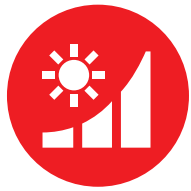


B&D Building Together

A summary of our plans for Homes in Barking & Dagenham





The Corporate Plan 2020-22 identifies Inclusive Growth as a key strategic priority for the Council and its partners. This document summarises our plans for Homes over the next two years and beyond.

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Homes: For local people and other working Londoners

The Borough Manifesto set out an ambition that by 2037 Barking & Dagenham will be **a place with sufficient, accessible and varied housing**, and that there **will be 50,000 new homes built to provide for our growing population, and these homes should be affordable for local people no matter their income.**

Building on the Borough Manifesto, our goal in relation to **HOMES** is:

“

50,000 new homes built in the Borough over the next two decades to meet housing need and provide for our growing population; with Barking and Dagenham remaining a place where working Londoners can afford to put down roots, raise their family and grow old in dignity; and where people live in decent, secure conditions, homelessness is prevented wherever possible, and suitable accommodation is available for vulnerable groups of residents to enable as many as possible to live well independently.

The first homes that were built on the Becontree Estate will soon be celebrating their centenary. Enabled by reforms such as the Addison Act, the building of the Becontree provided high quality affordable homes for working Londoners and drastically improved the living conditions of 120,000 people. These were homes fit for heroes and public house building on a scale we haven't seen since. The Becontree was only possible because the state played a direct role as provider of new homes.

Today we are returning to that approach; directly funding and building the homes we need. And, at the same time, working with third party developers and investors that share our values. Our ambition for housing in Barking & Dagenham today is to capture the spirit that delivered the Becontree to deliver new homes for today's working Londoners. Clearly the housing needs of today's Londoners have changed, as has the way we do house building. But the Becontree still symbolises what can be achieved with vision, ambition, and the right tools to deliver.

To achieve this goal, we are focused on four key areas of activity:

- Building new homes
- Improving the quality and management of homes
- Tackling homelessness
- Providing homes for vulnerable residents

Building new homes

Too many of the homes that have been built in London over recent years have been too expensive for local people and other working Londoners to rent or buy. We know that if we left the next wave of house building to the private sector alone, we would get the same unacceptable outcome. Given the current economic conditions, without direct intervention from public investment and Council delivery, the rate of house building will drop considerably. That's why we are actively shaping the land, development and housing markets to get more homes built, at a faster pace, and at more affordable prices – while ensuring good quality design and build standards.

To deliver on this intention, we established Be First in 2017 as a wholly owned Council company charged with accelerating the pace and scale of regeneration in the Borough, with a particular focus on building thousands of new affordable homes. Be First is using Council investment – alongside our Right-to-Buy receipts and grant – to fill the gap that the private sector alone cannot meet. A significant chunk of the £750m we are currently investing will be used to build 3,000 homes funded and owned by the Council over the next four years. Three-quarters of these will be sold or rented at significantly below market prices (with many at Council equivalent rents). Our approach is to build homes of different types at a range of rent levels, and shared ownership, to cater for different needs – all built to the same high design and construction standards.

Our new build programme is designed to meet the needs of two groups in particular:

- Local people in housing need: those on the Council's housing register, by building homes at London Affordable Rent (the Mayor of London's Council rent level); local homeless households, by building good quality temporary accommodation in the Borough; and older and more vulnerable residents, by building specially designed housing to meet their needs.
- Local working people who struggle to afford private rents or home ownership but who are unlikely to ever be allocated traditional social housing, by building homes at 'intermediate rents' (i.e. significantly discounted below market rents) and for shared ownership.

Lack of central government funding or significant subsidy means that we will also build some homes for market rent or sale to cross-subsidise (though these will also always be prioritised for local residents). The homes that the Council builds itself through Be First will contain as many affordable homes as possible, and many schemes will be 100% affordable. The breakdown of the new homes that will be built by Be First up to 2023/24 is set out below. Depending on conditions in the market, the proportion of homes at each tenure may change over time, but we will always look to increase the proportion of affordable homes, while continuing to build a diversity of types and tenures to meet different housing needs and support a mixed community here in Barking and Dagenham:

