

Report of	Assistant Director of Place and Client	Author	Karen Paton ☎ 282275
Title	Colchester's new Housing Strategy 2022-27		
Wards affected	All wards		

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Colchester's new Housing Strategy is due for publication in 2022.

The new Housing Strategy sets out our ambitions for housing in Colchester over the next 5 years and describes how we intend to use our resources and work with partners in both the public and private sectors to help us achieve our priorities. The new Housing Strategy highlights how our work in housing contributes to wider agendas such as Levelling Up

The Local Government Act 2003 required all local authorities to have a Housing Strategy, which sets out its vision for housing in the local area and provides an overarching framework for policies and plans.

The Housing Strategy is a key strategic document for the Local Authority, and it recognises the importance of a safe and affordable home for health and wellbeing.

The Strategy sets out what the Council and its partners will do to help address the key housing issues and challenges facing the residents of Colchester including increasing the supply and access to affordable housing and making better use of what is available, providing support to people to help them maintain their tenancies, improving neighbourhoods to create better communities for people to live in, improving the standard of accommodation in both the public and private rented sector and reducing carbon emissions in homes.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To approve the new Housing Strategy 2022-27 for Colchester.**
- 2.2 To recommend to full Council that the Housing Strategy be adopted as part of the Council's Policy Framework.**

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to produce and publish a Housing Strategy based on a review of housing in the borough.**

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 To not adopt the Housing Strategy. There are however clear risks to not having a robust evidence based strategy in place such as not achieving local priorities, not being able to evidence and articulate Colchester Borough Council's wider vision for housing and not providing a strong focus to our partners about their contribution to meeting our priorities.

5. Background Information

5.1 Developing the new Housing Strategy

In the process of developing the new Housing Strategy, we have collaborated extensively to ensure it is based on firm evidence.

- We updated and considered an in-depth evidence base to understand the details of housing need.
- We held a Consultation workshop with representatives from local housing organisations to help shape the new Housing Strategy by identifying the current challenges for housing in Colchester for both organisations and residents and how these can be addressed.
- Following the consultation, we established a Project Group with partners to ensure a collaborative approach to designing the new Strategy. The group considered the challenges identified at the workshop and agreed priorities with collaborative actions to improve the housing situation for the residents of Colchester.
- The Portfolio Holder for Housing, CBC Senior Management Team and Colchester Borough Homes Board have been given the opportunity to review the documents.
- The Draft Housing Strategy has been circulated to Officers and Partners for their comments and amendments made based on largely positive feedback.
- Senior Managers have reviewed and approved the draft.

5.2 Key Priorities

Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-27 sets out our vision for housing in the borough:

‘Colchester, where all residents have access to a safe and affordable home that promotes health and equality, in a sustainable community’.

The Housing Strategy recognises the importance of a safe and affordable home in ensuring healthy lives and levelling up access to life opportunities. It provides the overarching framework for the Council's housing policies and plans.

The key priorities that the new Housing Strategy will focus on are:

- Supply – ‘We will increase the supply of quality affordable homes’
- Sustainability and Community – ‘We will support people to maintain their homes and build sustainable communities’
- Structure – ‘We will reduce carbon emissions from homes and improve quality and standards’
- Prevent Homelessness – ‘We will prevent homelessness by working with partners to deliver Colchester's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy’ (A separate document that sits under the Housing Strategy).

We have considered government policy in the development of the new strategy to ensure that it aligns with the priority housing issues identified nationally especially around:

- Initiatives for increasing housing supply and homeownership
- Reforming the welfare system
- Quality of housing in both the social and private sector
- Levelling Up

We recognise that our work with partners is key to achieving the actions set out in our new Housing Strategy Delivery Plan and we have ensured that this aligns with the work of existing partnerships and programmes.

5.3 Monitoring and Review

The strategy will be a live document that will achieve its aims and objectives through the implementation of a 5-year Delivery Plan, which will be updated by Colchester Borough Council on a regular basis.

6. **Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment on the Housing Strategy has been completed and a link to the document can be found below:

[Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-27 · Colchester Borough Council](#)

6.2 There are no Human Rights implications

7. **Strategic Plan References**

7.1 The priorities in the new Housing Strategy will deliver against the Council's current Strategic Plan 2020-23 priorities in particular the pledge to "increase the number, quality and types of homes" and under this the goals to:

- Deliver 30% affordable housing across all our own housing sites
- Deliver 380 affordable homes
- Improve existing Council homes to keep them in good repair and improve energy efficiency
- Build new Council homes for our residents
- Ensure all new homes are designed to a high quality across all tenures
- Continue to improve and modernise available housing for older people

8. **Consultation**

- A Consultation workshop was held with representatives from local housing organisations as well as housing teams from CBC and CBH to help shape the new Housing Strategy.
- The Draft Housing Strategy has been circulated to Officers and Partners for their comments.
- The Portfolio Holder for Housing, CBC Senior Management Team and Colchester Borough Homes Board have been given the opportunity to review the documents.
- The responses to consultations have been positive. Where comments, amendments and suggestions have been made these have been incorporated where appropriate.

9. **Publicity Considerations**

9.1 The Housing Strategy documents will be published on the Council's website. A communications plan is being developed to publicise the Strategy and generate interest and commitment to the Delivery Plan.

10. **Financial implications**

- 10.1 The strategy sets out a challenging and ambitious vision for housing which will be delivered against a backdrop of significant reduction in funding for local government. In the current financial climate of reduced resources, the Council will need to look carefully at how it will use these resources to deliver the strategy from existing budgets.

The Council will work to encourage its partners to commit their resources to meeting the priorities set out in the strategy. As many of the organisations are members of the Housing Strategy Project Group, they have already helped to shape the strategy and shown their commitment to its delivery.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 Providing good quality homes is crucial to people's health and quality of life and the actions set out in the Delivery Plan of the new Housing Strategy aim to improve the health and wellbeing of residents in Colchester by providing affordable, safe and secure housing.
- 11.2 It is anticipated that with the implementation of the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan there will be a positive benefit for Community Safety.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 There are no health and safety implications

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 There are no risk management implications

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 14.1 Environmental and sustainability implications have been considered throughout the development of the new Housing Strategy, recognising the role that housing must play in the Net Zero Carbon agenda. The Housing Strategy Delivery Plan sets out dedicated actions to improve the energy efficiency of existing homes as well as on new housing developments. These improvements will benefit residents by providing a cost saving on utility bills and improvements to their health and wellbeing.

Appendices

- Appendix A Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-27
Appendix B Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2022-27

Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-2027

Logos and list of partners – to be confirmed

Foreword

Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities

Providing good quality homes is crucial to people's health and quality of life and supporting the provision of new and affordable housing across Colchester, is a key role for the Council.

Our new Housing Strategy for Colchester has been produced taking into account changes to national and local policy as well as the economic and social impacts of the Covid 19 Public Health pandemic.

Demand for all types of housing in Colchester continues to grow whilst the supply of affordable accommodation is reducing. To mitigate this, we need to look at ways in which we can work in partnership to increase the supply of affordable housing and make best use of the stock, as well as ensuring that existing and new homes meet the required standards and help to reduce carbon emissions.

In addition, we will also strive to support people from losing their homes and build sustainable communities where people want to live.

We recognise that there is no magic bullet, no one single action which will make a dramatic difference to the housing situation in Colchester. But by achieving lots of smaller actions and adding these together we believe we can make a significant difference. Working collaboratively in partnership will be key to the success of this Strategy.

The new Housing Strategy will set out our ambitions for housing in Colchester over the next 5 years and describe how we intend to use our resources and work with partners in both the public and private sectors to help us achieve our priorities.

Contents

What the new Housing Strategy will include:

- Foreword – PfH for Planning and Housing
- Executive Summary - What this document is and how it has been produced
- Section 1: Setting the scene – including key Housing Statistics
- Section 2: What we have achieved so far – key successes since the last strategy
- Section 3: Housing in Colchester
- Section 4: Our Vision and Key priorities - How we will deliver the strategy
- Section 5: The way we work
- Section 6: Links to national and local policy
- Section 7: How we will monitor the Housing Strategy

Executive Summary

Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-27 sets out our vision for housing in the borough:

‘Colchester, where all residents have access to a safe and affordable home that promotes health and equality, in a sustainable community’.

