measures to target rogue landlords and letting agents. As we have a growing private rented sector this is important locally
- The extension of the Right to Buy process to tenants of private registered providers. Pilot schemes are ongoing. It is expected that any future

national rollout will be funded by requiring councils to sell higher value social housing when it becomes vacant

- Phasing out tenancies for life – a change to a household's circumstances could mean that their social tenancy will end when they can afford to rent privately or buy a home
- The requirement for all local authorities to submit and deliver Local Plans – which will ensure an up-to-date land supply is available to build new homes.

### Neighbourhood planning

Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the Localism Act 2011 as a tool for local people and businesses to shape the development and growth of their local area. It allows communities to choose where new homes, shops and offices should be built, have their say on what infrastructure should be provided and grant planning permission for new buildings they want in their area.

Local councils (including Town, Parish and Village Councils) are responsible for neighbourhood planning in their administrative areas. In areas without a local council, local people and businesses can form neighbourhood forums which become the designated body for neighbourhood planning in their area.



Acacia Park, Basildon – photo courtesy of Hilbery Chaplin

Local councils and neighbourhood forums have the power to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan for their neighbourhood area which sets out general planning policies for development and the use of land and is used to determine planning applications in the neighbourhood area. Local councils and neighbourhood forums can also produce Neighbourhood Development Orders, which can grant planning permission for certain types of development in the neighbourhood area without the need for a traditional planning application.

In 2015, the Council adopted a Neighbourhood Planning Support Policy. Whilst to date no Neighbourhood Development Plans have been adopted in Basildon Borough, two are underway. Two neighbourhood areas have been designated, Hovefields & Honiley and Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet.

### **Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**

The Homelessness Reduction Act will come into force in April 2018. The aim of the Act is to reform the homelessness duties placed on local authorities, placing greater focus on preventing and relieving homelessness.

The key changes include:

- Requiring local housing authorities to take reasonable steps to help prevent any eligible person who is at risk of homelessness from becoming homeless. This means either helping them to stay in their current accommodation or helping them to find a new place to live
- The Bill extends the period for which people are considered threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days before they are likely to become homeless, ensuring that LHAs can intervene earlier to avert a crisis
- Introducing a relief duty requiring local housing authorities to take reasonable steps to help secure accommodation for any eligible person who is homeless. This help could be, for example, the provision of a rent deposit or debt advice
- Introducing the concept of 'help to secure', rather than secure in each case. The intention is to increase choice and control for applicants and allow the local housing authority to help to resolve a person's particular problems rather than direct resources at finding a place for everyone that seeks help

- Local authorities will cease to be subject to these duties if the applicant refuses a suitable offer of accommodation or deliberately and unreasonably refuses to co-operate
- Local authorities are required to carry out an assessment of the applicant's homelessness and set out steps to remedy this in an agreed, written plan
- Applicants will have the right to request a review in relation to prevention and relief duties
- Requires public authorities (to be specified) to notify the LHA of service users they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless where service users give their consent.

### **Housing White Paper 'Fixing our broken housing market' 2017**

The Housing White Paper was published in February 2017 with the intention to reform the housing market and boost the supply of new homes.

The Housing White Paper identified four proposals:

1. Planning for the right homes in the right places

This proposal focuses on the assessment of housing need, ensuring all areas have an up to date Local Plan and increasing the role of neighbourhood planning.

2. Building homes faster

This proposal focuses on delivering infrastructure, reducing delays in the planning system and driving development where planning permission has been granted.

3. Diversifying the market

This proposal focuses on opening up the market to smaller builders, supporting housing associations and local authorities to build more, encouraging institutional investment in the private rented sector and promoting modular and factory built homes.

4. Helping people now

This proposal focuses on investing in affordable housing and specialised housing for groups including the elderly and disabled and preventing homelessness.