Tenure	Who are the homes aimed at?	What's the rent/cost?	What income does a household need?	What sort of job?
Around 650 homes at Council equivalent rents	Local households in housing need who qualify for the Council's housing register	£158 a week for a 2 bed	Around £23.5k a year But rents are fully covered by housing benefit for those households with no income from employment.	Labourer
Around 900 homes at 'intermediate rents' (i.e. at least 20% less than market prices)	Local working households on low to median incomes who are struggling to afford private market rents.	From £200 a week for a 2 bed at London Living Rent (around 65% of local market rents) Around £222 a week for a 2 bed at 80% of local market rent	Starting from around £30k a year for a 2 bed at London Living Rent or around £33k a year at 80% of local market rent In many cases, rents would be covered or subsidised by housing benefit (or Local Housing Allowance)	Office assistant and a retail worker Social worker
Around 550 for Shared Ownership	Local working households who want to get on to the property ladder, but who cannot afford to buy a home outright	An initial deposit then around £250 a week in rent and mortgage payments (assuming property value of £300k)	Households who have been able to save up around £10k for a deposit, and then have an income of at least £35k per year	Teacher
Around 150 for temporary accommodation	Local homeless households, who the Council have a duty to house temporarily until they find more long-term accommodation	Rents set at 90% of the Local Housing Allowance rate	Rents are fully covered by housing benefit for those households with no income from employment.	N/A
Around 750 homes for private rent or private sale – to help cross-subsidise the affordable homes	Local households who can afford full market rents, but who can benefit from more security of tenure and more certainty on rent increases and local households who can afford to buy a new home outright	Around £277 a week for a 2 bed for rent From £300k for a 2 bed to buy	Around £40k a year to rent Households who have a deposit of around £30k, and a household income of around £70k to buy	Bus driver and classroom assistant Train driver and office worker



In addition to the new supply set out in the previous table, work is underway to develop a programme of new build housing to be delivered in the years beyond 2023/24, including by providing more and better homes on existing Council estates, with a commitment to replacing at least as many homes at Council-equivalent rents and offering existing tenants and resident leaseholders a right to return (our criteria for considering future estate renewal schemes is set out below).

Quality and safety. We are not only interested in the number of new homes that are built, but the quality. Be First will build new homes to high design and build quality standards – and have published a series of design guides for architects and the construction industry to set clear expectations for the design quality of new homes and the wider public realm it will develop and enhance. These are called ‘winning hearts and minds with bricks and mortar’. We are also very conscious of the concerns all residents will have about building safety and will ensure that our new homes comply with the review of Building Regulations, emerging guidance and other lessons regarding building safety following the Grenfell tragedy.

Housing innovation. The Council has embarked on a programme of housing innovation, focused around a series of small sites around the Borough in Council ownership. We will make these available to community-led housing groups, as well as small and medium sized house builders, who can bring forward innovative new housing solutions. We are keen to encourage community groups and local

organisations to develop their capacity to lead on the delivery of new homes. The aim is that these groups will take on a long-term and formal role in the ownership and management of the homes, and that the community benefit will be protected in perpetuity. In addition, we want to encourage SME’s to use this opportunity as a platform for testing and trialling innovations around sustainability (such as the passivhaus concept) and construction (such as modular development).

What we expect from developers. To meet the scale of new housing needed in the Borough, we also need to attract private developers to the Borough, who buy into our vision and are prepared to operate within our policy framework. Alongside building new homes on our behalf, Be First’s role is to attract and work with those developers, encouraging them to actively build out planning consents rather than sitting on land in order to make a long run profit, as they have done in many other parts of London. We will use our planning powers to push for 50% affordable homes on private schemes that come forward (with a minimum of 35% on sites delivering 10 or more new homes). As we set out in our new Local Plan, we expect the affordable homes provided to be split 50:50 between low cost rented homes (such as London Affordable Rent) and intermediate homes (such as intermediate rent and shared ownership).