It recognises the importance of a safe and affordable home in ensuring healthy lives and levelling up access to life opportunities.

The Housing Strategy provides the overarching framework for the Council's housing policies and plans.

The new Housing Strategy has been developed by Colchester Borough Council and its partners who have identified the most important priorities and what we should do to:

- address key Housing issues and challenges
- recognise Housing as a key determinant for good health
- provide agreement for action and resource decisions

The scope of our new strategy meets the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003 for all Local authorities to have a Housing Strategy, which sets out 'its vision for housing in its area and objectives, targets, and policies' that explain how it will play a leading role to:

- Assess and plan for current and future housing needs of the local population
- Make the best use of existing housing stock
- Plan and facilitate new supply
- Plan and commission housing support services which link homes to support and other services that people need to live in them
- Have working partnerships that secure effective housing and neighbourhood management

We have collaborated extensively to produce this strategy and to ensure it is based on firm evidence.

We have updated and considered an in-depth evidence base to understand the details of housing need.

We have held a Consultation workshop with representatives from local housing organisations to help shape the new Housing Strategy by identifying the current challenges for housing in Colchester for both organisations and residents and how these can be addressed.

Following the consultation, we established a Project Group with partners to ensure a collaborative approach to designing the new Strategy. The group considered the challenges identified at the workshop and agreed priorities with collaborative actions to improve the housing situation in Colchester. This group met several times.

We have also tested our emerging ideas with Senior Officers, members of Cabinet,

Project Group members

Members of the Project Group include representatives from:

- Colchester Borough Council – Strategic Housing, Housing Client, Private Sector Housing and Planning Policy
- Colchester Borough Homes – Housing Options and Housing Management
- Amphora Homes
- Housing Developer
- Housing Association partners
- Supported Housing Provider
- Essex County Council
- North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group

The Project Group identified the following key priorities that the strategy will focus on:

Supply – ‘We will increase the supply of quality affordable homes’

Sustainability and Community – ‘We will support people to maintain their homes and build sustainable communities’

Structure – ‘We will reduce carbon emissions from homes and improve standards’

Prevent Homelessness – ‘We will prevent homelessness by working with partners to deliver Colchester’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy’

(A separate document that sits under the Housing Strategy).

We have considered government policy in the development of the new strategy to ensure that it aligns with the priority housing issues identified nationally especially around:

- Initiatives for increasing housing supply and homeownership
- Reforming the welfare system
- Quality of housing in both the social and private sector
- Levelling Up

The themes for the new strategy also align with our partners strategies including:

Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
Essex County Council Housing Strategy

Our work with partners is key to achieving the actions set out in our new Housing Strategy and we have ensured that this aligns with the work of existing partnerships and programmes including:

South - East Local Enterprise Partnership - bringing together key leaders from business, local government and education in order to create the most enterprising economy in England.

Gateway to Homechoice Project Board – manage the Allocations policy for the Gateway to Homechoice choice-based lettings scheme which consists of a single Housing Register and a choice-based lettings scheme for allocating social housing.

The North - East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance - brings together authorities, commissioners and providers of health and wellbeing services including the ‘Live well’ approach.

Essex Housing Officers Group – working with local housing authorities across Essex to collaborate and share good practice and oversee the work of the housing sub groups.

The priorities identified for the new strategy will be achieved through the implementation of actions set out in a Delivery Plan, working collaboratively with a wide range of partners in Colchester.

Section 1. Setting the scene – the local picture

The borough of Colchester covers an area of 324 square kilometres in north east Essex. It borders Suffolk in the north, along with three Essex districts – Tendring in the east, Braintree in the west and Maldon in the south west.

At its centre is the town of Colchester, surrounded by villages and smaller towns of distinct and complementary character. Some are in the Dedham Vale, a designated area of outstanding natural beauty.

Our largest towns are Wivenhoe, Tiptree and West Mersea. The island of Mersea is at the south of the borough, and it forms the borough's principal coastal area.

According to the Government's Indices of Deprivation, across Essex County, **Colchester ranks as the 5th most deprived authority** (out of the 12 Essex LAs) - up one place from 2015. This means that deprivation has decreased slightly in Colchester.

The **most deprived areas** of the borough are Magnolia, Forest and Salary Brook South (Greenstead Ward) and St Anne's Estate (St Anne's and St John's Ward).

The **least deprived** areas are Bergholt (Lexden and Braiswick Ward) and Drury (New Town and Christ Church Ward).

The **health** of people in Colchester is generally in line with the average across England. Life expectancy in Colchester for men is 0.6 years better than the average for England, however in women the rate is 0.1 years lower than the England average.

Statistical Profile of Colchester	
The total population of Colchester in mid-2020	197,200
By 2030 the population is expected to grow to:	214,160
In mid-2020, the estimated number of people aged 16-64	126,176 64% of the total population
In mid-2020 the estimated number of people in Colchester who were 65+	34,056 17.3% of the total population
As of 31 March 2021, the number of households in the borough	84,041
As of 31 March 2021, the household size	2.38
Key Housing statistics	
The total number of new homes delivered for the year 2020-21	741

The number of affordable Homes delivered for the year 2019 - 20	101 (of which 59 homes were acquired by the Council).
The average household size (persons)	2.33
The number of properties sold under the Right to Buy scheme during 2020-21 was 46	46
The number of affordable homes let from April 2020 to March 2021	474
The average household price (£) as of April 2021	£338,193
The lower quartile house/flat price (£) as of April 2021	£230,000
The total number of Empty Properties (classified as empty for Council Tax purposes) in April 2021	1,851 empty properties (1,734 privately owned or owned by Registered Providers and 117 owned by CBC)
The length of time that Empty Properties have been empty	0 – 6 months 899 7 – 12 months 360 1 – 2 years 365 2 – 5 years 147 5+ years 80
The number of households on the Housing Register as of March 2021	3,009 households
The number of Homelessness households for 2020-21	The Council accepted a full homeless duty for 185 households. Action was taken to prevent homelessness for 187 households and relieved homelessness for 136 households.
The number of households living in temporary accommodation as of March 2021	209 households.

More detailed information on Housing and Homelessness in Colchester can be found in the Evidence Base that supports Colchester's Housing and Homelessness Strategies
[link to go here....](#)

Section 2: What we have achieved so far – Key successes since the last Housing Strategy

Since the last Housing Strategy was published in 2015, we have worked together to:

- Develop 4,990 new homes in Colchester between April 2016 and March 2021
- Deliver 697 affordable homes in Colchester during the same period with our Housing Association partners
- Bring back 16 ex local authority properties to be used as Temporary Accommodation
Bring back 78 ex local authority properties to be let as General Needs Accommodation at Social Rent – (8 bought in 2018/19, 35 in 2019/20 and 35 in 2020/21)
- Successfully purchase 100 properties through the Council's 100 Homes programme over an 18-month period, to be used as general needs housing, let at social rents through Gateway to Homechoice, for Colchester households.
- Deliver 31 new affordable homes on Council owned garage sites in 2015

- Achieve planning consent on Council land and assets at Creffield Road, Buffett and Scarfe Way, Military Road and Hardings Close delivering 32 new homes, 26 of which are affordable (some of these homes have been completed already, with the remainder due for completion Spring/Summer 2022).
- Achieve planning consent to redevelop an existing sheltered scheme, Elfreda House, which will deliver 36 new homes to a much higher standard than the existing building. The new development will be completed in 2023.
- Develop Colchester's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25 with organisations and agencies that support people that are homeless
- Implement a number of major projects and initiatives to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings, local businesses and households in the borough. As of July 2021, Colchester's Council housing stock has an average EPC rating of 'C'
- Administer 399 Disabled Facilities Grants to adapt properties to enable people with disabilities to continue to live in them.
- Improve standards in the Private Sector by
 - Improving the safety of 706 homes
 - Removing 1,600 serious category 1 and 2 hazards from homes
 - Serving 39 improvement notices on non-compliant landlords to ensure compliance with housing standards

In addition, we have worked successfully in partnership with:

- 7 Local Authorities (LA's) in Gateway to Homechoice to review the Allocations Policy and upgrade the system
- 12 District Councils and Essex County Council (ECC) on a Homeless Families protocol, Prisoner release protocol, 16- and 17-year-old protocol and Hospital discharge protocol
- Health on key worker housing
- ECC, Essex LA's and the voluntary sector on the response to our duties under the Domestic Abuse Bill
- ECC on the recommissioning of housing support services
- Private Sector funders, Housing associations, Almshouses and Charities to increase the supply of affordable housing
- Homes England, where the Council now has Investment Partner Status

Section 3: Housing in Colchester

Colchester has a long track record of joint working to meet housing need and tackle issues.