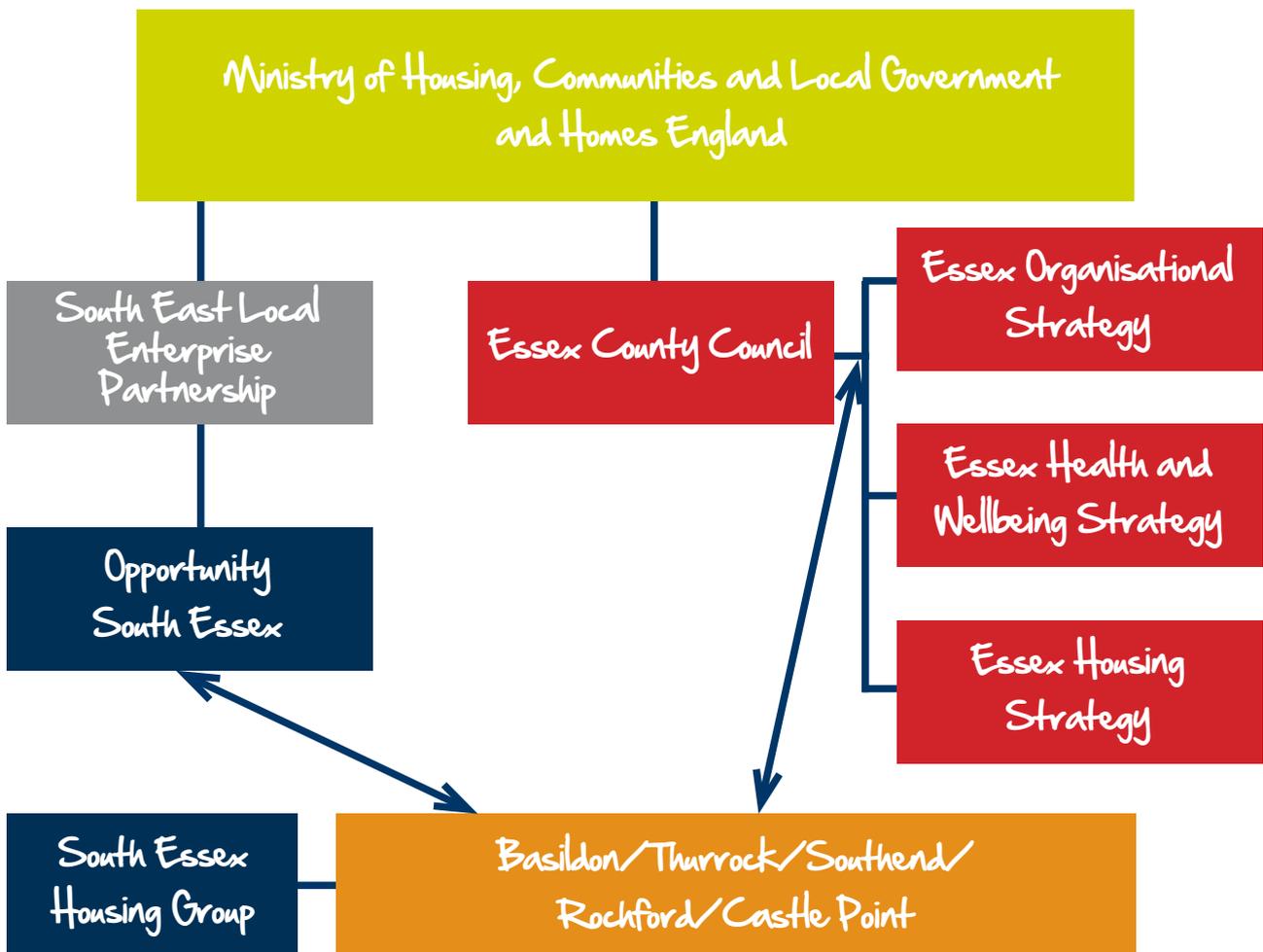
## 8. WHAT IS HAPPENING ELSEWHERE IN ESSEX?