To support the ambition of delivering 50,000 new homes in the next 20 years, the draft Local Plan 2019-34 identifies a stepped trajectory for housing deliver to 2034, as shown in the table below:

Delivery Period	Years	Indicative Delivery Target	Indicative Annual Delivery Target
Overall Housing Target	2019/20 to 2036/37	42,737	
Short Term	2019/20 to 2023/24	10,817	2,163
Medium Term	2024/25 to 2028/29	18,470	3,694
Long Term	2029/30 to 2037/38	13,450	1,681
Small and Windfall Sites			
Long Term	2019/20 to 2036/37	1,242	69

Figure 19. Stepped Trajectory for Housing Delivery to 2037 (Source: Barking and Dagenham Housing Trajectory, August 2020/29)

There are several large schemes being delivered by third party developers, including Barking Riverside, Beam Park, the old Ford Stamping Plant and on the old Abbey Road retail park. One of Be First’s roles is to ensure that these developers understand our expectations around the type and quality of homes that are built.

In particular, over the next couple of years the Council and its partners will be focused on:

- Ensuring at least 2,000 new affordable homes are built in the Borough between 2019 and 2023, through a combination of Be First and other developers.
- Working with Be First to complete over 3,000 new homes between 2018 and 2024, at least 75% of which will be affordable (the vast majority of which to be managed by Reside).
- Determining the shape and size of the Be First/Reside new build programme for delivery from 2023/24 onwards, including approving a future estate renewal programme and a dedicated HRA new build programme for specialist housing to meet the need of vulnerable groups of residents.
- Pursing acquisitions of new housing built by third party developers in the Borough, if there is a strong financial case and it improves affordability and accelerates delivery.
- Launching a housing innovation programme to generate practical, resident-led housing solutions for small Council-owned sites (such as self-build, custom build and community-led housing).
- Finalising and publishing a Be First/Reside design guide, setting out the quality standards for new homes, including to ensure fire safety compliance and take account of changes in building regulations following the Grenfell Tower tragedy.



Improving the quality and management of homes

Managing new homes

Reside is LBBB’s wholly owned housing management company that will let, manage, and ensure effective maintenance of the new homes Be First build (and any that the Council might directly acquire). Reside will provide a new benchmark for the local rental market, pushing quality up through offering more secure tenancies and improved landlord services, while pulling prices down through offering more affordable rents. The aim is that tenants of Reside are able put down roots in the Borough, supported by the much more secure tenancies and affordable rents offered by Reside compared to the wider private rented sector. They will be able to remain Reside tenants as long as they wish, as long as they pay their rent, abide by their tenancy agreements and remain within the Reside income thresholds.

Over the next 12 months, Reside will be reviewing its business and service standards to ensure it provides a high quality service to its residents. One of Reside’s key aims over the next couple of years will be to develop a strong brand identity around its unique qualities, products, services, specific groups of customers served, and the benefits to them. Reside will be engaging with its tenants further to understand their needs and aspirations and to ask questions about what they want, and what they consider to be a great service. This work will help define how Reside can best meet existing and future tenants’ needs. Part of this will be the development of a digital offer, and the active management of tenancies and blocks to ensure swift action is taken against any households who cause anti-social behaviour, or who do not comply with other tenancy terms and conditions.

The diversity of the Reside housing offer also means that it can provide a pathway for those residents who want to move between tenure types, such as from intermediate rents to shared ownership.

Reside will have regular conversations with its residents to understand how their housing needs or aspirations have changed, and if these could be better supported through a different offer within the Reside portfolio.

The homes we are building are for local people first and foremost, as embodied in the Council’s allocations policy. Households must have been living in the Borough for at least three years to get on our housing register and Reside homes always go to local people first. Over 80% of homes recently completed for shared ownership went to existing Borough residents. We have changed the Reside income tests to ensure that they are accessible to even more local working households. This includes increasing the affordability threshold from 35% of household income to 40% (i.e. allowing those on slightly lower household income to access the properties), alongside the inclusion of in-work benefits as part of a household’s income calculation. These changes aim to enable more local working households to access Reside.

In particular, over the next couple of years the Council and its partners will be focused on:

- Ensuring Reside delivers on key agreed areas of development for the company, as set out in its business plan, principally:
 - Setting out the housing management offer and customer service standards it’s tenants can expect to its tenants (and using that at the basis for its future approach to commissioning services on tenant’s behalf);
 - Re-vamping its website, social media presence and all aspects of communications and engagement with its tenants;
 - Putting in place robust marketing, sales and lettings plans for future new build handovers to ensure rapid occupancy and a high proportion of homes going to local people; and
 - Establishing its Registered Provider vehicle.



