



*Basingstoke  
and Deane*

# Housing and homelessness strategy

2013 to 2018



## Housing and homelessness strategy 2013 – 2018

### Scope

The council recognises the importance of housing in its widest sense in ensuring a high quality of life for the residents of Basingstoke and Deane. All residents should have access to a home of a good standard which they can afford and are able to sustain and maintain. The council's emerging Local Plan will consider and address the wider issues around the overall supply of housing in the borough (which will include the provision of new affordable housing). The Housing and Homelessness Strategy, covering the period 2013-18, sets out the council's strategic approach and long term direction of travel in relation to meeting the housing needs of those residents who are unable to afford or access a home of a suitable standard.

The Strategy builds on the significant successes achieved by its predecessor and fulfills the council's statutory duty to implement a Homelessness Strategy under Sections 1-3 of the Homelessness Act 2002. It sets out how the council will deal with continuing themes and new challenges facing the borough, by targeting five key priority areas and identifies the key actions which will deliver those key strategic priorities.

The Strategy has clear links to the council's vision, overall objectives and priorities, and other key documents and plans.

### Context

The Strategy has been prepared at a time of significant change within the housing sector - within both affordable and private market housing provision. These changes affect not only Basingstoke and Deane but local authorities up and down the country.

They are taking place against a backdrop of continued economic recession and higher levels of unemployment. The pace of change has been rapid and continuing - even as the strategy has been written, new initiatives and Government announcements are released. The main elements to the changes are:

**Funding:** Government funding for its Affordable Homes Programme 2011 – 2015 is at much reduced levels to the 2008-11 programme. Funding is granted on an investment basis to cover a programme of delivery over a five year period and no longer covers Social Rent properties or Section 106 sites.

**Social housing reform:** the package of new measures being introduced include Affordable Rents in social housing, whereby rents of new delivery and some existing stock will be set at levels of up to 80% of local market rents. These will be used to support funding for future delivery and are likely to be higher than social rents – in some cases significantly so. Additionally, social housing tenancies may, depending on the property type and particular policy approach adopted by individual RSL's, now only be offered on a fixed term tenancy basis, ending the so-called "tenancy for life" offer previously given to new tenants;

**Welfare reform:** The introduction of Universal Credit in 2013 and other welfare reforms (particularly housing benefit);

**Opportunities through legislative change:** This includes: the new duty to implement a Tenancy Strategy under the Localism Act 2011; new powers for local authorities to discharge homelessness duties into the private rented sector; greater flexibility for local authorities to determine their own allocations policies and Housing Register qualification criteria.

## Strategic fit

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 is one of a number of strategies which will deliver the Council's [Council Plan 2013-17](#). It will directly support a key priority of the council – to create neighbourhoods where people feel safe and want to live by: supporting first-time buyers; delivering affordable housing where it is needed; regenerating priority residential areas; assisting those in housing need and avoiding homelessness.

In turn, the Housing and Homelessness Strategy will be supported by and sit alongside the following council strategies:-



The Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 will also have a key role in supporting joint strategies and specific strategies of our partners:



The Strategy is underpinned by a detailed service delivery plan which sets out the individual actions and activities that will be undertaken to deliver the strategic priorities and outcomes. The involvement and actions of our partners will be key to delivering this plan.