Basildon Borough is one of 12 local authorities in Essex. Basildon Borough is located in the South of Essex which is defined as a single, functional, sub-regional housing market that can be stretching from the M25 in the west along the Thames Estuary to Shoeburyness in the east. South Essex presents a significant opportunity for transformational growth. While much has been achieved in recent years, for example the opening of DP World London Gateway, the development of London Southend Airport and the expansion of the Port of Tilbury; South Essex has the potential to deliver a further 66,600 jobs and 46,850 homes in the years to 2031.

The Government's preferred route for the Lower Thames Crossing is between east of Gravesend and Tilbury via a tunnel. The proximity of this new transport route to Basildon Borough, about 4KM to the west, is likely to have an effect on the need for housing and commensurate improvements to infrastructure in the borough. We will monitor the progress of the crossing and work with Essex County Council and Highways England to understand the impact and deliver adequate mitigations.

To meet this potential we need to work collaboratively with Essex County Council and our partners in the South Essex Sub-Region.

The following illustrates some of the main tools we use to facilitate collaborative working.



**National Lead**  
Sub Region

**Local Enterprise Partnership**  
Borough/District

**County**

## Opportunity South Essex

Opportunity South Essex is a sub-regional partnership governed by a business-led board. The partnership brings together the interests of both public and private sector partners to achieve economies of scale and efficiencies in delivering the collective growth ambitions of South Essex.

The Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission was set up by the Government in March 2016. It has been tasked with developing an ambitious vision and delivery plan for North Kent, South Essex and East London up to 2050. The Opportunity South Essex and the Council responded to the Commission's Call for Ideas. Responses in respect of creating new homes and communities included expansion of off-site construction facilities for homes, support for a programme of custom and self-build housing and remodeling of sheltered housing schemes. Over the next 18 months we will work with the Commission as it develops ideas further to secure a better future for our communities.

## South Essex Housing Group

Basildon Borough is part of the South Essex Housing Group. This partnership keeps the housing market under review through a joint housing and planning project, the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which informs Local Plans and housing strategies. Along with Registered Providers, the partnership also funds a Housing Strategy Coordinator who helps bring together the efforts across boundaries and organisations to deliver homes that people need in the places they are needed.

A sub group of the South Essex Housing Group is the Essex Developers Group which helps improve housing growth in the county. It aims to eliminate barriers to building and maximise commercial opportunities by getting the public and private sectors working together.

The current housing priority actions for the sub-region are:

### 1. New Funding Models / Viability / Evidence Base /Site Development

- Enabling the development of high quality and sustainable affordable housing in places where people want to live
- Responding to local need and supporting the economy.

### 2. Private Sector Housing / Green Deal / Decent Homes /Empty Homes

- Improving the condition and usage of existing housing across all tenures taking into account social and environmental factors that impact on quality of life.

### 3. Planning for Older People / Extra Care / Adaptations /Under Occupation / Homelessness

- Enabling people to make informed choices about their housing circumstances and enabling them to meet their own housing needs.

Developing links between health, wellbeing, employment and housing to help prevent homelessness and support vulnerable people

### Essex County Council Draft Housing Strategy

The ECC Draft Housing Strategy sets out ECC's role as an enabler and facilitator for housing growth. The ECC Draft Housing Strategy identifies five work streams:

- 1 Public Land utilisation and partnership packaging
- 2 Independent living for people who need support
- 3 Strategic place shaping for economic growth
- 4 Expertise, co-ordination and Fiscal support
- 5 Skills development for construction.

## The Essex Organisation Strategy 2017-2021

The Essex Organisation Strategy sets out the areas of work that Essex County Council will be focusing on during 2017 to 2021. Many of their objectives are similar to those laid out in the Basildon Borough Housing Strategy.

- Enable inclusive economic growth
- Help people get the best start and age well
- Help create great places to live and work
- Transform the council to achieve more with less.