Our consultation workshop and the Housing Strategy Project Group identified the following strengths in this area along with challenges facing housing organisations and residents in Colchester over the next 5 years

Housing Supply

What are our strengths?

Working with developers and Housing Associations to aim to secure 30% affordable housing on newbuild sites

Building on the success of our Acquisition programme to increase the supply of affordable housing

Making better use of the Council's land and assets through our housebuilding programme

What are the challenges?

- Not enough affordable accommodation of all sizes available
- Need to put more pressure on developers to ensure adequate affordable housing is included in developments.
- Developers are focussing on policy changes – little risk with affordable housing but First Homes may change that dynamic.
- Lack of understanding about what type of housing is really needed – need to improve data sharing across organisations and partners
- Affordability
 - House prices
 - Rental prices
- Need to work more closely with private landlords to help meet the needs for affordable housing to reduce reliance on social housing
- Make better use of the Council's housing stock by helping people downsize, to free up larger accommodation for families
- Not enough property that's adapted or can be adapted at reasonable cost to accommodate people with disabilities
- Lack of appropriate, emergency accommodation
- Ever increasing demand for social housing/number of households on the housing register

Sustainability and Community

What are our strengths?

Working in partnership with:

Essex County Council to ensure that the commissioning of supported housing meets the needs for people in Colchester

Private Sector landlords to encourage access to accommodation in the private sector for move-on

Voluntary sector and local organisations to encourage community cohesion, strengthen communities and enable behaviour change to help them become more self-sufficient.

What are the challenges?

- Lack of access to supported housing, particularly when trying to house vulnerable people
- More support needed to enable people to remain in their own home, "lifetime in the community"
- More move-on options from supported accommodation for vulnerable groups
- An increase in more residents with chaotic lifestyles and anti social behaviour which lead to evictions and who are more difficult to move on
- Securing accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees
- More people in temporary housing – lack of security
- Regeneration of estates needed where there are pockets of vulnerability
- Tools made available to the parishes directly to build a neighbourhood/community development plan
- Enable communities to become more self-sufficient and help themselves

Structure, standards and reducing carbon emissions

What are our strengths?

Improving the condition of the housing stock to improve energy efficiency

Successfully working with landlords to improve the condition of housing in the private sector

Our Council approach to driving up standards in homes developed under Permitted Developments

What are the challenges?

- Current housing stock needs to be modernised and improved
- Environmental agenda may impact on affordability.
- Need to improve smart technologies within homes
- Living in poor quality homes links directly to health issues and lower educational attainment
- Housing standards need to be improved as poor housing conditions impact on quality of life
- Homes need to be compliant with modern standards including - damp/mould, carbon emissions/fire safety/adequate heating
- We need to ensure that permitted developments are fit for purpose as difficult to enforce under planning

Section 4: Our Vision and Key Priorities – How we will deliver the Strategy

Our vision for housing:

‘Colchester, where all residents have access to a safe and affordable home that promotes health and equality, in a desirable and sustainable community’.

To achieve this vision and mitigate the challenges for housing in Colchester, 4 Key Priorities have been identified for our new Housing Strategy

Key Priority 1

Supply – ‘*We will increase the supply of quality affordable homes*’

The impact of the pandemic and supply chain issues has resulted in a decrease in the number of affordable homes across the country in the last year with completions of affordable rented homes hit the hardest. This contrasts with the previous year which saw a record number of affordable homes delivered. Colchester has followed this trend.

An increase in households across the borough has had a significant impact on housing growth and the demand for different house types and tenures. The demand for affordable rented housing continues to outstrip supply and with the increase in house prices and the cost of living the gap between the supply and demand for affordable housing is set to widen.

In Colchester’s emerging Local Plan, the allocation for affordable housing is 30% on all proposals considered a major development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more, but current allocations are 20%. (In designated

rural areas the threshold is lower, above 5). Once the local plan is adopted the requirement will be 30% affordable housing on all sites with a mix of housing types and tenures. There has been significant growth and demand for Private Rented Sector accommodation in Colchester and we need to ensure that this provides good quality and affordable accommodation for our residents.

Through our new Housing Strategy:

- We will deliver market and affordable housing to meet housing demand and need through our emerging Local Plan
- We will continue to purchase properties through our Acquisition programme to help increase supply
- We will continue to work in partnership with Developers, Housing Associations and Almshouse charities to maximise the supply of affordable housing on new developments
- We will maximise the Council's land and assets to deliver new housing through our housebuilding programme and identify future developments
- We will continue to partner with Homes England to deliver affordable housing through their Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26
- We will ensure that the Council's new housebuilding programme will provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the range of households on the register, including accessible homes where possible
- We will continue to support government initiatives to help people who wish to buy their first home.
- We will work with Private Sector Landlords to ensure they are supported to provide good quality homes.
- We will provide incentives and support to encourage tenants to downsize to reduce under occupation and make best use of the Council's housing stock.
- We will Identify and support the need for adapted properties as part of new developments

Case study: Increasing the supply of affordable housing - 100 Homes Programme

Building on the success of the Council's Acquisition Project, In September 2020 Cabinet approved the purchase of 100 properties over an 18-month period within the Housing Revenue Account. The properties were to be used as General Needs housing, let at social rents through the Council's Choice Based Lettings system, Gateway to Homechoice, and reserved specifically for Colchester households.

The properties were to be bought through the Right to Buy Back covenant and the open market and would predominantly be ex Local Authority properties. Although there was also the possibility to purchase non-Ex LA properties to suit specific needs if required such as medical requirements or larger properties (4/5 bed properties).

The budget was set at £21,000,000 for the programme with an additional £1,000,000 to achieve an average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of B across the programme.

There was also a focus on providing more accessible homes.

CBC worked in partnership with CBH on the project and by the end of February 2022 all 100 properties had been identified within the agreed budget.

The programme helped to increase the number of affordable homes during the period of Covid 19 when housing developments had stalled. Although the programme also suffered

from delays in sourcing materials to complete the works on the properties, to bring them up to lettable standard, by working collaboratively and building on the strengths within the partnership solutions were identified.

Key Priority 2

Sustainability and Community – ‘We will support people to maintain their homes and build sustainable communities’

Providing support to people at the right time is essential in helping people maintain their tenancies and build sustainable communities.

Consultation with housing organisations identified a lack of supported housing in Colchester to meet the needs of all groups and move-on opportunities to reduce the reliance on social housing.

We are inspired by One Colchester's Communities Can approach, recognising the strengths in our communities and the value of encouraging self-help. This is all the more important at a time when the demands on organisations and agencies are high and their resources are stretched. We will need to work collaboratively to ensure that these essential services are delivered.

Providing advice and support upstream to residents to help them maintain their homes by offering debt and budgeting advice will help to reduce evictions, preventing people from losing their homes.

Through our new Housing Strategy:

- We will ensure a co-ordinated approach to supported housing across the council, social care and health.
- We will conduct a mapping exercise to identify the current stock profile of supported housing for all groups across Colchester to identify gaps in provision.
- We will continue to work with partners to identify move-on opportunities for vulnerable groups.
- We will work in partnership with other providers to ensure a sufficient supply of housing for older people, including extra care.
- We will work with partners to ensure that there is an adequate supply of specialist housing and support available to meet the needs of residents with a disability.
- We will improve tenancy sustainment by working proactively with residents to provide advice and assistance around budgeting, work and debts.
- We will adapt properties where possible to allow tenants to stay in their homes and remain within existing communities and support networks.
- We will continue to work with residents to improve the external environment on the Council's housing estates.
- We will empower communities to become more self-sufficient by enabling them to help themselves.
- We will work with colleagues and partners to develop masterplans in key areas i.e., the town centre to ensure that housing is included.
- We will capitalise on regeneration schemes i.e., the Heart of Greenstead to ensure good quality housing is delivered.

