Rochford New Local Plan:

Spatial Options Consultation 2021

Topic Paper 9: Housing

Temporary Cover

Contents

Advisory Note

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was subject to a formal revision in July 2021, just before these papers were published. As a consequence, paragraph numbers and other references to the 2019 NPPF made in this document may no longer relate exactly to the latest version of the NPPF.

The principles set out in referenced paragraphs have not been subject to extensive change and references made are therefore still considered to be accurate reflections of national policy.

1 What is this topic paper about?

1.1 Rochford District Council is preparing a new Local Plan that will cover the period up to 2040. As a comprehensive and up to date evidence base is essential for plan preparation, the Council has prepared a range of technical studies, both in house and through external consultants, to support this process.

1.2 To help summarise the key topics that the new Local Plan will need to address, a series of 'topic papers' have been prepared to explain the national policy and legislative context for key topics and to set out how those key topics relate to local challenges and opportunities. These topic papers will be published alongside the Spatial Options consultation paper, allowing interested parties to understand these key topics in greater detail than what is contained in the consultation paper alone.

1.3 The Housing topic paper summarises the latest available evidence on housing issues and needs for the District including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2016 and its Addendum 2017. Although a SHMA update is planned to provide an up-to-date qualitative and quantitative understanding of housing need to 2040, the existing SHMA is considered to offer a reasonably robust indication of likely future housing needs for the Rochford District. Reflecting the wide scope of this topic, there are a number of overlaps between this paper and others including the Economic topic paper.

2 Introduction

2.1 This topic paper has been prepared to assess the national and local policy context for Housing, to consider what should be incorporated into the new Local Plan, covering the period up to 2040.

2.2 Different types and tenures of housing will need to be planned for in the new Local Plan to meet Rochford District's growing housing need. This includes:

- *Market Housing* – this is where properties are sold by housing developers (including housing associations) and purchased at **market values** by people seeking to own their own homes, it also includes properties that are rented on short-term tenancies (normally from 6 to 12 months, or longer) at **market rents.**

- *Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding* **-** this is where individuals purchase **plots of land** at market value and are involved in building or managing the construction of their home[1], on already serviced (water, electric and/or gas, and telecommunications) plots normally as part of a major housing development site.

- *Affordable Housing* – housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

[1] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/self-build-and-custom-housebuilding

a) **Affordable housing for rent**: (a) rent is set in accordance with Government policy or at least 20% below local market rents; (b) the landlord is a registered provider (i.e., a housing association) except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent Scheme (**Affordable Private Rent** and landlord does not need to be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision[2].

b) **Intermediate rent:** this is usually 20% below local market rent, available to key workers and others finding it hard to afford market rent prices (normally provided by housing associations), and with tenancy periods from 6 months to 5 years.

c) **Discounted market sales housing (DMS):** this is a low-cost home ownership product where a new build property is purchased at a discounted price, usually around 20%[3] below local market values to help low and middle earners get onto the property ladder, and who meet the criteria, for example, where a household's income does not exceed 45% of the discount market sale price of the property. The discount remains with the property into perpetuity, staying permanently affordable.

d) **First Homes:** a specific kind of discounted (minimum of 30%) market sale housing with a restrictive covenant which enables the discount to be passed on at each subsequent house sale, sold to households meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria[4].

e) **Shared ownership:** this is when a purchaser takes out a mortgage on a share of a property and pays rent to a landlord (usually a housing association) on the remaining share. Purchasers then have an opportunity to 'staircase' up their share of the property, gradually increasing the proportion of their home that they own and therefore paying less rent on the remaining portion, until they own 100% of their home.

- *Sheltered / supported / enhanced / specialist housing:* this includes sheltered and extra care (support packages in place) housing for older persons and those with disabilities including physical and mental health, or for people with addictions (drugs / alcohol) and for those fleeing domestic violence, normally provided, or managed by housing associations who implement care support packages. It is specifically designed for older people (or younger disabled

[2] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf

[3] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf

[4] First Homes - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

people) to allow them to live independently within self-contained accommodation (usually flats) with communal facilities. For older persons some schemes are open to those over 55 years old. When used exclusively for older people, it is sometimes called ‘retirement housing’.

Sheltered accommodation for older / disabled persons can be **purchased** or **rented**. Residents can pay for sheltered housing privately (out of their own funds) or, if they meet certain eligibility criteria, they can apply to be allocated sheltered housing by their local council or housing association.

- *Student housing:* this may comprise of communal halls of residence (normally sited on university campuses) or self-contained dwellings for the specific short-term use of students attending a specific educational establishment.

- *Gypsy, Traveler and Travelling Showpeople accommodation:* this normally comprises of sites containing pitches or plots of land including for temporary and transit requirements. Sites can be privately owned or owned and managed by a local authority or county council.

2.3 This topic paper covers a broad range of housing issues and summarises the latest available evidence relating to these matters. It also suggests how the Local Plan should deal with any important issues.

3 National Planning Policy

3.1 Local planning authorities are required to address various requirements set out in national policy and legislation in preparing their local plans, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, February 2019) and supporting National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).

3.2 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

3.3 The NPPF sets out a number of housing issues that Local Planning Authorities must take into account in the preparation of their Local Plans. These can be summarised as follows:

Table 1 Summary of National Planning Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale, and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for housing, including affordable housing (paragraph 20).

To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay (paragraph 59).
To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance. Any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for (Paragraph 60).
The size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes) (paragraph 61).
Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required and expect it to be met on-site unless: a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities (Paragraph 62).
Provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments (Paragraph 63).
Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership (paragraph 64).
Strategic policy-making authorities should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period. Within this overall requirement, strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas (paragraph 65).
Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses (paragraph 117).
Promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups, and railway infrastructure) (paragraph 118d).
Should support proposals to use retails and employment land (which are not allocated for that purpose in the plan) for homes in areas of high housing demand, provided this would not undermine key economic sectors or sites or the vitality and

viability of town centres, and would be compatible with other policies in this Framework (paragraph 121).
Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site (paragraph 123).
National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Sets out the detailed requirements for a housing needs assessment. The Standard Method for assessing housing need does not breakdown the overall figure into different types of housing. Therefore, the need for particular sizes, types and tenures of homes as well as the housing needs of particular groups should be considered separately.
Sets out requirements for undertaking housing and economic land availability assessments. This requires the identification of a 5 year land supply of housing land **and** includes provisions for a Housing Delivery Test. The Housing Delivery test is an annual measurement of housing delivery in the area.

National Space and Accessibility Standards

3.4 It will be important to make new homes in the new Local Plan period suitable in terms of both minimum internal space standards and suitable standards of accessibility and adaptability for the expected significant increase in older people and those with particular accessibility problems. Homes need to be adaptable for the changing needs of families and single people as their mobility decreases with age.

3.5 The government's Building Regulations and the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS)[5] will ensure that future homes standards will meet future identified housing needs, for example, full wheelchair accessible homes.

3.6 Part M (Volume 1: Dwellings) has recently replaced Part M4 of the Building Regulations (2015) provides for 'Access to and use of dwellings' with provisions for the categories of 'Visitable dwellings'; 'Accessible and adaptable dwellings'; and 'Wheelchair user dwellings'[6]. It is now for local authorities to decide the level of access, for example, if there is a proposal for a new housing site, the Local Planning Authority will decide how many dwellings should be built under each of the above categories. These numbers will change on a site by site basis. If the planning permission does not state a category, then it is assumed that there is no specific category for any of the dwellings and therefore Part M4 (1) should be followed which will make reasonable provisions for most people, including wheelchair users to access

5 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524531/160519_Nationally_Described_Space_Standard____Final_Web_version.pdf

6 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/990369/Single_stitched_together_pdf_of_all_ADs__May21_.pdf

and enter the dwellings, and access habitable rooms and sanitary facilities on the entrance level.

3.7 NDSS provides for the standard of internal space within new dwellings and is suitable for application across all tenures. It sets out requirements for the gross internal floor area of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of homes. This 'space standard' can only be applied where there is a local plan policy based on evidenced local need (e.g., retirements homes, sheltered homes or care homes), and where the viability of development is not compromised. The space standard is part of the planning system and is not a building regulation.

3.8 New homes delivered through permitted development rights will also have to meet the minimum (gross internal floor area of 37 square metres) NDSS[7].

4 National Policy Changes

Planning Reform

4.1 In August 2020, the Government published for consultation *Planning for the Future*[8], widely referred to as the Planning White Paper. This document contained a range of proposed reforms to the planning system, including the preparation, role and content of Local Plans. At the time of compiling this topic paper, a new Planning Bill has not progressed through Parliament and therefore a detailed understanding of its implications for planning for housing is not fully known.

First Homes

4.2 The First Homes[9] scheme was launched by the Government in early June 2021. This scheme is aimed at helping local young people, key workers and veterans purchase homes at a discount of at least 30% compared to the market price.

4.3 The discount will be passed on with any future sale of the property to future first-time buyers, meaning homes will always be sold below market value. Each individual local authority can set a local connection test to determine who should be prioritised for the scheme based on the needs of their communities.

Use Classes

4.4 The Government amended the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes order 1987 (as amended)[10], with changes brought in at the beginning of September 2020. Generally, this meant that, for planning purposes, former classes A1 (retail), A2 (professional services), A3 (restaurants and cafes) and B1 (offices and light industry) are to now be treated as a single class, Class E (Commercial, business and service).

