

Thurrock Housing Strategy

2012 – 2017

We want Thurrock to be at the **dynamic** heart of the Thames gateway, a place of **ambition, enterprise** and **opportunity**, where communities and businesses **flourish**.

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Revision History

This document will be subject to amendments during the review period and will be updated during this time using formal change control procedures.

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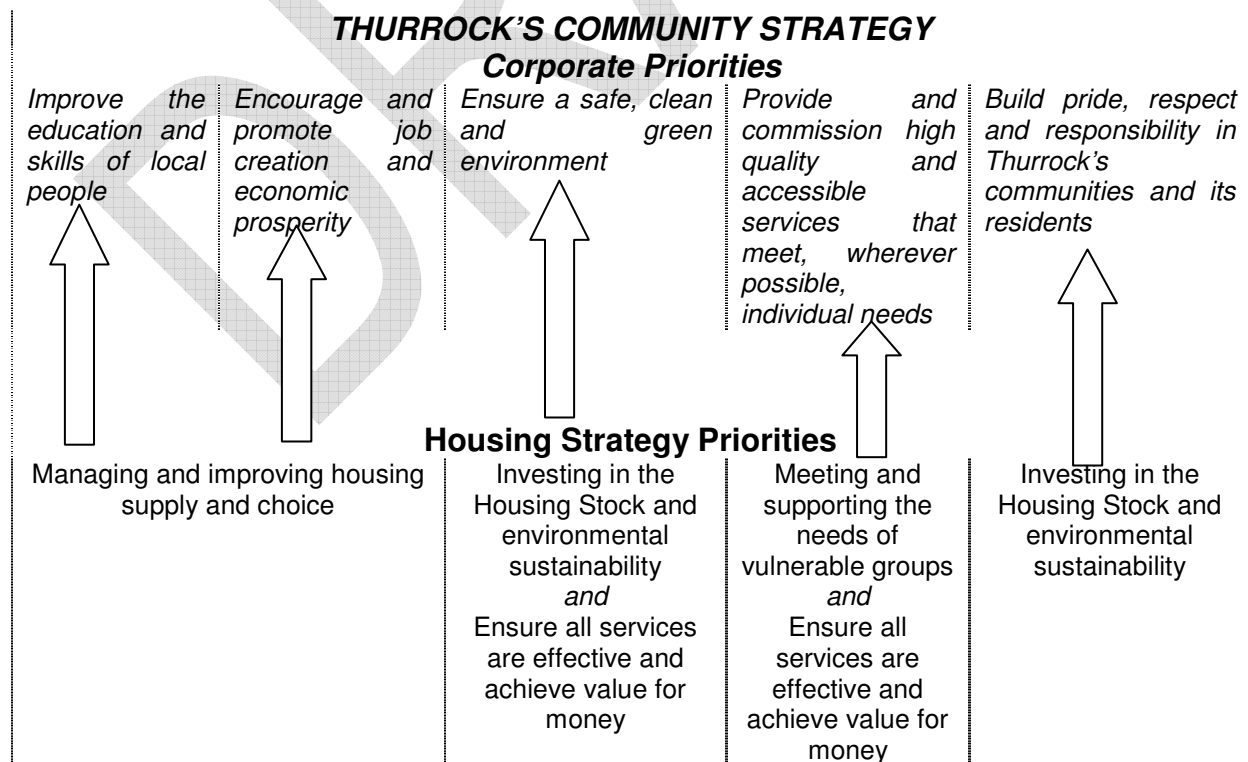
Executive Summary

Providing good quality housing and a well integrated blend of different housing types, tenures, and support that meet the needs of those who want to live here is a vital contribution to achieving Thurrock's Sustainable Community Strategy.

This housing strategy provides an analysis of the current housing market and the gaps, and then sets out through our priorities the areas that will be addressed. The strategy sets out our long term ambition for our place and is supported by a 5 year delivery plan. We intend to develop plans to expand the range of housing options for older people, bring forward options to develop support accommodation for vulnerable young people. We have also set out the council's landlord role as a stock retained authority and propose a housing development programme which goes beyond the life of this strategy. Our ambition is to see mixed tenure development using the HRA finance to lever in further funding from partners who share our ambition for our place – Thurrock.

Housing is important to the wellbeing and prosperity of places; above all it is where people live. The growing importance of skills to an area's economic performance means that getting the right housing offer, including affordable housing is essential to attracting and retaining a skills base that will encourage inward investment. Housing investment in itself can also be a powerful driver of local economic activity creating employment in the construction industry and supply chain companies and the subsequent recycling of wages spent in the local economy.

The strategy recognises the need to expand both ends of the housing market, executive housing to meet the professional and managerial job roles to be delivered through our economic led regeneration programme for Thurrock.



Through the life of this strategy our priorities are:

- **Managing and improving housing supply and choice**
- **Meeting and supporting the needs of vulnerable groups**
- **Investing in the Housing Stock and environmental sustainability**
- **Ensure all services are effective and achieve value for money**

Our housing priorities support the council's ambition for Thurrock to be *a place of ambition, enterprise and opportunity*. The strategy supports the council's priorities and in-turn the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Government's national housing strategy, "Laying the Foundations; A Housing Strategy for England", provides a comprehensive statement of the government's intentions. Supply is the central issue. Economic recovery will take longer without a bigger commitment to building. The aims of the strategy are to help drive local economies and create jobs, and to spread the social capita by becoming a nation of homeowners. The various policy sections set out a programme to increase building and create market stability.

An expanding population, high property prices, and pockets of poor quality housing within Thurrock are contributing to the demand for good quality affordable housing. We have seen housing development slowed considerably in the last three years - 7,893 dwellings completed between 1989 and 2008. The annual average number of net completions during this time was 789 dwellings per annum. This slowed down to 288 net new homes in 2011.

Affordable homes is considered in it widest context. It includes those households who aspire to homeownership and could afford to maintain a mortgage but due to the high loan to value, this group is forced to rent in the private market. Homeownership access products allow households to get onto the housing ladder. This segment of the market does not wish to share the ownership of their home but an equity product may be a more attractive offer for these households.

Affordability is a challenge in this difficult market. The housing waiting list, which is an indication of affordable housing needs, shows an underline upward trend. To deal with the backlog and new arising needs, then we need an annual build programme of 420 homes per year over 10 years, just to meet the needs of those locked out of the private market. For many, home-ownership is unaffordable. We will therefore encourage the development of low cost home ownership, helping many local families who aspire to get their feet on the property ladder. We will also continue to encourage the development of new homes for rent, helping those for whom home ownership is out of reach.

The private rented sector (PRS) is growing and remains part of the affordable housing offer. Although it is unregulated, the Council works with private landlords and their agents through the Landlord Accreditation Scheme to drive up standards and confidence in the market. We want to improve conditions in the private rented sector, ensuring there is a thriving private sector for rent and ownership. We will work with residents, vulnerable home owners and people renting privately to maintain and improve their homes through advice and where possible grants and loans. We seek to bring private sector empty properties back into use and work with both single

private landlords and large institutions to bring forward new models for this growing section of the housing market.

Unsuitable housing is recognised to affect other aspects of people's lives, harming education, health, employment and social networks. Through our strategy we want to help as many people as possible overcome their housing challenges to improve their well-being and overall quality of life. It is therefore important that housing professionals engage effectively with health and social care. The health service reform, will impact upon local areas in a number of different ways, including having a greater level of control over what happens at a local level to ensure that local needs are met, overall health is improved, and any inequalities in health are reduced. Housing already works with the Director of Public Health, whose post is being transferred to the Council. Housing will play a key role in the success of the new Health and Well-Being Boards. The Board will not only have responsibilities for ensuring that the right health and social care services are commissioned and provided but also that the broader determinants of good health and well-being are considered and influenced which includes housing.

An increasingly ageing society also requires a strategic response and we have led a sub-regional Commission of Enquiry to help us plan for future needs more effectively. We will seek to support older people with health and mobility difficulties to enable them to remain in their homes with housing choices that support independence and so in turn support the social care agenda.

Over the life of this strategy we will aim to better shape housing demand and supply to meet resident needs and aspirations. Increasing supply will also contribute to the local economy.

We will also ensure we use the challenges and opportunities presented by HRA finance reform to invest in our housing stock, to ensure well maintained homes that contribute to improving energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty. We will use our land and resources to best effect to improve, reshape and create new homes.

Ensuring the delivery of customer focused services, shaped by, and accountable to residents remains a key issue, and we will continue to work with our residents to ensure we deliver high quality, value for money services.

In addition we will continue to work with our communities to involve, develop and empower residents to ensure a resident led approach and wide engagement in all aspects of community activity.

This strategy has been developed at a time of rapid change in housing and public services. The strategy sets out the Thurrock response to these key changes including HRA subsidy reform, the Localism Act, changes to the funding of affordable housing and the impact of proposed welfare reforms. The Housing Service is responding to these changes by developing a robust evidence base of needs through the Local Investment Plan; balancing competing priorities, developing new approaches, and ensuring the best use of resources and assets available to us and our partners.

Introduction

Thurrock's character and personality has formed and evolved over centuries as agriculture, industry and the river have shaped the landscape, the make-up of its people and the quality of life.

The enduring characteristics of those who live or have lived and worked in the borough – enterprise, resilience, opportunism, adaptability – represent a strength of spirit. It is this spirit that will drive a new tone and a fresh relationship between the council and everyone it does business with and is captured in the council's vision and priorities:

"We want Thurrock to be the dynamic heart of the Thames Gateway, a place of ambition, enterprise and opportunity, where communities and businesses flourish"

- 1 *Improve the education and skills of local people*
- 2 *Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity*
- 3 *Ensure a safe, clean and green environment*
- 4 *Provide and commission high quality and accessible services that meet, wherever possible, individual needs*
- 5 *Build pride, respect and responsibility in Thurrock's communities and its residents*

2011 was the 75th anniversary of Thurrock as a Borough and marked the start of a new phase of opportunity for the next generation – the next generation of young people, older people, families, vulnerable people – the next generation of people who have an opportunity to benefit from the future prosperity of the borough.

The current regeneration programme will once again change the landscape, with the transformation of Lakeside into a town centre, the creation of the biggest container port in Europe, the Royal Opera House Production Park and performing arts, to name a few. All of these will bring new jobs and fresh opportunities for the future.

How people feel about where they live, how they feel about their public services, how they feel about themselves will be central to creating a collective sense of identity and direction. One in which people aspire for themselves and for their families to do well in education, are equipped to take on the new and different types of jobs available, have the best possible quality of life and are proud of where they live.

Thurrock Council will be changing and adapting to help achieve this, enabling and facilitating change, preparing its residents for the new opportunities, engaging and involving, more in tune and in touch with the needs of local residents, partners, businesses and its employees, aligning expectations and aspirations.

The current economic downturn provides an opportunity and a catalyst for operating differently and valuing the perspectives of everyone who has a stake in the future of the Borough.

The Core Strategy, Local Investment Plan and Community Strategy set out the overall vision and approach to the economic led regeneration in Thurrock. The Housing Strategy plays a significant contribution to the growth agenda, as well as delivering fundamental change in the way social housing is let, managed and delivered. The strategy set out the housing plans and ambitions for the medium term 2012 -15. It represents our contribute to Thurrock's Community Strategy and the Council's Corporate Priorities, and response to the governments wide ranging reforms including planning, housing, and welfare, as well as seeking to influence local housing markets to meet local demand.

The Housing Strategy assesses the current and future housing market across tenures, seeking to balance the housing market and setting out the Council's approach to meeting need. It sets out the wider links with planning and the economy particularly the Local Development Framework (LDF), and responds to national, sub-regional and local priorities. It also links and integrates with other Council and partnership strategies. These include the delivery of affordable housing, preventing and tackling homelessness, meeting the needs of vulnerable and older people and improving the quality of our housing stock and the lives of our residents.

Thurrock has many opportunities for new housing development:

- Through the Borough's spatial planning policies a number of designated housing regeneration areas have been identified, suitable for densification and have good public transport links and close proximity to services and amenities.
- Our LDF Core Strategy seeks to maximise re-use of previously developed land and the conversion of existing buildings. It will also encourage new housing development in accessible locations. This will be primarily within existing urban areas and on 'brownfield' land initiating urban regeneration programmes at Purfleet, West Thurrock, Lakeside town centre, Tilbury and South Stifford/West Grays. Our LDF sets out our ambitious targets for housing growth, with a target of 18,500 new homes by 2021 and a further 4,750 homes by 2026
- Purfleet is our regeneration priority, with the others being our longer term priority. The regeneration framework for Purfleet proposes the creation of a new centre for Purfleet comprising up to 3,000 new homes; employment and commercial land; new retail use; areas of public realm and open spaces accompanied by a new primary school and other community health uses.
- Our estate renewal programme on the Garrison estate will look at increasing housing supply of a mixture of tenures and sizes to contribute to the wider regeneration of the area.
- Making best use of surplus Council land and assets to create mixed and balanced communities. We will make the most of the new opportunity from the HRA self-financing and work in partnership with the private sector and Registered Providers (RPs).

The Housing Strategy also sets out how the Council and its partners are working together to address current housing issues and challenges and how these impact on housing services.

Background - achievements

The housing services achievements since the last strategy has meant we have been able to make further progress in a number of areas as well as being well placed to address some of the challenges presented by new policies and emerging issues. Some of our key achievements since the last strategy include:

- All the Council's housing stock met the Decent Homes Standard by March 2010
- 99.9% of social housing is let through a Choice Based Lettings system enabling greater transparency and choice
- Reduced the level of households in temporary accommodation by 50% (from Dec 2004 levels) by 2010
- We have produced 233 units of affordable housing since 2007/8
- Undertaken a Strategic Housing Market Assessment with sub regional partners
- Successful secured £4.2m for a sub regional scheme with regards to fuel poverty and empty homes; 132 clients lifted out of fuel poverty, 258 homes made thermally decent and the average SAP improved to 50-65
- Procured a new responsive repairs service to provide greater value for money
- Introduced an accessible housing register, resulting in over £500k savings.
- Successfully secured £500k funding to refurbish Gypsies & Travellers sites
- Embedded Sheltered Housing Forums
- Secured Trade School funding for next 2 years to provide young people with transferable skills
- Opening of the Seabrooke Rise Community House run by the community for the community

The strategy identifies the key policy changes and identifies current gaps and actions to address these issues.