Managing and improving existing homes

New homes will only ever make up a small proportion of the total housing stock in the Borough. Our ambition to build new, high-quality homes is matched by our ambition to drive up the standards of existing homes. The Council is landlord to around 17,000 households in the Borough, providing leasehold services to another 5,000 - we are the largest provider of housing services. We need to ensure that our landlord services, whether delivered by the Council directly or by Reside, are continuously improving and remain responsive to the needs of our tenants.

We will also continue to invest significant sums over the coming years to upgrade Council homes and estates, to bring them up to the standards that our residents should expect. Over the next two years, we will be working up revised long-term improvement plans for existing Council homes and estates. This will include setting out the standards we want our homes to meet, such as considering the need to improve energy efficiency and meet our decarbonisation objectives. This work will underpin a review of the financial model that supports our Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, to allow us to plan for (and finance) stock investment and improved services to tenants and leaseholders.

The absolute minimum that anyone should expect of their home is that it is safe. The review into the causes of the Grenfell Tower tragedy is still ongoing, and new building safety standards are expected including through the Building Safety Bill. We will continue to ensure full compliance with current and emerging building safety requirements for all Council owned homes and assets. We have also commissioned our own external review into the lessons that can be learned from the recent fire in our own Borough at Samuel Garside House, focusing on the response and obligations of statutory bodies and private companies.

Renewing our estates. In some instances, we will propose to re-build homes or estates, where this would deliver an overall increase in the number of affordable homes as well as providing higher quality homes than those that are replaced – with clear rights for tenants and leaseholders affected.

In June 2019, the Council approved a set of criteria that will need to be met if an estate is going to be rebuilt, closely aligned with our Inclusive Growth aims. These state that the Council will proceed with an estate renewal scheme where it will provide:

More homes:

- An increase in the number of homes on the site; and
- A net increase in the number of affordable homes on the site; and
- A net increase in the number of homes for local households on the housing register, i.e. at Council-equivalent rents (including for existing tenants with a Right to Return).

Better homes:

- A replacement of poorer quality, more expensive to maintain homes with high quality new homes that meet modern standards, including energy efficiency.
- Homes that better meet the needs of local people, including more family-sized homes and housing to meet the needs of vulnerable groups.

Better places:

- Other benefits from intervening in the built environment, including better design, improved public realm, new schools/parks and other types of social infrastructure.
- A route to overcome existing social or design problems which make the estate an unpopular place to live or where there are high levels of crime, ASB or other problems.

We will also consider the following:

- Whether the proposals are financially viable.
- Sustainability, such as whether the same regeneration goals can be achieved by refurbishment if this is more viable and/or more sustainable.
- A high ratio of additional homes to those that are lost, to justify the proposal to demolish existing homes.
- Local support for the proposals.

Alongside establishing these criteria, we have reviewed our commitments to those residents who will be affected by estate renewal to ensure that they benefit from the scheme. As such:

- Tenants will have top priority to bid for an alternative Council home in the Borough.
- Tenants will have a Right to Return to one of the new homes within Reside, at a Council target rent and on an Assured Tenancy.
- A home-loss payment of £6,300 (uprated annually) and disturbance payments to cover the cost of moving.
- Help to move out of the Borough, if they want to.
- Resident leaseholders will get market value for their home plus a 10% home loss payment.
- No resident leaseholder will need to move away from the local area if they don't want to. The Council will give assistance if they can't afford a suitable property on their own.
- Resident leaseholders will have a Right to Return to one of the new homes, with assistance if they can't afford it on their own.
- Non-resident leaseholders will get market value for their property plus a statutory basic loss payment of 7.5%.

In particular, over the next couple of years the Council and its partners will be focused on:

Delivering the My Place improvement plan, leading to demonstrable improvements in the core housing service offered to tenants and leaseholders (illustrated through the following proxies):

- Tenant and leaseholder satisfaction levels;
- Cleanliness of blocks and estates (including caretaking and grounds maintenance);
- Rent collection levels;
- Void turnaround times;
- Quality, speed and responsiveness of repairs and maintenance; and
- Assurance on safety and compliance.

Articulating what Council tenants and leaseholders should be able to expect from an excellent housing management service and commissioning an external review of the Council's offer and performance against these expectations.