We will continue to work jointly with Essex County Council to deliver these common objectives.

## Essex Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-2018

This strategy has been developed and implemented by the Essex Health and Wellbeing Board. It recognises that housing and health are intrinsically linked and we will continue to work with our health and social care partners to deliver the strategy locally.

The current priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy are:

- **Starting and developing well:** Ensuring every child in Essex has the best start in life
- **Living and working well:** Ensuring that residents make better lifestyle choices and have the opportunities needed to enjoy a healthy life
- **Ageing well:** Ensuring that older people remain as independent for as long as possible.

The priorities of this Housing Strategy are supportive of these priorities.



Quendon Road, Basildon. First new council homes in 25 years.

## 9. BASILDON BOROUGH'S HOUSING STRATEGY – OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

**We believe that the following four strategic priorities will address the challenges set out in chapter 3.**

### Meeting future growth needs

The borough's population continues to grow naturally, which raises supply challenges in meeting our own housing demand. With rising house and rent prices predicted to continue, and an increase in households moving out of London, there is also a challenge to provide housing which remains genuinely affordable to local residents.

We also want homes which attract households that commute into the borough to relocate here. The delivery of more 'executive-type' homes will encourage the high income and professional households needed by local employers to locate here. We also want to encourage residents seeking to purchase a larger home to stay in the borough. This will improve Basildon Borough's social-economic profile and overall sustainability.

The concept of aspirational homes will be different for everyone. By delivering a range of homes we hope to meet everyone's aspirations, be it a town centre apartment or a large detached house.

Stakeholders have drawn our attention to the difficulty key workers experience in gaining affordable homes in the borough. We recognise this is a barrier to staff recruitment and retention for workers who provide particular key roles in the borough.

Our public consultation showed that the provision of attractive and energy efficient homes set in well designed estates with green space and supporting infrastructure was important to our residents. Meeting future growth need was important to those who live in more unsettled housing and to those who work in the borough but do not live here. Support was given for the provision of properties suitable for older residents and those seeking to downsize and disabled residents indicated that they had had challenges finding housing which meet their needs.

Our Local Plan is under review to meet the longer term development needs of the borough and Sempra Homes has an ambitious business plan to develop and lease new homes for local people. We consider that our

Local Planning Authority function and Sempra Homes offer us the best opportunities to address many of these challenges.

### Some of the ways we will get there are:

- We will follow the proposal in the White Paper 'Fixing our Broken Housing market' by delivering a range of high quality market, intermediate and affordable homes via Sempra Homes
- Taking advantage of new and innovative ways of delivering housing, as per the Housing White Paper 'Fixing our Broken Market', including factory built homes supplied by the NU Living factory located in the Borough
- We will introduce and keep under review Tenure, Type and Unit Size Guidance (Appendix 3) to provide clarity to developers on our expectations for new housing in the borough
- We will maximize on site contributions of affordable homes on new developments by reviewing our viability appraisal and community sum policy and issuing guidance
- We will seek a balance between the supply of affordable housing for ownership and the supply of affordable housing for rent as guided by the South Essex Strategic Housing market Assessment
- We will put in place design guides and minimum space standards to encourage well designed and high quality homes
- We will set minimum requirements for provision of older peoples housing and lifetime homes which are accessible and easy to adapt
- Adding to the diversity of the market as stated in the White Paper 'Fixing our Broken Market', by encouraging self and custom built homes
- We are taking steps to deliver homes for applicants on the Homeseeker Register
- We are taking steps to deliver homes for key workers to support staff recruitment and retention via Sempra Homes.

## Make the best use of existing homes

As part of our drive to meet housing demand, we will work to ensure the best use of existing homes across all tenures in the borough.

From our public consultation there was strong support for bringing empty homes back into use and ensuring homes are warm and energy costs are affordable.