[7] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/permitted-development-homes-to-meet-space-standards
[8] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/958420/MHCLG-Planning-Consultation.pdf
[9] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes
[10] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1987/764/contents/made

This means that any buildings within those uses can freely change to any other use within that class without needing planning permission.

Permitted Development Rights

4.5 In order to enable more homes to be delivered and revitalise high streets, the Government are introducing new permitted development rights[11], from the beginning of August 2021. These rights will mean that buildings within the new Class E (commercial, business and service) will be able to change to a residential use (Class C3) without requiring formal planning permission. However, an application for Prior Approval will be required for the permitted change of use and will be considered by the Local Planning Authority against a limited list of issues including flood risk, noise, and transport. The local authority will also consider any constraints, for example, floor space (must not exceed 1,500 sqm), and excluded areas, for example, within Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

4.6 Whilst the expansion of these rights may lead to greater levels of housing delivery, the removal of these conversions from the formal planning permission system does reduce the amount of discretion local authorities have in considering whether the conversion should go ahead. This has led, in some areas, to relatively poor standards of housing being delivered in inappropriate buildings or locations.

5 Existing Local Planning Policy

5.1 The existing local policy context is set out in a number of adopted plans which include the Rochford Core Strategy (2011), Development Management Plan (2014), and Allocations Plan (2014). These adopted plans cover the period to 2025. ***Appendix 1*** sets out how the housing related policies relate to national planning policy guidance. These policy provisions need to be updated to cover the time frame to 2040 and to take account of changing circumstances and changes to national planning policy.

6 Evidence Base

6.1 The existing and emerging housing evidence base that will support the preparation of the Rochford New Local Plan, identifying which key issues need to be addressed by policy, is depicted in ***Table 2.*** This will be supplemented by key housing statistics including those published by the Government, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Valuation Office Agency (VOA) and for South Essex.

6.2 A number of these studies have been commissioned by the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA[12]) to assist in the preparation of a South Essex Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) which will in turn help to inform local plan preparation.

[11] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-freedoms-to-support-high-streets-and-fast-track-delivery-of-schools-and-hospitals-across-england-introduced-today
[12] ASELA partnership comprises the local authorities of Thurrock, Brentwood, Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend and Essex.

Table 2: Evidence Base Provisions

Current Evidence	Comments	Reference
2016 South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Turley Economics)	Study commissioned by South Essex local authorities to inform preparation of the South Essex Joint Strategic Plan.	www.rochford.gov.uk/
2017 Addendum to the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Turley Economics)	Study updated in light of revised population forecasts.	www. Rochford.gov.uk/
Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) 2017	Assessment of housing and economic land availability produced by the Council	www.rochford.gov.uk/
Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2020	Assessment of housing and economic land availability produced by Lichfields, updating the 2017 study	
Authority Monitoring Report	The Council monitors key indicators and publishes a report on a regular basis which sets out how well the District is performing against these indicators.	www.rochford.gov.uk/
Self-Build and Custom Build Register	A statutory record of the level of interest in self-build and custom-build housing opportunities. Currently has 110 entries	

Local Housing Need	The Government's standard methodology for calculating local housing need results in a need of 360 dwellings per annum. National policy is clear that this should be the starting point for local authorities considering how many homes are needed in their area.	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments

6.3 The above evidence base documents consider the housing needs of the District and wider sub-region. The housing links to economic, transport, and environmental considerations are also considered in separate topic papers on these issues.

6.4 The Rochford New Local Plan will have a key role to play in seeking to achieve certain aspects of these aims.

7 Past Delivery

7.1 As part of the Authority Monitoring Report (available online), we monitor how many new homes are built each year. Table 3 below, sets out that between April 2011 and April 2021, 2,048 net new homes have been built in the Rochford District, which is ahead of the existing phased target as set out in the adopted Core Strategy[13].

7.2 Since the latest affordable housing policy (Core Strategy Policy H4[14]) has been introduced in 2011, some 478 affordable homes have been delivered, which represents approximately 23% of all housing completions between 2011 and 2021.

Table 3: Net Housing Completions since 2011

Monitoring Period	Total Net Housing Completions	Of which Affordable Housing
2011 - 2012	93	23
2012 - 2013	97	20
2013 - 2014	248	85
2014 - 2015	169	32

[13] https://www.rochford.gov.uk/sites/default/files/planningpolicy_cs_adoptedstrategy.pdf
[14] https://www.rochford.gov.uk/sites/default/files/planningpolicy_cs_adoptedstrategy.pdf

2015 - 2016	67	33
2016 – 2018* *Covers two years	416	52
2018 - 2019	262	56
2019 - 2020	347	72
2020 - 2021	349	105
Total	**2,048**	**478**

8 Local Housing Market

Background

8.1 Since the significant housing market downturn caused by the 2008 financial crisis, the local housing market in Rochford has shown significant signs of recovery, with consumer confidence growing and improved credit conditions supporting higher levels of demand, with a return of first-time buyers. The extent of recovery has varied locationally, however, with evidence of overheating markets in London and the wider South East in particular. The latest Thames Gateway South Essex quarterly market trends report[15] acknowledges that many areas within commuting distance of London are seeing strong house price growth in response to past rapid increases in central London, which has led to people looking for property in more affordable areas.

Land Values

8.2 It is challenging to understand how land values have changed in South Essex, with a lack of a nationally available dataset of changes to benchmark land values on a comparable basis over time although evidence suggests that parts of the area have higher land values which may be driven by high demand due to the proximity to London, with strong transport links and supply constraints, such as the Green Belt. There may, therefore, be a price premium for residential land in higher value areas of South Essex, where there is high demand for housing.

Covid-19

8.3 House prices remained resilient to downward market pressure due to Covid-19 (second wave) restrictions; rising by as much as £47,112 on average across Rochford District, suggesting South Essex among other areas is becoming a more sought-after place to live. This growth has, however, stimulated issues of housing affordability.

[15] South Essex Housing Market Trends Quarterly Reports – House prices, Affordability and Market Indicators

House Purchase Deposits

8.4 The requirement for an initial deposit is becoming an increasingly significant problem particularly for the younger households and would-be first time buyers. Many of these households have increasingly turned to alternative housing products with smaller immediate financial requirements, thereby delaying their buying of a home. The private rented sector has seen considerable growth as a result.

House Prices

8.5 The limited supply of housing generally has been accentuated by increasing house prices, increasing rents and low wage levels resulting in worsening market signals on housing affordability across South Essex. Table 4 below highlights the significant 12.43 % increase in house prices within the Rochford District since February 2020.

Table 4: Overall Change in Average House Prices February 2020 – February 2021[16]

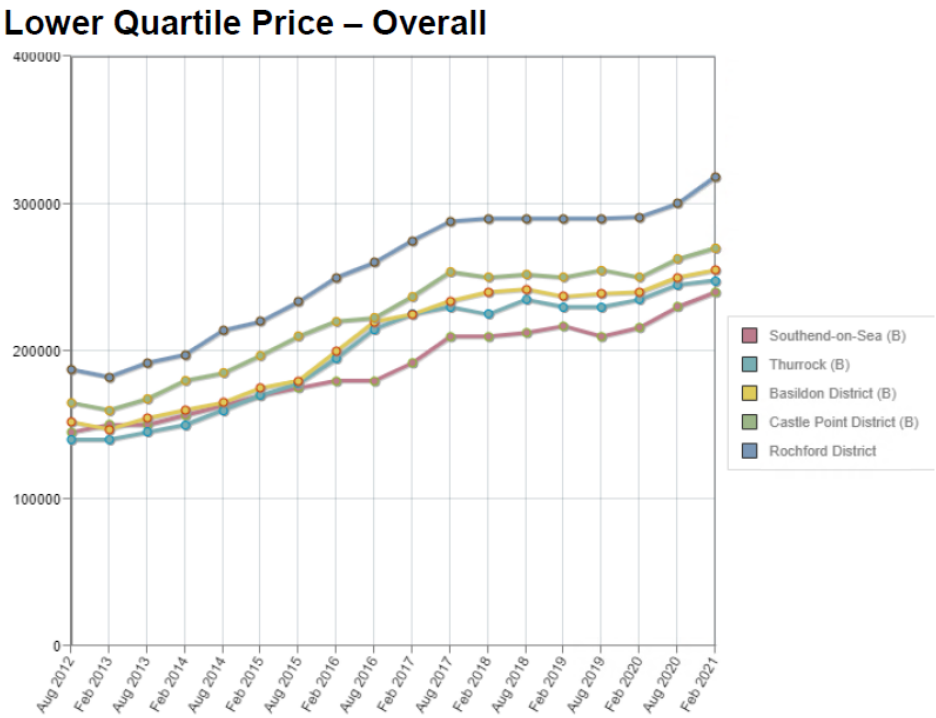
LA	London	Southend	Thurrock	Basildon	Castle Point	Rochford
Feb 2020	570,975	328,505	301,606	341,428	337,019	378,904
Feb 2021	596,054	361,724	322,277	371,917	365,179	426,016
CHANGE	25,079	33,219	20,671	30,489	28,160	47,112
%	4.39%	10.11%	6.85%	8.93%	8.36%	12.43%

8.6 In Rochford District, many more people who want to own homes simply cannot afford to do so. In February 2021, the highest overall lower quartile property price in South Essex was in Rochford at £318,500, followed by Castle Point at £270,000, Basildon at £255,000, Thurrock at £248,000, and Southend £240,000 as highlighted in Figure 1 below. Rochford had seen an annual increase in the Lower Quartile house price of approximately £27,500, suggesting that both it and South Essex generally were becoming a more sought-after place to live following the Covid-19 lock-down restrictions.