Developing and agreeing long-term investment and improvement plans for the homes and estates in the HRA, driven in particular by the imperative to fully decarbonise the housing stock by 2050 (and aligned with the agreement of a future estate renewal programme).

Updating the 30-year HRA business plan that sets the future financial strategy for managing and improving HRA housing.

Publishing the independent external review into the lessons from the Samuel Garside House fire, focusing on the response and obligations of statutory bodies and private companies.

Ensure Reside delivers on key agreed areas of development for the company, as set out in its business plan, principally:

- Setting out the housing management offer and customer service standards its tenants can expect to its tenants (and using that at the basis for its future approach to commissioning services on tenant's behalf)
- Re-vamping its website, social media presence and all aspects of communications and engagement with its tenants
- Putting in place robust marketing, sales and lettings plan for future new build handovers to ensure rapid occupancy and a high proportion of homes going to local people
- Establishing its Registered Provider vehicle





Regulating and improving housing quality in the private rented sector

Quality in the private rented sector needs to improve. The size of the private rented sector in the Borough has expanded rapidly from 5% of the Borough's housing in 2001 to around 25% today. Residents of the PRS are primarily younger, and a high proportion have dependent children. Higher rents mean that the loss of a PRS tenancy is the single largest cause of statutory homelessness in the Borough, while overcrowding is common. A fifth of PRS homes in London do not meet the decent homes standard, compared with 12% of Council and housing association homes; though this figure has improved in recent years as landlord licensing schemes have come into effect.

The Council has already taken significant steps in this area and was one of the first in London to have a Borough-wide licensing scheme. All private landlords in Barking & Dagenham are now required to have a license. We have also used our planning powers to put in place an Article 4 Direction to limit the number of family homes that can be converted to homes in multiple occupation (HMOs).

We will continue to take strict enforcement action against landlords who do not abide by the conditions of their license, particularly in relation to energy efficiency, fire safety and minimising empty homes. More fundamentally, we see Reside as a clear alternative to the private rented sector as it expands, providing better quality homes at lower rents, better management, and more security.

In particular, over the next two years the Council and its partners will be focused on:

Implementing the Borough wide landlord licensing scheme and maximising its potential to promote good housing management and property standards in the PRS (e.g. in relation to energy efficiency, safety and compliance and minimising empty homes), with robust enforcement action against landlords flouting the rules.

Tackling homelessness

The under supply of genuinely affordable homes and the increase in private sector rents has led to a significant increase in homelessness in London over the last decade. In 2015/16, Barking & Dagenham was ranked as having the highest rate of homeless acceptances per 1,000 households in the capital. There was also a significant increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation. As well as their social and human costs, the increases in homelessness and temporary accommodation represent a significant financial pressure for the Council.

The Council has since embarked on a proactive response to the problem of homelessness through the establishment of Community Solutions. Its strongly preventative focus has led to falls in both the rate of homelessness and the numbers housed in temporary accommodation:

- Community Solutions prevented 1766 households from becoming homeless in 18/19 compared to 793 in 17/18 (a 123% increase).
- There has been a significant increase in the number of households moved on from temporary accommodation to a longer-term home – 468 households in 18/19 compared to 321 in 17/18 (a 46% increase).
- Households in TA have reduced from 1925 in November 2017 to 1594 in March 2020 (a reduction of 331 households) – bucking the trend of rising homelessness and TA numbers across London.

However, wider housing market conditions in London and the Borough, as well as the impacts of welfare reform, mean that many residents remain at risk of homelessness. Therefore, we are not complacent and have set out our goals and plans in our statutory Homelessness Strategy. This includes the following priorities:

Priority 1: Reducing homelessness through prevention by:

- Continuing to increase the number of homelessness applications prevented, including developing technologies that support early intervention while expanding Community Solution's place-based work.
- Continuing to reduce the number of households placed into temporary accommodation advice.
- Providing support to resolve wider causes of homelessness, such as work, debt, and family issues.

Priority 2: Reducing temporary accommodation through permanent housing solutions by:

- Sourcing sustainable, affordable tenancies for homeless households in temporary accommodation.
- Reducing the use of more expensive forms of temporary accommodation.
- Providing purpose-built temporary accommodation through the new build programme.