Our stakeholder engagement identified the need to develop and support the private rented sector in Basildon Borough. We will find a balance between supporting provision and enforcing standards.

### Some of the ways will get there are:

- We will explore the reasons why we have long term empty homes in the borough and develop a proportionate and effective strategy for bringing them back into use including considering the use of management orders where necessary
- We will work in partnership with Morgan Sindall to ensure our council housing stock is safe and sound
- We will develop an asset management strategy which will take a more strategic approach to delivering improvements and look more widely at estate conditions
- We will review underused garage courts and other land assets for other purposes including parking provision and new housing
- We will consider the findings of the Sheltered Housing Review 2016 to determine how we can make best use of our homes for older people so that they meet the needs of both the current and future older population
- We will reduce under-occupation by marketing

alternatives to our tenants and supporting the increase in supply of smaller properties into which they could move

- We will make use of the information obtained from the Stock Condition Modelling and Health Impact Assessment to improve housing conditions, in respect of building condition, excessively cold homes, fuel poverty and the state of repair in the private sector
- We will rigorously enforce the legislation to secure improvements and ensure the health, safety and welfare of all private sector tenants
- We will take action to identify Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) within the borough and license those that fall within the Environmental Health licensing criteria to ensure tenants are protected from sub-standard living conditions. This includes considering the benefits of a selective licensing scheme
- We will promote and encourage good practice via our Landlord Forum and targeted contact with landlords
- We will work with Essex Social Care and Health Services to ensure that private tenants and owner occupiers are assessed promptly to access disabled facilities grants. We will continue to fund occupation therapy assessment services for tenants requiring adaptations and continue to make the case for increased Better Care funding for disabled facilities by outlining the health and social care cost savings this provides
- We will ensure homes are given to those most in need by tackling tenancy and Right to Buy fraud.



Beechwood Village, Basildon

## Support residents to create neighbourhoods they wish to live in and be part of

As part of our drive for more and better homes, we also want our borough to be a place where people choose to live throughout their life, as they develop their careers, raise their families, and grow old. To achieve this, we need to ensure our communities are empowered to do more for themselves, so they can shape, build and sustain the communities they want to be part of.

Respondents to the public consultation identified this as marginally, the most important priority. Stakeholders identified the importance of considering a wider perspective stating place shaping as an important element for future regeneration of the borough to avoid piecemeal development. A more holistic vision is required involving all stakeholders, including the community, as well as developers, Registered providers and investors. Enhancing or facilitating natural community growth could be a way for these developments to be more successful

### Some of the ways we will get there are:

- We will explore alternative and new ways of engagement, such as virtual and online mechanisms
- We will support our communities to thrive on their own and be independent by supporting community volunteer groups, through the Strengthening Communities Policy
- We will deliver the Community Safety Partnership Strategy, Gangs and Serious Organised Crime Strategy and the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy to improve the safety of our residents, their families and communities
- We will ensure our regeneration schemes promote communities in which people wish to live by providing quality neighbourhood services and public realm improvements including the streets, pathways, right of ways, parks, publicly accessible open spaces and any public and civic building and facilities
- We will consider the delivery of community facilities as well as affordable housing via Section 106 agreements.

## Improve access to housing opportunities and choice

As part of our ambition for more and better homes, it is also important that all residents can access housing which meets their needs. We know that increasing house prices and rents form a significant barrier to people accessing housing in the borough. There will, therefore, continue to be a need for affordable, social and intermediate housing options We understand that helping residents to gain employment, improve their employment prospects and maximise their income will enable them to have more choice about their housing and more control over how and where they live.