8.7 Long term increases in house prices can be indicative of an imbalance between supply and demand.

[16] Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Market Trends Quarterly Reports – House prices, Affordability and Market Indicators

Figure 1: Lower Quartile price – Overall in South Essex February 2021[17]



8.8 Table 5 below shows the lower quartile price of property by bed count in the South Essex area based on February 2021 figures. For 1 bed flats; Castle Point had the highest prices, for 2 bed flats it was Thurrock, for 2, 3 and 4 bed houses it was Rochford.

Table 5: Lower Quartile price of Property by Bed Count (February 2021)[18]

	Southend	Thurrock	Basildon	Castle Point	Rochford
1 bed Prices (Flat)	140,000	143,375	140,000	150,000	141,250
2 bed Prices (Flat)	182,000	195,000	180,250	191,875	193,500
2 bed Prices (House)	255,000	260,000	251,000	247,000	285,000
3 bed Prices (House)	298,000	290,000	275,000	288,000	325,000
4 bed Prices (House)	400,000	386,250	410,000	385,000	425,000

8.9 Over the last ten years, all South Essex Local Authorities experienced significant levels of growth with Rochford seeing the highest growth at £125K. Table 6 below sets out overall house price by local authority area over a 10-year period. Figure 2 below shows that larger properties have seen more growth especially in the latter part of 2020 following the extension to Stamp Duty Tax holiday and Help to Buy, spurred on by people looking for larger property with more space out of London.

17 Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Market Trends Quarterly Reports – House prices, Affordability and Market Indicators
18 Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Market Trends Quarterly Reports – House prices, Affordability and Market Indicators

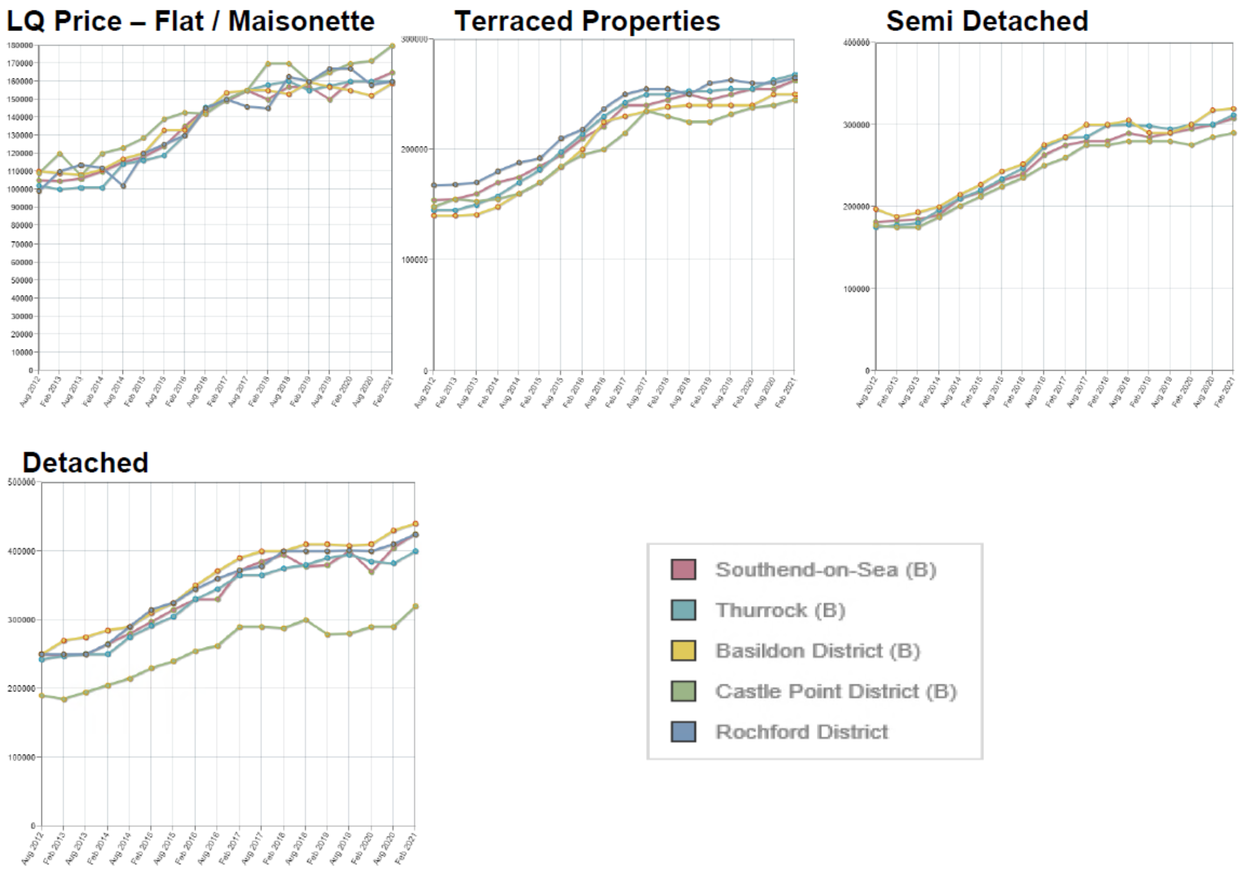
Table 6: Overall House price by Local Authority Area over a 10-year Period[19]

	Southend-on-Sea (UA)	Thurrock (UA)	Basildon (Borough)	Castle Point (Borough)	Rochford (District)
	Lower Quartile	Lower Quartile	Lower Quartile	Lower Quartile	Lower Quartile
Aug 2012	145,000	140,000	152,000	165,000	187,500
Feb 2013	150,000	140,000	147,000	160,000	182,500
Aug 2013	150,000	145,000	154,500	167,500	192,000
Feb 2014	156,500	150,000	159,995	180,000	197,500
Aug 2014	163,000	160,000	165,000	185,000	214,000
Feb 2015	170,000	170,000	174,995	197,000	220,000
Aug 2015	175,000	178,000	180,000	210,000	233,500
Feb 2016	180,000	195,000	200,000	220,250	250,000
Aug 2016	180,000	215,000	220,000	222,500	260,000
Feb 2017	192,000	225,000	225,000	237,000	275,000
Aug 2017	210,000	230,000	234,000	253,700	287,996
Feb 2018	210,000	225,000	240,000	250,000	290,000
Aug 2018	212,500	235,000	241,995	252,000	290,000
Feb 2019	217,000	230,000	237,000	250,000	290,000
Aug 2019	210,000	230,000	239,000	255,000	290,000
Feb 2020	216,000	235,000	240,000	250,000	291,000
Aug 2020	230,000	245,000	250,000	262,500	300,000
Feb 2021	240,000	248,000	255,000	270,000	318,500
Change Feb 20 Feb 21	24,000	13,000	15,000	20,000	27,500
Change Feb 2013 Feb 2021	90,000	108,000	108,000	110,000	136,000

Source: Hometrack Housing Intelligence System

[19] Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Market Trends Quarterly Reports – House prices, Affordability and Market Indicators

Figure 2: South Essex House Price Growth by Property Type[20]



Renting

8.10 Table 7 and Figure 3 below show the weekly cost of renting or purchasing a one bed-room property across a range of quartiles based on February 2021 figures. The key trends are:

- The weekly cost of private renting (one bed property) whilst stabilizing following a sharp increase in 2017-18, began to edge up in 2020. Since February 2020, private rents increased in all areas apart from Castle Point and Rochford where they remained stable.

- The gap between private renting and the latest Local Housing Allowance (LHA) (Housing Benefit) still remains significant in all South Essex Local Authorities ranging between £12 and £34 per week. The gap has increased in Basildon and Thurrock but remained broadly stable elsewhere. As more people are affected by the impact of the Covid-19 third national lockdown, there is a likelihood that affordability may worsen over the next few months (at the time of compiling this Topic Paper).

[20] Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Market Trends Quarterly Reports – House prices, Affordability and Market Indicators

- The LHA continues to be sufficient to cover the cost of Intermediate Rent (at 80% market rent) in the South Essex local authority areas.

