

Brentwood 2021-2026 Housing Strategy



BRENTWOOD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Where everyone matters





Welcome



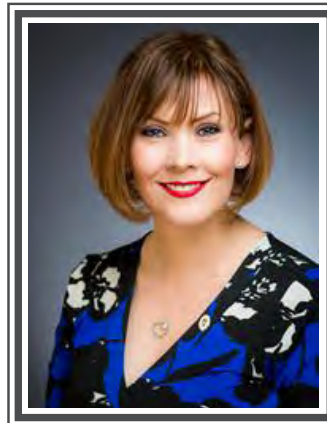
I am extremely pleased to present our proposals for a new and ambitious Housing Strategy.

Our aim is to provide the residents of Brentwood with a flexible and innovative service which meets the demands of the changing housing environment.

We recognise that there are a wide range of housing needs and expectations within the Borough and we are constantly seeking to overcome together the challenges which we face. Housing is a critical element of all our lives and this is being increasingly recognised at all levels of government.

The Council is committed to providing the best service possible and is determined to provide effective and innovative solutions for the benefit of all our residents.

Councillor Chris Hossack
Leader of the Council



As Chair of Environment, Enforcement & Housing, I am extremely proud to present our Housing Strategy 2021-2026.

Despite the challenges currently facing local government and the housing crisis across the UK. Members and Officers at this Council, have set out our ambitious plans for Brentwood over the next 5 years. As Chair, I am focused on delivering housing for all our current residents and for future generations. This strategy is not a list of aspirations, but a to do list, that will seek to improve our existing housing stock, build new homes, and create safe communities for our residents. Residents will be at the heart of everything we do.

We know there will be challenges to overcome and that we will be judged on our actions and not our words. That is why we have set out a comprehensive action plan, alongside this document for residents, partners, and others to hold us to account.

We will need the support of our residents and partners to deliver these aims, as set out in this strategy.

I look forward to working with you to deliver our housing ambitions for the borough.

Councillor Mrs Maria Pearson
Chair of Environment, Enforcement & Housing





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Vision for Housing in Brentwood

Our vision is for residents to live in affordable decent homes that meet their needs and enable them to build settled and healthy lives, within sustainable and thriving communities.

This vision is supported by 3 strategic corporate aims:

- Provide decent, safe and affordable homes for local people.
- Support our tenants through a high quality, well managed service.
- Support responsible development in the borough.

These aims will be supported by the delivery of the following objectives for the Housing Strategy:

- Increase the supply of affordable housing.
- Make best use of the existing stock.
- Deliver good quality sustainable homes.
- Deliver good quality services to residents.
- Deliver good quality services to tenants and leaseholders.
- Ensure resident safety.

Each objective is supported by actions and these are included in the delivery plan in Appendix One.

Introduction

A key priority for Brentwood is to improve housing and to provide access to a range of decent homes that meet local needs. We want the new housing strategy to provide a flagship housing service in the Borough, with effective partnerships in place to deliver this. This Housing Strategy sets out how the vision for housing in Brentwood is delivered.

Whilst local authorities are not expected to have a formal housing strategy, Brentwood is expected to adopt a strategic approach to housing in their local areas and deliver a thriving housing market to address local needs. This strategy sets out the objectives and plans for how Brentwood intends to manage its strategic housing role.

The Council in its leadership and facilitating role will work with statutory and non-statutory partners to deliver one of Brentwood's key priorities - to improve housing and the access to a range of decent homes that meets local needs.

This updated Housing strategy is focused on the way forward that partners will be contributing to improve the housing provided in Brentwood, and how Brentwood can support this.

Housing is not just about bricks and mortar, it's about the quality of the home, the services provided and the positive impact good housing has on communities and the local economy. An effective housing strategy will help deliver the Council's corporate strategy and other key strategies focused on the local economy and health and well-being.





Housing faces significant challenges as a consequence of key external factors, such as the lack of affordability, the small supply of affordable housing and the implications of COVID-19. This Housing strategy covering 2021 to 2026 has been produced at a time when we face change, not only nationally but locally too. Brentwood Borough Council cannot do it alone. The strategy for housing can only be delivered in collaboration with partners and we will nurture good partnerships to ensure that the priorities set out in this strategy are delivered.

The housing strategy is being written at a time when the full impact of COVID-19 on housing and the economy is not known, as well the impact on employment and income levels which affect the local housing market.

The government is reviewing national housing policy and has published its Social Housing White Paper. This along with the outcome of the Grenfell Inquiry will have significant implications for all owners and managers of residential buildings.

The Council has had a successful track record in 2020/2021:

- Established a clear and deliverable Strategic Housing Development Plan.
- Completed a review of sheltered housing.
- Created a housing company that provides more opportunities for the council to deliver a diverse range of housing options.
- Improved the safety of blocks and reduced the risk to residents.
- New Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy delivered.

The Council is also taking forward a programme of work to deliver new homes. Brookfield Close is an example of what the Council can achieve to improve housing. In addition to providing 61 new much needed homes there is the opportunity to help deliver carbon neutral homes of a high standard through a fabric first approach. Not only does this help achieve our long-term goals of decarbonising local homes it also provides residents with much lower running costs. The homes will become so well performing that the energy required to heat, and maintain the heat, is expected to considerably reduce. On similar projects annual heating bills have reduced to roughly £40 per annum (down from an average of £400 to £650 for a small or medium sized property).

To continue to improve, the Council will seek opportunities to adopt best practices within the housing sector for the benefit of Brentwood's residents. The housing strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure that the approach and actions are the right ones, and that we remain on track to deliver against our agreed objectives.

This strategy document is supported by an action plan to deliver the outcomes identified and supported by an appropriate governance framework to oversee the strategy's implementation.

This document is intended to be easy to understand and focus on the policies and actions that will deliver the ambitious plans for the Borough.





Introduction Continued

Link to the Corporate Strategy

The key themes of the Brentwood Borough Council corporate strategy are:

- Growing our economy.
- Protecting our environment.
- Developing our communities.
- Improving our housing.
- Delivering an efficient and effective council.

The housing strategy is focused on improving our housing. The Housing Strategy will not just improve housing but also help Brentwood's other key corporate priorities. Housing is important not only in providing somewhere to live, but also has a positive impact on achieving the other corporate objectives.

The Council has identified 3 key aims for the theme of improving our housing:

- Provide decent, safe and affordable homes for local people.
- Support our tenants through a high quality, well managed service.
- Support responsible development in the borough.

These aims will be supported by the delivery of the following objectives:

- Increase the supply of affordable housing.
- Make best use of the existing stock.
- Deliver good quality sustainable homes.
- Deliver good quality services to residents.
- Deliver good quality services to tenants and leaseholders.
- Ensure resident safety.

Each objective is supported by actions and these are included in the delivery plan in Appendix One.

Resources to deliver the Housing Strategy

To maintain the momentum on the work already started and to deliver the additional actions to the capacity to deliver the strategy and action plan will reviewed. A key focus will be to secure external funding to support the delivery of the Housing Strategy where these are available, the most significant of which will be the decarbonisation of the Council's housing stock.

Public Consultation

Feedback from key stakeholders was sought to help shape the new housing strategy, including registered providers of social housing in the borough. Feedback was sought on the existing housing strategy and what were the current housing issues that the Council should address. The feedback was positive on the Council's role in helping to deliver new homes, with the key issue for residents and organisations being the issue of affordability and the challenges this brings to the local community.

Ongoing consultation with residents on housing issues will happen as part of the updated corporate strategy to incorporate their views into the services the Council provides.





About Brentwood

Located in the south-west of the county of Essex and east of Greater London, Brentwood Borough is set within the Essex Countryside. The borough has easy access to the countryside and London along established road and rail networks. Our location offers the best of both worlds, making Brentwood an attractive place to live, work and visit.

89% of the borough is within London's Metropolitan Green Belt. Being set within London's Metropolitan Green Belt poses some development constraints. However, it also sets a foundation for a creative and innovative response to sustainable development.

The population in 2011 was 73,601, of which approximately 70% living in the Brentwood urban area. The 2014 mid-year population estimate shows that this had increased to 75,600.

Three quarters of the borough population is of working age (16-65). This proportion has fallen over time as the population ages and there is a rise in the number of older people, with this projected to continue in the future.

Brentwood is one of the most affluent areas in England, within the least deprived 10% of the country.

Average weekly wages for those who live here but work elsewhere are higher than for those who work in the borough. A high proportion of people are employed as managers, senior officials, and in associated professional and technical occupations, reflecting the number of people commuting to places like central London. The higher than average salaries has also contributed to making affordability a pressing issue in Brentwood and a challenge to meeting local housing needs.

The proportion of the population from minority ethnic groups in the borough is well below average for the East of England, and for England as a whole. The largest non-white minority ethnic group is made up of people of Asian origin.

There are just over 32,000 homes in Brentwood Borough. The main property type is detached and semi-detached houses, which makes up almost 63% total stock compared to the national average of 53%. The main property size is 3 bedrooms (35%), followed by 2 bedrooms (25%) and 4 bedroom homes (23%).

House prices in the borough are very high in comparison with the rest of Essex, with an average house price of £431,961. This can cause issues preventing people from buying homes with entry level housing often too expensive for many newly forming households and the need for a significant deposit. Higher than average house prices and a bigger proportion of larger homes also pushes up rental values, making rents in the private rented sector higher as well.

Brentwood has retained its housing stock of around 2,500 homes and has an ambitious development programme utilising existing land to deliver new council homes.





About Brentwood

The Council is working with Homes England to secure funding for new homes. Since the launch of Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) and other sources of funding related to the delivery of garden communities administered by Homes England, the Council has received over £750,000 of capacity funding to drive forward the Dunton Hills Garden Village project. These grants have been vital to help the Council fund a dedicated project team and key pieces of work that have informed collaborative efforts to deliver the site so far.

Through the Council's key partnerships with the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) and Essex County Council (ECC), especially the working group approach, we have been able to maximise the opportunities to engage with Homes England and secure funding that not only benefits the regional approach to meeting housing needs but those needs within our Borough.

ASELA has a vision for developing growth in the region to address the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead and ECC has a housing strategy which is currently being consulted on and which will impact on the region's approach to housing issues.





Local Plan - what it says about market housing and affordable housing in Brentwood

Brentwood's Local Plan has recently been reviewed and the plan is going through consultation and is expected to be concluded later in 2021.

The Local Plan sets out to achieve the conditions for effective planning and development, that meets the needs of the current and future local population. Provision of sufficient housing is critical to meet the needs of the local population, including market housing and affordable housing. To meet the requirements of national policy, local planning authorities are expected to identify their local housing need and ensure that their Local Plans meet this need.

Once adopted the local plan will be a statutory document and a significant consideration in determining planning applications. The plan runs until 2033 and is reviewed every 5 years to ensure that Brentwood's strategic priorities are delivered on.

The Local Plan sets out the key position on local housing policies, for example including: affordable housing and specialist housing. The proposed policy for affordable housing seeks 35% of affordable housing on all sites of 10 or more homes submitted for planning permission.

The Local Plan has identified a need of 456 homes per annum and for 35% of these to be affordable homes (or 160 properties).

The approach to delivering affordable housing is set out in this strategy is consistent with the Local Plan policies for Brentwood and those relating to the delivery of affordable housing in the borough.

Affordable Housing Need and Delivery

Affordable housing is defined as housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers). The definition includes, but is not limited to social rented/affordable rented and intermediate housing as well as starter homes. To be 'affordable', the cost of housing must be low enough for eligible households to afford based on local incomes and house prices.

A growing number of households in the borough cannot afford to buy or rent on the open market because house prices in Brentwood are among the highest in Essex. A shortage of affordable housing can lead to overcrowding, poor health, an inability to achieve a decent standard of living and personal aspirations such as living independently, having children, being part of family or social network of choice – all factors that contribute to improving the sustainability of neighbourhoods.

The provision of affordable housing to meet identified need is an important objective of the Local Plan and to assess this need the Council, commissioned consultants to produce a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). This was published in June 2016 and uses the national planning practice guidance to calculate the level of affordable housing need.





Affordable Housing - past performance and future projections

Delivery of sufficient affordable housing is an important issue within the borough, in Brentwood over the last 5 years there has been an under provision of affordable housing as demonstrated in the table below. The low delivery of affordable housing in recent years means it is essential that the number of affordable homes is increased over the forthcoming years and for this to be continued for the foreseeable future.

The table below shows that the variable rate of affordable housing delivery in the borough and that over the 5 year period affordable homes accounted for less than 11% of the new homes built.

| Type | 2015/2016 | 2016/2017 | 2017/2018 | 2018/2019 | 2019/2020 | Total |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Affordable | 16 | 22 | 52 | 2 | 0 | 92 |
| Market | 109 | 150 | 187 | 247 | 70 | 763 |
| Total | 125 | 172 | 239 | 249 | 70 | 855 |

(Source - Brentwood Local Plan.)

In the Local Plan the proposal is for the provision of 35% affordable homes on all new sites coming forward of 10 or more homes.

The projection for the provision of market housing and affordable housing (at a rate of 35%) in the local plan is outlined in the table below. The projection is based on the sites identified in the Local Plan, increases both the number of homes to be built and in particular the number of affordable homes to be delivered. The Council will have a key role in delivering a proportion of the homes directly and support other organisations to deliver these.

| Period | Market | Affordable |
|-----------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Short Term 2021/22 to 2024/25 | 1,487 | 796 |
| Medium Term 2025/26 to 2028/29 | 1,387 | 746 |
| Long Term 2029/30 to 2032/33 | 923 | 497 |
| Total | 3,797 | 2,039 |

(Source - Brentwood Local Plan.)





An assessment of the size and tenure of affordable housing needed has also been completed and for the housing required up to 2033 this is included in the table below.

| Tenure | % Split | One bedroom | Two bedrooms | Three bedrooms | Four/+ bedrooms | Total Size |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------|
| Affordable rent/Social rent | 86% | 31% | 24% | 19% | 26% | 100% |
| Other forms of affordable housing | 14% | 28% | 36% | 24% | 12% | 100% |
| Total Tenure | 100% | | | | | |

(Source - Brentwood Local Plan.)

Affordability

There is a growing affordability gap that sees middle income households being squeezed out of the market. Many are left with limited options for low cost home ownership or in the private rented sector.

The Council will work with developers to deliver affordable housing requirements on sites. Delivering new affordable housing from starter homes to section 106s is key to the sustainability of the area and achieving the council’s corporate objectives.

Affordability in the private rented sector is particularly acute, with those on benefits limited because of the funding available for supporting housing costs. This is a factor in households being at risk of homelessness due to accommodation costs.

The average monthly cost of a 2 bedroom flat is £1,200, whereas the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate is set at the 30th percentile point and leads to housing rates being set at £700. This limits the options for households of the properties available and needing assistance from the Council to secure rented accommodation.

The Council recognises that the delivery of new affordable housing has been low and the impact of high average property prices continues to make this a significant challenge for the Borough. A number of the actions in this document will begin to address this issue. This is a longstanding problem for Brentwood, therefore the work to address this issue will need to continue beyond the life of this strategy.





National Context

There are a number of issues at a national level that will have influenced housing locally and the content of the housing strategy and action plan. The key current ones that have influenced the focus of the Housing Strategy are listed below

- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- National Planning Policy Framework 2018.
- Welfare Reform, in particular the impact of Universal Credit on residents' incomes and arrears.
- Local Housing Allowance and the impact on benefit levels and affordability.
- Grenfell Inquiry and the Hackitt report.
- The impact of COVID-19.
- Refugees and no recourse to public funds.

And there is the forthcoming change to legislation overseeing social housing, in particular the tightening up on the consumer standards outlined in the white paper.

The Government's social housing white paper (The Charter for Social Housing Residents) was published in November 2020. It promises widespread reform to social housing regulation, the quality standards applicable to social homes and the relationships between social housing residents and their landlords.

At the time of writing it is not clear when the new legislation will be introduced, however it will be during the life of this strategy. The Council has started to plan for meeting the new requirements through the strategy's action plan.

The current regulations for local authorities cover compliance with the consumer standards and the rent standard. Currently the Regulator does not proactively monitor compliance with these standards, except where the "serious detriment test" has not been met.

Within the social housing white paper the proposal for all registered providers of social housing (including local authorities) to be inspected every 4 years on compliance with the consumer standards. The consumer standards are to be reviewed and there will be a clear requirement for local authority providers to self-refer breaches of the consumer standards should they occur.

In addition, all registered providers will be asked to report against the new tenant satisfaction measures, which the regulator has been asked to develop.

Local Authorities will need to identify a suitable "named person" who will be responsible for consumer standards compliance, as well as a "named person" who will be responsible for ensuring compliance with health and safety obligations.

A number of steps have been identified in the action plan to help prepare Brentwood for the implementation of the new Housing Act.





Increasing the supply of new homes

The biggest impact that the Council can have as a Local Authority is to help facilitate a substantial housing programme in the Borough and play its part in directly delivering these new homes as well. To reflect this priority, the Council is working proactively pursuing development opportunities across a number of different sites.

Delivering new homes of different tenures will help address the needs of residents for improved housing and also support the delivery of the Council's broad strategic aims for economic growth and health and wellbeing. There is a clear need to be addressed from the data available and the opportunity to help address the shortfall in completions of affordable housing.

The Council will use the resources of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land and business plan to deliver new affordable housing, as well as using General Fund land to support the provision of market housing and affordable housing.

We will develop working relationships with funders of social housing (e.g. Homes England) to optimise the funding streams that the Council is eligible for, including borrowing within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding framework.

Brentwood has recently drafted an Affordable Homes Development Strategy for the period covering 2021 to 2028. The strategy addresses growth through new homes directly developed by the council over a 7 year programme. The strategy and plan (along with viability assumptions) will be reviewed annually to ensure that the outcomes are achieved.

To address the need identified for affordable housing a Strategic Housing Development Plan has been developed and will deliver two phases of affordable housing in the borough. Phase 1 of the development programme will deliver 145 new homes by 2024 and a second phase 2 will be developed to deliver further homes from 2024.





Increasing the supply of new homes

The following table sets out the properties to be delivered in phase 1. The numbers are total homes per ward, in some wards there is more than one development site proposed.

| Location or Ward | Number of Homes on the site | Type of Homes |
|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Brookfield Close/Courage Court | 62 homes | 31 Social Rent and Affordable Rent 15 Shared Ownership 16 Open Market Sale |
| Pilgrims Hatch | 9 homes | Affordable Rent |
| Brizes and Doddinghurst | 7 homes | Affordable Rent |
| Brentwood South | 13 homes | Affordable Rent |
| Brentwood North | 12 homes | Affordable Rent |
| Ingatestone, Fryerning and Mountnessing | 32 homes | Affordable Rent |
| Brentwood West | 7 homes | Affordable Rent |
| Hutton East | 3 homes | Affordable Rent |
| Total | 145 homes | 114 Social rent and affordable rent 15 Shared ownership 16 Open market sale |

There will also be potential for Section 106 homes (affordable) to be delivered by developers in the Borough. In the proposed local plan, Brentwood is seeking for all sites above 10 homes to have 35% affordable housing.

The Council will also be seeking first refusal on buying back the properties that have been sold through the Right to Buy. Purchases will be made where this offers value for money for the Council.

We will ensure that affordable housing developed directly by the Council is developed of the right type and tenure to meet the needs of households. The design of buildings and spaces should be tenure blind, whereby homes of social rent, affordable rent, shared ownership and private sale are indistinguishable from one another in terms of design quality, appearance or location within a community. Where the Council leads the design of sites different tenures no distinction will be made between market housing and affordable housing.

Due to Brentwood's location a number of Local Authorities use properties in the private rented sector to provide temporary accommodation for their residents. This pushes up the demand for private rented sector properties and local rental prices reflect this demand. Not only does this impact for residents trying to secure homes in the private rented sector, it impacts on the Council securing local accommodation for residents. Increasing the supply of housing will be essential to meet local people's needs.





Brentwood Development Partnership

The Brentwood Development Partnership (BDP) is a Joint Venture between Brentwood Borough Council and Morgan Sindall Investments (MSI). The Joint Venture will provide new homes, affordable housing and community facilities on the council's portfolio of land.

The current sites being progressed include: Westbury Road, Maple Close and Seven Arches Road. There are currently 9 affordable homes identified to be progressed by the Joint Venture with others to follow. For the homes built by the Joint venture these will be managed by the Council and plans are in place the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan to accommodate these.

| Location or Ward | Number of Homes on the site | Type of Homes |
|------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Maple Close | 9 homes | Affordable Rent |
| Seven Arches | 2 homes | Shared Ownership |
| Total | 11 homes | 9 Affordable Rent 2 Shared Ownership |

As well as providing much needed new homes, the Joint Venture will contribute to local economic growth and bring tangible benefits to the residents and the local community.





Seven Arches Investment Limited

The Council can consider the opportunities to use its company Seven Arches Investment Limited (SAIL) for the provision of properties to support meeting local housing need. The options to consider this can be explored should the other methods available do not achieve the outcomes needed, such as on Section 106 sites.

Dunton Hills Garden Village

Dunton Hills Garden Village is a new village proposed in the Borough of Brentwood which will provide much needed homes for the future. This village is one of 14 such villages that were proposed by the Government in January 2017. Dunton Hills will be a thriving new garden village which offers a landscaped setting, with sustainable transport connections, a self-sustaining population and modern energy-efficient homes.

The Vision for Dunton Hills Garden Village is a new settlement in a borough of villages. It is a place where the local natural environment is valued, protected, and shapes people's lives. Education, community facilities and amenities are central and well-integrated, creating a place that will become an exemplar of healthy and sustainable living.

As a Garden Village, Dunton Hills will be an exemplar for creating self-contained housing developments. At the same time it will have a unique sense of place and reflect its specific context. It will sit within the borough of Brentwood, the borough of villages, and will continue the borough's historic settlement pattern by drawing from the character of local villages to create a place which is rooted within its setting and landscapes.

The new village will be self-sustaining and will provide up to 4,000 new homes, new schools, job opportunities, health and community facilities and new public spaces. It will have three neighbourhoods: Dunton Fanns, Dunton Waters and Dunton Woods. Each of these areas will be designed to have a unique character which highlights the existing natural features found in Dunton Hills.

A new settlement to meet the needs of the population providing up to 4,000 homes will be developed and 2,700 homes are expected to be built up to 2033 and a further 1,300 homes delivered beyond 2033. This development will significantly contribute to the delivery of new market housing and affordable housing in the borough. The Council will work with the developers of the Dunton Hills Garden Village to ensure a mix of market housing and affordable housing is provided that meets the borough's needs.

Making best use of the existing stock

As well as facilitating and providing new homes in the Borough, the Council will review the existing homes and property that it manages to ensure that this meets current and future housing needs. Many of the homes were built over a long period of time and either require investment or were built for a specific purpose that is no longer needed to the same extent.





Regeneration

The regeneration of sites within the Borough will be a key issue for the Council. The Council's housing stock is increasing in age and will require significant investment in the future to meet modern standards. The sites are located across the borough and without regenerating these areas the Council's aims will not be achieved. The regeneration of sites is not without issues and will have a disruptive impact on some residents. The Council acknowledges this and will put in place measures to minimise this.

Housing-led regeneration can be a very good investment for both the public and private sector. It can deliver a range of social and economic benefits, as well as addressing the investment in the physical homes residents live in. On some sites there will also be the opportunity to secure additional homes and different tenures to meet the needs and aspirations of the local community.

A rolling programme of sites for regeneration will be focussed on by the Council to deliver improved housing and where possible additional homes. Brentwood will support estate regeneration in appropriate locations and where the housing and area need to be improved. Plans will be shared with residents as they are developed and are considered feasible.

Residents will be engaged at an early stage on the Council's plans and their needs taken into account when the plans are developed, particularly for those residents with specific needs.

To support the delivery of the sites and to provide clarity on the approach that will be taken formal documents that set out the approach to decanting residents and a "meanwhile offer" for residents affected will be developed.

Residents may need to be decanted from their property whilst the work is completed and re-housed temporarily elsewhere or given the choice of a property in the Council's other homes.

A meanwhile offer covers the arrangements for the maintenance of the properties whilst the area is regenerated, so that it is clear on how the site will be maintained until the regeneration starts. Residents will be involved in the discussions on the offer and how this will be implemented.

Where needed, the Council will use Local Lettings Plans (LLPs) to support the movement of residents affected by regeneration and the Allocations Policy will be updated to reflect this.





Sheltered Housing

We will create better opportunities for developing innovative use of redundant and underused sheltered housing stock, and invest in the sheltered housing that we continue to manage.

At the time of writing a review of Brentwood's sheltered housing is being completed, to identify those properties that should be retained as sheltered housing and which buildings should be used for a different purpose or regenerated to provide modern housing to meet future needs. The Council has 487 sheltered housing units across 3 hubs and there is an oversupply of this type of accommodation.

Some of the Council's sheltered housing blocks still have shared bathrooms, leading to empty properties and low demand. The presence of shared bathrooms during the COVID-19 pandemic has also led to changes in the blocks management to ensure residents are safe. This type of accommodation is out of date and this has been reiterated by the issues raised during the pandemic.

The general feedback that the Council has received is that there should be fewer, better quality homes available to support tenants moving out of their larger, family sized homes.

Measures have been put in place to encourage applicants, however the quality of the accommodation does not meet expectations and for this reason decisions will need to be made on how best to use the sites in the future.

As the population ages, we will work with partners and commissioners to meet the needs of our older residents and will seek to provide new, accessible homes. Our aim is to ensure that our older and disabled residents can remain in their homes for as long as they want and we will continue to provide adaptations to support this aim.

For those properties to be retained as sheltered housing, a programme of investment will be created to not only maintain residents' homes but also to improve the quality of communal areas, meet modern standards and be comparable to the sheltered housing provided by other registered providers.





Garages

Brentwood manages over 1,200 garages and at the time of writing over 400 of these were void, and there is the opportunity to review the use of these sites either to support the delivery of new homes or to reduce the financial impact on the Housing Revenue Account budget.

Where garages are in a poor condition the Council will consider the value for money from investing in the garages or using the sites for parking (and demolishing the garages as needed).

As well as addressing the financial impact on the Housing Revenue Account, this will also address local residents concerns about anti-social behaviour in vacant garages.

Under Occupation Scheme

The Council operates an under occupation scheme that encourages households in large family accommodation to move to smaller accommodation, thereby reducing their living costs and releasing a property for another household.

There are currently 40 households registered on the transfer list who are under occupying their home and choice applications have been prioritised to move into smaller accommodation or sheltered housing.

There is the opportunity for the scheme to be reviewed to identify other methods of encouraging an increased take up of the scheme through either the funding or support available to enable these moves to be completed.

In addition the information on under-occupation can help influence the decisions about the plans for new homes and how this can be used to target under occupying households to release the much needed larger accommodation.

Tenancy Fraud

It is good practice for every registered provider of social housing to proactively manage suspected cases of fraud to ensure that this scarce resource is used for those in most need. The Council will continue to work on suspected cases of fraud to support its best use of the housing stock and work in partnership with other agencies to do so.





Delivery of good quality sustainable homes

The UK Carbon Plan (HM Government, 2011) states that if we are to achieve the 2050 carbon target, the emissions footprint of our buildings will need to be almost zero. The UK's Committee on Climate Change in 2015 reinstated that 'meeting the 2050 target will require that emissions from energy use - power, heat and transport - are almost eliminated.

The impact of this for the Council will be on the delivery of new homes and investing in the existing housing stock to help deliver this target locally.

There are a number of challenges for landlords to improve their stock and achieve being carbon neutral by 2050, as well as reducing the use of gas and electricity to support residents on lower incomes. The challenges to achieving this are both financial (i.e. how much it will cost?) and technical (i.e. how will it be achieved?).

Within its development programme Brentwood will seek to build new homes which are zero carbon "in use" and where appropriate have "passivhaus" systems in place. We will build new homes that maximise the use of green technology and sustainable construction to reduce the running costs for residents.

Examples of the green technology that will be used includes:

- Fabric First - A 'fabric first' approach to building design for new homes involves maximising the performance of the components and materials that make up the building fabric itself, before considering the use of mechanical or electrical building services systems. So reducing energy consumption by increasing insulation, reducing heat loss and air infiltration and using heat from the sun is considered before deciding to create energy using solar panels or wind energy. A fabric first approach reduces the dependency on technology 'bolt-ons' and helps in keeping costs down over the life of the building.
- MVHR (Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery) provides fresh filtered air into a building whilst retaining most of the energy that has already been used in heating the building. Heat Recovery Ventilation is the solution to the ventilation needs of energy efficient buildings.
- Different heating systems that support efficient electric heating, such as air or ground source heat pumps. These systems recover a lot of heat and as a result they use less energy.
- Creating energy for residents - Technologies like solar panels can capture energy and turn it into electricity or heat for the home.
- Low water usage - reducing the impact on the environment and the bills paid by residents.

The impact of this for the standard of our homes will be significant, but the impact for residents and the amount of gas and electricity they use will also be reduced. One of the expected impacts of this is to reduce the running costs associated with living in one of the Council's homes and help residents' finances and enable them to use the heating costs at reduced costs.

We will work with partners to support homeowners to access funding to improve their properties, reduce heating costs and reduce their impact on the environment.





The Council has already invested in some of the poorest performing energy efficient council homes, for example through using existing methods of improving homes:

- Boiler Replacement - The replacement of older boilers that tend to lose a lot of heat and use a lot of energy with modern gas boilers (such as condensing boilers).
- Window and door replacement - Homes leak heat through their windows. By replacing windows with double or triple glazed windows, or installing secondary glazing to existing windows, homes can be kept warmer and outside noise can be reduced.
- Loft insulation Heat rises and it may be leaking into the loft. Insulating lofts, or topping up existing insulation, will keep heat inside living spaces for longer.
- External solid wall insulation- Older homes usually have solid walls. Installing insulation on the inside or outside of the wall can dramatically reduce the heat that escapes the home.
- Using low energy lighting in communal areas.

The investment over the last three years has totalled £1.2M and work is continuing in this area.

However the costs associated with achieving carbon neutrality are expected to be significant and will need to be quantified. The Housing Revenue Act Business Plan will need to be reviewed for the implications of this and the Council will ensure that external grant support is secured to help implement these changes.

To understand the most effective ways of implementing the new technology and improvements, we will work with partners and suppliers to achieve this and learn from the successes of other organisations.

From 2025 under the Future Homes Standard (a change in the building regulations for new homes) no new home will be allowed to be fitted with a gas boiler, and the Council will utilise alternative heating systems and include this in our specification for new homes.

In our existing homes we will aim for all Council owned social housing to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of C or above by 2030. The properties will continue to be assessed to identify the best methods of achieving this and which offer value for money for residents. For some properties which cannot achieve a C rating or where the cost to achieve this is prohibitive we will work to secure alternative solutions.

The strategy's delivery plan will address the gaps in the stock condition information to both quantify the size of the gap and the actions to close the gap to achieve an EPC rating C across the Council's homes.

Investment to improve the sustainability of the Council's homes will be delivered through an annual housing investment programme that improves council homes and estate areas to ensure that they meet required standards and contribute to reducing carbon emissions.

In addition to improving the homes we own we will also: improve the recycling facilities on estates, reduce incidents of fly tipping through improved estate design and ensure contractors and suppliers invest in an electrical fleet or alternative fuel powered vehicles to reduce the impact on the environment.



Deliver good quality services to residents

The Council provides services to residents across the borough across all tenures and to support residents when they need help, this is particularly on housing issues and covers a wide range of activities from homelessness to grants for private owners.

Housing Register and Allocations Policy

On a weekly basis usually between 5 and 10 families are rehoused through the housing register for the properties that become available and which the Council has nomination rights for. This is a combination of the Council's own stock and those managed by registered providers of social housing.

The housing register and transfer list also gives an indication of the need for housing in the borough, and with over 1,000 households registered it would take a significant period of time for the register to be significantly reduced. The Council's role is to help those in most housing need to have access to the limited social housing available.

The Council's Allocations Policy will be reviewed to restrict access to those who have been resident in the Borough for at least 5 years or worked in the borough for 2 years. This will be in line with neighbouring local authorities and provide a consistent approach in the locality. There are some exceptions to this rule prescribed by statute and these will remain in place.

If the proposed changes are agreed they will be applied retrospectively to the housing register and provide an updated data set for the Council to use for the demand for both property type and location to help shape future developments.





Supported Housing

There is limited supported housing provision in the Borough and this limits the opportunities to support the independent living of some residents. This is a county wide issue and one that will be addressed through the updated housing policies for Brentwood's local plan.

The proposed Local Plan for Brentwood seeks the provision of Specialist Accommodation on residential sites of 500 dwellings or more, this will be to ensure there will be sufficient housing to accommodate identified local need.

One example of the supported housing needed is for older people. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) indicates that if the trend of need for specialist residential accommodation for older people remains at current levels, that there will be a requirement for 494 additional specialist units up to 2033. Brentwood has an ageing population which has clear implications for the future delivery of housing over the Local Plan period.

This approach to meeting the specialist accommodation needs of older people is intended to reduce the demand for residential/nursing home care. Independent Living schemes are part of a wider accommodation pathway to enable older people to remain as independent as possible with the right housing and support to meet their needs. The Council will work with Essex County Council to secure provision of suitable sites.

The YMCA are in the process of purchasing the Foyer in Warley. This has remained empty for the last few years. In addition to providing 40 units for younger people, the YMCA will also be providing support and activities for this group. The Council will be working in partnership with the YMCA to make the best of the Foyer and help focus on supporting local young people. This is a positive step to helping local young people and the Council looks forward to working with the YMCA on this exciting project.





Homelessness and rough sleepers

The Council approved a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in 2020, this forms the basis of the approach and work on these two important subjects. The strategy demonstrates the Council's plans for preventing homelessness and resolving causes of homelessness in Brentwood.

The strategy has 5 aims:

- To increase effectiveness of the homelessness prevention service.
- To deliver and expand the choice of housing options available to customers.
- To enhance and extend partnership working to obtain meaningful results.
- To reduce the need for temporary accommodation and to improve the quality of provision.
- To eliminate rough sleeping in the Borough.

Brentwood receives a relatively low number of households presenting as homeless or threatened with homelessness, with no recorded rough sleepers on the day of the nightly count. The trend however is for homelessness to increase in line with national average and this is caused by the lack of affordability in the borough, which disproportionately affects younger households. This is particularly for those households on benefits where the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is below market rental values. The LHA is determined by the government and informs the rate of benefit paid to cover housing costs. The LHA rate is set at the 30th percentile of market values.

One of the key areas to improve are the working arrangements between agencies for those households who are at risk of repeat homelessness and need support to overcome this. To address this it is proposed to work with partners to introduce agreed updated protocols to help focus on the more challenging situations to be resolved, which are set out in the action plan.

The Council has a duty under the Housing Act 1996 to secure temporary accommodation for qualifying households. The number of households in this type of accommodation has remained relatively stable at between 50 and 75. Good progress has been made in reducing the use of temporary accommodation at a time when many Local Authorities have increased the number of residents in this form of accommodation. Work on reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation continues, as well as those in temporary accommodation for long periods of time. The length of time in temporary accommodation is created in part by the lack of three bedroom social housing properties becoming available in the local supply of social housing.

One of the issues for Brentwood is the provision of temporary accommodation in the Borough by neighbouring London Local Authorities. The Council has worked with Essex County Council on the bilateral agreement with London Councils on this issue, and in particular that adhere to their Temporary Accommodation placement policies which cover the support available for vulnerable residents. In some cases, Brentwood is competing with other Local Authorities in securing temporary accommodation and this can mean that the initial accommodation provided by the Council can be out of the Borough.

During 2020 the number of approaches made to the Council had reduced, however recently in 2021 number of people seeking advice from the Council has increased and may be the start of a change in the number of cases presented to the Housing Options and Homelessness Service. This trend may continue due to the economic impact of the pandemic and close monitoring of this issue will continue.





Private sector housing

The Council will continue to work on reducing the incidents of long term empty homes and develop effective actions to bring them back into use. This will include advice and assistance for owners to sell or bring their properties back into use, but will include enforcement measures where necessary.

Empty Homes Strategy - previously there has been a separate Empty Homes Strategy, going forward the reporting on the work in reducing the number of Empty Homes will be reported within the work on the housing strategy. There is an action in the delivery plan to review the resources available to bring Empty Homes back into use.

We will support the proper management of Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) through effective licensing. We will take enforcement action on landlords who compromise tenants' safety using the powers available to the Council.

We will work with partner agencies in the implementation of projects to improve home insulation and heating efficiency that help reduce fuel costs and maximise income.

Self Build

The development of self-build properties by individuals or community groups contributes to meeting the need for additional housing within Brentwood and provides a more diverse housing stock. Self-build plots are plots of land which are made available for individuals to design and build their own home whereas custom build plots are provided by site developers to the specification of individuals which may or may not follow a basic design pattern.

The Council's Strategy for Self and Custom Builds in the proposed Local Plan requires 5% self and custom builds for all developments of 100 dwellings or more.

Therefore, based on this requirement the following proposed sites would be required to provide 5% self and custom build homes:

- Dunton Hills Garden Village.
- West Horndon Industrial Estate.
- Land North of Shenfield.
- Ford HQ and Council Depot.
- Land off Nags Head Lane.
- Brentwood Railway Station.
- William Hunter Way Car Park.
- Land off Doddinghurst Road.
- Land South of Ingatestone.

Since 2016 Local Authorities are expected (under the Self Build and Customer House Building Act 2015) to keep a register of people who express an interest in developing land for self-build and custom-built projects.

The Self and Custom Build Register is monitored from 31st October to 30th October the following year. The applications also outline the preferred locations, housing type, and number of bedrooms. The majority of people are seeking to self build or custom build a detached 4 or more bedroom house in the countryside or villages. The statistics for 2020-21 go as far as 1st March 2021.





Self Build Stats

| Year | Number of new applications |
|-----------|----------------------------|
| 2015/2016 | 14 |
| 2016/2017 | 52 |
| 2017/2018 | 47 |
| 2018/2019 | 47 |
| 2019/2020 | 31 |
| 2020/2021 | 14 |
| Total | 205 |

The monitoring of the Housing Strategy will include information on the number of self-builds registered and the number of completed self-build units.

Gypsies and Travellers

The Council has a duty to identify land to meet the local needs of Gypsies and Travellers. This reflects the national planning policy that seeks to ensure fair and equal treatment for Travellers.

In doing so, government guidance sets out the approach Local Authorities should take when making provision for Gypsy and Travellers. It requires Local Authorities to make their own assessment of need, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites, to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale, to increase the number of Traveller sites in appropriate locations in order to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply.

In Brentwood for the period 2016 to 2033 there is an identified requirement of 11 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches to be developed by 2033. The Council will work with partners to deliver these on the development sites coming forward.

Community Cohesion

The population in Brentwood will continue to change and a key focus will need to be on helping to develop and cohesive community that is resilient to the challenges it faces. The Housing Strategy will help deliver cohesion through the development of new affordable homes, a good balance of tenures and mixed incomes. However this will be in the long-term and to support local communities it is proposed to develop a community cohesion and resilience plan that supports the work of local communities. The Council will work with partners to identify the way forward and how Brentwood can work proactively to support communities as they change. The impact of COVID-19 has made this focus even more important with additional pressures and challenges to be addressed.





Deliver good quality services to tenants and leaseholders

The Council is one of the 165 stock retaining councils and is continuing to look to improve the services to residents, learning from others and using the feedback from residents and stakeholders to achieve this. Currently the satisfaction levels with complaints and repairs have scored well against other providers of social housing.

Looking ahead there are areas where the service for tenants and leaseholders will need to change as residents' need change, responding to the new consumer standards and satisfaction measures for social housing and to deliver a flagship housing service.

Customer Satisfaction

To continue to improve customer satisfaction with our services we will review the way we capture information and follow up on the feedback provided. This will be to ensure we keep improving and learning from how the service is delivered.

In addition this work will help the Council to prepare for the introduction of the updated consumer standards for social housing that the regulator is expected to deliver. The current proposed draft tenant satisfaction measures are included in the table below:

| |
|---|
| <p>Properties to be in good repair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with the Decent Homes standard. • Completing repairs right first time. • Overall tenant satisfaction with repairs. |
| <p>Safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with all safety standards on gas, electrics, fire, asbestos water and lifts. • Overall satisfaction with the health and safety in homes. |
| <p>Handling complaints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of complaints relative to size of landlord. • % resolved on time. • Overall satisfaction with complaint handling. |
| <p>Respectful and helpful engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of complaints relating to fairness and respect relative to size of landlord. • Tenant satisfaction that their landlord listens to views and takes notice and overall satisfaction with landlord's engagement with tenants. |
| <p>Responsible neighbourhood engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % areas meeting the required standard. • Number of complaints relative to the size of the landlord. • Overall satisfaction that areas are clean and safe. • Tenant satisfaction with landlord contribution to the neighbourhood. • Number of ASB complaints relative to the landlord size and overall satisfaction with ASB handling. |
| <p>Overall satisfaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall tenant satisfaction with services. |





Resident Engagement

Resident engagement and the opportunities to incorporate residents views on existing and new homes will be reviewed. This is to ensure that residents' views continue to support the delivery of improved homes and services, whilst we also maximise the use of technology where possible and engage residents in the issues local to them.

We recognise that as we go through the regeneration of areas that we have need to engage effectively with and minimise the disruption for residents. We will be developing a standard approach to the engagement of residents early in the process and where appropriate specialist external resources will be used to support the Council in this approach.

Using technology to improve the tenant experience

Customer Services will continue to increase the use of on-line access to services, as this makes for simpler and more efficient interaction between our tenants and front-line teams, thereby enabling them to focus on providing services in a more effective way. The work on improving the impact of using IT to achieve a better customer experience will continue through the work on digital transformation, whilst also supporting performance monitoring and supporting remote working.

Whilst we expect more and more of our tenants to adopt our on-line service platforms. as the technology both becomes simpler to use and more prevalent, we will continue to provide a means of interaction for tenants who use more traditional methods of communication.

Where possible the Council will incorporate technology into homes to help with remote monitoring of safety and sensors on how the building is being used. This is likely to include: heat sensors, air quality monitors, humidity monitoring and remote diagnostics. We will work with suppliers to test the outcomes of using the technology and the additional cost. Where the pilot proves successful we will incorporate this into plans to be implemented across the Council's homes.

We will work with our repairs and maintenance contractor AXIS on how to add value for residents during the life of the partnering agreement. This will include making best of AXIS's technology to improve the customer experience and to incorporate new technology into the core service provided for all residents or vulnerable residents where appropriate. This will include: automated booking arrangements for appointments and remote diagnostics. The aim of these improvements is to improve the productivity of the Council and our contractors, as well as reducing the number of unnecessary visits to residents' homes.

Smart Homes technology will likely be incorporated into to our housing stock during the life of this strategy. This will reduce costs whilst enhancing the tenant's quality of life. For social housing organisations especially, the introduction of Internet of Things (IoT) technology, should be seen as a win-win. It will help the Council to manage and maintain the homes more effectively, and it will help residents to take an active and leading role in that management and maintenance process.





Examples of this include:

- Smart locks will let a resident who is at work open their front door so that a repairs person can fix a faulty boiler, reducing costs associated with missed appointments.
- Smart temperature sensors will enable social housing organisations to ensure that homes are suitably heated for the health of tenants, they can also identify potential issues around fuel poverty.
- Air quality and humidity sensors can be used to indicate potential issues around damp and mould thereby enabling solutions before they become both costly maintenance problems and detrimental health issues for the tenant.
- Smart leak sensors can detect water escape and activate smart stop-cocks before major damage is caused, saving costs of repairs, protecting residents' home contents and the inconvenience of remedial work.
- Remote monitoring of boilers and safety devices (e.g. smoke alarms) will help identify faults earlier improving resident safety and the customer experience.

The Council will join appropriate networks and work with partners and suppliers to achieve the incorporation of technology and innovation into our homes and services where possible. We will learn from the work of others and applying this to the needs of Brentwood's residents.





Investing in our Homes

To ensure that we continue to know where best to invest the Council's resources an updated stock condition survey will be completed and an asset management strategy written to set out where and how the resources will be used.

Progress in updating the stock condition survey has started and is expected to be completed by the end of 2022/2023 financial year. There are c2,684 surveys of dwellings and communal areas to be completed and during 2020/2021 Covid-19 impacted on the ability to safely access residents' homes to complete the surveys.

| Year | 2020/2021 | 2021/2022 | 2022/2023 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Number of surveys completed or to be completed | 408 | 1,100 | 1,100 |
| % of surveys completed or to be completed | 15% | 60% | 100% |

To support this a 5 year repairs and maintenance programme will outline the commitments over the forthcoming years and a detailed annual housing investment programme will be presented to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee each year.

These actions will help improve existing council homes and estate areas, make best use of the existing homes, support the delivery of new homes and contribute to reducing carbon emissions.

Increasing life expectancy means that there will be changing health and housing needs of the local population. We will support this through the better use of existing homes and take these needs into account when planning for future affordable homes. The Council will also invest the homes through an effective programme of aids and adaptations to support residents independence.

Repairs and Maintenance

The repairs and maintenance provided to residents is the one service that all residents use and often is the service that has the biggest impact on a resident's perception of their landlord and the satisfaction rating given. To ensure that the repairs service continues to improve a formal review of the quality of the service and the value for money offered by the contract with our repairs and maintenance partner (Axis) will be completed and reported on to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee on an annual basis. This will help ensure that residents receive a reliable value for money service and one which continues to improve.

The "handy person" service provided to residents by Axis is included as part of the repairs and maintenance contract. The service is aimed at the elderly and vulnerable persons to help support their independence and their safety, with 25 visits completed per month in line with residents' requests.

The service will be reviewed every year to ensure that it continues to have the best impact for residents for the resources available.





Supporting residents

Services are provided to residents in sheltered accommodation and general needs housing to support them and sustain their tenancy with the Council. This service has been reviewed and the intention is to introduce changes that target the service to those most in need and where the service can have the biggest impact.

The use of tenancy audits will be reviewed and the audits focused on identifying residents who are vulnerable and where support can be provided to support them.

This approach will help support the best use of the floating support service provided by Peabody (and financed by Essex County Council). The service receives positive feedback and regular meetings are in place to maximise the impact of the service, the targeted tenancy audits will help to further maximise the impact of this service.

To support local residents (as well as tenants) there is the opportunity to enhance the impact of the sheltered housing schemes by considering how they can link to other services and be used as resource to support the local community. This will help to support Brentwood's other priorities, such as health and wellbeing. As part of the review of the sheltered housing homes, once the future approach to sheltered housing provision is identified how these assets can support the local community can be explored through conversations with Adult Social Care.

The Welfare Reform changes and Universal Credit in particular has impacted on residents' finances and for the Council this has changed the way we manage the income received from tenants. The way we work will continue to evolve as the impact of Universal Credit is felt by households and on the arrears experienced.

COVID-19 has also impacted on households financial circumstances and on the arrears levels. The current approach to financial inclusion and tenancy support will be reviewed to see what changes are needed to support residents and protect the Council's income.

We will continue to work with local charities and voluntary groups that support residents and focus on housing issues, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Brentwood MIND, Synergy, Papworth Trust, Changing Pathways, Peabody, YMCA and the Lighthouse Furniture Project.





Ensuring Resident Safety

Resident safety has been a key issues for households and housing providers alike in recent years. Since the Grenfell Tower Fire, many of the building safety issues identified have already begun to be addressed. The Council has improved the safety of its stock to address identified issues, as well as preparing for the introduction of new standards.

Building and home safety will become an explicit part of the redesigned consumer regulation standards overseen by the Housing regulator. These new standards will be applied to Local Authorities and supported by an assessment every 4 years.

Within the social housing White Paper (The Charter for Social Housing Residents) all landlords will need to have a nominated, publicly named person who is responsible for health and safety compliance. There will be consistency in safety measures across the private and social rented sectors, with mandatory installation of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and an increased focus on electrical safety. Brentwood has already started to install carbon monoxide detectors and will be in a good position when this change is introduced.

Landlords will need to engage residents of all tenures on safety issues and will be key to residents 'feeling safe'. The accountable person for every high-rise building will be required to produce and action a resident engagement strategy to share safety information and allow safety concerns to be voiced.

The Building a Safer Future report (published in May 2018) was an independent review of building regulations and Fire safety. This along with the outcomes of the Grenfell Inquiry will be used to shape how fire safety is managed by the Council.

In addition to a robust approach to compliance Brentwood will extend the use of external audits on the 5 key areas of resident safety (gas, electrics, asbestos, fire safety, water hygiene) to support the ongoing improvements in this area.

As mentioned previously in the Smart Homes section, where possible the Council will incorporate technology into tenants' homes to that helps keep residents safe and healthy. This work will continue beyond the life of this strategy.

We will review the use of garage sites to ensure communal areas are well managed and not subject to anti-social behaviour. These issues will taken into account when the garage sites future use are reviewed and changes made.





Delivery of the Housing Strategy

Governance Arrangements for Delivering the Housing Strategy

The Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee will receive an annual update on progress with implementing the Housing Strategy and what changes are needed to the action plan to deliver the strategy's vision and key objectives.

This Housing Strategy will be supported by an effective action plan and governance arrangements to deliver the outcomes needed.

It is important that the Housing Strategy is regularly reviewed and kept up to date, to respond to changes in guidance and legislation, and any changes in trends relating to need and demand for housing and services. A check will be carried out on an annual basis, or in the event of major new legislation or guidance or a major change in services, to determine if a wider review of the strategy is required. The action plan will be a live document, to be updated when necessary as actions are completed and new actions arise, but in any case will be reviewed on an annual basis.

In addition to the action plan, a number of key performance measures have been identified and these will be reported on to demonstrate the outcomes being achieved on the objectives. These will be reported to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee.

The Council will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the strategy and the action plan and ensuring that these are kept up to date as described above.

This will be in addition to the reports that the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee receive on operational issues and performance (e.g. repairs, compliance, homelessness applications, temporary accommodation, etc).

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan

Attached as Appendix One to this strategy is the delivery plan to improve housing in Brentwood.

Some of the actions in this strategy are short term and can be realised quickly and others will take a number of years to be achieved. There are likely to be changes over the next 5 years that means that the strategy and the action plan needs to change and new actions agreed. The action will be updated on an annual basis to ensure momentum is maintained during the life of the Housing Strategy. The Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee will receive an annual update on progress with the plan's delivery.

Some of the actions will continue to support the strategy's delivery and there are also a number of new actions to deliver the aspirations of the Council.





Housing Strategy Outcomes - Performance Measures

The following measures will be used to measure success in delivering the strategy and will be reported on an annual basis to the Council's Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee.

| Objective | Performance Measure for the Housing Strategy |
|---|--|
| Increasing the supply of affordable housing | Number and size of new homes built by tenure. |
| | Number and size of new affordable homes built by tenure. |
| | Number of homes built by Brentwood Borough Council. |
| | Number of homes started on site by Brentwood Borough Council. |
| Make best use of the existing stock | Number of HRA sites identified for regeneration. |
| | Number of households that have down sized and freed up larger properties. |
| | Number of cases of action taken on suspected fraud. |
| Deliver good quality sustainable homes | Average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating of Brentwood's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) stock. |
| | Number of homes with a completed EPC Rating. |
| | Number and % of stock condition surveys completed for homes and blocks. |
| Deliver good quality services to residents | Number of empty homes brought back into use. |
| | Private rented sector - enforcement action taken against private rented sector landlords. |
| | Private rented sector - formal advice given to private rented sector landlords. |
| | The number and value of grants provided. |
| | Report on the delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper strategy to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee. |
| | Number recorded on the self-build register. |
| | Number of self builds completed. |
| Deliver good quality services to tenants and leaseholders | Performance reported to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee. |
| | Annual update on the AXIS contract to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee. |
| | An annual housing investment programme approved by the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee. |
| Delivering Resident Safety | Compliance performance reported to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee. |





Housing Strategy Supporting Documents and Information

The following documents have been used to help shape this Housing Strategy.

| Document | Link |
|---|---|
| Brentwood Borough Council's Corporate Strategy | https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/23012020152027000000.pdf |
| Brentwood Borough Council Economic Strategy | https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/20042018104113000000.pdf |
| Brentwood Borough Council Health and Wellbeing Strategy | https://www.livewellcampaign.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/05/Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-Brentwood-2017-2022.pdf |
| Brentwood Housing Strategy 2017-2020 | https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/15032017132944u.pdf |
| Brentwood Borough Council Local Plan 2016-2036 | https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/31012019170028000000.pdf |
| Brentwood Local Plan (Pre-submission document) February 2019 | https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/31012019170028000000.pdf |
| Brentwood Borough Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Part One - June 2016 | https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/25102018093817000000.pdf |
| Brentwood Borough Council Objectively Assessed Housing Needs (OAHN) June 2016 | https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/08082016155101u.pdf |
| Brentwood Monitoring Report Housing Delivery 2018-2019 | https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/14022020163907000000.pdf |
| Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2014-2044 | https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/18022014151748u.pdf |
| Brentwood Housing Action Plan | https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/06022020134858000000.pdf |
| Brentwood Affordable Homes Development Strategy 2021-2028 | TBC |
| Building a Safer Future - published May 2018 | https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/707785/Building_a_Safer_Future_-_web.pdf |
| Homeless and Rough Sleepers Strategy | https://brentwood.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s17960/Appendix%20A-%20Homelessness%20Rough%20Sleeping%20Strategy%202020.pdf |
| Allocations Policy 2019 | https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/08032019133226000000.pdf |
| Tenancy Strategy 2017-2020 | https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/15032017132944u.pdf |
| Service Charge Strategy 2017 | https://brentwood.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s12226/Appendix%20A.pdf |
| Empty Homes Strategy 2017-2020 | https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/27092017102821000000.pdf |
| Social Housing White Paper | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-charter-for-social-housing-residents-social-housing-white-paper |



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