### Some of the ways we will get there are:

- We will make full use of our community hub located within the Basildon Centre. By working with our partners, such as the DWP, we will keep the borough's unemployment rate as low as possible by supporting residents into employment or skills training so they can improve their life opportunities
- We will work with our partners to identify ways to continue to deliver services to vulnerable people who require housing related support or specialist accommodation
- We will monitor and update the Homeless Prevention Strategy Action Plan every year so it is capable of responding to our duties under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017
- We will follow the proposal in the White Paper 'Fixing our Broken Housing Market' and invest in affordable housing to prevent homelessness
- We will manage customers' housing expectations from the start so they are clear about the type of housing available to them and how much it will cost. We will also help them to help themselves to find a solution that works for them
- We will explore ways to prevent homelessness amongst young, low income single persons
- We will keep our housing allocation scheme under review to ensure it is meeting the housing needs of people we accept as having a need for affordable rented housing.

## 10. DELIVERING THE HOUSING STRATEGY

**This housing strategy is a living, working document. The delivery plan will be monitored quarterly and updated by the housing strategy team annually. This is to ensure it can be responsive to the changes in local issues and national legislative and policy environment that will occur over the lifetime of the strategy. We recognise that we cannot deliver our ambitions alone and therefore we will maintain, grow and enter into new partnerships that will help us do this.**

### Working in partnership

Partnership working is central to achieving our housing objectives and we will continue to strengthen current connections and make investments in new emerging partnerships in the following ways:

- Continue to develop our relationship with key housing providers, including Registered Providers, private developers and house builders, through specific forums and boards
- Maintain our joint working with Essex County Council to deliver services that benefit the people of Basildon Borough especially those who are vulnerable and require a joint approach of the county and the borough

- Continue our vital work with the third sector as their contribution is recognised and valued
- Work alongside our residents and value and act upon the suggestions and feedback made by our Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives and members of the general public
- Maintain and develop links with the Basildon and Brentwood Clinical Commissioning Group and the Basildon and Thurrock Hospital Trust so we can support the health and wellbeing of residents through healthy housing initiatives
- Engage with neighbouring authorities through a range of partnership working groups including the South Essex Housing Group, Essex Housing Officers Group and Essex Homeless Officers Group
- We will collaborate on different partnership delivery models to find one that will support us to deliver the strategy.



Lincewood Court, Langdon Hills

## Appendix 6 Housing Strategy Glossary

<b>Affordable Housing</b>	The name given to a range of housing products available for rent or purchase to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Examples include Social Rent, Affordable Rent and Shared Ownership.
<b>Affordable Rent</b>	Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent (including any applicable service charges) of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent.
<b>Benefit Cap</b>	A restriction on the maximum income most non-working households can receive from benefits. Currently set at £20,000 per annum.
<b>Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)</b>	Clinical Commissioning Groups are NHS organisations set up by the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to organise the delivery of NHS services in England. The Basildon Borough is situated within the Basildon, Billericay and Brentwood CCG.
<b>Concealed Households</b>	A concealed family is one living in a multi-family household in addition to the primary household. An example would be a young couple living with parents. The parents would be the primary household and the young couple would be the concealed household.
<b>Decent Homes Standard</b>	A minimum quality standard for socially rented homes. It sets minimum standards for kitchens, bathrooms, heating and general repair.
<b>The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)</b>	The Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for welfare and pension policy. The Department has four operational organisations: Jobcentre Plus; the Pension Service; Disability and Carers Service which provides financial support to disabled people and their carers; and the Child Maintenance Group.
<b>Fuel Poverty</b>	A household is considered to be in fuel poverty if they need to spend more than 10% of their income to heat their home to an adequate warmth.
<b>Help to Buy loan</b>	A scheme where the Government lends the buyer up to 20% of the cost of a new-build home, to be repaid within 25 years, or on the sale of the property if sooner.