8.11 Longer term changes in rental levels are also indicative of a potential imbalance between the demand for and supply of housing. There has been a sizable growth in the private rental sector in the national housing market, such that it has become the dominant tenure for younger people. The Census shows that there has also been a similar shift in tenure trends in South Essex, with the number of households renting from a landlord or letting agency in the area increasing by 95% between 2001 and 2011. It is cheaper to rent privately than buy an average resale property or buying a new build property in the Rochford District[21]

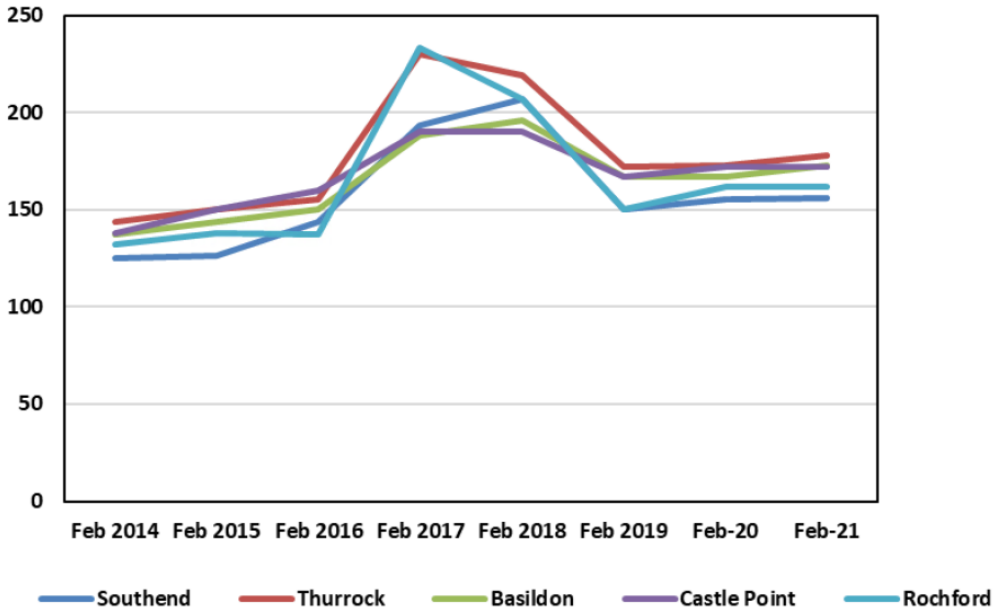
Table 7: Weekly Cost for 1 Bed Property for rent and Purchasing Across a Range of Quartiles[22]

February 2021	Southend	Thurrock	Basildon	Castle Point	Rochford
Renting (LA)	78	76	76	83	NA
Renting (HA)	95	101	95	92	92
Renting - 80%	125	142	138	138	129
Renting (private)	156	178	173	172	162
February 2020 February 2019 February 2018 February 2017 February 2016	155 150 207 193 144	173 172 219 230 155	167 167 196 188 150	172 167 190 190 155	162 150 207 233 137
LHA (as of 1/04/20)	138	161	161	138	138
Gap LHA & renting	**-18**	**-17**	**-12**	**-34**	**-24**
Buying LQ resale	148	146	149	156	144
Buying av resale	167	161	171	171	159
Buying LQ new build	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Buying av new build	227	201	217	NA	NA

[21] Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Market Trends Quarterly Reports – House prices, Affordability and Market Indicators

[22] Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Market Trends Quarterly Reports – House prices, Affordability and Market Indicators

[23] Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Market Trends Quarterly Reports – House prices, Affordability and Market Indicators



9 Affordable Housing

9.1 The data in Section 8 of this paper illustrates that there has been considerable price growth in South Essex over recent years, and the impact of these increases on the affordability of homes in the area can be estimated by taking account of local earnings.

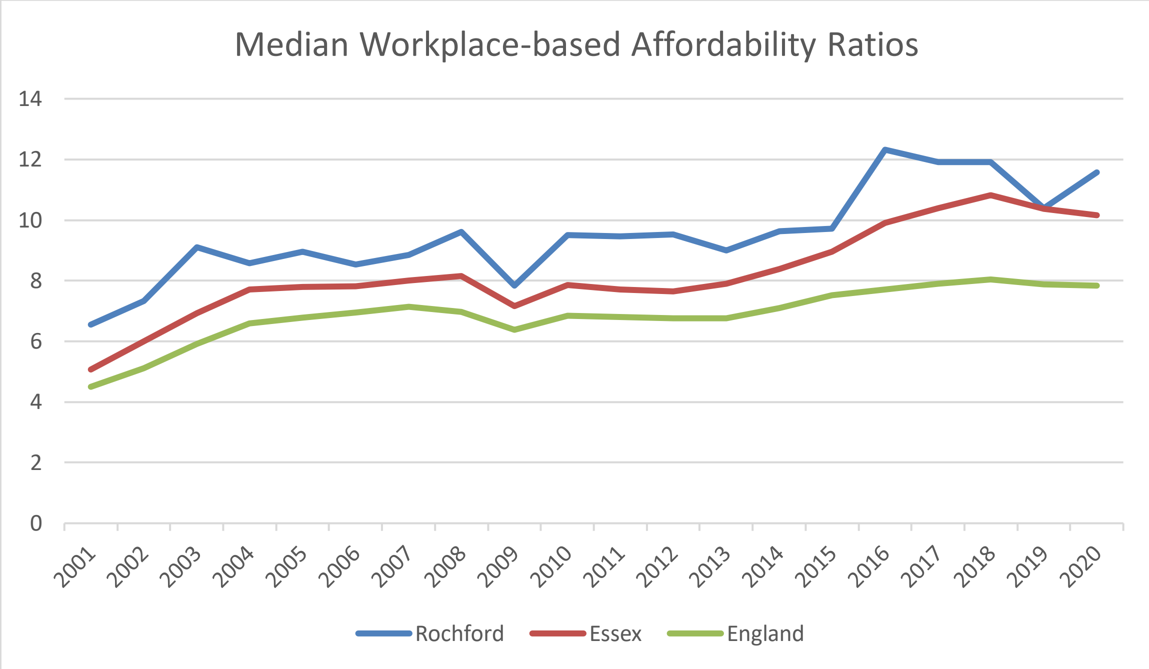
9.2 The NPPF requires local authorities to assess the number of affordable homes that are evidenced as being required. Affordable housing is defined as:

"*housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following affordable housing for rent, starter homes. Discounted market sales housing, other affordable routes to home ownership*[24]*"*

9.3 The Office of National Statistics (ONS) publishes data showing the ratio between workplace house prices and earnings. Figure 4 below illustrates the median workplace base affordability ratios.

[24] NPPF 2019

Figure 4: Median Workplace-based Affordability Ratios[25]

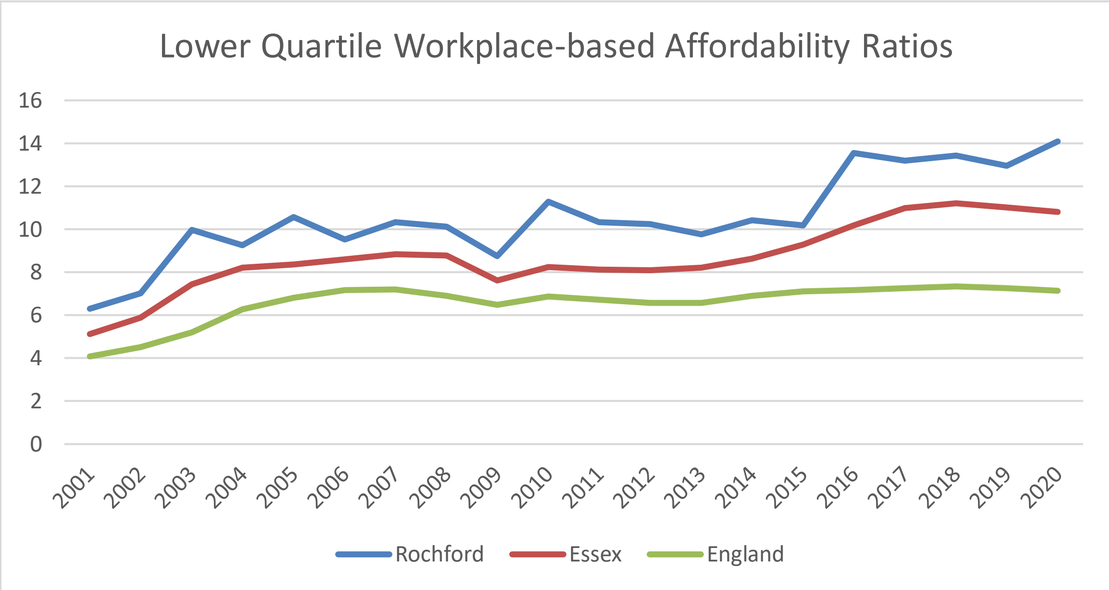


9.4 Both Rochford and Essex as a whole have seen a long-term worsening in affordability, significantly above the national trend. In 2001 the affordability ratio in Rochford was above that of the Essex County as a whole, and national averages, and apart from 2009 (at the time of an economic recession) and in 2018 has continued to climb whilst the Essex average has continued to slightly decline and the England average has plateaued for the year 2020. Figure 4 above suggests that people working in Essex generally and more so in the Rochford District are required to commit a greater amount of their income to mortgages than most other areas.

9.5 This situation is accentuated when affordability of housing at the lower, more accessible end of the market is considered. This is illustrated in Figure 5 below.

[25] ONS, 2021

Figure 5: Lower Quartile Workplace-based Affordability Ratios[26]



9.6 The worsening of housing affordability in Essex generally, and more so in the Rochford District in recent years is reflected in the ratio of lower quartile earnings to lower quartile house prices which for Rochford District is above the national and neighbouring authority areas as depicted in Table 8 below.