## Our main achievements during 2008-12:

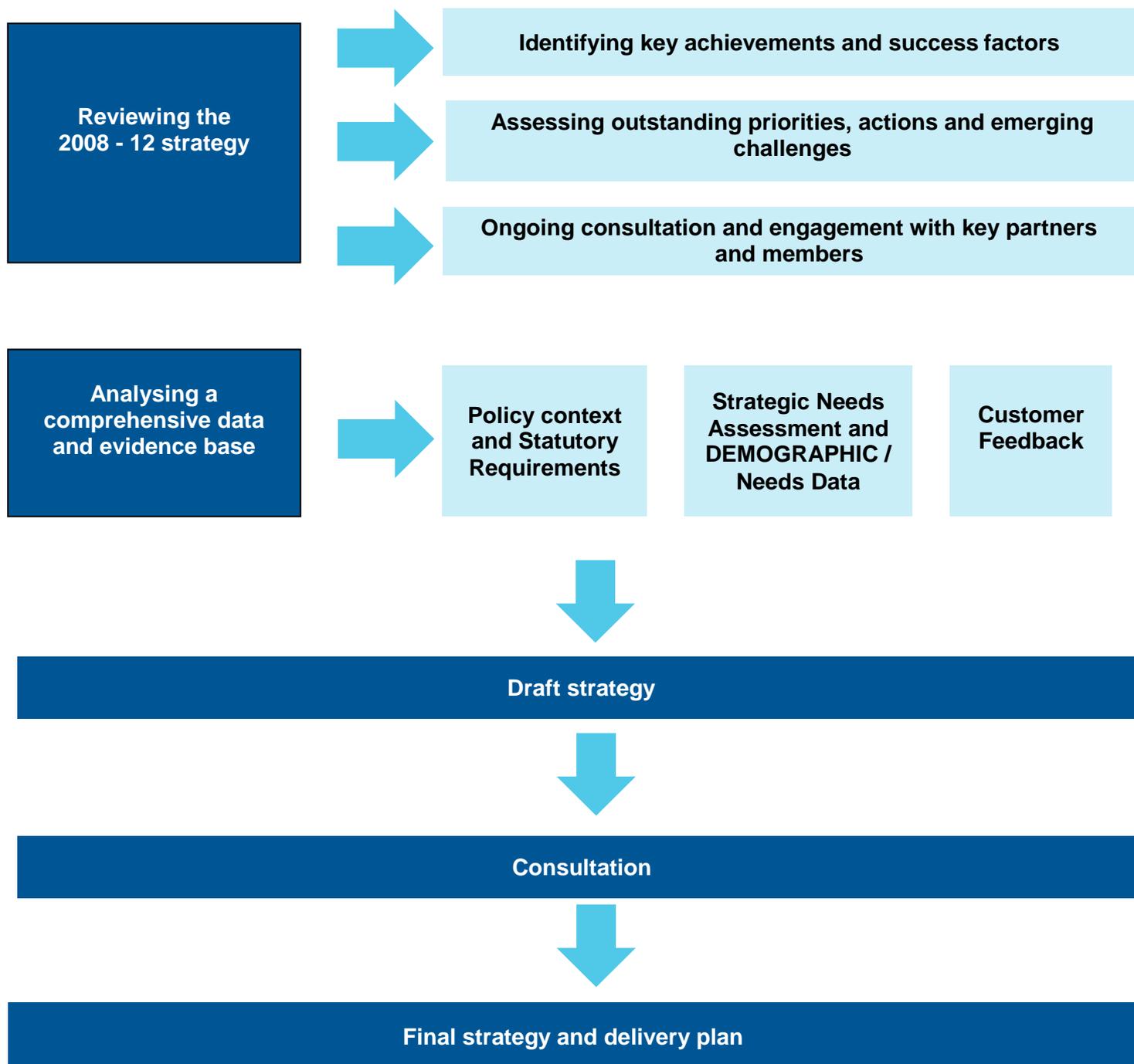
- Introduced Choice Based Lettings and a new allocations scheme
- Delivered a gross total of 1,579 a new affordable homes (almost 400 a year) against a target of 300
- Reduced the numbers of households in temporary accommodation from 87 at the start of the strategy period to 4 by the end.
- Reduced the numbers of accepted homeless households per year from 25 to 6
- Assisted almost 450 households with the Rent Bond scheme
- Introduced specialist (and trail blazing) Mortgage Rescue and Court Desk advisory services. Over 100 mortgage rescue completions have been achieved.
- Delivered outcome focussed housing and support services for young people which meant no homeless young person had to be placed in bed and breakfast
- Enabled the delivery of new flagship Extra Care Services for older people in the borough
- Delivered a comprehensive advice and information service across the housing and benefits service areas, assisting up to 26,000 cases a year
- Maintained service delivery for housing and council tax benefits during a period within which caseloads increased substantially
- Embarked on a project to evaluate and deal with Empty Homes
- Achieved significant efficiencies in administering Disabled Facilities Grants through an innovative procurement project
- Delivered three significant regeneration schemes in conjunction with Sentinel Housing Association - Maldive Road and Faroe Close, Longfellow Parade and Bishops Green