Case Study - Improving the external environment on the Council's housing estates – Greenstead Housing Panel.

Empowering people to take an active part in the Community that they live in helps us to make improvements where they are most needed and gives residents a say in what is important to them.

In 2018 Colchester Borough Homes developed a local tenant panel to help improve Greenstead Housing Estate. The purpose of the group is to make recommendations and decisions on estate improvement requests and monitor the performance.

The requirements to be a member of the Panel are that you must be a current tenant or leaseholder of Colchester Borough Council living on the Greenstead Housing Estate and therefore have a specific interest and knowledge. The role of a panel member is to help monitor:

- The performance of the local housing management services for Greenstead*
- The quality of maintenance and other contracts within the estate*
- Raise and discuss local housing related issues*
- Agree budget proposals for estate improvements, landscaping schemes and community funding*

Since the panel started it has been responsible for agreeing £10,000 work of community fund projects each year specifically for Greenstead.

The Panel has also approved landscaping improvement schemes and estate improvements. Comments and feedback from the Panel are also fed into the Heart of Greenstead Project. The scheme has helped residents to have a say and take pride in the community that they live in.

CBH also carried out estate tours with tenants and Councillors to identify estate improvements and have developed an Estate management standard and strategy.

Key Priority 3

Structure – ‘We will reduce carbon emissions from homes and improve standards’

Housing is responsible for about one fifth of all carbon emissions, therefore schemes to decarbonise existing homes are just as important as the energy efficiency of new properties. Social housing is generally more energy efficient than privately owned homes but much of it could be better.

An improvement to the fibre of the housing stock in all tenures is needed to enhance standards, reduce carbon emissions, and raise the energy efficiency of housing in the Borough.

Fuel poverty is one of the biggest contributors to health inequalities. Therefore, we must tackle fuel poverty to improve living standards for people on low incomes, and encourage a more energy efficient housing sector

Through our new Housing Strategy:

- We will identify funding opportunities and schemes to help reduce carbon emissions from new and existing homes
- We will encourage the take up of initiatives to reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency of homes across the borough
- We will work with developers to ensure that all new homes are built to future homes standards
- We will invest in Council new build properties to ensure they are thermally efficient
- We will invest in the fabric first approach in reducing energy demand of the Council's existing homes
- We will encourage private landlords and agents to provide well managed and decent quality properties
- We will review our services and adopt new collaborative approaches to continue to deliver effective and efficient services for tenants
- We will ensure that Council and Housing Association homes meet the required standards and building safety compliance regulations
- We will work with tenants to encourage them to adapt their lifestyles to help reduce carbon emissions

Case study - Tackling inequality and improving health outcomes

Helping people live healthy lives is core to our housing work. We know that having an affordable home is a key determiner of people's health.

One of the measures we adopt to increase the supply of affordable homes is to use the proceeds from the sale of Council homes bought under the legal Right to Buy to acquire homes on the open market to increase the stock of social housing. During the coming two years we aim to acquire 90 homes in this way.

These homes are truly affordable to local people as they are let at social rent levels (typically 60% of market rents). They are let based on people's housing need and tend to help house people on the lowest incomes.

However, we also know that these homes need to be warm and dry to be healthy. Cold and damp homes are more expensive to heat, result in more carbon emissions, and have a strong link with poor health.

Our local NHS Clinical Commissioning Group recently awarded us £900,000 to carry out work to these properties to significantly improve their energy efficiency. This work will be on top of the repairs we carry out routinely to ensure they meet the standards for social housing.

This grant funding will enable adaptations that will help reduce bills for low incomes households, avoid the health issues associated with cold housing, and reduce carbon emissions. At a time of increasing fuel bills, making these homes cheaper to heat is crucial to allowing people to keep their homes at a healthy temperature.

All the homes purchased will receive works to improve their energy performance certificate (EPC) rating to an average of C (B for houses, C for flats), with the funding from the CCG

used to achieve this. An EPC measures the energy efficiency of a property on a scale of A-G.

We have found that each property needs on average £7,300 to significantly improve its thermal efficiency. This work includes improving glazing, heating systems, or adding solar panels.

This initiative forms part of our wider efforts to tackle inequalities and improve health outcomes. In particular, it complements our work to improve energy efficiency in private sector housing to improve residents' health outcomes.

Key Priority 4

Prevent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – ‘We will prevent homelessness by working with partners to deliver Colchester’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25’

The 4 key aims for the strategy are:

- Increasing access to accommodation and providing settled homes.
- Helping people to sustain their accommodation.
- Improving the health and wellbeing of people who experience homelessness
- Improving communication and challenging the perception and culture of homelessness

[CBC-Housing-Colchester’s-Homelessness-and-Rough-Sleeping-Strategy-2020-25-Colchester’s Homelessness and Rough Seeping Strategy .pdf \(windows.net\)](#)

Section 5: The way we work

Demand for housing in Colchester that is safe, affordable and meets the needs of our residents continues to create challenges that require us to work together and with imagination.

Since the last Housing Strategy, we have:

- Successfully worked in partnership with developers and housing associations to build more affordable homes
- Improved relationships with our health and social care colleagues to provide housing solutions for vulnerable residents to improve their quality of life
- Worked with local organisations to encourage communities to become more self sufficient
- Implemented several major projects and initiatives to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings, local businesses, and households in the borough

What we will do:

Research Influence Collaborate Partner Facilitate

At a time of limited resource for all partners, we need to coordinate our efforts, collaborate inclusively, work to our strengths, and be open-minded about new opportunities. We have developed strong working relationships with Essex County Council, Neighbouring District

Councils, North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, Registered Provider's and Charities to achieve more than we could alone. We will:

- Increase our understanding of local need and sharing our knowledge with partners
- Identify opportunities to stimulate the development of new affordable homes
- Use existing assets to encourage new investment
- Develop strong relationships to allow productive collaboration with others
- Build on our existing partnerships to make our efforts more effective
- Concentrate on our role as facilitator rather than trying to 'do' everything ourselves

Section 6: National and Local Policy context

This section sets out key national and local policy that was considered in the development of the Housing Strategy.

National Policy

There is currently no national strategy for housing. The last national housing strategy 'Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England' was published by the coalition government in 2011. Since that time the Government has announced a number of policies and policy changes aimed at addressing its priority housing issues.

- ***Increasing housing supply*** – through Planning reforms; a Housing White Paper; supporting Garden Communities; initiatives to unlock land; supporting local authorities and housing associations to increase the supply of affordable housing through Homes England grant funding.
- ***Increasing homeownership*** with a focus on making it more affordable - through the introduction of the Help to Buy equity loan scheme; rent to buy scheme, lifetime ISA, changes to shared ownership minimum shares; mortgage guarantee scheme; changes to stamp duty land tax; stamp duty land tax holiday; introducing a right to shared ownership.
- ***Reforming the welfare system*** – through the implementation of universal credit.
- ***Reforming the private rented sector*** – through a commitment to bring forward a Renters Reform Bill and abolish s21 (no fault) evictions for private renters.
- ***Addressing homelessness and rough sleeping*** – through the Homelessness Reduction Act and financial support to local authorities to reduce rough sleeping, increased financial support during the Covid -19 public health pandemic and a national commitment to ending rough sleeping.
- ***Dealing with cladding and fire safety*** – with the introduction of approved document guidance on Fire Safety to meet the Building Regulations 2010.
- ***Protection for Social Housing Residents*** - The [Social Housing White Paper](#) was published in 2020 with a focus on resident voice and influence. The white paper presents a charter setting out seven commitments that social housing residents should be able to expect from their landlord. The overarching themes are building and resident safety, and resident voice.
- ***Levelling up White Paper published in 2022*** – setting out 12 missions to tackle inequality. The work contained in the Housing Strategy will contribute to achieving a number of these.