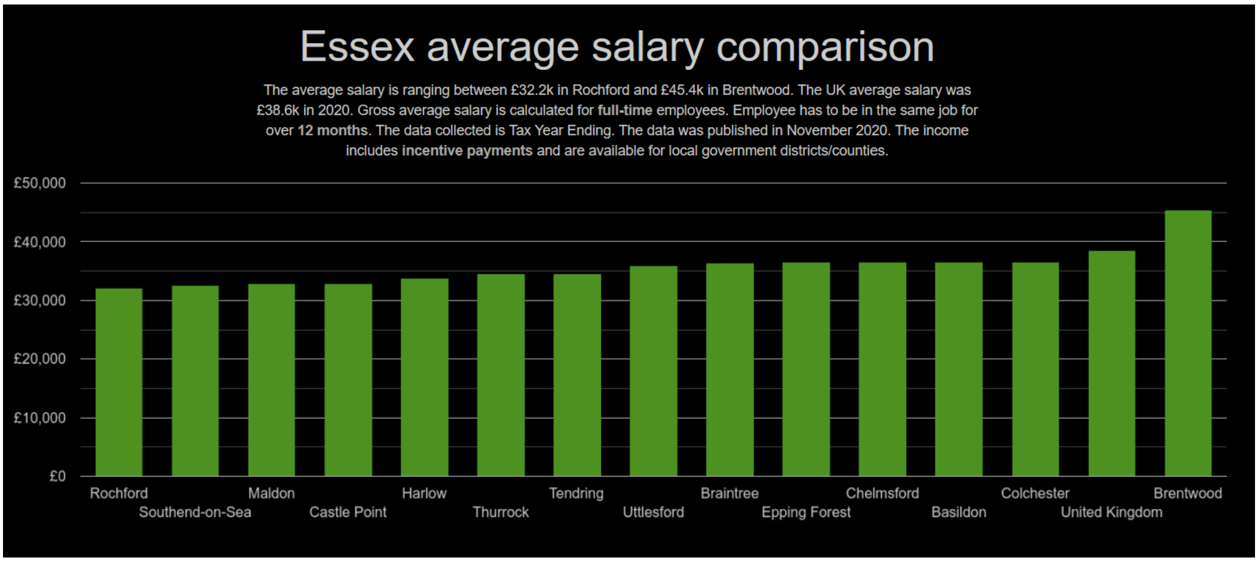
Table 8: Relationship Between Resident Earnings and House Prices 2020[27]

	Lower Quartile house price 2020	Lower Quartile Earnings 2020	Ratio
England	£164,000	£22,938	7.15
Basildon	£243,500	£22,916	10.63
Castle Point	£248,000	£19,845	12.50
Rochford	**£285,000**	**£20,229**	**14.09**
Southend-on-Sea	£225,000	£19,885	11.32
Thurrock	£239,950	£23,258	10.32

[26] ONS, 2021
[27] ONS, 2021

	Median house price 2020	Median Earnings 2020	Ratio
England	£249,000	£31,777	7.84
Basildon	£305,000	£31,947	9.55
Castle Point	£302,500	£27,083	11.17
Rochford	**£332,500**	**£28,747**	**11.57**
Southend-on-Sea	£293,500	£27,641	10.62
Thurrock	£290,000	£30,801	9.42

Figure 6: Income Profile – Average Salaries in Essex in November 2020[28]



Supply of Affordable Housing

9.7 Affordable or social rent vacancies continue to be limited compared with need in the Rochford District. As of 31 March 2021, there were 988 households on the housing register in the Rochford District. Table 9 below details the number of households rehoused year on year into affordable rented housing, following a nomination from the Housing Register i.e., Housing Association accommodation, which the Council receives nomination rights to.

[28] www.plumplot.co.uk

9.8 Figure 7 below, details the number of housing register applicants waiting for accommodation. The average waiting time for all types of bedroom size has increased over the last 12 months, except for Sheltered Accommodation. This information can be viewed on the Rochford District Council website, which is updated every 6 months.

9.9 Table 10 further below, details the increase in demand for affordable housing by Bedroom size for those households on the housing register in the Rochford District.

Table 9: Re-housed Households year on year in the Rochford District[29]

Q4 (Jan – March)	1 bed property	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	Total
2016/2017	20	8	1	1	**30**
2017/2018	36 (15 new builds)	10 (4 new builds)	9 (6 new builds)	0	**55**
2018/2019	11 (7 new builds)	8 (1 new build)	1	0	**20**
2019/2020	14 (8 new builds) 12 sheltered	14 (8 new builds)	2 (1 new build)	0	**42**
2020/2021	20 25 sheltered	31 (6 new builds)	12 (9 new builds)	3 (all new build	**91**

Figure 7: Housing Register Applicants as of 1st April 2021[30]

Housing allocations- our housing register

710 new applications in 2020-21. An average of 14 every week.

988 number of households on the housing register, as at the 1st April 2021.

- A 22% increase from last year.
- This is despite rehousing 210 applicants since April 2020.

239 number of households in Band A

- A 58% increase from last year (138)

[29] Rochford District Council, March 2021
[30] Rochford District Council, April 2021

Table 10: Housing Register Need by Bedroom Size[31]

Bed size	19/20	20/21	% increase
1	233	314	25%
2	279	369	26%
3	157	196	21%
4	35	50	30%
Sheltered	76	59	-28%

Impact of Affordability and Supply

9.10 For Rochford District, the existing Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)[32] updated in 2017, highlights that the Council needs to enable 238 affordable homes a year through the planning process.

9.11 In the monitoring period (2020 – 2021), 85 affordable rented homes (less than 37% of the target) were offered to housing register applicants. Whilst there are a number of new developments in progress, the delivery of affordable housing from these sites will be delivered over the next 4 years and therefore unlikely to keep pace with demand.

9.12 In total there are approximately 2,600 affordable homes in the District and the Council normally have 75% nomination rights to these, meaning there are 1,950 homes the Council has nominated access to. A third of these homes are sheltered accommodation homes, which leaves 1,300 general needs homes available for those residents on the housing register.

9.13 Over the last 5 years the Council has averaged 80 general needs lettings per year (not including new builds or sheltered accommodation). This means that only 1 in every 9 households on the housing register are ever likely to be rehoused.

Homelessness

9.14 National planning guidance suggests that indicators on overcrowding, concealed and shared households, homelessness and the numbers in temporary accommodation should be analysed, given that they can be indicative of an unmet need for housing. The longer term increase in the number of such households could signal a need to consider increasing planned housing numbers.

9.15 Whilst homelessness is not visibly (rough sleeping / street homelessness) significant within the District, there are many different types of homelessness, for example, households in temporary accommodation, hostels, and shelters, as well as those households, normally single households who are sofa surfing, staying with friends or

[31] Rochford District Council, April 2021

[32]Rochford District Council South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016 updated in 2017, https://www.rochford.gov.uk/south-essex-strategic-housing-market-assessment-addendum-2017

relatives and of which are difficult to quantify (count) and may not consider themselves as being homeless.

9.16 Table 11 below illustrates the number of homeless or potentially homeless households who have sought housing advice and accommodation from Rochford District Council over a 3 month period (January – March 2021), as well as the total number of households on the Council's Housing Register waiting for rehousing over the last monitoring year 2020-21.

Table 11: Housing Need 2020-2021 in the Rochford District[33]

2020-21	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of housing advice incl. housing register	236	270	238
Number of triage cases	139	196	168
Total number of approaches / contacts	**375**	**466**	**406**
Total No of households living in temporary accommodation	**79**	**83**	**87**
No of households in B&B at end of month	3	3	5
No of households in nightly paid accommodation	15	13	10
No of households with registered providers /RDC/Refuge/Richmond Fellowship/Nacro	61	67	72
Total numbers on housing register	**928**	**948**	**988**
Band A	229	228	239
Band B	699	720	749
Total number of households rehoused from the housing register	**4**	**10**	**11**
rehoused into general needs housing	1	7	4
rehoused into sheltered housing	3	3	7
Housing Need:			
1 Bed	283	293	314
2 Bed	347	358	369
3 Bed	186	189	196
4 Bed	47	47	50
Sheltered	65	61	59

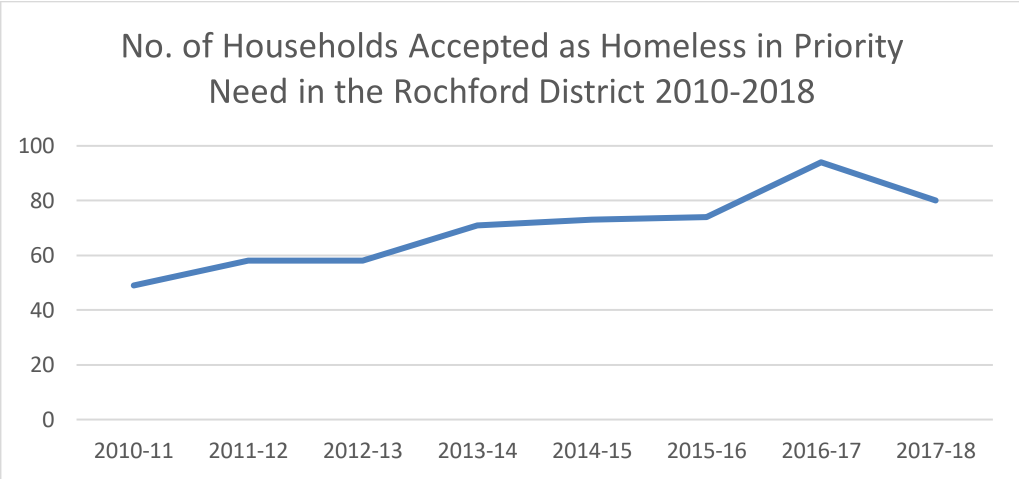
9.17 Data published by the Government (January, 2019[34]) also shows the number of households who have been accepted as homeless and classified in priority need on an annual basis since 2010 in the Rochford District as shown in Figure 8 below. This data shows that an average of around 70 households per year have been classified as homeless in this way.