## Emerging challenges

The impact of a changed economic climate and prolonged recession towards the end of the previous Strategy period has meant that the housing need and delivery context and challenges have intensified. In particular this includes:

- Declining levels of all new housing delivery, including affordable housing
- Reducing level of government funding for new affordable housing delivery
- Commencement of the welfare and benefit reform programme (and potential implications for homelessness)
- Shortfalls in the availability of private rented accommodation for low income households, leading to a fall in our ability to use rent bonds to prevent homelessness
- Increasing levels of housing demand for decreasing supplies of social housing lets
- Increasing use of Bed and Breakfast for vulnerable households, especially with dependent children
- Reducing funding for the Supporting People programme across Hampshire
- Consistently high demand for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) from an increasingly ageing population
- Risk of increases in rough sleeping – as levels of unmet need amongst single people remain high

## Developing the Housing and Homelessness Strategy involved:



## Equality and diversity

The council is committed to ensuring that no one faces unfair or unlawful discrimination, and that all residents can access services and a full Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy. The EIA found that the Strategy identified a number of ways in which vulnerable groups were supported and makes specific reference to households that fall within the “protected characteristics” groups outlined in the Equality Act such as people with disabilities, and younger and older people. <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/browse/community-and-living/equality-and-diversity/Equality+Impact+Assessments+continued.htm>

## Priorities for the Strategy 2013 – 2018

The main themes which determine the key priority areas for action within the strategy remain relevant and are broadly similar to those within the 2008-12 strategy, although they have been refined to reflect changes within the broader social, economic and funding context. They are of equal standing and are:

### **Maximising supply**

New affordable housing is an important priority for residents. It is crucial in helping the council meet its statutory housing and homelessness duties and achieve a number of key strategic objectives. The target from the previous strategy of at least 300 (net) homes per annum therefore continues. Delivery and development constraints may well mean a shortfall against this target at the start of this strategy, but the long term aim will be to return to a level of 300 affordable homes delivery by the end of the strategy period. The council, will, as a public body, be expected to use its own resources to help deliver affordable housing.

### **Shaping supply**

As opportunities for new housing delivery are scarce the council must ensure all new supply is targeted towards its key priorities and meeting local needs. We have already identified our most acute priority needs, but the council is also committed to supporting lower income households to access home ownership.

### **Making best use of existing resources**

As resources are finite the need to make best use of what we have becomes even more paramount. Resources within a broader context refers to all those available within our community - including assets such as land and buildings, staffing, and financial (capital and revenue) resources.

All available resources must be targeted towards identified and evidence-based priorities and applies equally across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

### **Preventing Homelessness**

This remains a primary statutory function for the council. The context for preventing homelessness and delivering sustainable options has become even more challenging and demands innovative and joined up responses. The council must prevent homelessness at the same time as offering a range of suitable and sustainable options which offer real alternatives. Using private rented sector accommodation will be key in doing this, as will effective partnership and sub regional working

### **Supporting Vulnerable people**

The availability of appropriate support is fundamental in helping vulnerable people access and / or maintain suitable housing, as well as preventing homelessness. Much of this work is undertaken in conjunction with our key partners.