<b>Homelessness (rough sleeper)</b>	A person who has nowhere they can legally live or reasonably live. It may include people who are staying very temporarily with friends or family or living in emergency accommodation such as a domestic violence refuge. A person who is street homeless is referred to as a 'rough sleeper'.
<b>Home Swap Scheme</b>	A national scheme used by social tenants to seek properties to exchange with.
<b>Housing Revenue Account (HRA)</b>	The income and expenditure related to council housing.
<b>House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)</b>	A property occupied by three or more people consisting of two or more households. HMO's are required to have a licence from the local authority if they contain 5 or more people forming 2 or more households who share facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms and are 3 or more storeys high.
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Any facility, service or physical structure which supports or enables housing. Examples would include new or improved roads, schools or health services provision.
<b>Intermediate Housing Products</b>	Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels These can include shared ownership and other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rent housing.
<b>Basildon Infrastructure Delivery Plan</b>	An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) sets out the infrastructure needed to deliver planned growth sustainably, effectively and at the right time. The Council, its partners and other stakeholders then use the document to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure is in place as the growth is delivered.
<b>Key Workers</b>	An employee who provides a vital service for example in the police, health, or education sectors. A full explanation of key workers is given in Appendix 3: Tenure, Size and Type Guidance.
<b>Local Enterprise Partnership</b>	Local enterprise partnerships are partnerships between local authorities and businesses. They decide what the priorities should be for investment in roads, buildings and facilities in the area to create jobs and drive economic growth. Basildon is in the South East Local Enterprise Partnership. (SELEP)

<b>The Local Housing Allocation Scheme</b>	This sets out how council and housing association properties in Basildon are let.
<b>Local Housing Allowance (LHA)</b>	The maximum amount of assistance with private rent a person who qualifies for housing benefit can receive. It is based on both the area lived in and the number of bedrooms needed. From April 2019 the LHA rate will also apply to rent in social housing.
<b>Local Plan</b>	The Local Plan sets out a vision and a framework for the future development of an area. It reviews how much new development is needed in the borough over a period of around 20 years and where it will be built. It identifies which areas should be developed, what should be protected and how we might best mitigate the impacts and provide infrastructure to support development.
<b>Long term empty home</b>	A property which has been vacant for more than six months.
<b>Open Market Homes</b>	Property which are sold or let without any criteria.
<b>Private Registered provider</b>	An organisation, other than a Local Authority, who provide social housing. Most private registered providers are also known as Housing Associations. Private Registered Providers are defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.
<b>Rent to Buy</b>	Rent to Buy homes are let to working households who have not previously owned their own home. They are let at an intermediate rent of up to 80% market rent to give the tenant the opportunity to save for a deposit. The tenant is able to ultimately purchase the property.
<b>Right to Buy (RTB)</b>	Council tenants who have held their tenancy for over five years can apply to purchase their property at a discounted rate. This is also being extended to tenants of Private Registered Providers.
<b>Self-Contained Housing</b>	A property which has its own kitchen, bathroom and toilet facilities not shared with any other household. It may share other facilities such as communal gardens or an entrance hall.
<b>Social Housing</b>	Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers for which guideline target rents are determined through a national rent formula.

<b>Spare room subsidy ('bedroom tax')</b>	A reduction in the maximum amount of housing benefit a person in a socially rented home can receive if they have more bedrooms than they need. Housing benefit is currently reduced by 14% for one spare room and 25% for two or more spare rooms.
<b>Starter Home</b>	These are designed to enable first time buyers to purchase new build homes. Outside London, they are sold with a minimum 20% discount on the market value with the price capped at £250,000.
<b>Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)</b>	An assessment carried out to determine the amounts and types of accommodation. Basildon is included in the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
<b>Supported Accommodation</b>	Housing which also provides support as part of the conditions of living there. Typical residents include young people leaving home or care, older people or persons with physical or learning disabilities needing support to live independently.
<b>Universal Credit</b>	A single monthly payment being introduced to replace a range of other benefits including Job Seekers Allowance, Employment Support Allowance, Income Support and Housing Benefit.
<b>Welfare Reform</b>	A programme of changes introduced since 2012 to reform the welfare system. This includes the introduction of Universal Credit and the 'bedroom tax'.





# HOUSING STRATEGY

2018-2023

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