9.18 Figure 8 shows that there has been a modest increase (63%) in priority need acceptances since 2010 in the Rochford District. Although the acceptances appear to begin to decline in the year 2017 -18, there is very likely to be a future increase in

[33] Rochford District Council, 2021
[34] Local Authority Homelessness Statistics (England) – House of Commons Library January 2019

households finding it more difficult to afford both private renting and purchasing of properties in the Rochford District and neighbouring local authority areas. The number of homeless households deemed to be in a priority need is likely to increase in line with the increase in demand for and decrease in supply of financially affordable properties available on the housing market.

Figure 8: Households Accepted as Homeless and in Priority Need 2010-2018



9.19 More recent data[35] is set out below where households were accepted as homeless and in priority need:

2018 - 2019, 427 households in priority need

2019 – 2020, 317 households in priority need

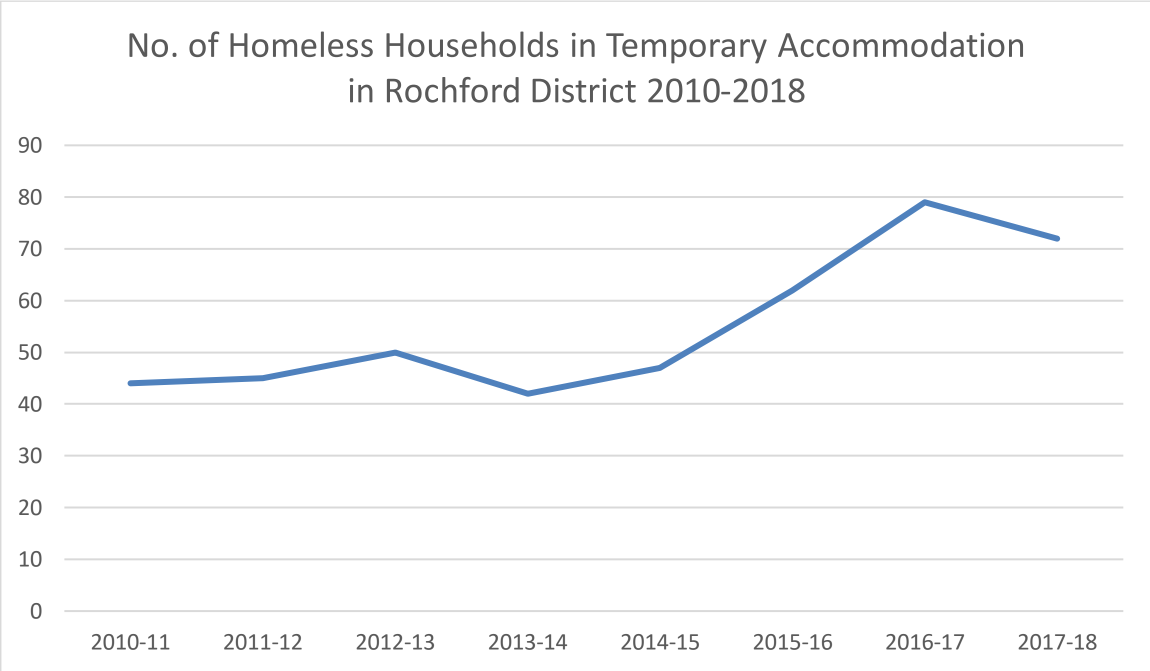
2020 – 2021, 224 households in priority need

9.20 Rochford District Council has seen a growth (64%) in the number of households placed in temporary accommodation under its homelessness duties since 2010 as illustrated in Figure 9 below. The shortage of affordable accommodation in the private or social sector, and many landlords being unwilling to let housing to those whose income is wholly or partially dependent upon welfare benefits has meant that the Council have experienced difficulty moving households on from temporary accommodation. This can prevent temporary accommodation supply from being freed up for newly arising households and leads to increased temporary accommodation usage and use of public funds to spend on bed and breakfast accommodation.

9.21 Figure 9 below shows the increase in the use of temporary accommodation from 2010 to 2018[36] in the Rochford District.

[35] Rochford District Council Housing Services, June 2021
[36] Homelessness summary local authority level tables https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness#flows-tables

Figure 9: Number of Households in Temporary Accommodation 2010 - 2018



10 Assessing Future Housing Need

Objectively Assessed Needs

10.1 The above analysis indicated that for Rochford District and the wider sub-region, there are significant housing affordability issues reflecting the national imbalance between supply and demand.

10.2 To address these issues and achieve a step change in housing delivery, the Government through the revised National Planning policy Framework (2019) has introduced a new approach to determining local housing need. This introduces a consistent standard methodology which calculates future housing needs having regard to demographic data published by the Office for National Statistics and incorporates adjustments to take account of market signals, including the affordability of local housing, having regard to house prices and earnings of those working in the local area.

10.3 This approach identifies the 'objectively' assessed housing needs in an area. In other words, the assessment does not take into account the capacity of an area to provide new housing given constraints such as Green Belt or flood risk. The NPPF provides that planning policy should, as a minimum, seek to provide for the objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any need that cannot be met within neighbouring areas as far as is consistent to do so when considering any legitimate and evidenced constraints to housing development in the area, such as environmental considerations and infrastructure capacity, which cannot be mitigated.

Objectively Assessed Housing Need

10.4 Table 12 below sets out the objectively assessed housing need as identified by the new Government standard methodology for the South Essex sub-region.

Table 12: South Essex Future Annual Housing Need – Government Local Housing Need Methodology (Annual Provision)

Housing Area	Local Housing Need (Annual)
Basildon	1,001
Brentwood	453
Castle Point	354
Rochford	**360**
Southend	1,181
Thurrock	1,147
Total: South Essex	4,496

Source: *Local Housing Need (2020)*

10.5 The identified objectively assessed housing need for Rochford District broadly correlates to the findings of the South Essex Housing Needs Assessment (SHMA) commissioned by the South Essex local planning authorities in 2016 (amended in 2017)[37], which identifies an annual objectively assessed need of between 331 and 361 dwellings per year, which is within the standard methodology range. The SHMA takes into account the findings of the South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA)[38] in terms of likely job creation in the sub-region.

10.6 Over the last 10 years, Rochford's historic rate of delivery is 227 dwellings per annum the standardised methodology. As a result, meeting local housing need would require a significant uplift in annual housing completions rates of around +60%.

Objectively Assessed Need and Land Availability

10.7 Available and suitable land for housing in Rochford is scare, with the majority of open land being designated as Metropolitan Green Belt, extending from London across the South Essex sub-region. Significant parts of the District are also protected for their ecological value, landscape value or because they are at risk of flooding. The emerging Annual Monitoring Report for 2020-2021's existing land supply trajectory suggests there is a potential supply of land available for around 2,248 homes over the next 5 years (c.450 per year), and 3,227 over the next 10 years (c.323 per year).

[37] https://www.rochford.gov.uk/sites/default/files/AddendumtotheSouthEssexSHMA.pdf
[38] https://www.rochford.gov.uk/sites/default/files/SouthEssexEDNAFinalReport20171211.pdf

Different Types of Housing Need

10.8 The Governments standard method for assessing housing need does not breakdown the overall figure into different types of housing. National planning policy guidance requires local planning authorities to have regard to the need for particular sizes, types, and tenures of homes as well as the housing needs of particular groups in preparing their local plans.

10.9 The South Essex SHMA 2016 and its Addendum 2017 provide an assessment of the need for different types, tenures, and size of housing to 2037. Whilst an update to the SHMA is planned to account for changes in demography and policy, the assessment of need contained within the SHMA and SHMA addendum are considered to remain reliable for drawing general conclusions around the extent of need for different types of housing over the next 15 years.

Housing for Older People

10.10 The South Essex SHMA estimates an increase of 47,188 people over the age of 75 to 2037, whilst Poppi[39] data (using ONS data) estimate that by 2035 there will be 4,800 persons aged 65 plus in the Rochford District of which 5.05% will be 85 plus years.

10.11 The projected changes suggest that the growth in the older population could generate an annual need for nearly 100 specialist self-contained older person accommodation units annually up to 2037. This is illustrated in Table 13 below.

Table 13: South Essex Need for Self-Contained Elderly Person Housing 2017-2037

	Sheltered Housing	Enhanced Sheltered Housing	Extra Care Units	Annual Need	Total Need 2017-2037
Castle Point	886	142	177	60	1,205
Rochford	**850**	**136**	**170**	**58**	**1,156**
Southend-on-Sea	1,424	228	285	97	1,937
Southend Housing Market Area (including Rochford & Castle Point)	3,160	506	632	215	4,298
Total: South Essex	6,178	986	1,236	427	8,535

[39] https://data.essex.gov.uk/dataset/20k78/percentage-of-total-population-aged-65-and-over

Source: South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2017

10.12 The older private household population is included in the objectively assessed need. However, where a Council sought to provide for the need for extra care housing being met through residential institutions (C2) this would only provide a proportion towards identified Objectively Assessed Need.