## Turning priorities into actions and outcomes - and measuring success

Key priority	Objective <i>What outcome / impact will this have?</i>	How will we achieve it  <i>What key activities in the delivery / action plan will we take to deliver this?</i>	How will we measure success?  <i>Performance Targets</i>
<b>Priority 1</b> <b>Maximising supply</b>	Enable local residents who are vulnerable and on a low income to access and sustain suitable accommodation which meets their needs	<p>Adopting a partnership approach with select preferred partners and considering potential use of other council resources (including land) to underline this approach</p> <p>Capitalising on any opportunities to draw additional housing investment into the borough through sub-regional working and strategic enabling with the Homes and Communities Agency, other public land-owning authorities</p> <p>Supporting community initiated interest towards opportunities appropriate for self-build, community land trusts and other community-based initiatives</p> <p>Capitalising on and pursuing any windfall affordable housing development opportunities that arise within the borough</p>	<p>Delivery target rate of at least 300 new affordable (net) homes per annum by the end of the strategy period.</p> <p>At least one new rural housing scheme to progress per annum</p>
<b>Priority 2</b> <b>Shaping supply</b>	Ensure new housing delivery is affordable, best meets a range of local housing needs and is located within sustainable communities	<p>Targeting use of the affordable housing reserve to secure new delivery which meets agreed priority needs</p> <p>Supporting low cost home ownership such as the LAMS (Local Authority Mortgage Scheme)</p> <p>Shaping new affordable housing delivered on new developments through negotiation (to ensure an optimum mix of tenures, based on evidenced local needs)</p> <p>Updating affordability and needs modelling, ensuring it is locality based, to assess proposed rent levels and inform the Planning process / use of S 106 agreements</p>	<p>Spending all of the council's Affordable housing Reserve to meet agreed priorities</p> <p>40% of new housing delivery to be secured as affordable housing (in accordance with existing policy C2)</p> <p>100% of LAMS indemnities committed</p>

Key priority	Objective	How will we achieve it	How will we measure success?
<p><b>Priority 3</b></p> <p><b>Making best use of resources</b></p>	<p>Ensure all available housing and support resources are fully utilised to maximum impact.</p> <p>Ensure all housing (including HMOs) is free from any significant hazards</p>	<p>Reviewing the allocations policy and implementing a new scheme which gives priority to local households in housing need</p> <p>Working with RP's to actively promote mutual exchanges</p> <p>Accelerating work on the empty homes programme</p> <p>Reviewing the Private Sector Renewal strategy and continuing to achieve efficiencies in the delivery of mandatory DFG's</p> <p>Continuing to monitor housing standards within the private sector (including HMOs), and delivering a responsive and effective inspection and enforcement service</p> <p>Supporting implementation of the council's strategic approach to regeneration including delivery completion of the Freemantle and Taverner Close scheme</p> <p>Reviewing mechanisms for securing and enforcing maximum nomination rights to all available social housing vacancies</p> <p>Implementing and monitoring the new Tenancy Strategy</p>	<p>Delivery of 190 new affordable housing units at Freemantle Taverner regeneration scheme</p> <p>Minimum of 10 long term Empty Homes brought back into use each year</p> <p>100% of lettings to be made in accordance with allocations scheme each year</p> <p>100% annual inspections of licensed HMOs and monitoring assessments of non-licensed HMOs</p>
<p><b>Priority 4</b></p> <p><b>Preventing homelessness</b></p>	<p>Ensure vulnerable people are able to access and keep accommodation which meets their needs</p>	<p>Ensuring availability of suitable, affordable, privately rented accommodation alternatives through Rent Bonds, Private Sector Leasing (PSL) and effective landlord liaison, to use in preventing homelessness and discharging homelessness duties where appropriate</p> <p>Promoting good management standards within the private rented sector through landlord liaison and promotion of landlord accreditation schemes and guides</p> <p>Ensuring the continued availability of quality and specialist housing advice and prevention services for potentially homeless households, including the Court Desk</p> <p>Working sub regionally and cross sector to eradicate rough sleeping by developing and implementing a No Second Night Out response</p> <p>Joint working and liaison with key partners to establish a cross sector and dynamic Homeless Partnership Forum, focussed on homelessness prevention</p> <p>Establishing key operational liaison links with key agencies and services involved in homelessness prevention</p> <p>Minimising B&amp;B use for accepted homeless households, ensuring placements meet appropriate standards and are located in the borough as far as is practicable</p>	<p>Year on year reduction in use of B&amp;B for unintentionally homeless vulnerable households (baseline measure 2012/13)</p> <p>Nil use of B&amp;B for all vulnerable homeless 16/17 year olds</p> <p>Minimum 90 properties secured on PSL scheme by 2014/15 and maintained thereafter</p> <p>Minimum 80 new placements into private rented sector (using rent bonds and / or other assistance) per annum</p> <p>All rough sleepers to be offered NSNO response within 24 hours</p>