Local context

South East Local Enterprise Partnership

The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) brings together key leaders from business, local government, further and higher education in order to create the most enterprising economy in England through exploring opportunities for enterprise while addressing barriers to growth.

The SELEP covers Essex, Southend, Thurrock, Kent, Medway and East Sussex and is the largest strategic enterprise partnership outside of London. The SELEP works at a strategic level across the region, with leaders from the private and public sectors, to create the best possible environment for businesses of all sizes and sectors to fulfil their potential.

Gateway to Homechoice Project Board

The Project Board manage the Allocations policy for the Gateway to Homechoice choice-based lettings scheme which consists of a single Housing Register and a choice-based lettings scheme for allocating social housing. The Partner Organisations (POs) that are part of the scheme include:

Babergh District Council, Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Maldon District Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and East Suffolk District Council.

The Project Board is made up of housing managers from the participating POs and Registered Providers. The scheme is subject to a consortium agreement. Registered providers, charities, community land trusts and almshouses (RPs), also allocate properties using this scheme and are subject to a Service Level Agreement. The list of RPs which participate in the scheme are listed on the Gateway to Homechoice website:

<http://www.gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk/Data/ASPPages/1/277.aspx>

The scheme aims to provide a consistent approach to accessing housing across the diverse area of operation of the scheme and where possible, to ensure that applicants have choice over where they live.

The Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) 2018 – 22

This strategy promotes a shared vision for health and wellbeing in Essex, setting out key countywide strategic priorities, which focus on four areas:

- Improving mental health and wellbeing
- Addressing obesity, improving diet and increasing physical activity
- Influencing conditions and behaviours linked to health inequalities
- Enabling and supporting people with long-term conditions and disabilities.

The priorities are delivered by local government, the NHS and other partners together through the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance

The Alliance brings together authorities, commissioners and providers of health and wellbeing services including the 'Live well' approach which places Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) at its heart.

The partnership work together to tackle the causes of ill health, with a focus on prevention and by adopting a Neighbourhood approach to improve health and wellbeing.

Essex County Council Housing Strategy 2021-2025

The ECC Housing Strategy sets out the actions ECC will take to help achieve progress towards three goals:

1. Growing Essex while protecting the best of the county
2. Enabling people to live independently throughout their life
3. Supporting people facing homelessness or rough sleeping.

Although ECC are not a housing authority the strategy sets out why housing is important at a county council level and acknowledges that the quality of our homes and the places we live play an important role in all our lives.

ECC commission specialist housing, secure infrastructure funding to support housing growth and direct development through Essex Housing. The strategy is a commitment to work with borough, city and district partners who have the responsibility for housing and planning.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014

Colchester Borough Council commissioned research to help shape future housing and planning strategies in the area. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires all local planning authorities to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).

The SHMA is an assessment of people's housing needs within an area, based on statistical evidence and survey data.

The purpose of a SHMA is to provide local authorities with robust and credible information and data that can be used as part of its evidence base to inform future policies and decision-making related to housing and planning. Such assessments should consider housing market areas, and therefore need to be prepared jointly between neighbouring authorities. The local authorities of Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Colchester have worked collectively in commissioning their SHMAs.

Colchester Borough Council Strategic Plan 2020-23 - [The Council's Strategic Plan](#) . [Colchester Borough Council](#)

The priorities in the new Housing Strategy will deliver against the Council's strategic Plan priorities in particular the pledge to "increase the number, quality and types of homes" and under this the goal to.

- Deliver 30% affordable housing across all our own housing sites
- Deliver 380 affordable homes
- Improve existing Council homes to keep them in good repair and improve energy efficiency
- Build new Council homes for our residents
- Ensure all new homes are designed to a high quality across all tenures
- Continue to improve and modernise available housing for older people

The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2013 – 2043

Colchester's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan sets out the priorities, plans and actions for the Council's homes & tenants over the next 30 years.

The HRA Business Plan shows how Colchester Borough Council will maintain its existing homes; the viability of current plans and how they translate in the long term; identifies that money should be available for investment in new homes, existing homes and services to tenants.

The Plan includes information on the condition of council properties, how much money will be spent on improving properties and how Colchester Borough Council plan to meet the housing needs of its tenants.

The Housing Asset Management Strategy - [Colchester Borough Council](#)

The strategy sets out the key priorities and levels of investment that are planned over the next five years, together with considering the longer-term investment requirements, that link to the Housing Revenue Account (Business Plan).

The strategy broadly covers the following key areas:

- Investing for the Future
- Keeping Your Home Safe and Secure
- Preparing for Climate Change
- Homes for Life
- Rethinking Use

Our Strategy and Climate Emergency Action Plan - [Our Strategy and Climate Emergency Action Plan · Colchester Borough Council](#)

Colchester Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and since then have developed a Climate Emergency Action Plan on how the Council plans to reach carbon neutrality by 2030.

Communities Can ...a collaborative approach - [Communities Can Sept 2021 \(1\).pdf](#)

Echoing the title of the December 2020 COVID-19 Marmot Review, to “build back fairer”, the Communities Can strategy sets out the ways in which the local community will work together to reduce inequalities.

Section 6: How we will monitor the Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan

The Housing Strategy is intended to be a working document and therefore actions will be implemented throughout the life of the strategy.

The Delivery Plan will be monitored by the Housing Strategy Project Group and other key stakeholders and updated.

A report on the progress of the Strategy and Delivery Plan will be produced on an annual basis and circulated to the relevant stakeholders and the Portfolio holder with responsibility for housing. The report will also be published on the Colchester Borough Council website

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2022 to 2027

Draft

1. Supply – ‘We will increase the supply of quality affordable homes’

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Deliver Market and Affordable Housing to meet housing need and demand	Produce a new Local Plan which follows the National Planning Policy Framework.	Ensure the Council's planning policies are updated to provide a robust basis for guiding future growth in the Borough.	Spring 2022		CBC Planning Policy Team
	<p>Ensure that the Local Plan meets the requirements of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 with regards to the provision of starter homes and custom and self build homes.</p> <p>Work in partnership with Parish Council's, the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE), Registered Providers and private developers to enable the delivery of</p>	Delivery of more affordable housing in rural areas of Colchester	2022-27		CBC – Housing Strategy Team Parish Council's, RCCE, Registered Providers and private developers

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>affordable housing in rural areas.</p> <p>Ensure that the planning policy framework for the proposed Garden Communities provides for a mix of housing types and tenures including self- and custom-build and includes a minimum of 30% affordable housing which will be phased through the development</p>		2022		CBC Planning Policy Team
Work in partnership with Developers and Housing Associations to maximise the supply of affordable housing on new developments	<p>Implement Colchester's Local Plan which seeks 30% of all new homes to be affordable on sites with over 5 homes in rural areas and more than 10 in urban areas.</p> <p>Continue to purchase ex local</p>	<p>Affordable housing supply target of 380 affordable Council and Housing Association homes is met (by 2023)</p> <p>Different ways of delivering affordable housing explored and successfully implemented</p>	2022-2027		CBC – Housing Strategy Team, Development Team, Planning Officers, Registered Providers

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>authority properties through the Acquisition programme (using right to buy receipts) to increase the supply of affordable housing</p> <p>Support and promote government initiatives for first-time buyers. Research and identify the process for the implementation of the First Homes initiative for Colchester</p> <p>Influence the allocation of S106 contributions to ensure the delivery of affordable housing is maximised not compromised</p>				

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>Ensure a balance is reached between delivering new homes and the need for affordable housing by considering viability.</p> <p>Consider if commuted sums can be used to deliver affordable housing elsewhere in the borough</p> <p>Explore how we can use the Affordable Housing New Homes Bonus to increase the supply of housing</p> <p>Work with Registered Providers to seek Homes England funding to help deliver more affordable units on new schemes</p>				

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Understand and identify housing needs in terms of number, size, tenure, quality of properties and associated facilities.	<p>Clearly set out the level of housing required in the borough to meet housing need and demand through an Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) figure, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework</p> <p>Ensure that the new Local Plan includes policies to secure good quality design and space standards for new homes</p> <p>Continue to consider the building of specially adapted</p>	<p>Robust Objectively Assessed Need figure is used to inform production of the local plan</p> <p>The Council can demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply to meet both emerging Local Plan requirements and higher delivery totals resulting from use of the new housing methodology which is applied to current planning applications.</p> <p>Housing delivered in the market is attractive and meets the needs of Borough residents, creating neighbourhoods and communities which are sustainable.</p> <p>Particular groups include larger</p>	2022		<p>CBC Planning Policy Team</p> <p>Planning Policy Team / Housing Strategy Team</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Ensure that Neighborhood Plans which are making housing site allocations are delivered in timely manner consistent with National and Local Policy and provide the policy framework to contribute to meeting local housing need.	properties to accommodate those with specific needs. CBC will support and work with Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plan Groups where they are developing Neighbourhood Plans which are making housing site allocations. This will help ensure these Plans provide for a mix of housing types and tenures and contribute to meeting local housing need and affordable housing.	families, older people and supported housing for vulnerable people. Neighbourhood Plans are consistent with National and Local Policy and provide the policy framework to contribute to meeting local housing need.			Planning Policy Officers (supporting Parish Councils)
Encourage new initiatives, including housing products, which meet housing	Implement Colchester's Planning Policies which seek up to	A range of products and initiatives	2022-2027		CBC Housing Strategy Team

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
need and demand between affordable rented and home ownership.	<p>20% of all affordable housing to be provided as Intermediate housing.</p> <p>Explore increasing the number of equity share properties available</p> <p>Publicise and support national initiatives which seek to bridge the gap between affordable rented and outright home ownership.</p> <p>Provide support for the provision of self-build and custom-build homes and maintain a register as required by the Housing and Planning Act so that households can register their interest in this product.</p>	available to meet housing need.			

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Maximise the use of the Council's land and assets to deliver new housing	<p>Produce a development strategy which sets out the Council's aspirations, a pipeline of development and the funding required to deliver the strategy</p> <p>Identify council owned housing that is no longer viable and consider its potential to enable the development of new homes</p> <p>Identify land opportunities for development of affordable housing</p> <p>Partner with Homes England to deliver affordable housing through their Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26</p>	<p>Delivery of new housing on Council owned sites to increase housing</p> <p>In 2019 the Council committed to deliver 350 additional social homes owned by the Council over 5 years.</p> <p>The Council's HRA newbuild developments are designed to meet the "Future Homes 2025" standard (option 2) principles to achieve a 31% carbon saving.</p>	2022-27		<p>Amphora Homes/CBC Client Team/CBH</p> <p>Joint CBC/CBH Asset Management Group</p> <p>CBC Client Team</p> <p>Amphora Homes, CBC Client Team, CBH</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	Ensure that the Council new housebuilding programme will provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the range of households on the register, including those who require an accessible home				
Work in partnership with ECC and other providers to ensure a sufficient supply of housing for older people including extra care.	<p>Work with ECC to identify funding available and delivery options.</p> <p>Use information available to identify the needs and aspirations of older people, where they want to live and type of accommodation</p>	<p>Funding and schemes identified.</p> <p>Needs and aspirations of older people identified, and provision made within the Local Plan for suitable sites</p> <p>Local Plan policy requires developers to demonstrate how their proposal will meet the need for</p>	Ongoing		<p>CBC Housing Strategy Team/ECC</p> <p>Planning Policy Team</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
		housing for older residents			
<p>Continue to review the Council's existing sheltered housing stock to implement the Colchester Standard through the Sheltered Housing Refurbishment programme</p> <p>A 5-year investment programme is in place, with on-going surveys to identify major works.</p>	<p>Review the remaining Sheltered housing stock through condition surveys and assessing their viability</p>	<p>Colchester Standard achieved on all schemes identified</p> <p>Up to date surveys and viability assessments completed on schemes.</p>	<p>2022-27</p>		<p>CBH Asset Management Team</p> <p>CBC Client Team</p>
<p>Increase the role of the private rented sector in meeting housing need through incentive packages for Private Sector Landlords including the Homestep and Private Sector Leasing schemes</p>	<p>Improve access for those who traditionally face barriers to the private rented sector (PRS)</p> <p>Continue to hold a quarterly Landlords Forum</p> <p>Continue to offer a rent bond to landlords to provide affordable</p>	<p>Increased provision of Private Rented homes to meet housing needs</p> <p>Landlords Forum set up and good attendance maintained</p> <p>Increase in use of the Private Rented</p>	<p>2022-27</p> <p>Ongoing</p>		<p>CBH - Housing Options Team, CBC – Private Sector Housing Team, Private Landlords</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>rented accommodation and to ensure housing standards are suitable.</p> <p>Deliver housing standards regulation and management training to Private Sector Landlords.</p>	<p>Sector – Monitor take up</p> <p>Training delivered – better informed and broadly compliant landlords.</p>			
Maximise the use of council homes and reduce under-occupation	<p>Implement revised tenant incentive scheme policy to encourage council tenants who are under-occupying to move to a home that better meets their needs</p> <p>Promote the use of mutual exchange, to better meet tenants housing needs</p> <p>Maximise take-up of sheltered housing through</p>	<p>Tenant Incentive Scheme implemented and more under occupied households using the scheme.</p> <p>Mutual exchange publicised and an increase in the number of households moving through the scheme.</p> <p>Reduction in sheltered voids.</p>	Ongoing		<p>CBH –Tenant Support Officers, Registered Providers</p> <p>Tenant Support Officers</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	the major refurbishment programme to free up under-occupied properties	Better use of Council properties to meet housing need. Tenants are housed in properties which are better suited to their housing need.			
Identify and support the need for adaptable and accessible properties as part of new developments	Negotiate the provision of homes built to enhanced accessibility standards (Part M4 Cat 2 & 3) to include wheelchair accessible homes on sites where affordable housing is being provided Include the provision of enhanced accessibility standards in Councils newbuild development programme	Increase in the number of wheelchair standard properties			CBC Housing Strategy Team CBC Client Team Amphora CBH
Maintain and where possible reduce the currently low levels of long-term empty	Respond to enquiries regarding long term empty	Reduction in the overall number of empty homes.	Ongoing		CBC-Private Sector Housing

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
properties in the Private Sector Provide information to residents on the reality of empty homes – manage the perception	<p>properties and take informal or formal action as appropriate.</p> <p>Offer financial assistance to bring empty properties back in to use wherever possible or to reduce the effect of the property on the neighbourhood.</p>	Make safe and secure empty properties where there is a significant public health or safety impact on the community.			<p>Registered Providers</p> <p>CBC Healthy Homes Team</p>

2. Sustainability and Community – ‘We will support people to maintain their homes and build sustainable communities’

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Ensure a co-ordinated approach to supported housing across the council, social care and health	Continue to work with ECC, Health and Social Care to influence commissioning of supported housing and support services where possible.	An increase and improvement in supported housing and support services for Colchester.	Ongoing		CBC Housing Strategy Team/CBH Housing Options Team/ECC/Health
	Map the existing supply of supported housing in the borough including access to and support options and identify gaps in provision Work in partnership with ECC, CBH and supported housing providers to ensure that the support and housing needs of Colchester's residents are still met and are not	Supported housing supply is identified to inform the commissioning process. The housing and support need of Colchester's residents are met	Ongoing		

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Ensure that young people understand the housing options available to them and the risks of leaving home in an unplanned way	<p>compromised following procurement activities undertaken by ECC</p> <p>Continue to work with partners to identify move-on opportunities for vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Continue to review the nominations CBC gives to supported housing providers to ensure that they still meet the strategic priorities of CBC</p> <p>Work in partnership with schools in the borough to educate young people and their parents about their housing options</p>	<p>This scarce resource is used to best meet the needs of Colchester's residents</p> <p>Young people and parents are more aware of the risks and lack of housing options available.</p>	Ongoing		CBC/CBH/Supported Housing Providers
Improve health & wellbeing of Colchester residents	Engage with partner services and identify	Joint working established between	2022-27	.	CBC/CBH/Registered Providers/He