Priority 3: Reduce incidences of rough sleeping by:

- Developing a proactive partnership approach to tackling rough sleeping with the voluntary sector.
- Working with partners to develop a No Second Night Out model of intervention.
- Working with the CCG to address access to primary care for rough sleepers.

In particular, over the next couple years the Council and its partners will be focused on:

Delivering the Council's homelessness strategy, with a focus on action to reduce the number of homeless households and the number of households in TA alongside the development of a more proactive approach to the reduction of rough sleeping.



Providing homes for vulnerable residents

The experience of inadequate housing takes many forms, from families living in overcrowded accommodation to older residents who could live independently being prevented from doing so because of inappropriate accommodation. The effects of these experiences can be serious and damaging for the residents concerned – and often end up being very costly for the Council.

Our approach to housing will seek to address these structural challenges. The growth in the number of homes in the Borough in the coming years is an opportunity to increase the amount and quality of the housing provided for more vulnerable residents. However, this also needs to be supported by an approach to allocating homes that supports residents, understands their wider circumstances, and makes best use of available properties (including existing properties).

We have launched a cross-Council programme – the Housing for Vulnerable People Programme – which seeks to understand demand, use this to shape new supply, and create effective and joined up processes to deliver the best possible outcomes for vulnerable people.

While there are specific vulnerable cohorts which have been identified as a priority within the programme, it will be dynamic and run on the premise that it supports work on accommodation solutions for a broad cohort of vulnerable individuals based on insight and evidence from Care and Support and Community Solutions. As such, it will include, but will not be limited to:

- Care leavers
- Older people
- Mental Health
- Physical Disabilities
- Learning Disabilities
- Domestic violence
- Substance misuse

As part of the housing for vulnerable people programme, the following set of commitments have been endorsed by the Council’s Cabinet:

- We will ensure the Barking Riverside development leaves no one behind: To date, we have secured an extra care scheme for older residents of 60 units, 35 units for vulnerable adults with learning disabilities and a further 35 for young people leaving care within general needs schemes.
- We are the corporate parents of our children leaving care – and our new build programme will provide stable accommodation that supports their social and mental wellbeing, including shared accommodation and one-bedroom flats integrated into the existing community.
- Older people in our Borough should live independently wherever possible in a setting that supports this. We will initiate a comprehensive review of our provision for sheltered housing and extra care and bring forward a plan of investment, improvements and new provision to best meet the needs of individuals and our future older population.
- Every new build development will consider the needs of vulnerable people. We will build specialist accommodation – purpose-built properties for people with physical disabilities, severe and enduring mental health needs, older people and care leavers. These properties will be future proofed – with the capacity for adaptations and care technology.
- All accommodation for vulnerable people must consider how they are connected to their wider communities, including avoiding social isolation, having access to shops, green spaces, transport, healthcare, community facilities and a social life. All vulnerable people should be able to be part of a thriving community.
- Vulnerability exists outside of statutory social care responsibilities as well. Inclusive Growth means everyone, and we will assess and deliver according to the housing need of groups beyond Care Act eligibility such as victims of domestic abuse, those with substance misuse issues and those with no recourse to public funds.

- When allocating housing we will work in a relational way with vulnerable residents to understand their wider circumstances and ensure that housing can best support their needs and their wellbeing and provide choice and control – not just allocating the first available accommodation.

In particular, over the next couple of years the Council and its partners will be focused on:

Delivering the commitments set out above as part of the Vulnerable People’s Housing programme, with the aim of improving the housing offer and pathways for key groups of vulnerable residents. This includes:

- Identifying the current and future housing demand among key groups of vulnerable residents and using that to shape both a specialist housing new build programme and s106 requirements from third party developers in the Borough.
- Ensuring that the s106 obligation on Barking Riverside Ltd to provide specialist housing, including an extra care scheme of 60 units for older residents, and 35 new units each for people with learning difficulties and young people leaving care within general needs schemes are delivered.
- Undertaking a review of existing sheltered and adapted stock to inform future commissioning and investment decisions.
- Implementing the new allocations policy, supported by the introduction of an annual lettings plan and embedding new accommodation panels and move-on arrangements

Developing a policy around Council’s approach to domestic abuse as it relates to housing services, as part of the work to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation.



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