

Introduction

This Housing Strategy supports and underpins the council's Corporate Plan 2017 to 2021 by setting out the ways in which housing can help to make the borough a better place for people who live here.

The Corporate Plan sets out its vision for the borough through the strands of People, Places and Prosperity. The priorities within these themes that housing directly impacts upon are:

People

- Enable and inspire older people to make the most of later life
- Support vulnerable people and those who are most in need

Places

- Make our neighbourhoods safer
- Improve the quality of existing homes and enable the delivery of affordable housing
- Inspire standards of urban design that create attractive places to live

Prosperity

- Support our rural communities
- Work with partners to raise aspirations of residents and provide opportunities for training, employment and home ownership



The key housing issues facing the borough

Key housing issue 1: Supply - availability of affordable housing

The council will ensure there is an appropriate mix of housing to meet future needs, especially:

- To increase availability of affordable, good quality accommodation
- To support the growing number of older people
- To help younger people to get onto the housing ladder
- To sustain communities in rural settlements
- To meet the needs of a growing and more prosperous borough



Key housing issue 2: Access - support for people's needs and aspirations

The council and its partners will provide help and support to people to ensure they are able to access and sustain appropriate housing, particularly:

- To ensure that council housing is available to provide for people who are most in need
- To help people with complex needs to access housing and maintain their tenancies
- To reduce homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation
- To give people support to build their aspirations for the future
- To provide pathways to home ownership

Key housing issue 3: Quality - Housing standards

The council will use its powers to improve the quality of new and existing homes in the borough

- To ensure that new homes meet high standards of design and build quality
- To ensure that homes within the borough are safe and free from Category 1 hazards
- To improve conditions for tenants in the growing private rented sector
- To raise the standard of council homes and estates across the borough
- To reduce the number of people living in fuel poverty

Addressing the supply issues

1 The council and its partners will ensure there is an appropriate mix of housing to meet future needs



Updating the Local Plan to better reflect current projections.

- Maintaining a five-year housing land supply
- Making appropriate use of land through the Local Plan
- To carry out a borough wide Housing Needs Study to inform the Local Plan of the need for affordable housing
- Keeping an up to date programme of rural Housing Needs Surveys to update the evidence base

More information on the Local Plan is available at

<https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/localplanreview>

To work with partners to provide for the housing needs of rural communities.

- Work with the Rural Housing Enabling service to evidence the need for affordable rural housing
- Work in partnership with Registered Providers to identify suitable locations for Rural Exception Sites



Minimise the number of empty homes in the borough and bring them back into use.

- Identify the barriers which prevent owners from maintaining or disposing of the property in order to offer appropriate assistance
- Provide practical and financial assistance to resolve issues preventing properties being brought back into use
- Pursue enforcement action, including compulsory purchase, where help and assistance fails
- Manage long term empty properties as part of the Private Sector Leasing (PSL) scheme

continued next page...

Maximise the provision of affordable housing.



Use available finance to:

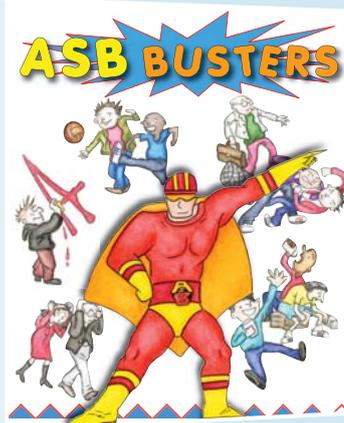
- Provide new council housing of the right type in the right place
- Explore the use of modular housing and estate regeneration for council house delivery
- Work pro-actively with developers to ensure the affordable housing on sites meets the identified need
- Work with Registered Providers to ensure the optimum mix of property types and tenures are brought forward for affordable housing
- Help facilitate the delivery of stalled approved sites

To facilitate a range of supported housing types and tenures.

- Support the delivery of an extra care scheme
- Work with adult social care to identify supported housing needs
- Remodelling of sheltered schemes which are no longer fit for purpose
- Negotiating for a supply of bungalows/supported accommodation for rent and home ownership on appropriate new build schemes
- Introducing an incentive scheme for council tenants to encourage them to downsize

Addressing the accessibility issues

2 The council and its partners will provide help and support to people to enable them to access and sustain appropriate housing and build their aspirations for the future.