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
through greater integration of housing, health and social care services.	<p>opportunities for joint working and service delivery to tackle housing as a long-term barrier to health through the work with the Housing and Health Alliance</p> <p>Explore opportunities for additional Public Health funding.</p> <p>Establish effective multidisciplinary care/referral pathways</p> <p>Work with local community and voluntary sector organisations to improve information, access and support for household health checks.</p>	<p>housing, health and social care</p> <p>Funding opportunities identified and funding awarded</p> <p>Pathways established, and referral processes improved</p> <p>Continue to develop the Essex Hospital Discharge Protocol with ECC, currently out to consultation and developed with the support of Colchester, as a mechanism to help people whose independence may be at risk to remain in or return to their home in both the</p>			alth CCG/Essex County Council

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	Reduce the number of home hazards most likely to have a negative impact on residents' health and safety.	private and public sector properties.			CBC-Private Sector Housing Team
Improve tenancy sustainment and work proactively with residents to provide advice and assistance around budgeting, work and debts	<p>Promote pre-tenancy workshops/early intervention for arrears</p> <p>Promote financial Inclusion to help tenants to budget and provide long term improvements for residents in financial difficulty and reduce long term dependency on discretionary funds</p> <p>Identify funding initiatives to support residents with the cost-of-living crisis</p> <p>Work with ECC to identify how commissioned services such as</p>	<p>Increase in take up of workshops.</p> <p>Financial resilience encouraged and supported through Money advice outreach work and training sessions.</p> <p>Reduction in the take up of discretionary funds</p>	Ongoing		CBH – Housing Options Team /Supported Housing Organisations/CBH - Tenant Support Officers

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	the Housing Related Support Floating Support Service and Phoenix Futures can work better with Colchester tenants and landlords alike, supporting households at risk/reducing evictions and building positive relationships between landlords and tenants.				
Support residents affected by Welfare Reforms and those experiencing financial hardship to remove the risk of homelessness	Continue to develop internal and external partnerships to mitigate the effects of welfare reform. Continue to provide proactive support to those affected by the reform agenda and experiencing financial hardship	More residents supported and where appropriate alternative housing options identified and risk of homelessness mitigated.	Ongoing		Housing Options Team, CBH, CBC Customer Solutions
Help people whose independence may be at risk to remain	Increase use of the disabled adaptations in CBC	Increase in planned and unplanned adaptations	Ongoing		CBC/CBH Asset Management

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
in or return to their home in both the private and public sector properties.	<p>properties to encourage independent living amongst older residents and residents with a disability</p> <p>Respond to recommendations from ECC Occupational Therapy service to process Disabled Facilities Grants in private sector properties.</p> <p>Provide advice on welfare benefits to older people to help them maximise their income and remain in their own home.</p>	<p>100% spend of DFG budget allocation</p> <p>Increase in older people able to remain in their own home</p>			CBC Healthy Homes Team
Increase use of assistive technologies for Council tenants.	Publicise the benefits of assistive technology to tenants to enable them to remain in their own homes.	More tenants using the service	2022-27		CBH Older Persons Services

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Facilitate integration into the local community for the incoming population including refugees and asylum seekers.	Work with the local community and voluntary sector including Refugee Action and Essex integration to improve information, access and support (especially ethnic minorities)	Community groups set up. Incoming population successfully integrated into the community.	2022-27		CBC Community Initiatives Team
Deliver quality neighbourhoods with adequate infrastructure.	<p>Inform and consult the relevant infrastructure providers including education services of proposed housing developments so they have an opportunity to influence outcomes.</p> <p>Work in partnership with ECC and the Southeast Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) to deliver integrated and sustainable transport projects</p>	<p>High quality communities</p> <p>Projects delivered – Infrastructure needs met</p>	<p>2022-2027</p> <p>2022-2027</p>		CBC Planning Policy and Transportation Team, Development Management, Community Development Team

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Create neighbourhoods and communities which are sustainable	<p>Develop partnerships with residents, the voluntary sector, community organisations and wider local service providers, especially on new housing schemes/developments.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the Community Police to implement new legislation from the ASB Police and Crime Act and undertake enforcement action as necessary</p>	<p>Partnerships set up</p> <p>Continue to hold events including 'Days of Action' and 'Make a difference day', to bring communities together. (8 make a difference day held a year)</p>	2022 - 2027		<p>Zone Wardens, Community Police, Community Initiatives, CBH, Registered Providers, CBC – Private Sector Housing, Community Safety Team</p>
Encourage Community Engagement with housing providers and other organisations	<p>Introduce a co-ordinated approach to community engagement with voluntary sector and housing providers.</p>	<p>Community projects established</p>			<p>Police, Crime Commissioners, Colchester Community Voluntary Sector (CCVS),</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>Encourage parishes directly to build a neighbourhood/community development plan</p> <p>Establish a clear focus on a collaborative, cross sector, system wide, partnership approach to creating sustainable, healthy & engaged communities through the Health & Wellbeing Alliance and One Colchester.</p> <p>Maximise employability funding from the SELEP to support the Economic Development Strategy</p>	Funding bids submitted and agreed	2022-27		<p>CBH, Registered Providers, CBC Community Safety, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)</p> <p>CBC - Economic Development Team</p>
Improve the external environment on the Council's housing estates	Continue to implement the actions set out in the Estate Management Strategy for the	Estate Management Strategy recommendations implemented	Ongoing		CBH Housing Management Team/ Zone Wardens

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Enable communities to become more self-sufficient and help themselves	external environment within the Council's housing estates Set up local tenant panels to encourage tenants to take pride in the areas that they live in by making recommendations and decisions on estate improvements	Local tenant panels developed			
Improved satisfaction in services that are delivered to Council tenants	We will review our services and adopt new collaborative approaches to continue to deliver effective and efficient services for tenants	Services reviewed and tenant satisfaction improved	Ongoing		CBC Client Team, CBH, Comms Team
Implement the Principal areas of the Charter in relation to Social Housing White Paper to improve tenant engagement and satisfaction	Work with CBH to ensure that CBC tenants and leaseholders are aware of the principal areas of the Charter and how their voice can	Engagement with services improved			

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	be heard to improve satisfaction in services that are provided.				
Reduce and tackle anti-social behaviour in partnership with other agencies	<p>Continue to deliver an overarching multi-agency approach to tackling ASB within the Town Centre through the Town Centre Action Plan.</p> <p>Challenge antisocial behaviour and use appropriate sanctions against those who cause a nuisance</p> <p>Work with others to offer a range of interventions to help people change their behaviour</p>	<p>Reduction in antisocial behaviour</p> <p>Town Centre multi agency partnership team set up and continue to meet regularly to agree approach with support and enforcement in place to resolve crime and ASB issues arising in the town centre.</p>	Ongoing		CBH anti-social behaviour team, Police, CBC Community Safety Team/CBH Rough Sleeper Team

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	Provide support to witnesses and victims of antisocial behaviour				
Prevent and reduce Domestic Abuse	<p>Work in partnership with Essex County Council to develop a Domestic Abuse Strategy for Essex in line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021</p> <p>Ensure that the Domestic Abuse Act implications have been considered and the Gateway to Homechoice Allocations policy amended to reflect the new legislation.</p>	Domestic Abuse Strategy produced and implemented			CBC Housing Strategy Team, CBH Housing Options Team, ECC, Registered Providers

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Lower the rates of unemployment in the Borough by supporting and encouraging residents to take up work.	Operate weekly Work Clubs and drop-in centres for advice, support and networking Develop education, employment and training opportunities for council tenants and other residents. Develop the Local Support Services framework, in partnership with Colchester Job Centre Plus, Colchester Borough Homes, Customer Borough Council and other partners to promote employment opportunities and local support services	Work clubs/drop-in centres set up; premises and volunteers to run them identified Unemployment reduced	Ongoing		CBH/CBC Customer Solutions. DWP