Issues and Opportunities

The Government is significantly changing planning and housing policy. It has major implications for how we provide for all types of housing, and particularly housing for those on limited incomes. The Localism Act sets out new rights for neighbourhoods to develop their own community plans through a powerful new mechanism, complemented by the Community Right to Build and opportunities to secure community assets. Neighbourhood Development Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders can form part of the Development Plan, and will be able to create development consent for defined areas. The Core Strategy element of the Local Development Framework will be retained, and this will be a more flexible document with less detail and with a streamlined preparation process.

The effectiveness of these changes are also dependent on a wider package of changes – including the introduction of the New Homes Bonus, designed to incentivise housing growth, changes to Housing Benefit, and a new National Planning Policy Framework, which will set the key national policy direction for planning.

Changes to the Local Housing Allowance will affect all existing claimants. Nationally it is estimated 1,100¹ in Thurrock will experience a change that will mean their benefit covers less of their rent. But our local knowledge predicts over 2,000 claimants will be affected in a negative way. These households will have to offset the portion of the rent that is no longer covered by the Government, unless their landlord forgoes rent.

To counteract some of the hardship this is likely to cause, provision for discretionary housing payment over the next four years has increased. The discretionary fund administered by our Housing Benefit team enables the Council to provide extra support to those facing an unavoidable and unaffordable burden. Clearly this funding will assist in the prevention of homelessness giving households time to find alternative affordable housing options.

The Localism Act reverses measures in the 2002 Homelessness Act, and specifically to reintroduce closed housing waiting lists, which would give local authorities further discretion as to which households are eligible for an allocation of social housing.² It also gives local authorities the power to discharge their homeless duty in the private rented sector. The ending of the homeless duty in the private rented sector should lead to more social lets for people on the waiting list. Shorter tenancies will see a number of tenants move from the social and affordable housing in to the private sector and council's will see their waiting lists falling over time if they implement the changes. We will see our stock turn over increase to the industry norm from 5% to 25%.

The policy direction is for social housing to be used more efficiently so many more tenants are provided with the right support and incentives to take up work. They would then be able to make that transition from social rented to other housing tenures which include low cost home ownership or the private sector market.

In Thurrock 15,414³ households claim housing benefit and 43% (6,500) are current council tenants. If we do not take up the freedom and flexibilities in the Localism Act, we could see the residualisation of our current stock and the number on housing benefit claimants increase both in absolute terms as well as percentage of the total population.

The national housing strategy makes a clear causal link between the low turnover in the social housing stock and growing waiting list. The low turn over is due to secure tenancies which leads to increasing waiting lists. The widening of the reasonable preference groups and small social housing build programmes also contribute to a growing waiting list. To address the growing waiting list, the government proposes a number of flexibilities for council's and landlords. It will widen the opportunity for the more of the community to live in council housing.

The government wants to change public perception of social housing to it being a time limited resource available during that time of need. The Localism Act is part of the move towards achieving that shift in opinion; the Welfare Reform Act 2011 is another. These alongside other policy changes will impact on the council and its

¹ *Impact of Changes to Local Housing Allowance from 2011*. Department for Work and Pensions. Jul. 2010. <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/impacts-of-hb-proposals.pdf>: Table 3: Impact of measures contained in the March 2010 Budget – caseload

² Localism Act. Part 5. Clauses 121-123. House of Commons. TSO, Dec. 2010. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/126/11126part1.pdf>

³ Information from HB system – 6th Jan 2012

landlord function. Registered Providers (RPs) will be offering flexible tenancies to new tenants; converting up to 50% of their voids to affordable rents; and all new developments will be let at as affordable rents. Neighbouring authorities may close their waiting list and or introduce further restriction to “local connections”.

As waiting list numbers are currently used as core data in the assessment of local housing need, restricted waiting lists could significantly influence the assessments of housing need and demand through the planning process. The numbers of local homeless households is also used as core data in housing need assessments, and any restrictions could also result in a reduction in the calculation of future social housing requirements. We will need to monitor the impact of these policy changes.

It is important as a landlord that we respond to the changes in the housing market as identified in the national housing strategy, so that the council’s stock does not become a residual stock⁴. As a local authority we will need to take a leading role in managing the housing supply and affordability.

⁴ The term ‘residualisation’ means the social balance of the area is disturbed by the departures and the people who remain are faced with concentrated poverty together with strengthening social stigmatisation.

Purpose of our council housing

The purpose of the Council as a social landlord is largely determined and prescribed by legislation and regulation, but it is also heavily shaped by the history of social housing, and by the needs of the people of Thurrock as articulated in our strategies and plans. What the Council does in the future and how the Housing Business Plan articulates that future will be shaped by how the Council chooses to interpret its role as a social landlord.

The purpose of social housing in England continues to be shaped by social attitudes, by economic necessity and national policies, such as those now proposed in the Government's National Housing Strategy, *Laying the foundations: A Housing Strategy for England*. These forces are translated on the ground through the various statutory duties placed on the Council.

These statutory duties in the main require the Council to carry out two strategic functions as a social landlord:

- To meet the acute housing needs of the most vulnerable and the homeless; and at the same time,
- To help create and support mixed and sustainable communities.

The Council as a social landlord will therefore need to balance its various housing policies, such as the revised allocations scheme and its tenancy policies, together with the new opportunity of building new Council homes so that it can achieve both the objectives of meeting statutory housing need and creating mixed and sustainable communities. Our key strategic objective as a Council Landlord is to:

Meet our statutory obligations as a social landlord in terms of meeting housing need and maintaining its homes whilst at the same time helping to create and maintain sustainable communities.

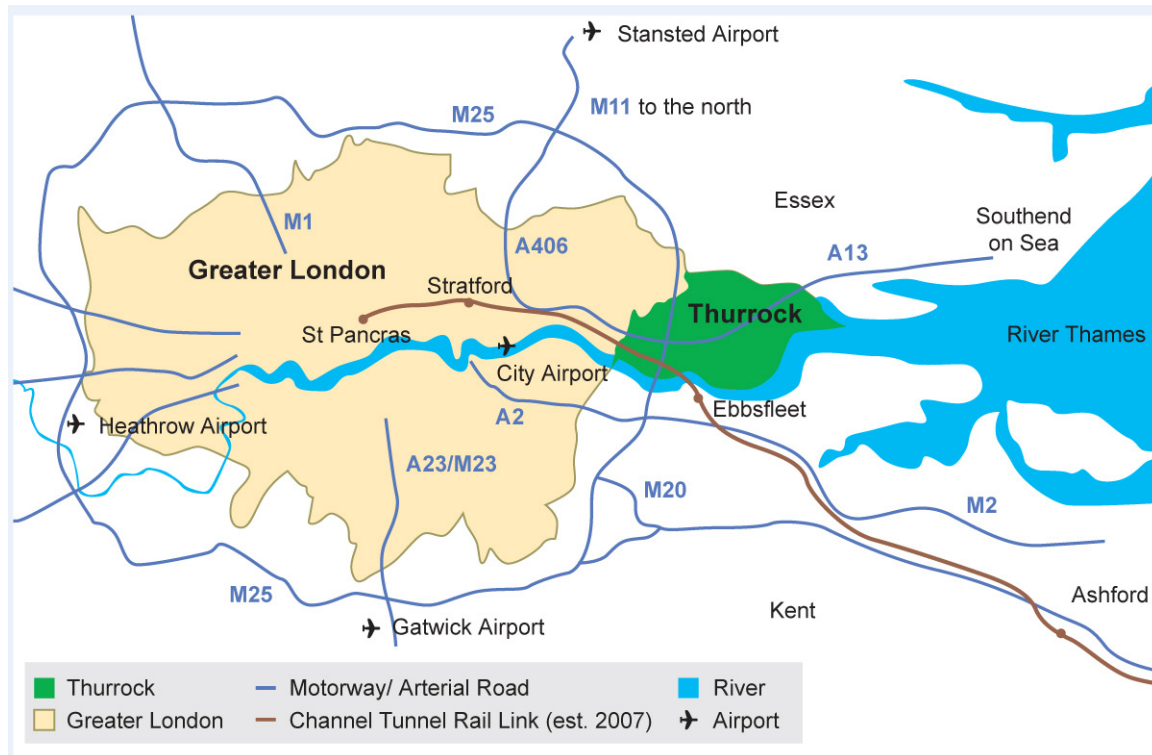
We will do this by meeting the statutory housing needs for the homeless and the vulnerable while at the same time meet particular local housing needs, for example, for people in work or who are looking for work. We will help create and support sustainable and mixed communities amongst Council estates and the neighbourhoods in which they are situated; and support the Council's regeneration and growth plans by directing existing and new stock investment to sites of strategic importance.

This will remain the continuing housing challenge for the Council - to meet its statutory landlord obligations whilst also supporting the wider vision of the Council.

A more detailed description of the council's role can be found in Appendix A.

THE HOUSING MARKET – A DETAILED PICTURE

Thurrock's Profile



Thurrock is situated 25 miles east of the City of London on the River Thames, with over 18 miles of riverfront. It covers an area of 64 square miles, over half of which is Green Belt. Thurrock has a population of 159,700⁵. The Borough has a number of main settlements including, Grays, Stanford, Corringham, South Ockendon and Tilbury, together with a number of villages.

Thurrock has a diverse economy. The riverside includes many significant industrial sites, including large oil refineries and manufacturing industries. Thurrock is also home to the Lakeside Shopping Centre, one of the largest retail centres in Europe.

Although much of the Borough is Green Belt (60%), Thurrock provides great opportunities for industrial, commercial and social development. The Borough is a major part of the Thames Gateway area, a development corridor identified by central Government as the area of greatest potential within the country. A snapshot of key demographic data on Thurrock is set out in Appendix B.

By 2021 Thurrock has been identified as needing 18,500 additional dwellings and a further 4,750 by 2026. The long term housing focus is to have improved supply and

⁵ ONS Mid-Year Estimate

design of housing which meets local needs, coupled with growth in business, employment and education opportunities and essential investment in infrastructure.

Population Trends and Impact

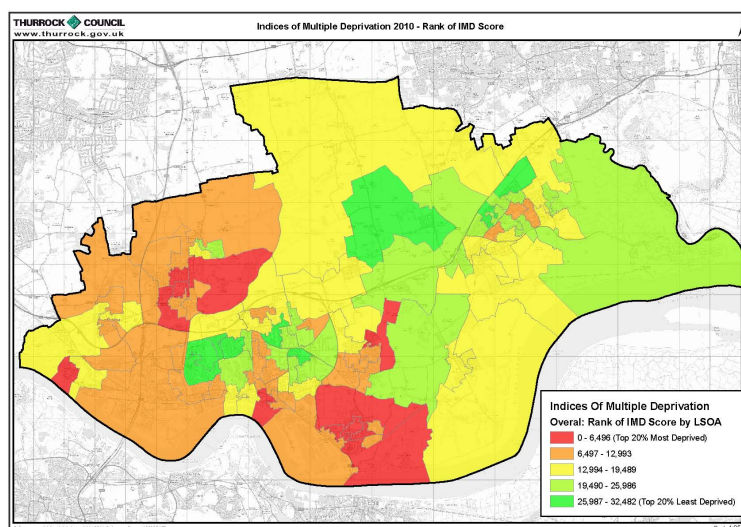
Demographic change is a driver of housing market demand and requirements.

- The 2010 population of Thurrock is estimated at 159,700.
- The population of Thurrock is projected to continue to grow and reach 207,200 by 2033. A projected increase of 25% or 52,000 people from 2008 to 2033
- Thurrock has a relatively young age structure with 21% of its population under 16, which is 2% higher than the national and regional comparators
- Over the next 25 years Thurrock will see a significant ageing of its population. The number of people aged over 65 will increase by 13,800 people (71%) and people aged over 85, increasing by 3,100 people (141%)
- Approximately 500 residents in Thurrock have a learning disability and further research is required to update the statistics regarding accommodation needs

The implications of this population growth and the change in the age of our population includes the need for substantial further housing development as well as housing that meets the needs of older people.

Deprivation

Thurrock was ranked as 124th in the deprivation index for England in 2007 (ID2007). This indicates that Thurrock is around the average in terms of overall deprivation. However this average masks significant differences between wards within Thurrock. Some wards have a relatively high level of affluence and associated low levels of deprivation, whilst there are deep pockets of deprivation in some wards. Five of the identified communities are in the top 10% most deprived areas of England and 12 are in the top 20% most deprived areas. The most deprived wards in Thurrock include; Tilbury St Chads, Grays, Belhus, Chadwell St Mary, Ockendon and West Thurrock. The diagram below provides an overview of where levels of deprivation are concentrated in Thurrock with the areas shaded darkest being the areas with the highest levels of deprivation.



Our Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy sets out strategic aims and targets to tackle deprivation and other key areas. Following an analysis guided by the national Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), the strategy focuses on four areas that feature in the 10% most deprived nationally: Grays Riverside & Central, Chadwell and Tilbury, South Ockendon (incorporating Belhus) and Purfleet. One priority for these areas is for residents to have access to appropriate housing services.

This ranges from the development of one and two bedroom flats in the west to generate a commuter offer, to a diverse housing offer to cater for existing and new communities in the east. Appendix G provides a summary of the issues including the affordability issues for each ward. This has strong links to the Housing Strategy which reflects the councils commitment to make use of disused housing land for affordable housing.

The Housing Market

The housing market has seen a rapid decline in development, sales and liquidity since September 2008. This has had a major impact on housing and regeneration development in Thurrock and elsewhere.

A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was completed in October 2008 and updated in May 2010 to take into account changes in the housing market. This was commissioned across the Thames Gateway South Essex Sub Region (TGSE).

Key conclusions for Thurrock are:

- A high proportion of terraced housing (35%) and lower levels of detached housing (12%) reflects the socio-economic mix of the Borough's residents
- The viability of developing new housing of all types and tenures has been challenging, resulting in a development hiatus and decline in house prices across much of the country
- Housing affordability remains an issue due to a continued inability of incomes to meet rental or sale prices
- There is a annual net need to supply 439 units to balance demand and supply of affordable housing within the Borough
- Underlying demographic dynamics show an ageing population structure and a strong inward migration pattern
- Demand for housing over the long term remains strong; in the short term however there has been significant reductions in the levels of housing delivery

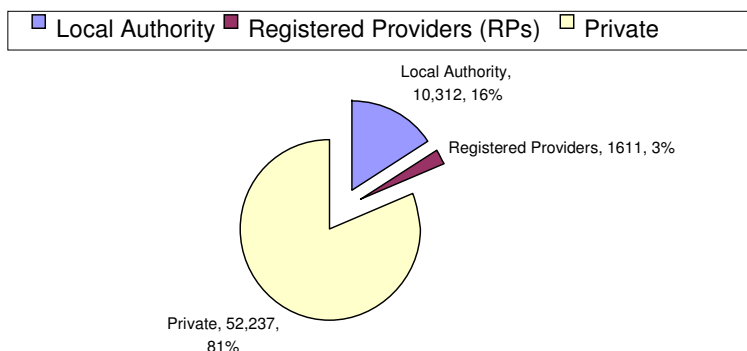
The chart below shows household split across tenures. The total households in Thurrock during the period 2001 – 10 has increased by 10% (64,223), while the percentage of stock in the public sector fell by 1% to 19% during the same period.

Data from the English Housing Survey for 2009⁶, showed 67% of households were owner occupied, about one in six (16%) were privately rented and the remaining 17% was split fairly evenly between local authorities and registered providers/housing associations. Nationally there has been a decrease in the number of owner occupied

⁶ English Housing Survey: Housing Stock Report 2009

households which peaked in 2005/06. In contrast for the same period, the number of households renting privately has risen by over 40%⁷.

Tenure Profile as at 31st March 2011 (HSSA):



In Thurrock in 2001⁸, 72% of the household were owner occupiers, private rented was at 8%, which was lower than the nationally trend (12%). In 2011 owner occupier and private rented now make up over 81% of the stock an increase of 1%. Based on the national trend, we would expect the number of owner occupiers to have also decreased and the number of private rented households to have increased.

Summary of Property Prices

Thurrock has seen a significant growth in average house prices since 1999. In 1999 the average house price in Thurrock was £75,225, by 2010 it was £145,171, (almost double the 1999 value). This compares to a national average value of £71,000 in 1999 rising to £165,000 in 2010. This shows that Thurrock prices whilst rising, have risen less than the national average. Whilst there has been recent recovery in house prices across the Borough, in 2010 average prices were still below their peak of 2008.

Average House Prices

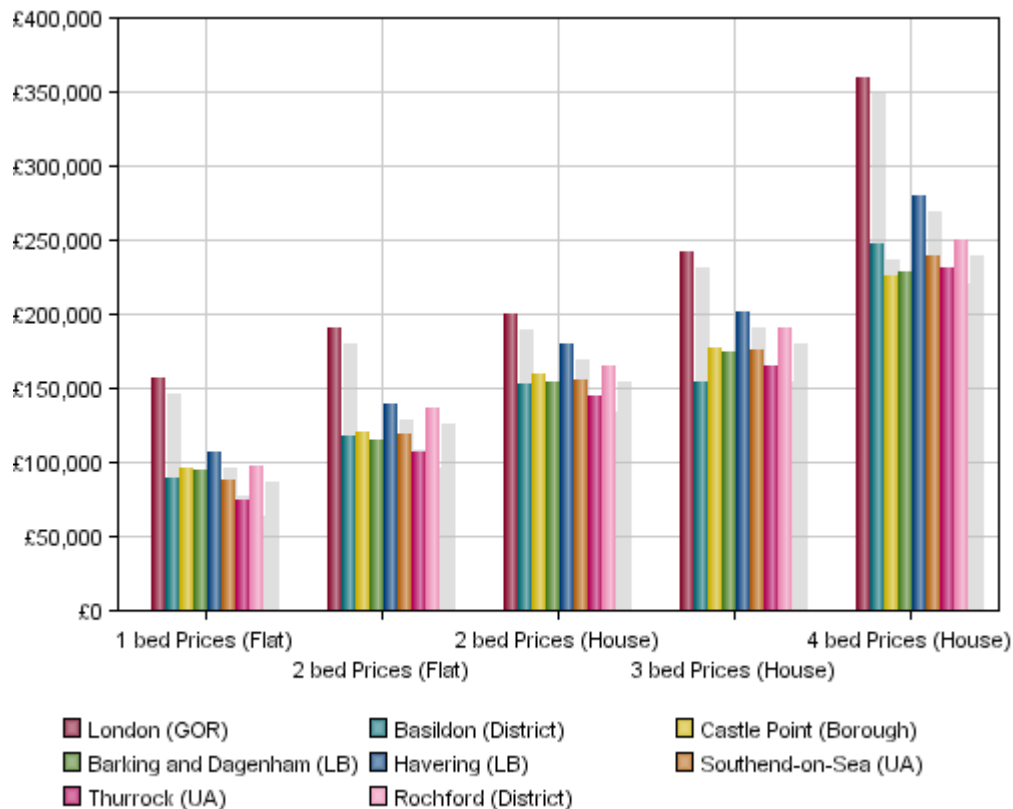
	Average Price (£)	Monthly Change (%)	Annual Change (%)
England & Wales	165,314	-0.2	8.2
East of England	175,731	-0.6	9.0
Essex	191,162	0.0	9.1
Thurrock	145,171	0.7	6.0

Source: HM Land Registry May 2010

Thurrock has below average house prices than England and Wales and Essex mainly due to the higher levels of terraced housing. However, house prices have risen recently at a higher rate than its national, regional and county counterparts:

Lower Quartile Price of Property by Bed Count (March 2011)

⁷ English Housing Survey: Household Report 2009–10 July 2010
⁸ 2001 ONS Census



	London	Barking & Dagenham	Havering	Basildon	Castle Point	Southend-on-Sea	Thurrock	Rochford
1 bed Prices (Flat)	157,000	95,000	107,500	90,000	96,250	88,000	75,375	98,000
2 bed Prices (Flat)	191,000	115,750	140,000	118,000	120,500	120,000	107,875	137,000
2 bed Prices (House)	200,000	155,000	180,000	154,000	160,000	156,000	145,000	165,000
3 bed Prices (House)	242,500	175,000	202,250	155,000	178,250	176,500	165,000	190,875
4 bed Prices (House)	360,000	229,000	279,995	248,000	226,000	240,000	232,000	250,000

Source: Hometrack March 2011

The above graph and table show the lower quartile price of property by bed count in the TGSE sub region compared with Greater London and the two outer London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham and Havering based on March 2011 figures.

The lower house prices in Thurrock compared to London, together with good transport links to London has resulted in a long established pattern of migration to Thurrock, particularly from East London. We have the strongest links with East London compared to other parts of the sub-region. The lower flows to Rochford, Castle Point and Southend-on-Sea reflect the greater distance from East London boroughs.

There is also a pattern of further migration trends from Thurrock to other parts of Essex in particular Basildon and Rochford, but within Thurrock there is strong

movement between Purfleet, Grays, Tilbury and South Ockendon. There are also moves between this area and Stanford-le-Hope and Corringham.

Thurrock has seen the largest population growth of all the Thames Gateway South Essex districts since 2002. This was mainly due to high birth rates and inward migration coming from neighbouring London which supports the migration patterns seen in the housing market.⁹

Affordability in the Housing Market

Whilst average prices are below national and regional averages, property in Thurrock remains out of reach for many local people. The social class demographic is slowly changing with a shift away from manual and unskilled groups towards more professional, managerial and skilled non-manual workers. However, many employees work in the industrial or service sectors with low wages, and housing affordability remains a major issue.

The average wage in Thurrock is £528 per week and £27,456¹⁰ per annum. This compares to the national average wage of £499 per week and £25,948 per annum (ASHE 2010). The average property price in Thurrock is £145,171¹¹, and therefore to buy a property in Thurrock, a person would require 5.3 times their annual income. In addition, there is reduced access to mortgage finance, and increased requirements to provide a large deposit which exacerbates affordability concerns.

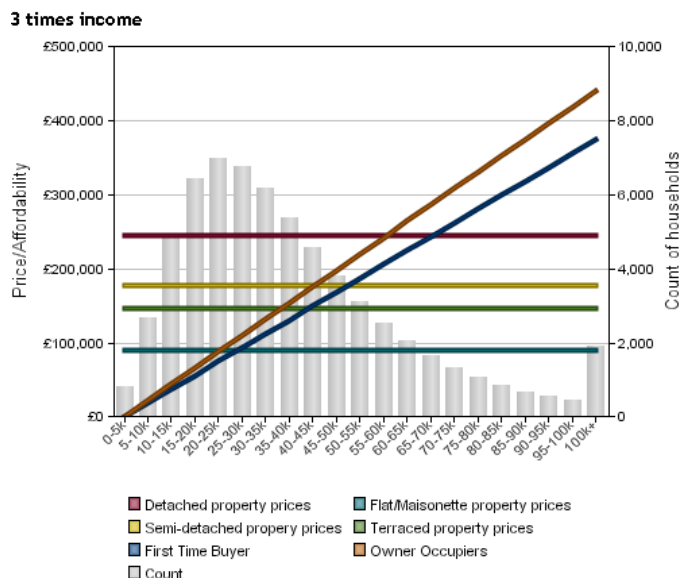
The chart below shows the number of households in different household income bands in Thurrock (bars) compared to the minimum price for different property types (horizontal lines). The diagonal lines rising from left to right show the value of property that can be afforded at different income multiples by a first time buyer and former owner-occupier. The Chart and table demonstrates that a significant proportion of residents in Thurrock are unable to access home ownership. For example, 33.74% or approximately 14,892 households cannot afford to purchase a flat or maisonette as a first time buyer on a mortgage at 3.0 times their income.

Thurrock	Percent of households priced out of market
FTB households - Flats	33.74%
FTB households - Terraced houses	62.04%
FTB households - Semi-detached houses	74.95%
FTB households - Detached houses	89.40%
Owner occupier - Flats	33.74%
Owner occupier - Terraced houses	53.74%
Owner occupier - Semi-detached houses	69.09%
Owner occupier - Detached houses	83.68%

⁹ TGSE Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Update 2010

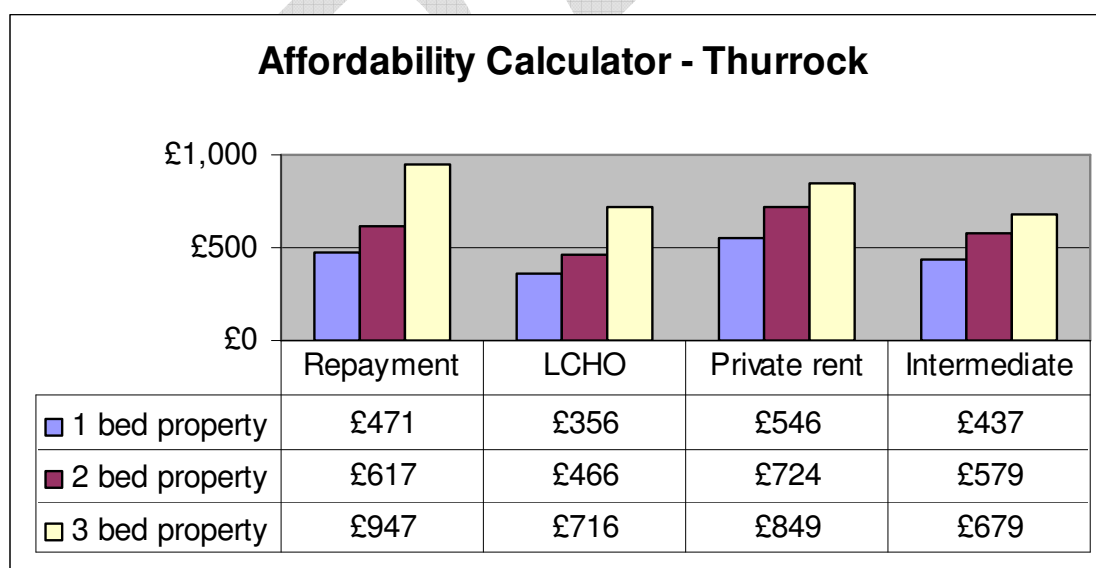
¹⁰ Median gross wage ASHE 2008

¹¹ The Land Registry May 10



Affordability Calculator for Thurrock

The graph below sets out the average monthly cost by property size of a range of purchase and rental options covering: repayment mortgage, low cost home ownership (LCHO), private rent and intermediate rent. This then enables a comparison to be carried out against average incomes to assess the proportion of income (or borrowing against income) needed to access each option. LCHO is the cheapest tenure for 1 and 2 bed properties and intermediate rent is the cheapest for 3 bed properties.



Source: Hometrack March 2011

Costs within the private sector influence demand for social housing. There were 2,597 households on the housing waiting list as at 31st March 2010, a rise of 5% from 2009. There were also a further 2,348 applicants on the transfer list (current tenants waiting to transfer to alternative accommodation)¹².

¹² The demand for more affordable rents could increase once the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is reduced to the 30th percentile unless rent levels in the private sector also falls at the same time.

During 2009/10 897 households were re-housed through the Choice Based Lettings system. Of these 575 (64%) were new tenants to the Council and were a mix of homeless applicants, people previously renting in the private rented sector and the sons and daughters of existing tenants.

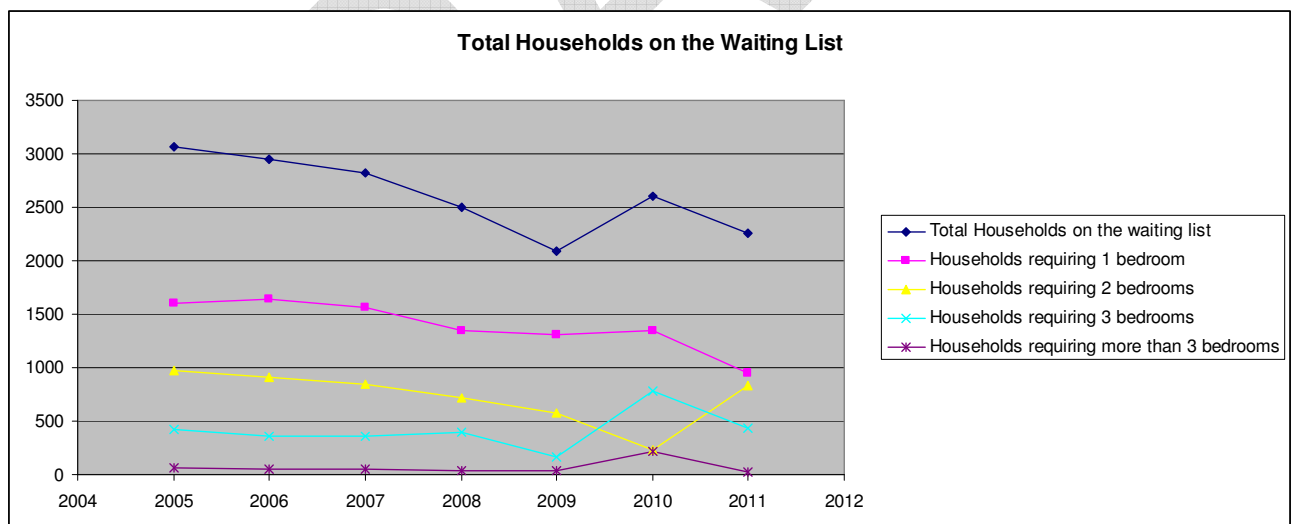
Demand Model – Affordable Housing Needs

The housing needs assessment provides estimates of households in need based on the methodology set out in the SHMA and the available information. The estimates provided are based on households who are assessed to be in reasonable preference groups. The housing needs analysis assesses entry-level housing costs in the open market for newly forming households using lowest quartile house prices and entry-level private rents to assess the proportion of newly-forming households who cannot afford to buy a home.

In summary:

- To deal with the backlog on the waiting list, we will need to deliver 200 homes per annum over 10 years or 400 homes over 5 years.
- To deal with the backlog and new arising needs, then we need an annual build programme of 420 homes per year over 10 years or 820 homes over 5 years.

The table below shows the Council's waiting list over 6 years. Demand peaked in 2005 and we saw the lowest numbers in 2009. There is now an underlie upward trend in the waiting list.



Private Sector Market

From our mini stock condition survey carried out in 2007, we know that Thurrock has a high proportion of older private sector housing, with 21% being pre 1945. We also had the highest proportion of terrace housing in the sub region at 45%, and 13% of private rented dwellings built before 1919.

Nationally, the non-decent housing stock remains concentrated among older dwellings (51% of pre-1919 stock is non-decent¹³) and flats. In Thurrock 15.5% fail the decent homes standard. NICE briefing confirms the most vulnerable people live in non-decent homes. They are predominately households that rent privately, people who live alone, ethnic minorities and households with no-one in full-time employment.

The number of non-decent homes in Thurrock occupied by vulnerable households was estimated at just over 1,100. These figures are lower than predicted by the CLG decent homes 'ready reckoner.' The cost of repairing the non-decent homes of vulnerable households in Thurrock was forecast at just over £2 million, an average of £1,860 a property.

At the 31st March 2011 90% of vulnerable households were living in decent homes and our aim is for all vulnerable households to be living in decent homes by 2015. Clearly this requires capital resources and we aim to achieve this through our work with our sub regional partners and through bidding opportunities.

In 2010 Thurrock locally launched the Landlord Accreditation Scheme aimed at improving standards among private landlords through training and information. Whilst this is a voluntary scheme, from July 2011 the Council now only work with accredited landlords or their agents.

The housing service has commissioned a private sector house condition stock survey with a health impact report expected early 2012.

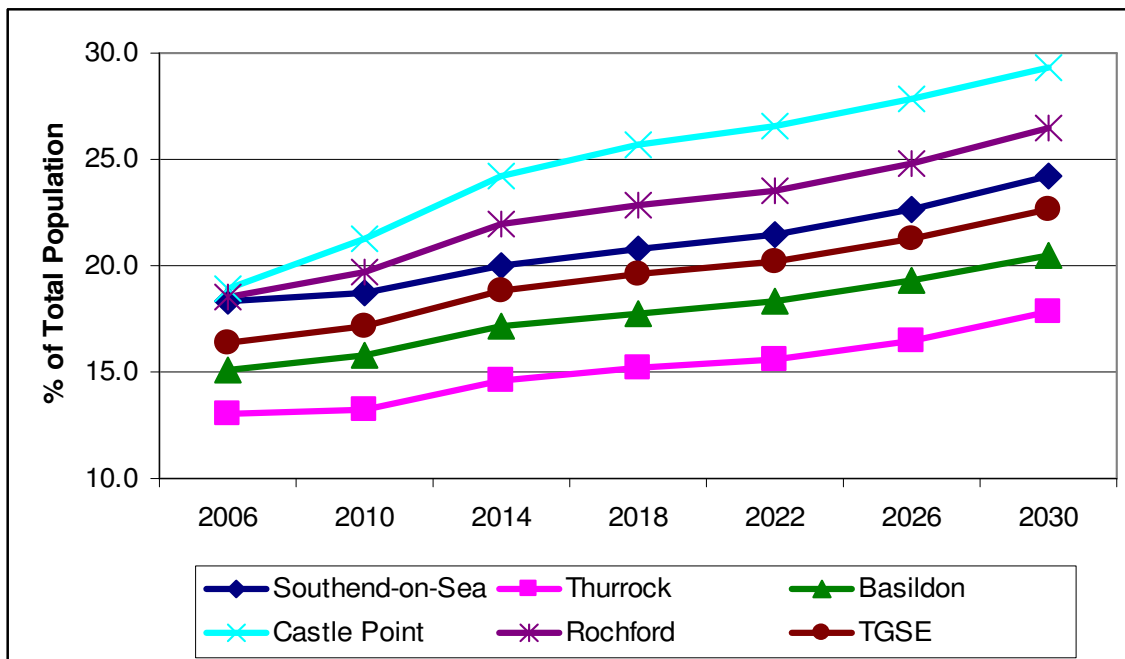
Older People

Over the next 25 years Thurrock will see a significant ageing of its population. The number of people aged over 65 will increase by 16,200 people (71%) and people aged over 85, increasing by 4,100 people (141%).

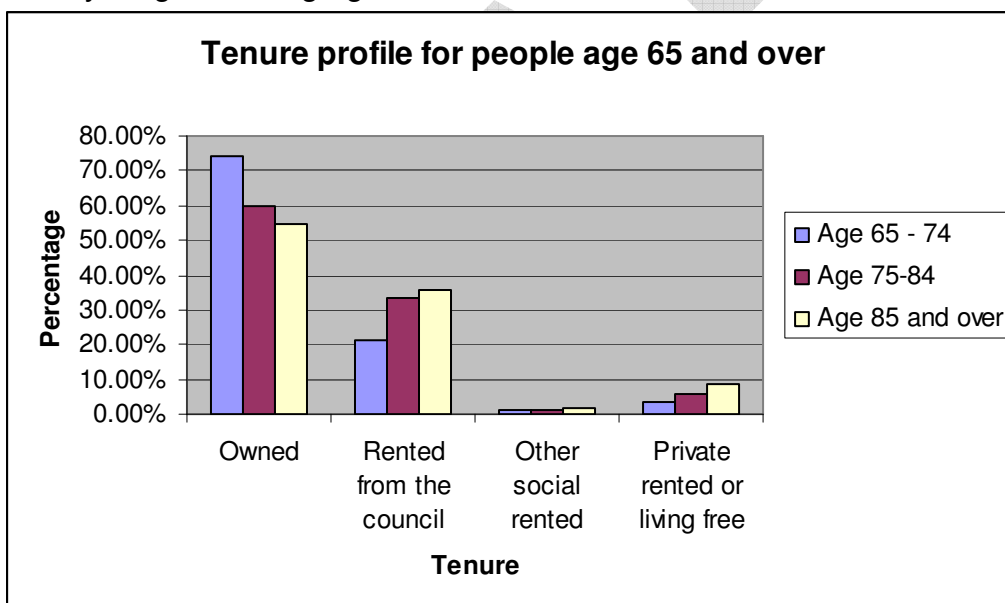
The graph below shows that whilst the numbers of older people as a percentage of overall population are lower in Thurrock than elsewhere in south Essex, this percentage is growing in line with national trends. In 2009, the 65 and over made up 13% of the total population in Thurrock - this is projected to rise to 18% by 2034.

The changing demographic profile of the South Essex older population

13 *Housing and public health: a review of reviews of interventions for improving health*: NICE 2005.
http://www.nice.org.uk/niceMedia/pdf/housing_MAIN%20FINAL.pdf



The tenure profile for the cohort is predominately owner occupiers with almost 75% of older people ages 65 to 74 being owners. Owner occupation continues to be high in the younger working age cohorts.



One of the key proposals, amongst others, that came out of the Commission's report earlier in 2011 was:

To create quality housing, and enhance the built environment for all ages by transforming the current social housing offer to older residents through the strategic use of assets and more coherent design and planning policies.

Work has also been carried out in respect of a review of the Council's 42 sheltered housing schemes (1,304 homes) in terms of its fit-for-purpose status in meeting current supported housing needs in Thurrock. It concludes that our current offer will need to change if we are to meet the challenges of an ageing population and deliver

improved outcomes for health and social care by delivering care closer to home for the wider population.

Young People

In our homeless statistics young people are disproportionately represented which is identical to the national picture. Statistical evidence from P1E returns shows that in Thurrock in 2007/2008 almost half (43%) of those accepted as homeless were between the ages of 16 and 24.

Parental exclusion is the most common reason for homelessness in Thurrock, as it is nationally. In 2007/2008 20% of homelessness acceptances were cases in which parents were no longer willing/able to accommodate the applicant (this was 2.7% fewer than in 2006/7).

As part of the Homeless Review, consultation on issues affecting young people took place with staff from the Housing Options Team, service users and agencies. This revealed a lack of provision, both in terms of accommodation and services.

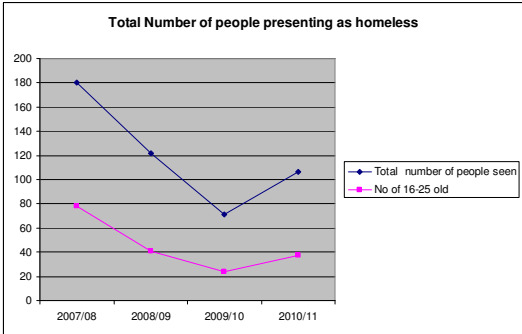
Research shows that the main issue for 16/17 year olds facing homelessness is the lack of appropriate forms of alternative accommodation, resulting in long periods of time spent in hostel accommodation, which is designed to provide short-term emergency accommodation, rather than to meet the long-term needs of young people.

Young people aged 15-24 make up 13% of Thurrock’s age profile, with a population that is increasing at a faster than average rate. Younger people who are homeless are significantly more at risk and will face increased problems with health, involvement with anti-social behaviour and offending and also financial problems as they are less likely to be in work or in education or training.

The only supported accommodation services that is specifically for young people are Ruth House (9 rooms for teenage parents, managed by Sanctuary Housing Association) and The Gables, both of which are for teenage parents (aged 16-25). All other accommodation services, including Brooke House (10 units managed by Family Mosaic) are for working age adults.

Charles Street Hostel is for homeless families but currently one of the blocks is for young people. Children’s Social Care provide additional funding for this due to the higher support needs for this vulnerable group.

Homeless Young People 16 – 25 year old



	Count	%
2007/08	78	43%
2008/09	41	34%
2009/10	24	34%
2010/11	37	35%

During 2010/11 we have seen a significant increase in the numbers of people and families presenting to the Housing Options Team. There has been a corresponding increase with 16/17 years old. Last year a total of 49 young people were seen by the team.

Number of 16/17 year olds seen.

2010/11	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
16/17 year olds	5	0	27	17	49

In total the team saw 1,795 people. While this particular group represent 3% of the total number of people seen, the Southwark Judgement identified this group as being vulnerable and requiring the input of Children’s Social Care so that their supports needs as well as their housing needs are met.

As at 1st April 2011 42%, (948), of the 2,252 applicants on the Housing Waiting List require one-bedroom. Over 40% (391) are 25 years old or younger. The average age for this group is 21 years old.

Opportunities

The current narrow housing offer should be expanded at both ends of the market. At present 12% of housing stock are detached houses and this will not meet the expected changes in the soci-economic group who will take up the new high skilled jobs being created in the borough. While we will seek use our housing land to bring forward supported accommodation scheme and general needs housing for rent, we also want to see the expansion of shared equity and other LCHO products in the market.

In the private sector, there will be a growing market for executive style housing, which the market could bring forward. The economic regeneration is expected to create 26,000 new jobs by 2021 and a number of these jobs will be higher skilled trades and executive roles. London Gateway DP World and a major logistics and business park in East Thurrock will create 12,000 direct jobs and over 20,000 indirect jobs. The Royal Opera House Production Park in Purfleet opened in 2010 and will become a centre for local creative and cultural industries creating 250 jobs and 2,250 training places.

The expansion of Lakeside creating a town centre will see the development of river front apartments. The opportunity to deliver real and lasting change in Thurrock will not be fully realised if our housing offer cannot meet the aspiration of the workforce taking up these new and exciting jobs.

We know that the costs within the private sector influence demand for social housing. While the full impact arising from the Welfare Reform will only be known over the lifespan of this strategy, it is anticipated there will be an increase in homeless prevention services. Nationally homeless decisions have increased by 16% and in Thurrock we have seen a 50% increase during the same period. During 2010/11 the service had 1,795 approaches from applicants who were potentially homeless and we can expect it to rise.

There is a clear need for more affordable homes. The self-financing of the HRA offers an opportunity as a social landlord, for the Council to consider how it will take

forward its role to meet some of these needs. This could be either through direct provision, as well as through its housing enabling role and work with RPs. However this is done, it is clear that new models need to be in place that can deliver the variety and choice of new homes.

We should also explore how we can attract private landlords with large portfolios in to the private rented sector to meet the increase in demand for private rented accommodation.

The current provision of accommodation for young people has been developed in response to the growing needs of young people. While these services are fulfilling a need capacity is an ongoing issue and a specific service for young people, like a Foyer could pull together services under one roof and offer complimentary services.

We are keen to see a range of housing models and products that meets the needs and aspiration of our growing population.

Policy Drivers

National Drivers

The Government's national housing strategy, "Laying the Foundations; A Housing Strategy for England", provides a comprehensive statement of the government's intentions. The social argument for new build housing is well made. The new build housing programme could help the whole economy into stronger growth through the creation of new jobs and new homes and is one of the two main aims of the strategy. The second aim is to "spread opportunity in our society". Housing's asset value is seen as unlocking opportunities and creating wealth for future generations.

The strategy recognises that new build is the greatest challenge and so the government is putting in place incentives to stimulate the market and overcome the supply and demand. The effectiveness of some of these measures is dependent on the international financial market which is not within the direct control of Government.

On the demand side the government proposes:

- a new build indemnity scheme to bring about a return to 95% mortgages
- an equity loan scheme, FirstBuy, provides loans of up to 20% and will help an estimated 10,500 first-time buyers.

On the supply side:

- Builders will be allowed to challenge existing s106 agreements on stalled building sites.
- Free up public sector land for new homes. Some on the build now pay later scheme.
- Pilot land auctions¹⁴
- Set up competition for local areas to bring forward acceptable plans for large-scale development

¹⁴ The aim is for council's to capture the rise in land value by rezoning agricultural or industrial land, creating an incentive for development. The landowner names their price they will sell at. The council retains right to purchase at the price for 18 months. In that time they produce a development plan before auctioning the land to potential developers. The council captures the rising value of the land.

The government recognises that social housing can improve people's life chances, providing support at a time when they need it, for as long as they need. But nationally, the housing waiting lists is growing and the turn over in the stock is lower in the social housing sectors, (5%), compared to the private rented sector at 25%. Social housing should be a time-limited safety net for those in greatest need. Too many tenants are not provided with the right support to take up work and often cannot move even if they want to. Social housing should encourage social mobility. The conclusion is that current social housing is used inefficiently.

The Localism Act introduces shorter tenancies for new tenants; changes to the homelessness function and ending the requirement for 'open' waiting lists. A significant change to the allocation policy will be the insistence that service personnel with urgent needs are placed 'always at or near the top' of waiting lists.

The social housing reform is intended to enable decisions about who lives where and for how long to be taken on the basis of local need and circumstances, resulting in a housing system that is better focused and protecting and supporting those who need it most. It should shift the public's perception of social housing to it being a springboard into work and self sufficiency.

Due to the economy and restriction on lending, the private rented sector is growing. It is now the sector where many people who might otherwise have been owners or social renters now find themselves. The Government aims to encourage greater institutional investment into the sector, coupled with tough enforcement against rogue landlords through:

- supporting investment by large institutions in homes to rent by introducing changes to Stamp Duty Land Tax and legislating on changes to Real Estate Investment Trusts in the 2012 Finance Bill
- marketing new Build to Rent pilot sites through the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)
- putting in place an independent review of barriers to investment in private homes for rent
- working with industry to drive up standards and improve consumer awareness
- encouraging local authorities to make full use of the robust powers they already have to tackle dangerous and poorly maintained homes.

Around a third of households in the private rented sector receive Housing Benefit, much lower than those in social housing. The 2010 Private Landlords Survey has shown a further shift in the proportion of the sector being owned and managed by private individuals, who now account for almost 90 per cent of all private landlords and are responsible for 71 per cent of all private rented dwellings. Only 1 per cent of residential stock in the UK is owned by institutions, compared with around 10–15 per cent in most European countries.

The Welfare Reform changes and in particular housing benefit changes has seen the capping of rents. Further changes are to be implemented over the coming years. From 2013, new claims will receive universal credit. With a cap for families and single adults estimated to be £500/wk and £350/wk.

The full impact of all of these reforms cannot yet be fully assessed, however there is likely to be increased pressure on social housing, a reduction in the supply of new social housing, and potentially a smaller affordable private rented sector. In addition affordability will be an increasing issue as will the availability of supported housing for

vulnerable groups as pressures increase on Supporting People budgets which now form part of mainstream grants. This will lead to increased pressure on social care, health and housing services.

A recent review of Health Inequalities in England (Marmot Review 2010) stated that 'inequalities in health arise because of inequalities in society – in the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age'. In Thurrock health inequalities means there is a 4 year difference in life expectancy between the most and least disadvantaged quintiles in Thurrock. For men this is 6 years and women 2 years. The quality of housing – both public and private – plays a key role in this.

The Government's Public Health White Paper published in 2011 emphasises the 'need for the combined efforts of all public services to focus on the factors the drive health problems amongst the poorest and most disadvantaged in our communities'. Responsibility for health improvement is planned to transfer to local authorities from primary care trusts from April 2013.

Sub regional Drivers

The key priorities for the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), is London Gateway DP World, East Thurrock; Lakeside Town Centre West Thurrock; London Southend Airport, Southend on Sea; and expansion of Junction 30/31 being led by Thurrock Council. It is the main transport link in to south east Essex. Thurrock is playing a leading role by seeking to maximise opportunities for economic development and regeneration.

There is a need to look at the broader housing market area too, because people travel across boundaries in their daily lives and move house in response to changing family or working circumstances. Within the sub region the containment is significant with 71% commute and work within the area, 21% commute to London and the rest commute outside the submarket and London.

The TGSE housing strategy recognises South Essex as a single, functional sub region housing market. The strategy provides an over-arching framework for local authorities and registered providers to work within and deliver the mix, size, and quality of housing needed in the sub-region. The strategy identifies areas of collaboration and partnership working. It helps partners to work more effectively across the housing market and enables local authorities to deliver cross-boundaries projects e.g. Landlord Accreditation, Warm and Healthy Homes and Empty Homes.

At a local level, the Thames Gateway South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment published in September 2008 confirmed that the sub-region as a whole has experienced steady population growth and household growth. This growth is forecast to continue based on the latest household projections, which estimates In TGSE's population will increase from around 663,100 in 2008 to 822,100 by 2033 and its households will increase from around 283,000 in 2008 to 377,000 by 2033.

There are national drivers that support the need to work with other local authorities. An example is the draft National Planning Policy Framework. Through using an evidence-base to ensure our Local Plan meets the full requirements for *market and affordable housing in the housing market area*, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period.

Local Drivers

An important component in the delivery of the Community Strategy is for Thurrock to have well-planned, quality housing and sustainable development. This will require neighbourhood renewal, as well as different housing types and tenures to be provided in a way that support the growth of employment opportunities and educational and cultural sectors. It will also be important to retain the commuter population working in the London, whilst ensuring the most vulnerable people in our community are well supported.

The Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out the Council's strategic direction. Housing particularly contributes to the Council's priorities in respect of economic prosperity, a safe, clean and green environment, and commissioning high quality services.

	Priority	Objective	Activity
2	Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity	Create quality housing and enhance the built environment for all communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best use is made of the new Housing Revenue Account financial regime - to maximise affordable housing opportunities • Refurbishment of existing stock housing that meets Decent Homes
3	Ensure a safe, clean and green environment	Improve sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of fuel poverty are reduced • Utilise the 'feed-in tariff' in our public sector housing stock
		Help people to feel safe and be safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate action is taken in relation to anti-social behaviour • Crime is designed out of new build developments
4	Provide and commission high quality and accessible services that meet, wherever possible, individual needs	Change the way we do things to reduce costs and improve choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services are commissioned that are efficient, tailored to individuals' needs and achieve improved outcomes

The Local Development Framework (LDF) which is the statutory development plan provides the framework through which new housing supply is delivered. It sets out requirements for affordable housing as well as a range of design and other requirements. The LDF is therefore central to the development and delivery of the housing strategy.

Over the next few years, a significant number of the new affordable homes in the borough will be delivered through regeneration as well as through identified sites identified in the LDF Core Strategy CSTP5 – Urban Renewal.

Estate renewal is an essential element for the delivery of high quality homes and mixed and sustainable communities in Thurrock. It will help us tackle overcrowding in our own stock and will improve housing conditions for hundreds of residents. It also offers opportunities for place-shaping and the development of more cohesive communities, providing focal points for effective multi-agency working to improve services and tackle social exclusion and worklessness.

- Estate regeneration scheme will replace some existing social homes with improved and environmentally efficient homes and provide additional social units.
- We will consider extra social homes on renewal or infill schemes where this has the support of local residents following consultation.
- We will put in place clear criteria for the selection of future estate regeneration schemes

The Local Investment Plan is also an important document. It identifies the range of housing projects from major transformational developments to smaller scale schemes which are seen as key to sustainable regeneration across Thurrock. Developed and agreed by the HCA, it forms part of our evidence base to access available funding.

The Housing Strategy also seeks to respond to the existing and future needs of our communities. This recognises that Thurrock is becoming increasingly diverse. The non-white population was estimated at 9% in 2007 – up from 4.7% in 2001. Ethnicity in schools is much higher at almost 25% in Spring 2010.¹⁵ Concentrations of ethnic minority groups are particularly evident in parts of Grays, Tilbury, Purfleet and Chafford Hundred. A wide range of faiths are practiced, with established Sikh, Jewish, and Muslim communities.

The Borough's disabled residents have a range of lifestyles and require a wide range of supported, adapted and specialist housing.

There is an increasing older population and the need to respond to this demographic change in terms of the supply of suitable general needs as well as specialist supported housing in both the private and public sector is recognised within the strategy.

Thurrock currently provides the largest provision of Council run Gypsy and Traveller pitches in Essex and has the second highest total of gypsy caravans after Basildon including authorised and unauthorised based on an average over a five year count. This includes directly managed sites by Housing Services. The sites have recently been upgraded. In 2006 Thurrock had the fourth largest total number of caravans in Essex. Within Thurrock there are 3 travelling Show People sites, established over many years. Buckles Lane has a history of occupation by travelling Show People. They are members of a community that consists of self-employed business people who travel the country, often with their families, holding fairs.

Authorised permanent sites

Local Authority Pitches	Private Pitches	Unauthorised Pitches	Total authorised pitches
65	5	20	70

Date of Information: July 06

We also recognise the need to respond to specific gender needs within our services as well as ensure services meet the needs of all equality groups including race, age, gender, disability, faith and sexuality.

The Council is committed to constantly improving its practice in relation to equal opportunities. A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out during

¹⁵ State of Thurrock Review 2010

the development of this strategy and was informed by public consultation with local residents and stakeholders.

We continue to ensure that our Housing Strategy meets residents' priorities by consulting with a wide range of stakeholders. This Housing Strategy has been developed in partnership with organisations with an interest in the Borough's housing and is a product of joint working and analysis. A joint consultation day was held in May 2010 and brought up to date October 2011. The key points are stated throughout the strategy.

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Our Housing Vision

A clear strategic housing vision supports the wider community strategy for the area and helps all stakeholders to understand and share our ambitions for Thurrock. Our strategic housing vision for Thurrock sets out how we intend to contribute to the economic prosperity of our Borough:

“To provide high quality housing opportunities in safe, clean and green environments. We will continue to care for our existing homes and ensure that new developments are well designed and support our ambition for our communities to flourish alongside business growth. Thurrock will be a place to live, learn and enjoy.”

If Thurrock is to be a place of choice there needs to be good provision of housing in attractive residential areas. Much of our existing housing has strengths we want to build on; many of our residential areas are within a short distance of public transport networks and shopping facilities. Our housing supports people who work locally and those who work further away, particularly in London, but who seek the environmental and recreational benefits that Thurrock offers. We will continue to support the diversity that this brings to our community whilst providing a range of housing to support our growing jobs economy.

Through the life of this strategy are priorities are:

- **Managing and improving housing supply and choice**
- **Meeting and supporting the needs of vulnerable groups**
- **Investing in the Housing Stock and environmental sustainability**
- **Ensure all services are effective and achieve value for money**

We recognise that if we are to realise the priorities in this housing strategy, we will need to work in partnership with key stakeholders including health colleagues, Registered Providers, private sector landlords, tenants and leaseholder groups, and housing developers. We also recognise that housing, health, transport, community safety and retail provision are all interrelated and that the housing strategy is linked to all our ambitions for these services through the Community Plan.

<p>Strategic Priority 1: Managing and improving housing supply and choice</p> <p>To ensure the borough has the right type of housing to meet the needs of residents.</p> <p>Outcome: To better match demand and supply to ensure sustainable access to homes where mixed communities flourish</p>	<p>Strategic Priority 2: Meeting and supporting the needs of vulnerable groups</p> <p>To make sure residents are supported to maintain and increase their independence:</p> <p>Outcome: Vulnerable young people and adults are able to maintain and increase their independence</p>
<p>Strategic Priority 3: Investing in the Housing Stock and environmental sustainability</p> <p>To ensure a robust strategy is in place to fund</p>	<p>Strategic Priority 4: Ensure all services are effective and achieve value for money</p> <p>Review costs and performance levels across</p>

improvements to existing homes and increase supply and make best use of assets.

Outcome: Residents living in decent homes suitable for their needs

the housing service.

Outcome: Residents receive high quality, effective, customer focused services

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STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Strategic Priority 1: Managing and improving housing supply and choice

Outcome:	Secure a better balance between demand and supply to ensure sustainable access to homes where mixed communities flourish	
To manage and improve housing supply and choice our key priority areas are:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting increased affordable housing at a cost accessible to local residents • Increasing housing choices and wider mobility by introducing a new delivery model promoting high quality design and build standards in new homes • Developing the private rented market and tackling empty homes 	

The draft National Policy Framework expects local authorities to “set out a housing implementation strategy describing how they will maintain delivery of a five-year supply of housing land to meet their housing target”¹⁶. To manage and improve housing supply and choice, the local authority will need to take a leading role in land assembly, landowners and their agents need to be encouraged through the national regulation and taxation to bring forward suitable land for prompt development at values that secure appropriate quality, government and the housing sector need to make sure there is a range of finance available to support housing development, and local authorities need to make best use of the empty homes¹⁷ and commercial properties that could be used to meet new and arising housing needs.

Thurrock has been successful in optimising opportunities to deliver new affordable homes by linking schemes through the planning system and delivering schemes through Homes & Community Agency¹⁸ (HCA) grant investment and private finance raised by Registered Providers (RP). Final completion of affordable housing units for 2010-11 was 92 units.

The current economic downturn has affected both housing development and the estate renewal programme. There is less interest in developing private sector housing on estates, which is needed to provide more mixed and sustainable communities, and to providing cross-subsidy to renewal schemes.

The Council has the opportunity to meet some of the supply directly by building homes on housing land if it choose to use the “borrowing headroom” to fund a housing development programme. The HRA self-financing financial modelling indicates that from April 2012 the Council will have sufficient capacity to borrow.¹⁹

¹⁶ Draft National Planning Framework July 2011, Section 109

¹⁷ 687 private empty homes at 1st April 2011; <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/2039847.xls>

¹⁸ The national housing and regeneration delivery agency for England

¹⁹ The Council is able to borrow up to the difference between its total debt at the start of self financing and the debt ceiling. This gives a borrowing “headroom”.

This means the Council will be able to use the financial resources of both capital and revenue for new build scheme, reconfiguration of our shelter housing schemes to meet the needs of vulnerable population, and to improve the standard of existing stock above decent homes standards. There are a number of homeownership products that the council could set up by itself, in partnerships with a RP or private developer, or RPs or private developers could set-up independently.

In 2012, the Council will be offering 16 new units for social rented housing to applicants from the waiting lists on a disused garage site in Corringham. This will be the first council housing development to be owned and managed by the Council in over a decade. This is the start of the Council's long-term development plan to directly develop a range of much needed affordable housing for local residents who are priced out of the private housing market. Thurrock's council housing will be one of a number of housing offers to prospective tenants. We will continue to offer social rents, but will explore affordable rents for new lets. While we want to provide stability for households and communities we will explore flexible tenancies for working age adults because we would not wish to see tenants limiting their options as their circumstances change. We will continue to strengthen our relationship with private landlords who provide good quality homes, so we can discharge our homeless duty. We will develop low cost home ownership products for our current and future tenants. There will be an overall net increase in council homes, even after tenants take up the improved discount for the right to buy (RTB).

The introduction of the new affordable rents regime where rents for new homes and relets can be set at up to 80% of market rents will present a challenge in maintaining a supply of housing accessible to local people. Whilst understanding the need to deliver new homes we want to ensure these new homes are affordable for our residents. We also want communities to be sustainable and want to see the new affordable rent product being offered only on new developments and not to include relets, which are currently at social rent levels. We will work closely with our RP partners to develop our Strategic Tenancy Policy which will set out our policy on affordable rents and flexible tenancies.

The private rented sector is growing. People want to put down roots and short-term tenancies can often act as a disincentive when a long term options would be preferred. The 2011 Budget announced fiscal incentive for large institutions, and the real estate investment trust (REIT) regime will get an overhaul to increase incentive for large institutions to offer more attractive products in the market. Local authorities will play a significant role to bring these new models to the market.

Currently in Thurrock we have 687²⁰ private long term empty properties in the borough. To bring empty properties back into use require staff resources as well as capital investments. We will continue to bring empty homes back into use in partnership with the sub region and Pathmeads.

A recent publication, *More Homes and Better Places*²¹, outlined five key objectives to address large scale housing needs. They are:

- Build new places
- Enhance delivery of land

²⁰ 687 private empty homes at 1st April 2011; <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/2039847.xls>
²¹ *More Homes and Better Places Solutions to address the scale of housing need Building and Social Housing Foundation 2011*

- Ensure that an appropriate range of finance is available to support development
- Maximise the use of the existing building stock

Fundamental to the delivery of the housing growth target will be the need for a robust delivery mechanism. The Regeneration Delivery Plan sets out how we will set out how we will deliver 18,500 new homes by 2021. The proposed housing implementation strategy as indicated in the draft National Policy Framework will set out how we will maintain delivery. Below are some of the issues the council will need to consider.

Build new places: There are five regeneration hubs across the borough. The local authorities will need to take a leading role in assembling land and parcelling it out to a range of suppliers, to increase competition amongst firms and between different models of development.

Enhance delivery of land: Those who own or control land that is suitable for housing need to be encouraged to bring it forward for prompt development at values that will secure appropriate quality. The removal of barriers, e.g. de-regulation of taxation structures which cause disincentives to bring forward land are being removed. We will explore land auctions alongside the freeing up of public sector land to bring forward housing developments.

Ensure that an appropriate range of finance is available to support development: We have seen a fundamental change to the financing of housing supply and purchase, in addition to short-term credit constraints. The government is considering allowing developers to require local authorities to reconsider those S106 agreements agreed in more prosperous market conditions prior to April 2010. The government is also launching a £400 million “Get Britain Building” investment fund, to unlock progress on stalled sites that have planning permission and are otherwise shovel ready. We will support developers who meet the criteria to access this fund. We will also bring forward directly or in partnership a range of homeownership products to help households who can purchase their own home but need some help.

Maximise the use of the existing building stock: Our existing stock, including empty homes represents a potential source of additional housing. Some commercial properties could also provide a possible supply for more dwellings. We will continue to work in partnership with the sub region to bring back empty properties back into use.

In summary our key actions are:

- **Development of alternative delivery mechanisms and increase mobility**

There is a national aspiration to be a home owning society. There are potential homeowners who can afford to own but have been squeezed out of the market due to the reduction of financial products available enabling them to buy. We will also review land supply which is key to the delivery of new homes.

- **Promote high quality design and build standards in new homes**

New homes need to be designed, built, maintained and managed to high standards.

- **Develop the private rented market and tackling empty homes**

Making best use of the private rented sector to maximise supply and ensure high standards is central to a thriving housing market as well as ensuring that empty homes are brought back into use.

- **Ensuring sustainable housing options are available to residents**
The impact of the changes in welfare reform and affordable rents are likely to be significant.

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Strategic Priority 2: Meeting and supporting the needs of vulnerable groups

Vulnerability covers a wide spectrum of needs and groups including older residents, residents with learning difficulties, physical impairments and mental health concerns. Vulnerability can also arise from a range of circumstances including Domestic Abuse, homelessness (particularly youth homelessness and young people leaving care).

OUTCOME	Vulnerable adults and young people are able to maintain and increase their independence	
To make sure residents are supported to maintain and increase their independence, our key priorities are:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure choice in access to housing and in doing so tackle and prevent homelessness. • Ensure a supply of the right supported housing to meet changing needs and requirements across all vulnerable groups • Ensure that residents, carers and families have access to information and services to support their housing options. • Ensure a robust approach to addressing anti social behaviour 	

Homelessness

We expect homelessness to continue to rise due to the economic downturn and as a result of the housing benefit reforms. Nationally homelessness households have increased in two consecutive quarters for the first time since 2003. This position is mirrored locally in Thurrock but with a 50% increase in acceptances over the past year. If this trend were to continue, we could expect to be dealing with over 500 cases in 2014/15. In response to the economic and policy direction we will make full use of the Localism Act to discharge our homeless duty in the private sector where this will be a sustainable option.

The needs of older people

An increasingly ageing population requires a strategic response to meeting current and future needs. We will need to create quality housing, enhancing the built environment for all ages by transforming the current social housing offer to our older residents. The aim is to promote independence at home by ensuring there is a more holistic approach to meeting housing, health and social care needs. We will use the review of our Sheltered Accommodation, developed alongside the Commission of Enquiry, which has made a number of recommendations for the future accommodation needs for our ageing population, both here and across the sub region. We will take forward these recommendations over the course of this strategy. We will also seek to enhance the services offered by the Home Improvement Agency.

The needs of vulnerable young people

In 2009/10, 30% of those found to be eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need were young people, (aged 16 – 24) who are also vulnerable due to their age. We recognise there is insufficient specialist provision for young people. The only specific young person scheme is two hostels for teenage families. We will assess the potential for a foyer scheme and specialist provision for homeless 16/17 year olds. Foyers seek to avoid repeat homelessness by giving young people a structured path to access and sustain stable accommodation, improving their skills and capabilities people through training and education, enhancing their employment prospects.

It is also known that formation of single person households continues to present challenges to the Council. When measured (as at 31st March 2011) 42% of the cases on housing register required 1 bed accommodation. A high proportion of these are young people seeking to occupy their first home away from their family unit.

The needs of the gypsy and traveller community

Gypsy & Traveller children have the lowest educational attainment of any group and life expectancy is 10 years lower than the national average. There are a number of authorised and tolerated sites within Thurrock.

There are three authorised Local Authority sites in Thurrock providing 64 plots. In addition there are several authorised and unauthorised private sites. In addition there is a privately owned travelling show person site at Buckles Land, Stifford.

Privately Funded Sites			
Site Name	Total No. of Sites	Total number of Caravans/Movable Dwellings	Permanent Planning Permission
Land at St Chads Rd, Tilbury (North)	1	4	14/11/03 approved
The Willows Buckles lane, South Ockendon	4	4	06/07/06 approved
Orchard Stables, Love Lane, East Tilbury	1	1	02/05/03 approved
Smallacre, Herd lane, Corringham	9	7	-
Holy land, Buckles Lane, South Ockendon	3	1	Temp planning permission expired 11/04/2011

Unauthorised Gypsy Sites (Tolerated)		
Site Name	Total No. of Sites	Total number of Caravans/Movable Dwellings
Biggin Lane, Chadwell St Mary	5	5
Echo Farm, Mollands Lane, South Ockendon	1	2
Lower Crescent, Linford	1	7
Ship Lane, Aveley	1	4
Sleepy Hollow, Chadwell St Mary	1	1
The Paddock, Park Gate Road, Corringham	1	2
Land at St Chads Road, Tilbury (South)	1	5

Thurrock Council will ensure provision of appropriate sites where there is an identified and established need, and working in partnership to tackle homelessness and social exclusion among Gypsy and Traveller communities, and address tensions between Gypsies and Travellers and settled communities and tackle unauthorised encampments.

An accommodation assessment (2006) concluded that the total extra residential pitch provision required in Thurrock by 2016 is 46 pitches, and is expected to further rise to 56 pitches by 2021. However this presumes that those families living on sites who said they would prefer to live in bricks and mortar accommodation are able to move.

If they are not, the total would be 42 pitches, rising to 87 by 2021. The core strategy of the LDF seeks where possible to extend the council owned Gypsy & Traveller sites.

With the demise of the regional special strategy and the review of the Core Strategy, we will need to review the housing needs of the community. We will work with the planning department to publish a supplement document on the housing needs of this community.

Adaptation

An 'adapted home' is one where items have been specially fitted to the property itself from minor fittings e.g. grab rails, to major installations e.g. stairlifts or level access shower facilities. The adaptations stay in the home as long as a person needs them which lead to increased independence. We will ensure we make the best use of existing wheelchair, adapted and lifetime homes standard stock and ensure it is allocated to those who most need it.

Community Cohesion

Housing organisations have a key role to play in building social and community cohesion, working closely with other local service providers such as GPs, schools and police to provide more integrated services in the neighbourhoods where they work. They also create social capital by encouraging greater resident involvement in housing and neighbourhood issues and providing community facilities on their estates. We intend to work closely with agencies offering financial advice and employment, counselling and support, targeted at those residents who are not working. This advice and support will be available to residents of all tenures, with priority given to residents in the social and private rented sectors. We will also use our procurement arrangements to encourage contractors and partners to develop apprenticeship schemes and other community and employment initiatives.

Anti Social Behaviour

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a responsibility on Councils and other agencies within their local community to tackle crime and disorder including the misuse of drugs, and consider the impact on crime and disorder of the decisions they make. From April 2010 Councils were also given a statutory duty to reduce re-offending.

Thurrock's Community Safety Partnership's strategy 2011-14 sets out our partnership proposals to ensure delivery of services that meet the needs of the communities of Thurrock. The strategy promotes a community based, multi-agency approach towards local empowerment, and addressing local concerns. The priorities for the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership for 2011/14 are to:

- Reduce antisocial behaviour
- Improve community safety through education, engagement and prevention
- Reduce re-offending
- Reduce serious crime and domestic abuse
- Tackle hate crime (race, disability, sexual orientation and religion)

Local residents feel that crime and ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) is still a big problem in Thurrock²². The survey also identified the need to increase communication across and within communities.

²² 80% of local respondents list "preventing crime" as one of their priorities (Community Consultation 2006).

The development of Family Intervention Projects nationally has been based on a successful model of intervention that has shown evidence of positive impact on outcomes in households facing multiple and complex disadvantage. The project provides intensive intervention in the home for the whole family.

The Family Intervention Project was introduced in Thurrock in August 2009 and Catch 22, a voluntary sector organisation, were commissioned to deliver the project. The project was initially focussed on the reduction of Youth Crime but in January 2010 the project expanded to also support families at risk of eviction due to anti social behaviour or rent arrears.

Our key actions are:

- **Ensure there is a choice in access to housing:**

Increase the provision of temporary accommodation and discharge our homeless duty into the private sector where it is a suitable option.

- **Ensure a supply of the right supported housing to meet changing needs and requirements across all vulnerable groups**

Take forward the sheltered housing review and increase the range and supply of accommodation to meet the needs of our ageing population.

- **Ensure that residents, carers and families have access to information and services to support their housing options**

We will ensure that residents have access to timely information and services about their housing options including alternative accommodation options, the need for adapted accommodation or specific support.

- **Contribute to reducing worklessness, improving community cohesion, and reducing inequality**

Work closely with agencies who can support tenants into employment. Involve tenants in shaping housing services to meet the needs of current and future customers.

- **Ensure a robust approach to addressing anti social behaviour**

Continue to support the work of the Family Intervention project.

Strategic Priority 3: Investing in the Housing Stock and Environmental Sustainability

This priority sets out our strategic plans for maintaining and improving homes and estates and ensuring housing investment plays a key role in helping to create attractive neighbourhoods, environmental sustainability and contributes to the quality of peoples’ lives and place making.

Outcome	Residents living in decent homes suitable for their needs	
To make sure that residents are able to live in decent homes suitable for their needs, our key priority areas are:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering and maintaining the Decent Homes Standard • To ensure 100% of vulnerable households in the private sector are living in decent homes by 2015 • Delivering and maintaining high quality management of homes and the environment • Addressing the challenges of environmental sustainability, climate change and fuel poverty • Make the best use of our Council homes and estates through estate renewal and regeneration • Developing an HRA asset management plan and long term business plan for the council housing stock. 	

Decent Homes Standard

The Council has an ongoing planned maintenance programme providing substantial investment in its own housing stock. This ensured we met the Decent Home Standard in March 2010. This was a national minimum standard and did not cover all of the investment needed to maintain estates such as lifts, communal windows and door entry systems. Nor does it allow for automatic modernisation of all kitchens and bathrooms, and the climate proofing and environmental improvements that will be needed in the future. Our housing strategy will work to ensure that more residents are able to live in decent homes that are able to meet their changing needs by putting in place long term investment plans for the councils stock

Decent Homes in the Private Sector for Vulnerable People

In 2007 Thurrock together with Basildon and Rochford Councils commissioned a mini sub regional private sector housing condition stock condition and energy report. The survey investigated the extent of non-decent and unsuitable housing in private tenures and the resources required to address these problems. An investment of £58m to bring all private sector non-decent homes up to standard is required of which £9.3m is needed to address non-decent homes of vulnerable people. We will update the survey information during 2011/12 which will be used to revise the private sector renewal strategy.

Demolition may have a role to play as over 21% of our stock is pre 1945, and there is a higher chance that some dwellings would require significant investment to meet decent homes standards. In 2009/10 we did not carry out any demolition. Whereas in

the East of England and London 800 and 1,890 dwelling were demolished respectively.

Housing demolition is often undertaken to clear land for new developments. Any demolition policy will not only need to be sensitive to the current community directly and indirectly affected by the site clearance but there should also be a clear criteria in place that assesses current design, condition, refurbishment costs, location etc. Our regeneration in Purfleet aims to create space for decant and rebuild making better use of the riverfront locations. It will mean some homes are replaced with new builds.

High quality management of homes and the environment

The quality, design and condition of homes all have a role to play in making neighbourhoods peaceful, safe and enjoyable. Housing and estate management are also essential to the success of neighbourhoods. To ensure consistently high standards of management we will put in place local offers agreed with residents in respect of; energy conservation and advice; develop a dog-fouling & dangerous dogs policy; and increase the involvement of young people in tenant participation opportunities

Environmental sustainability, climate change and fuel poverty

In line with national policy, we are committed to reduce future CO₂ emissions to at least 80% of 1990 levels by 2050. In the UK, the housing stock is the largest single contributor to CO₂ emissions. The Council has adopted three action plans with regards to tackling climate change; the Climate Change Mitigation Action Plan, Carbon Management Plan and Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan.

Housing will contribute to the delivery of these plans over the period of this strategy by building on our high SAP rating in council housing stock and continue to invest in thermal comfort through a planned maintenance programme for heating and insulation, directly addressing health inequalities and fuel poverty. We will continue to investigate environmentally sustainable products for our housing stock when renewing or refurbishing Council-owned estates and make bids for resources to install and monitor energy efficient products and explore Feed in Tariff pilot projects.

The Private Housing Service is delivering a wide range of energy efficiency measures in private homes as part of the Warm and Healthy Homes and the Warmfront Programmes. The service has led a sub regional partnership 'Warm & Healthy Homes' with four neighbouring Councils, Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford and Southend. Through this partnership we will address home repairs and improve energy-efficiency across South Essex, offering homeowners in South Essex healthy home loans, insulation grants and other discounts to help make their homes healthy and warm.

Estate renewal and regeneration

Our Regeneration and Estate Renewal Programme is the key regeneration vehicle for the Council's housing stock. It will help meet the central objectives of improving the design, quality and condition of existing homes on our estates as well as, over time, delivering extra homes at higher densities. It will also meet the wider objectives for neighbourhood renewal of improving quality of life, promoting social inclusion and reducing inequality.

The programme includes making best use of under utilised sites; targeted estates; remodelling of current provision as well as the development of criteria for targeting estate renewal.

The first council housing development in over a decade will be delivered in 2012. The new social housing rented development scheme costing over £2M which has been fully funded by the council. We have a number of under-utilised housing sites across the borough. Using our financial resources and land asset we are looking to build outright and lever in additional funding so we can maximise the number of new homes. These developments will not only be for social rented, but could include a mixture of tenures, shared ownership, outright sales and private rented depending on the make-up of the partnership.

The feasibility study for the Garrison Estate recommends the refurbishment of existing homes, plus the conversion of some garages and redundant space. The study proposes that a number of new homes also be built to enhance the neighbourhood character, as well as the enhancement of the green network and open space. To achieve this, a number of homes would be demolished, some refurbished and new build on the site to take full advantage of the waterfront location.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan

The HRA Business Plan sets out the Council's approach to the management and maintenance of its own housing stock as well as wider investment in new housing and estate renewal, including plans for the use of council housing assets and land to address housing need. The HRA Business plan looks at major investment as well as day to day repair needs including planned and cyclical works. This includes works to individual homes to ensure safety in the home as well as works to blocks and estates.

The current financial modelling indicates that from April 2012 the Council will generate a revenue surplus over 30 years and a fully funded capital programme. This is after all of the stock investment needs of the existing stock is met²³. In practise this will mean the Council will be able to use the financial resources of both capital and revenue for new build scheme, reconfiguration of our shelter housing schemes to meet the needs of vulnerable population, and estate regeneration.

The key strategic objectives of the plan are meeting housing needs and supporting sustainable communities. The preferred option would be a mix of building new homes; reviewing and changing key housing policies; investing in the existing stock and improving service delivery; and also supporting key regeneration needs.

Strategic Priority 4: Ensure all services are effective and achieve value for money

It is vital that services are customer focused, provided efficiency and are driven by and focussed on the needs of our customers. The HRA subsidy reforms also highlight the need for a strong Value for Money approach.

²³ See Thurrock Council HRA Business Pan 2011 - 2041

Outcome	Residents receive high quality, customer focussed services that meet their needs
During the course of this strategy we will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a customer focused and resident led approach to the development and delivery of services across all priorities • Regularly test and improve customer satisfaction across all services. • Align strategies and investment through this strategy and the HRA Business Plan. • Restructure the Housing Department to better meets customers needs • Attract high quality partners and investment • Cross boundary working through the TGSE and the Commission of Enquiry, investigating opportunities for sharing skills, advice, expertise and practices • Involve, develop and empower communities to improve quality of life and increase participation • Maximise income and an asset management approach • Explore innovative delivery models • Develop a set of specific targets and indicators based on local issues • Target high cost and low performance areas to improve Value for Money.

Our approach recognises that we will need new and innovative solutions, working with our partners to deliver our plans, and to continue to drive value and efficiency in the delivery of our services. We aim to provide modern and efficient services to our tenants, leaseholders and residents.

We will need to build on existing good patterns of Council cross-directorate co-operation and local partnerships, to ensure effective prioritisation of scarce future resources.

Risk and Opportunities

Risks

There are a wide range of risks associated with the delivery of the Housing Strategy and a detailed risk matrix will be developed as part of the implementation arrangements for the Strategy.

A number of the key risks are highlighted below:

Market risks – These are risks which are centered around the capacity of the market to deliver new housing and to deliver new affordable housing. Land and sales values will be significant for delivery and may impact on current regeneration opportunities.

Legislative risks – The impact of the governments proposals for welfare reform may impact on demand for services, the availability of properties in the private rented market, and homeless services.

Financial risks – The impact of HRA subsidy reform is yet to be fully assessed and a detailed risk assessment and modelling will be required in respect of the HRA Business Plan to ensure it is robust. The reduction in the availability of development finance and its replacement with income generated through higher rents brings significant risks for all social and affordable housing providers. The move to direct payments will also present significant challenges for income collection. The impact of reductions in Council and Health funding are likely to have implications for a number of the vulnerable groups identified within this strategy. Financial constraints may impact on the ability to resource elements of the Housing Strategy.

Planning risks – the proposed changes to the planning system are likely to result in greater development risks

Partnership risks – a number of elements of the Housing Strategy can only be delivered in partnership. If the commitment of partners cannot be secured then delivery of these aspects of the Strategy is uncertain.

Opportunities

Our opportunities are expressed in the regeneration framework for Thurrock. We have five economic hubs; London Gateway, Lakeside & West Thurrock, Tilbury, Purfleet and Grays.

London Gateway DP World

The site will be far more than a simple dock, it will develop into a town bringing thousands of jobs and millions of pounds into the local community. It represents the UK's largest capital investment project as well as the UK's largest employment creation project.

Lakeside & West Thurrock

We will continue to provide a regionally significant retail offer. Has the potential to be transformed into a thriving Regional Town Centre that provides a new range of employment opportunities, up to **3,000 housing** for local people, excellent community facilities and top quality greenspace. New residential development will address some of the perceived lack of 'executive housing' and will complement rapid employment growth at London Gateway, Lakeside and Tilbury.

Tilbury

Port of Tilbury is one of Thurrock's largest employers, the port boasts high-tech berths and warehousing within its gates, and is seeking to develop a massive scheme outside too, a scheme which will bring an estimated 4,000 jobs. The proposed development of a new Coal Power Station could expand in to a sustainable industrial park which could become the home to a sophisticated new generation of firms in the Environmental Technologies and Energy (ETE) sector. Regeneration proposals include a riverfront development of new homes, leisure facilities and shops that will help to reconnect Tilbury with the River Thames. The development must be carried out in such a way that ensures socioeconomic uplift for the existing community. Planned growth for Tilbury includes up to **470 new dwellings** between 2009 and 2021 and **a further 546 dwellings** as part of an eco-quarter between 2021 and 2025 and associated facilities.

Purfleet

Purfleet will take advantage of its location in relation to London and the wider South East, becoming the residential location of choice for a highly skilled workforce drawn to the riverfront location and leisure offer afforded by the vast open space opened up via the RSPB centre. The development of the ROH Production Park forms the basis of a new creative sector. Up to **3,000 new homes** and new employment opportunities will be delivered to sustain and support the growth of Purfleet into the 21st century.

The Garrison Estate provides an opportunity for comprehensive renewal possibly associated with some redevelopment.

Grays

South Essex College will be developing a new further- and higher-education campus close to the heart of Grays. The new college will not only offer university-level courses, it will lead to the regeneration of the town centre with shopping, entertainment and restaurants close at hand.

The Learning Campus will drive skills development in the Borough, a new Community Hospital will form a vital component of social infrastructure and will be a key element in growing the public service sector in the borough as a whole.

Summary

The hubs offer the opportunity for the jobs and growth and for a wider housing offer. Our regeneration plan is for a mixture of houses and apartments. The Council will take a lead to ensure the housing completions stay on track and are delivered. The regeneration delivery plan sets out the timetable to deliver the economic hubs across the borough.

In developing our affordable housing development plans on housing owned sites, we will aim to contribute to the regeneration and the housing offer by aligning and phasing sites that fall within the hubs.

Delivery and Implementation

We recognise the importance of ensuring that we manage and monitor our performance in relation to our targets. The strategy has been developed in consultation with partners who have a key role to play in helping to deliver specific actions. The strategy's action plan will be monitored by the Housing Departmental Management Team.

We recognise that it is important to share our progress with Thurrock's residents and partners. Progress on the Housing Strategy will be made available to all residents and partners through the housing section of the council website and through the Housing "discover" magazine – housing news and information for Thurrock's residents.

The implementation plan is set out over the next pages.

There are a number of significant projects that will need a separate and more detailed delivery plan.

- Taking forward the work of the sheltered housing review and the recommendations from the Commission of Enquiry
- Developing a comprehensive housing options that addresses the needs of vulnerable young people
- HRA Business Plan
- Affordable Housing Development Plan

Delivery Plan 2012 - 2017

Strategic Priority 1: Managing and improving housing supply and choice

Aims	Target	Actions	Outcomes	Leads
To ensure the borough has the right type of housing to meet the needs of residents.	Supporting increased affordable housing at a cost accessible to local residents	<p>Develop new funding models:</p> <p>Expand the intermediate housing market by developing a wider range of home ownership products such as FirstBuy and facilitating local HomeBuy events.</p> <p>Support a developer / planning / housing forum for closer working and improved understanding of housing issues</p> <p>Monitor the supply of strategic housing sites</p> <p>Develop a local authority new build housing development programme</p>	<p>To better match demand and supply to ensure sustainable access to homes where mixed communities flourish</p> <p>Improve special awareness of housing supply ensuring that its meeting local demand</p>	<p>Housing Dept - Strategy</p> <p>Strategic Planners</p>
	Increasing housing choices and wider mobility by introducing a new delivery model promoting high quality design and build standards in new homes	<p>Development of alternative delivery mechanisms such as Shared Equity and promote new models for bringing forward land to deliver affordable housing and increase mobility</p> <p>Promote high quality design and build standards in new homes</p> <p>Explore the possibility to pilot land auctions</p>	Improved understanding of housing viability, innovative approached to delivery, boosting housing supply including affordable housing	<p>Housing Dept Strategy</p> <p>Strategic Planners/Regeneration/Housing Dept – Strategy</p>

Aims	Target	Actions	Outcomes	Leads
		Review the need for a Housing Implementation Strategy – as set out in the draft National Policy Framework		Housing Dept – Strategy Strategic Planners
	Developing the private rented market and tackling empty homes	<p>Commission BRE stock condition survey.</p> <p>Continue to develop the Landlord Accreditation scheme</p> <p>Establish a private sector landlord’s forum and support to assist with the better management of private sector accommodation</p> <p>Work with the HCA to support growth in the private rented sector by encouraging institutional investors to work with local authorities and develop a Build to Let market</p> <p>Continue to deliver the sub regional empty homes scheme.</p> <p>Review empty homes scheme and evaluate options for improving take up</p>	<p>Deliver more targeted support to private sector housing stock and compare stock condition data with our comparators.</p> <p>Better quality and increased usage of private sector accommodation</p>	Housing Dept Strategy

Strategic Priority 2: Meeting and supporting the needs of vulnerable groups

Aims	Target	Actions	Outcomes	Leads
To make sure residents are supported to maintain and increase their independence:	Ensure choice in access to housing and in doing so tackle and prevent homelessness.	<p>Continue to improve homelessness advice and prevention.</p> <p>Increase the provision of temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Seek to discharge our homeless duty into the private sector where it is a</p>	Vulnerable young people and adults are able to maintain and increase their independence	Housing Dept Strategy

Aims	Target	Actions	Outcomes	Leads
	<p>Ensure a supply of the right supported housing to meet changing needs and requirements across all vulnerable groups</p>	<p>suitable option</p> <p>Take forward the sheltered housing review and increase the range and supply of accommodation to meet the needs of our ageing population.</p> <p>Promote the opportunities for delivering shared ownership/equity Extra Care schemes for elderly owner occupiers</p> <p>Explore how the needs for vulnerable young people can be best met.</p> <p>Carry out a housing needs assessment for gypsies and travellers in conjunction with planners</p>	<p>Promote independent living in attractive, well designed housing and facilitate the delivery of health and adult social services into people's homes</p> <p>Avoid unnecessary and prolonged hospital stays.</p> <p>Provision of supported accommodation for vulnerable young people.</p>	<p>Housing Dept Strategy</p> <p>Housing Dept – Strategy Strategic Planners</p>
	<p>Ensure that residents, carers and families have access to information and services to support their housing options.</p>	<p>Support statutory and the voluntary and community sector and their expanding role in helping to deliver community services.</p> <p>Work closely with Adult Social Care for the New Deal for Older People's Housing FirstStop information and advice service to help older people make informed decisions about their housing, care and support options.</p>	<p>Improve capacity across the partnership</p>	<p>Housing Dept Strategy</p> <p>People Services</p>
	<p>Contribute to reducing worklessness, improving community cohesion, and reducing inequality</p>	<p>Work closely with agencies who can support tenants into employment. Involve tenants in shaping housing services to meet the needs of current and future customers.</p> <p>Monitor changes in Housing Benefit and impact of Universal Credit</p>	<p>Empowered communities. Improved quality of life and increase participation</p>	<p>Housing Dept -Strategy</p>

Aims	Target	Actions	Outcomes	Leads
	Ensure a robust approach to addressing anti social behaviour	Continue to support the work of the Family Intervention project.	Tenancy sustainment for families who were at risk of losing their tenancy.	Housing Dept – Landlord Services
	Make best use of the rented housing stock	Develop a Strategic Tenancy Strategy and a local tenancy policy Implement a new Allocation Scheme	Clear policy statement on the affordable rent models and flexible tenancies. Updated allocation scheme Incentives to address under occupation and over occupation	Housing Dept Strategy and Landlord Services

Strategic Priority 3: Investing in the Housing Stock and environmental sustainability

To ensure a robust strategy is in place to fund improvements to existing homes and increase supply and make best use of assets.	Delivering and maintaining the Decent Homes Standard	Review product lifecycles and update planned maintenance programme	Residents living in decent homes suitable for their needs	
	To ensure 100% of vulnerable households in the private sector are living in decent homes by 2015	Continue to support the principal of a Home Improvement Agency providing advice and assistance to vulnerable people and help people to explore their housing options and maintain their independence in a safe, secure, decent and warm home.	100 private sector properties per year occupied by vulnerable households are made decent, with a minimum of 20 households directly assisted to move to a decent home. Measures that support residents to live in a safe and healthy home are prioritise	Housing Dept Strategy
	Delivering and maintaining high quality management of homes and the environment	Support delivery of Green Deal through promoting opportunities in partnership with energy providers	Reduce fuel poverty and increase the number of warm homes	Housing Dept Strategy
	Addressing the challenges of environmental sustainability, climate change and fuel poverty			
	Make the best use of our Council homes and estates through estate renewal and regeneration	Make best use of housing land within the Borough, building on the viability study of our garages sites to identify	A clear criteria for determining estate renewal priorities	Housing Dept Strategy

Aims	Target	Actions	Outcomes	Leads
		<p>where sites are: under utilised, subject to anti-social behaviour, suitable for affordable housing development or have other issues. We will use the economic hubs to prioritise this work.</p> <p>Investigate the potential for estate renewal in other key neighbourhood renewal locations including developing plans for Tilbury over the course of this strategy.</p> <p>Investigate all potential models for securing investment and regeneration for part or all of housing and estate based projects.</p>		
	Developing an HRA asset management plan and long term business plan for the council housing stock	Assess headroom within the Business Plan for a HRA new build programme and estate renewal programme	A 5-year Affordable Housing Development Plan to utilise current HRA land	

Strategic Priority 4: Ensure all services are effective and achieve value for money

Aims	Target	Actions	Outcomes	Leads
Residents receive high quality, customer focussed services that meet their needs	Review costs and performance levels across the housing service	Target high cost and low performance areas to improve Value for Money	Residents receive high quality, effective, customer focused services	Housing Dept Strategy
		Restructure the Housing Department to better meets customers needs		Housing Dept
		Align strategies and investment through this strategy and the HRA Business Plan		Housing Dept Strategy/Landlord Services
	Attract high quality partners and investment	Procure partners with the skill and investment portfolio to bring forward housing developments	Increase the annual number of affordable homes	Housing Dept Strategy

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Council's key priorities reflect national and local needs and views. They are informed by analysis, needs assessment and consultation with stakeholders, partners and residents. They contribute to the Council's aims and objectives as set out in the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan.

The Housing Strategy is necessarily ambitious to impact on the housing conditions in Thurrock, however it is also based on securing effective delivery:

- Financial planning is based on realistic and prudent assumptions about the availability of future funding to the Council and its partners
- The Housing Strategy action plan supports and is informed by the Council's Community Strategy and Corporate Plan
- Wherever possible capital and other resources are employed as 'match funding' to maximise resources
- Opportunities for Councillors, service users and other stakeholders to influence and participate in decision making about financing and developing the service is encouraged.

Section 4 contains our proposed action plans for delivering the Strategy set out in this document. These include the timescales within which the actions will be carried out. The action plan will be updated annually so that we can make any adjustments for new policies.

Performance Indicators

KPI	Description	Target 2011/12
Managing and improving housing supply and choice		
HSGLPH02a	Number of empty properties returned to use (private sector)	150
NI155	Number of affordable housing units completed (gross)	105
CPA H18	Total private sector homes vacant for more than 6 months (annual)	0.46
NI 157	Processing of planning applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • major • minor • other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% • 86% • 93%
Meeting and supporting the needs of vulnerable groups		
BV183a	Length of stay in B & B accommodation	7
NI156	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	45
HSG002	Total number of homeless applications per month	180
HSG004	Total number of cases where homelessness is prevented	540
HSG009	Number of those waiting for adaptations	0
	Reducing the number of residents in fuel poverty	?
NI 141	% vulnerable people achieving independent living	Provisional Target 90%
NI 142	% vulnerable people supported to achieve independent	Provisional

KPI	Description	Target 2011/12
	living	Target 98%
Investing in the Housing Stock and environmental sustainability		
LA 72	% of relevant repairs completed in Govt. time	99%
LA73	Average time taken to complete non-urgent repairs	7.50
HSG010	% of customer satisfaction with Housing repairs service	95%
M08	% of customer satisfaction with repairs	Don't use
NI158	% of Local Authority homes which are non decent	0.00
HSG RPH01	Proportion of households living in decent private sector homes	91.45
Ensure all services are effective and achieve value for money		
BV212.05	Average Time to re-let	32

Monitoring and Review of the strategy

The Housing Strategy is a key corporate document approved by Cabinet. Delivery is overseen by the Director of Housing. Monitoring and evaluation is carried out by the Housing Strategy and Renewal Service Manager. Overview and Scrutiny Committee will review the performance of the action plan through an annual report.

Wider housing and regeneration conditions can change rapidly over time. Through monitoring and review we will ensure that the action plan stays on track, taking remedial action where needed.

We will carry out regular reviews of the housing strategy and the action plan to:

- Ensure actions are achieved within the timescales set out in the delivery plan
- Evaluate the impact made by completed actions against the core priorities in the strategy, and make improvements based on the lessons learned, and
- Consider the findings of the reviews with our partners to ensure that the strategy continues to be responsive to changing conditions and priorities.

Appendix A: HRA Business Plan Strategic Objectives

Purpose of a Social Landlord in Thurrock

In summary, the purpose of the Council as a social landlord is largely determined and prescribed by legislation and regulation, but it is also heavily shaped by the history of social housing, and by the needs of the people of Thurrock as articulated in local strategies and plans, such as the Community Strategy and the Housing Strategy. What the Council does in the future and how the Business Plan articulates that future will be shaped by how the Council chooses to interpret its role as a social landlord.

The purpose of social housing in England continues to be shaped by social attitudes, by economic necessity and national policies, such as those now proposed in the Government's National Housing Strategy, *Laying the foundations: A Housing Strategy for England*. These forces are translated on the ground through the various statutory duties placed on the Council.

These statutory duties in the main require the Council to carry out two strategic functions as a social landlord:

1. To meet the acute housing needs of the most vulnerable and the homeless; and at the same time,
2. To help create and support mixed and sustainable communities. (In meeting this function, the Business Plan takes its lead from the Council's Community Strategy and the Housing Strategy).

The Council as a social landlord will therefore need to balance its various housing policies, such as the revised allocations policy and its tenancy policies, together with the new opportunity of building new Council homes so that it can achieve both the objectives of meeting statutory housing need and creating mixed and sustainable communities. This then, will remain the continuing housing challenge for the Council:- To meet its statutory landlord obligations whilst also supporting the wider vision of the Council.

...be at the dynamic heart of the Thames Gateway, a place of ambition, enterprise and opportunity, where communities and businesses flourish and the quality of life for local people is continually improving".

What does this mean for Thurrock? The current and future housing needs of the people of Thurrock are continually shaped by various national and local socio-economic forces, and a particular set of geographical factors, such as its riverside location which commands the main transport water-way from London to the sea. The job of Thurrock Council in this respect is to harness the opportunities that such forces provide for the benefit of its community, by capitalising on its advantageous geographical position at the commercial trading gateway to Europe and beyond.

The Council has set out how it intends to do that with its key local partners in its premier strategic plan: *Shaping Thurrock: Sustainable Communities Strategy 2020*.

The vision in the strategy captures the ambition of the people of Thurrock to create and enjoy living in a successful, healthy and happy community, where residents take pride and have responsibility for their neighbourhoods, and where businesses can grow and jobs are created. Specifically, the Council has stated in its strategy:-

“We want Thurrock to be at the dynamic heart of the Thames Gateway, a place of ambition, enterprise and opportunity, where communities and businesses flourish and the quality of life for local people is continually improving”.

To achieve this vision, we have identified five priorities:

- 1. To ensure a safe, clean and green environment;*
- 2. To improve the education and skills of local people;*
- 3. To encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity;*
- 4. To provide and commission high quality and accessible services that meet, wherever possible, individual needs;*
- 5. To build pride, respect and responsibility in Thurrock’s communities and its residents.*

The Housing Business Plan makes clear links to the Community Strategy, the various key spatial strategies and the Housing Strategy, in order to ensure that HRA resources and assets are used to support the key corporate priorities and objectives of the Council.

Some of the ways in which the Business Plan can support the Council’s strategic plans are illustrated in summary in the next three paragraphs.

The Housing Strategy links into the Council’s spatial plans by supporting future housing developments in areas of the Borough that most benefit economic growth and that foster community sustainability and cohesion. The Housing Business Plan follows the paths set out by the Housing Strategy in terms of where, in a geographical sense, new Council homes might be built and also where stock investment priorities can support wider regeneration initiatives. For example, by upgrading Council blocks and estates in areas adjoining regeneration, such as the Purfleet regeneration area.

The social landlord activities of the Council can also support the community’s educational endeavours, for example by giving consideration to the option to build a student foyer scheme linked to the new South Essex College campus development in Grays.

The Business Plan sets out a multi-million stock investment and maintenance strategy (£0.5 Billion) over 30 years for its housing stock. Much of this investment will go to local contractors and companies, and will therefore create local jobs and form a significant part of the growth and sustainability of the local economy. There is also the opportunity identified within the Business Plan for the Council to deliver a

significant programme of new Council homes; this would also create new jobs and growth in the local economy.

Therefore, in order to fulfil the above requirements of the Council's purpose as a social landlord, a number of specific, key objectives need to be defined. These objectives can then be turned into performance measures to monitor how well the Council is able to deliver required housing services.

The HRA Business Plan strategic objective is based on the Council's purpose of being a social landlord. The primary objective of the Council as a social landlord is to support the key objectives in the Housing Strategy and the Community Strategy through direct delivery and intervention using HRA assets and resources. Therefore the Business Plan strategic objective is expressed as follows:-

Key Strategic Objective: The Council Landlord will meet its statutory obligations as a social landlord in terms of meeting housing need and maintaining its homes whilst at the same time helping to create and maintain sustainable communities.

The various key objectives and priorities for the Council landlord flow from this overarching strategic objective and they are detailed in chapter 7 of the HRA Business Plan.

In summary, there are four key objectives as follows:-

1. To meet statutory housing needs for the homeless and the vulnerable;
2. To meet particular local housing needs, for example, for people in work or who are looking for work;
3. To help create and support sustainable and mixed communities amongst Council estates and the neighbourhoods in which they are situated;
4. To support the Council's regeneration and growth plans by directing existing and new stock investment to sites of strategic importance.

The success of the Business Plan is dependent on how well it is able to meet all these key objectives and thus fulfil the overall strategic business objective.

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