10.13 The SHMA modelling produced assumes a growth in the number of people living in communal establishments, which is entirely attributable to growth in the number of older people aged 75 and over. This is estimated to be some 220 persons in Rochford District since from 2017 to 2037 as indicated in Table 14 below.

Table 14: South Essex Need for Communal Elderly Persons Accommodation 2017-2037

	Total Change in Communal Population 2017-2037	Annual Requirement for Bed Spaces
Castle Point	500	25
Rochford	**220**	**11**
Southend-on-Sea	900	45
Total South Essex	2,974	149

Source: South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment Addendum 2017

10.14 It will be important that the Rochford New Local Plan makes adequate provision to meet the need of a growing elderly population to help older people live independently for longer and provide attractive alternatives for people to downsize if they so wish.

<u>Housing for people with Disabilities</u>

10.15 The provision of appropriate housing for people with disabilities, including specialist and supported housing, is crucial in ensuring that they live safe and independent lives.

10.16 The South Essex SHMA estimates needs and uses the Census (2011) data as a baseline; however, it is noted within the planning guidance that not all people counted under this dataset will require adaptations to their home. Those residents aged 75 and over have been excluded from this analysis given that their needs have been identifies in the earlier analysis for elderly persons (see tables 13 and 14 above). The analysis indicates that over 1,000 residents in the Rochford District could require support needs over the plan period.

Table 15: Modelled Growth in Private Household Residents with Support Needs 2014 – 2037

	Change in Residents with Support Needs			Total Change 2014-2037
	15 and under	16 to 59/64	60/65-74	
Castle Point	72	154	853	1,078
Rochford	**86**	**249**	**1,086**	**1,421**
Southend	215	1,062	3,098	4,375
Southend Housing Market Area (including Rochford & Castle Point)	373	1,465	5,037	0
Total South Essex*	806	4,043	10,908	15,754

Source: South Essex Housing Market Assessment 2017

**The SHMA modelling did not include Brentwood*

Privately Rented

10.17 Government data shows that an estimated 9.79%[40] of dwellings in Rochford District in 2019 were being privately rented. Due to affordability issues many younger households have increasingly turned to the private rented sector and as a consequence this sector has witnessed considerable growth, however the ending of a private rented tenancy is also a significant cause of homelessness.

10.18 In planning for future housing needs it will be important to ensure that the privately rented sector is well represented.

Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding

10.19 Self-build involves a person directly organising the design and construction of their home, while custom build is where a person works with a specialist developer to deliver their own home. 'Laying the Foundations: a Housing Strategy for England'[41] provides useful national context in relation to both self-build and custom build. The strategy states that, in 2011, over 100,000 UK residents were looking for building plots

[40] ONS, 2021 – Subnational estimates of dwellings by tenure, England
[41] Laying the Foundations: a Housing Strategy for England 2011

across the country, with around one in ten new homes custom built. This is considerably lower than in many other European countries, and recent figures suggest that – while there is demand – there are relatively few self-build homes in the UK, with just 8,235 delivered in 2013 – a fall of 22% since 2010.

10.20 As part of the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act from 1 April 2016 local authorities have been required to establish local registers of custom builders wishing to acquire suitable land to build their own home. National planning policy guidance provides that local authorities should have regard to this local register when considering future needs. Currently the Rochford District Custom and Self build register has 83 entries as of April 2021.

Student Housing

10.21 Whilst there are no colleges or universities operating within the Rochford District, a university and college complex does operate within the neighbouring Southend town centre. The Southend Central Area Action Plan contains policy provisions to expand the university and college complex. As part of these provisions, it will be important to ensure that adequate quality student accommodation provision is supported to facilitate the growth of education establishments in neighbouring local authority areas.

Affordable Housing

10.22 The South Essex SHMA finds that whilst in absolute terms South Essex is an area of comparatively low house prices when compared with many neighbouring areas it is apparent that it demonstrates symptoms of worsening market signals and worsening affordability as indicated in the data above (see Figures 4 and 5).

10.23 The SHMA assessment for affordable housing follows National planning policy guidance based on current and projected future needs and taking account of supply. This looks at existing need for affordable housing, adds newly arising need, subtracts new affordable housing becoming available through relets and committed supply to produce an annual affordable housing requirement.

10.24 This indicates that there is a significant level of unmet and likely future need for affordable housing across South Essex and suggests a short-term need for 2,239 affordable homes annually to clear the backlog over five years reducing to 2,128 affordable homes per annum thereafter. For the Rochford District this equates to 238 affordable dwellings per year, some 60% of the median total range for objectively assessed housing needs (see Table 12 above).

10.25 The lack of affordable housing is becoming a major issue in the Rochford District and can have significant implications for achieving economic growth and prosperity. It could also have potential detrimental consequences in terms of leading to increased multi-occupation, overcrowding and homelessness.

10.26 Whilst this need is significant national planning policy guidance makes clear that this need should be considered in the context of its likely delivery as a proportion of mixed market and affordable housing developments. This can be established through local plan policies setting out a requirement for affordable housing as a part of development schemes. Due to viability issues, the NPPF (par.63) does not permit local planning authorities to seek affordable housing as part of small development schemes.

10.27 Current planning policy for affordable housing provision is contained in the Rochford Core Strategy[42] (Policy H4 -Affordable Housing) which seeks to achieve a proportion of affordable housing on new development sites. On developments of 15 or more units 35% of the housing proposed is required to be affordable. This policy approach has delivered around 478 affordable homes between its adoption in 2011 and 2021, which equates to some 20% of the total net dwellings completed in the District over the same period, significantly below the projected requirement.

10.28 Given the need for affordable housing identified through the SHMA assessment, it may be important to review current affordable housing policy as part of the preparation of the Rochford New Local Plan to seek to achieve a greater delivery of affordable housing. However, in doing this any potential increase in the percentage requirement for affordable housing on large development sites will need to be balanced against that the site remains financially viable as a development scheme.

10.29 There are currently disparities across South Essex in the way each local planning authority applies its affordable housing policy to large development schemes. In Southend a 40% requirement is applied whilst in other authorities there is a requirement for 25% of development schemes to comprise affordable housing, with the exception of Canvey Island where a 15% requirement is applied.

10.30 Whilst the SHMA highlights the significant need for affordable housing it recommends that the outputs of this calculation are used for guidance, particularly given the assumptions made when estimating the size of affordable housing needed in future. In order to maintain an up-to-date understanding of current needs in particular, the SHMA recommends that the South Essex Councils continue to monitor the number of bedrooms required by households in priority need on respective Housing Registers and identify trends relating to affordable housing need and supply, resulting from welfare reforms, for example. These factors should be taken into account on an ongoing basis. This highlights the need for effective monitoring procedures as part of the preparation of the Rochford New Local Plan.

Housing Size, Tenure and Mix

10.31 Although not forming part of national planning policy guidance, in planning for future housing needs it is also important to understand the demand for certain sizes, tenure and mix of housing.

10.32 The 2017 SHMA shows the likely continued demand for housing of all sizes, with the greatest demand for housing generated by households who would typically require three bedrooms. Some 60% of households in South Essex are expected to require housing with at least three bedrooms, although local variation is evident and a demand for additional smaller housing is also expected to be generated over the period, particularly in the case of affordable housing.

[42] Rochford District Council- Local Development Framework Core Strategy, 2011

Table 16: Proportion of Housing Requiring Different House Sizes 2017-2037 – All Housing

Local Planning Authority	Proportion of households forming requiring			
	1 bed	**2 bed**	**3+ beds**	**4+ beds**
Basildon	14%	26%	40%	20%
Castle Point	7%	25%	42%	27%
Rochford	**7%**	**24%**	**42%**	**27%**
Southend-on-Sea	18%	30%	35%	17%
Thurrock	13%	26%	48%	13%
South Essex*	14%	27%	42%	18%

Source: South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2017

**Excludes Brentwood*

Table 17: Proportion of Housing Requiring Different House Sizes 2017-2037 – Affordable Housing

Local Planning Authority	Proportion of households forming requiring			
	1 bed	2 bed	3+ beds	4+ beds
Basildon	8%	39%	47%	6%
Castle Point	46%	24%	28%	3%
Rochford	**52%**	**27%**	**19%**	**21%**
Southend-on-Sea	45%	26%	25%	4%
Thurrock	44%	22%	36%	-1%
South Essex*	39%	27%	31%	3%

Source: South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2017

**Excludes Brentwood*

10.33 It is important to recognise that the greatest need for affordable housing rests with those that requires assistance under homeless duties and those on the housing register in statutory reasonable preference categories. The bedroom needs of these groups should also be considered as policy is developed.

Overcrowded, Concealed and Homeless Households

10.34 National planning guidance suggests that indicators on overcrowding, concealed and shared households, homelessness and the numbers in temporary accommodation should be analysed, given that they can be indicative of an unmet need for housing. The longer term increase in the number of such households could signal a need to consider increasing planned housing numbers.

10.35 The 2011 Census shows the number of occupants and the number of bedrooms in dwellings, allowing an understanding of overcrowding. The following table summarises the proportion of households who are overcrowded with at least one fewer bedroom than required based on the bedroom standard, as a proportion of all households.