3. Structure – ‘We will reduce carbon emissions from homes and improve standards’

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Reduce Carbon emissions in new and existing homes by 2027	Identify funding opportunities and schemes to help reduce carbon emissions from new and existing homes	<p>Funding identified and carbon emissions in new and existing homes reduced</p> <p>The Council's Housing Revenue Account newbuild developments are designed to meet the "Future Homes 2025" standard (option 2) principles to achieve a 31% carbon saving</p>			CBC - Client Team
<p>Reduce fuel poverty in the borough.</p> <p>Increase the take up of the government's Green Deal scheme across the borough, encouraging and supporting residents to make improvements to their home increasing</p>	<p>Promote Warm Home Discount and Priority Services Register for vulnerable residents.</p> <p>Provide fuel poverty advice to households & signpost customers to income maximisation and</p>	<p>Increased take up of Warm Home discount.</p> <p>Reduction in fuel poverty in the borough</p>	2022-2027		<p>CBC – Community Initiatives Team, Voluntary sector</p> <p>Energy suppliers</p> <p>Energy Savings Trust</p> <p>CBC – Healthy Homes Team</p>

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
energy efficiency, and reducing fuel bills.	<p>fuel tariff/debt advice.</p> <p>Continue to work with ECC and other districts/boroughs, work has commenced around supporting the UK Power Networks recently launched Heat Decarbonisation Strategy to support communities that are heavily dependent on oil, to use greener fuels.</p> <p>Signpost customers to Green Deal offers and measures available.</p> <p>Promote the ECO Flex scheme which will allow CBC, through its partners, to provide affordable warmth assistance to fuel poor and low-income households that are vulnerable to the effects of the cold</p>	<p>An uptake of the ECO Flex funding discounts provided by our partners</p> <p>Reduction in fuel poverty in the borough and removal of excess cold hazards.</p> <p>Removal of 80 Excess Cold</p>			<p>CBC Warm Homes partners, Energy suppliers</p> <p>CBC – Healthy Homes Team</p>

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>Enforce the provision of insulation and economic/efficient heating systems in privately rented properties to remove Category 1 and significant Category 2 hazards of Excess Cold.</p> <p>Provide grant/loan aid to owner occupiers (where alternative forms of assistance are not available) to remove Category 1 and significant Category 2 hazards of Excess Cold</p>	hazards in privately rented and owner-occupied homes per annum.			CBC-Private Sector Housing/Healthy Homes Team
Undertake targeted activity to support the most vulnerable members of the community who live in the poorest quality housing containing Category 1 and significant Category 2 hazards	Continue to improve referral pathways between Private Sector Housing & Customer Support Team to raise concerns about the housing conditions of vulnerable residents	<p>Pathways established</p> <p>Progress to achieving an annual target of improving 300 dwellings occupied by vulnerable people including those with long term health conditions.</p>	Ongoing		<p>CBC Private Sector Housing</p> <p>CBC Healthy Homes Team</p>

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	Work with Clinical Commissioning Group and Health and Social Care Services to tie Environmental Health into care planning and patient discharge.	Facilitate quick and ready access to services which resolve property-related barriers to returning to/staying at home.			Registered Providers NEE CCG ECC
Target the work we do to improve homes in the private sector based on evidence and the best information and improve the energy efficiency.	Continue to use bulk Energy Performance data and Tenancy Deposit data to identify rented properties with poor energy performance.	Improved Energy performance rating of private sector homes	Ongoing		CBC-Private Sector Housing Team
Encourage private landlords & managing agents to provide good quality and well managed properties	Use the Excess Cold Calculator to assist in the assessment and decision making for enforcement of excess cold hazards Support landlords towards provision of broadly compliant housing accommodation through improved	Excess cold hazards removed from properties Landlord training delivered. Participation in Landlord Forums			

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	communication and joint working - Identify common barriers to compliance and provide self-service advice and guidance in order that resources can be targeted toward criminal landlords.	and other similar events. Improvement in the management and quality of private sector accommodation			
Ensure that houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are safe and well managed	<p>Ensure HMOs are managed in accordance with the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 & (additional provisions) Regulations 2007</p> <p>Undertake statutory duty to license all mandatory HMOs under the provisions of the Housing Act 2004 Part 2</p> <p>Use enforcement powers to raise standards where landlords refuse to work with CBC or</p>	<p>Better quality accommodation - Improvement of HMO's from 30 to 50 per annum over the course of the strategy.</p> <p>Reduction in unlicensed HMO's</p> <p>Enforcement action and prosecution of non-compliant/criminal landlords.</p>	Ongoing		CBC - Private Sector Housing Private Landlords

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	where landlords fail to licence properties as necessary.				
Encourage & Support homeowners to maintain and repair their homes and introduce energy efficiency measures.	<p>Remove and mitigate significant hazards and fund energy efficiency improvements where no alternative form of assistance is available by providing financial assistance through grants and loans.</p> <p>Undertake review of Financial Assistance Policy and explore opportunities to further incentivise property improvements through provision of grants and loans.</p>	<p>Improvement in energy efficiency of properties.</p> <p>More grants and loans provided for property improvements.</p>	Ongoing		CBC – Healthy Homes Team
Improvement in the energy efficiency of the Council's housing stock and ensure that Council properties are thermally efficient	Implement the Green Strategy part of the Asset Management Strategy, which provides a holistic approach to making homes more energy efficient.	Increase in homes that are more energy efficient.	Ongoing		CBH Asset Management Team

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>Utilise the Government's and the EU's energy grant and incentive schemes to maximise the number of measures available to individual properties within the stock.</p> <p>Include energy saving measures within the Colchester standard and ensure procurement includes measures within specifications where appropriate.</p>	Energy measure specified in Sheltered Scheme Refurbishments and in the Housing Improvement Programme (HIP) procurement.			CBH Asset Management Team
Understand the viability of implementing new energy efficiency measures for the Council's housing stock	Continue to carry out energy assessments on all properties with the Housing Stock.	Assessments completed, better understanding of costs to inform what new measures are implemented.	Ongoing		CBH Project Surveyor (Energy)
Encourage a proactive approach to dealing with dampness and condensation in flats	Work with Registered providers to identify and improve dwellings through building	Accommodation with damp and condensation problems identified and improved.	Pilot properties identified 2015 2018		CBC -Private Sector Housing-Registered Providers

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	fabric and behaviour change interventions	Damp & Mold hazards mitigated NHS Cost Savings established	Ongoing		
Reduce levels of overcrowding in affordable housing	Promote the use of mutual exchange, to better meet tenants needs (see action above) Assessment of 'crowding and space' under the provisions of part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 to ensure families are correctly prioritised for rehousing	Crowding and space hazards removed or sufficiently mitigated. Crowding and Space hazard considered during every property inspection by the Private Sector Housing team, including inspections for HomeStep and Private Sector Leasing Scheme. An indication is given of acceptable occupancy numbers in the	Ongoing Ongoing		CBH Housing Management Team, Registered Providers CBC – Private Sector Housing Team

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
		property inspection report provided to CBH for each property taken on by CBH for either scheme			
Council and Housing Association homes meet the required standards and building safety compliance regulations set out in the Social Housing White Paper	Work with CBH and Housing Association partners to ensure that the requirements are met.	Council and Housing Association homes meet the required standards and building safety compliance	tbc		CBC Client Team/CBH Asset Management Team

4. Prevent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – ‘We will prevent homelessness by working with partners to deliver Colchester’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25’

Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping are addressed in our Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025. The Delivery plan for the strategy can be found by following the link here: [CBC-Policies-and-Strategies-Colchester's-Homelessness-and-Rough-Sleeping-Strategy-Delivery-Plan-2020-25---update-for-2020-21-Colchester's Homelessness and RS Strategy Delivery Plan 2020-25 - update for 2020-21.pdf](#) (windows.net)

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Progress on the actions set out in the Homelessness Strategy Delivery plan monitored and updated annually.	Consult with Homelessness Strategy Project Group and other key organisations on progress on actions.	Delivery plan updated, and progress report completed and published on website.	Annually		Housing Strategy Team
To produce a new Homelessness Strategy for Colchester.	Project Group set up with key stakeholders to carry out a review of Homelessness in Colchester and develop a new Homelessness Strategy and Delivery plan.	A new Homelessness Strategy written and published.	2025 - 2026		Housing Strategy Team