Key priority	Objective	How will we achieve it	How will we measure success?
<p><b>Priority 5</b></p> <p><b>Supporting vulnerable people</b></p>	<p>Supporting people into the new welfare framework and ensuring vulnerable households receive requisite support to access and maintain suitable accommodation</p>	<p>Critically reviewing and coordinating all supported housing panels, referral systems and move on arrangements</p> <p>Coordinating and steering the delivery of appropriate advice and support to all households impacted by the welfare reform agenda</p> <p>Collaborating with HCC and neighbouring authorities on administration of Supporting People programme</p> <p>Coordinating specialist cross agency drop-in sessions for particular vulnerable groups (rough sleepers, young people, people impacted by welfare reform, victims of domestic abuse)</p> <p>Working in partnership with Hampshire County Council to strategically review and jointly re-commission key housing related support services (including for victims of domestic abuse and supported lodgings)</p> <p>Exploring opportunities for delivering or enhancing new housing related support services – including Extra Care</p> <p>Reviewing framework for use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to ensure optimum needs can be met and homelessness prevented</p> <p>Reviewing and developing the principles of the Vulnerable Persons Protocol</p>	<p>Delivery of 15 supported lodgings placements through joint commissioning with HCC</p> <p>Achieving 100% spend of DHP budget in line with guidance framework</p> <p>All rough sleepers to be offered NSNO response within 24 hours</p> <p>Nil use of B&amp;B for all vulnerable homeless 16/17 year olds</p>

## Monitoring and reviewing the strategy

Performance targets and evidence data to measure success and delivery of the strategy will be monitored through:

Mechanism	Monitoring parties
Business unit monitoring	BDBC Director, Head of Residents Services and Management Team
Member and Portfolio Holder Briefings / updates / workshops	Members and Portfolio Holder
Performance Panel	Members, Housing Management Team
BASP - Housing Priority Action Group (PAG)	Senior Officers, preferred Registered Provider partners and BASP members
Key partnership forums – including a new Homelessness Forum	Senior Officers, key Registered Providers, Supporting People, statutory agencies and voluntary sector organisations
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Members

## Council funding to support delivery of the strategy

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy is supported by significant revenue and capital budgets.

The council will receive £101,000 Government revenue funding to prevent homelessness. Although not ring fenced for such, the funding is currently targeted towards specific homelessness prevention measures – including specialist advice services at the Court Desk and supporting the Rent Bond scheme.

The council has also agreed a budget of £500,000 for a community support fund. This will be used for specific projects to help residents impacted by Welfare Reform.

The council also receives Government grants to contribute to meeting the demand for Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (£480,000). It is assumed that this level of funding will continue in future years.

In January 2010, Cabinet approved a fund of £884,000 as a capital fund reserve to be used to support the delivery of affordable housing. The priorities for spending this reserve were agreed by Cabinet in June 2012 and the mechanisms by which it would be released approved by Council in July 2012. Spend in the first year is capped to £442,000. The council has access to the use of additional sums of £735,000 from Section 106 contributions which must be applied as capital grant funding for specific affordable housing delivery.

## Glossary

BASP	Basingstoke Area Strategic Partnership
B&B	Bed and Breakfast
DHPs	Discretionary Housing Payments
HCC	Hampshire County Council
HMO	House in Multiple Occupation
LAMS	Local Authority Mortgage Scheme
NSNO	No Second Night Out
PAG	Priority Action Group
RP / RSL	Registered Provider / Registered Social Landlord

# Housing and homelessness strategy

2013 to 2018

©Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council August 2013

Civic Offices

London Road

Basingstoke

RG21 4AH

Telephone 01256 844844

[www.basingstoke.gov.uk](http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk)

[commissioning@basingstoke.gov.uk](mailto:commissioning@basingstoke.gov.uk)



Follow us on Twitter: [twitter.com/BasingstokeGov](https://twitter.com/BasingstokeGov)