Table 18: Proportion of Households Overcrowded (bedrooms) 2011

	Total overcrowded households (bedrooms)	Proportion of households overcrowded
England	1,024,473	4.6%
Castle Point	1,005	2.8%
Basildon	2,719	3.7
Rochford	**863**	**2.6%**
Southend-on-Sea	3,545	4.7%
Thurrock	3,378	5.4%

Source: Census 2011

10.36 A further indicator is the proportion of families who are concealed. 1,475 additional concealed families were recorded in South Essex at the 2011 Census relative to 2001, with Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Basildon seeing the greatest increases compared to neighbouring authorities and England.

10.37 National planning policy guidance suggests that the number of homeless households and those in temporary accommodation should be established, given that this demonstrates unmet need for housing in an area. Data published by the Government also shows the number of households who have been accepted as homeless and classifies in priority need on an annual basis, and this shows that an average of around 650 households have been classifies as homeless this way across South

Essex annually since 2004. Basildon has seen an increase in the number of priority homeless households with both Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock experiencing an overall fall since 2004.

10.38 Rochford District Council has seen a continued upwards growth in the number of households placed in temporary accommodation under its homelessness duties. The shortage of affordable accommodation in the private or social sector, and many landlords being unwilling to let housing to those whose income is wholly or partially dependent upon welfare benefits has meant that the council have experienced difficulty moving households on from temporary accommodation. This prevents temporary accommodation supply from being freed up for newly arising homeless households and leads to increased temporary accommodation usage and use of public funds to spend on bed and breakfast accommodation.

Need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation

10.39 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople have unique accommodation needs that local plans are required to address. A separate national policy framework, the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), is in place setting requirements relating to planning for sufficient pitches and plots.

10.40 With respect to plan-making, the PPTS requires plans to:

a. identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets
b. identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations for growth, for years 6 to 10 of the plan and, where possible, for years 11-15 of the plan
c. consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites, particularly if a local planning authority has special or strict planning constraints across its area (local planning authorities have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries)
d. relate the number of pitches or plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density
e. protect local amenity and environment

10.41 The South Essex Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Assessment (SEGTAA) 2021 sets out, by year, the need for additional pitches and plots to meet local gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople accommodation needs. This need is split into categories based on whether the household meets the definition of a 'traveller' set out in the PPTS. This definition is:

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

10.42 Table 19 below summarises the need for new pitches for Gypsies and Travellers in Rochford, defined by whether the household meets the above definition and by year.

Table 19: Rochford Need for Pitches for Gypsy and Traveller Households

Years	0-5 2016-21	6-10 2021-26	11-15 2026-31	16-20 2031-36	21-22 2036-38	Total
Meet planning definition	14	1	1	1	1	**18**
Unknown	2	0	1	0	0	**3 (25% = 1)**
Do not meet planning definition	9	0	1	1	0	**11**

10.43 The SEGTAA identifies no need for Travelling Showpeople plots in Rochford.

10.44 The Council's current policy approach to meeting the need for pitches is Policy GT1, which allocated a site for up to 18 pitches at Michelin Farm. It is recognised that this site has yet to be delivered and the current landowner has indicated that they do not consider the site available for the allocated use.

10.45 There are also a considerable number of unauthorised sites across the District which typically contain a small number of pitches. These unauthorised sites are the main generator of the District's need for additional permanent pitches as they indicate demand but can not be considered permanent supply given, they do not have planning permission.

10.46 In addition to permanent accommodation needs, Gypsy, Traveller and travelling Showpeople households also have temporary and transit accommodation requirements, i.e., locations where they are lawfully able to stop for short periods while travelling. There are a number of different types of temporary and transit accommodation options, including:

- Transit sites - full facilities where Travellers can live temporarily (usually for up to a maximum of three months) – for example, to work locally, for holidays or to visit family and friends.
- Emergency stopping places - more limited facilities.
- Temporary sites and stopping places - only temporary facilities to cater for an event.
- Negotiated stopping places - agreements which allow caravans to be sited on suitable specific pieces of ground for an agreed and limited period of time.

10.47 The previous Essex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (EGTAA) identified a potential need for transit sites in Essex to address temporary accommodation needs of around 45 pitches at peak in a year. A Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site Assessment is now under preparation across Essex which may identify specific locations in the county where one or more transit sites could be located.

11 Issues the Rochford New Local Plan Needs to Address

11.1 The new Local Plan faces a significant challenge in seeking to meet objectively assessed housing needs as identified in the Government standard methodology given the limited land resources in the District. These challenges extend to meeting the specific needs of different groups as indicated above, particularly the provision of affordable housing and meeting the needs of a growing ageing population.

11.2 The issues raised in the most recent SHMA, SEGTAA and data analysis, the requirements of national planning policy have influenced the identification of options through the Spatial Options document, as set out in Tables 20 and 21 below. However, these are not considered to be mutually exclusive and other issues and solutions may be identified in due course as a result of public consultation on the Rochford New Local Plan.

Table 20: Identified Options for addressing General and Specific Housing issues

Option	Explanation
Meeting our need for different types, sizes, and tenures of housing (including affordable housing and specialist housing) by requiring a standard non-negotiable mix of housing to be provided on all housing developments	This option would be to make sure that new housing developments that came forward provide a suitable mix of housing that broadly reflects the housing needs of the District's residents as a whole
Meeting our need for different types, sizes, and tenures of housing (including affordable housing and specialist housing) by requiring a suitable or negotiable mix of housing that is responsive to the type or location of the development	This option would be to make sure that new housing developments that came forward provide a suitable mix of housing that reflects the housing needs of people in the area of the development
Meeting our need for different types, sizes, and tenures of housing by allocating specific areas of land for specific types, sizes and tenures of housing, including to: • Allocate entry-level 'exceptions' sites for first-time buyers • Allocate specific areas of land for affordable housing • Allocate specific areas of land for specialist housing	This option would be to meet the District's need for specific types of development by clearly defining areas of land where certain types of housing should be developed and taking action to prevent other forms of housing taking place on those sites.

• Allocate specific areas of land for self-build or custom-build housing	
Taking a market-led approach to housing mix and not specifying the types, tenures and sizes of houses that need to be delivered through a specific policy	This option would be to allow developers to determine the most appropriate housing mix on individual sites, based on marketability and demand. This would not guarantee that more specialist forms of housing need would be addressed as these are typically less profitable than market housing
Requiring all new homes to be built to the Nationally Described Space Standard	This option would be to continue to require all new houses to be built to a minimum space standard, as opposed to allowing developers to determine the size of houses built on new sites
Requiring all new homes to be built to Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations	This option would be to require new houses to be built to a higher standard of accessibility than at present, as opposed to allowing developers to determine the number of more accessible homes to build based on marketability and demand
Requiring a suitable proportion of new homes to be built to Part M4(3) of the Building Regulations	This option would be to require a percentage of new houses to be built to the highest standard of accessibility than at present, as opposed to allowing developers to determine the number of the most accessible homes to build based on marketability and demand

Table 21: Identified Options for addressing Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation issues

Option	Explanation
Retaining the current policy position of delivering a permanent site at Michelin Farm, if it can be established that this site is deliverable within the plan period	The Council's current policy position on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation is set out in Policy GT1, allocating a site at Michelin Farm for up to 15 permanent pitches. However, the owner has indicated that the site is not considered available for this use, and therefore it may no longer be deliverable.

Prioritising the regularisation of existing unauthorised sites where any environmental, transport and amenity impacts of doing so are outweighed by the benefits	There are a large number of unauthorised sites across the District which are the key generator of the identified need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches in Rochford. These sites could be authorised and meet the majority of identified need, however most fall within the Green Belt and an assessment would likely be required of the harm authorisation of these sites would cause.
Prioritising the regularisation and expansion of existing unauthorised sites where any environmental, transport and amenity impacts of doing so are outweighed by the benefits	This option would be to pursue the above option but with also considering options for existing sites to be expanded where this would allow needs to be met, such as from children living on the site who may desire their own pitch
Allocating new areas of land for permanent traveller sites, informed by a specific Call for Sites and site assessment process for potential locations for new traveller sites	This option would be to allocate one or more new sites through the new Local Plan where new permanent pitches could be created to meet need. This option would need to be led by a criteria approach to consider suitable sites, noting that this may need to be in the Green Belt
Requiring new strategic housing allocation to set aside areas for permanent traveller sites within the general boundary of any allocation	This option would be to require new housing developments to make provision on their site for new pitches, which may guarantee delivery and allow for better cohesion of communities
Working with neighbouring authorities to meet permanent traveller accommodation needs in other local authority areas if it is established that needs could be better met by permanent sites located elsewhere	This option would be to consider if the need for permanent pitches could better be delivered in another area, however the Council would need to consider whether this option would genuinely meet local needs given there are a number of unauthorised sites already in the District which may not desire to live in another location
Allocating new areas of land for temporary traveller sites, such as a transit site, informed by a specific Call for Sites and site assessment process for potential locations for a new transit site or temporary stopping place	This option would be allocated one or more sites through the new Local Plan where temporary pitches could be created which would be available for households to use for short periods while travelling. This option would need to be led by a criteria approach to consider

	suitable sites, noting that this may need to be in the Green Belt.
Working with neighbouring authorities to meet temporary traveller accommodation needs in other local authority areas if it is established that needs would be better met by a transit site or temporary stopping place located elsewhere	This option would be to consider if the need for temporary could better be delivered in another area, such as an area with better access to the strategic road network