Working to prevent homelessness and to support homeless people into appropriate accommodation.

We will provide support by:

- Provide a comprehensive Housing Options service to work with potentially homeless people at the earliest opportunity
- Introduce a Hostels to Home service to support people move from insecure accommodation to holding their own tenancy
- Appointment of a Pathways Officer to work with private sector landlords to help remove the barriers which prevent people accessing private rented housing



Working with young people to prepare the next generation for managing life experiences.

Provide information and advice on:

- housing and homelessness prevention
- financial responsibilities
- the consequences of anti-social behaviour for both individuals and communities
- substance misuse
- personal safety

To offer a range of general and bespoke support services to help people manage their tenancies successfully.

- Early identification of residents who are most in need of support to sustain their tenancies
- Enable access to holistic support to ensure residents and their families most in need of additional support achieve the best outcomes including financial support, substance misuse, domestic abuse, support for children, tenancy support and support for those affected by anti-social behaviour
- Providing mental health first aid training for officers
- Establishing localised and accessible Mental Health and Wellbeing projects

Create opportunities for residents to access education, training, volunteering and employment opportunities to raise aspirations and promote financial independence.

- Work with the Employment and Skills Partnership to create work experiences, training and apprenticeship posts
- Identify with partners the barriers to employment and put actions in place to enable residents to overcome these and become financially independent
- Link residents with voluntary and community sector volunteering opportunities
- Work with partners to link residents with job opportunities
- Link with Job Centre Plus work coaches to maximise opportunities for council tenants on Universal Credit



Develop pathways into home ownership to assist people who want their own homes to get onto the housing ladder.

For people who do not qualify for affordable housing, or who wish to leave social housing to buy their own home, we will:

- Provide information on the different types of home ownership and signpost them to appropriate professional advice
- Make greater use of the Choice Based Lettings website to advertise other tenure types in addition to social and affordable rent
- Produce literature to help people on the practicalities of moving house

Addressing the quality issues

3 Housing standards - The council will use its powers to improve the quality of new and existing homes in the borough



To ensure that new homes meet high standards of design and build quality.

The review of the Local Plan for new housing in the borough will:

- consider including minimum design and size standards for new housing in the borough
- enhance the nature and character of communities
- support new infrastructure and facilities alongside housing growth

To ensure that homes within the borough are safe and free from Category 1 hazards.

- promote and encourage take up of grants which are available to owner occupiers for home improvements
- work with the Lightbulb project to refer and signpost people of all housing tenures to access adaptations

continued over ...

Improve conditions for tenants in the growing private rented sector in the borough.

- Ensuring that rogue landlords are dealt with fairly and effectively and that the rights of residents living in the growing private rented sector are protected by use of the powers available to local authorities
- Tackling harassment and illegal eviction in the private rented sector by offering advice and support and by taking legal action against landlords
- Working with the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue service via a joint protocol to ensure adequate fire safety within the private rented sector
- Operating a Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) register of licensable premises



Raise the standard of council homes and estates across the borough.

- Deliver a housing investment programme which ensures stock will meet and maintain decent homes standard
- Produce an Asset Management Strategy which ensures sound management of the council house stock
- To introduce the Lightbulb model of housing support into council house adaptations
- To carry out an asset management review of council owned garage sites
- Link with volunteers and communities to carry out estate improvements

To reduce the number of people living in fuel poverty.

- By providing financial assistance to vulnerable households to improve the efficiency of their homes by carrying out measures such as insulation and installing more efficient heating systems
- Reducing the amount spent on fuel bills by helping residents to switch supplier to get the best deal
- Providing advice for residents in their home, on how to best use the controls on their existing heating systems
- Working with partners to deliver services for residents experiencing fuel poverty, when external funding opportunities are available
- Using enforcement powers to ensure landlords are complying with the minimum standards for efficiency in privately rented property

For more information please contact:

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Telephone: **01455**

Website: **www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk**