

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is a Local Plan?

All councils must prepare a Development Plan which forms the policy framework for their local planning authority area. The Local Plan is one document within the Development Plan, and sets out planning policies which determine which sites or areas can be developed and which should be protected over a long period of time, typically 15 to 20 years.

The Council has prepared a *Draft Local Plan* which sets out the proposed overall framework for development of the Borough up to 2034. The *Draft Local Plan* includes strategic policies setting out the overall approach to development, infrastructure provision and environmental protection within Basildon Borough. It also includes policies which propose to allocate land for development and propose to designate land for protection. Finally, it includes new development management policies which are proposed to be used to assess planning applications as they come forward until 2034 to ensure that they are appropriate and deliver high standard development.

2. Why is it important for the Council to prepare a Local Plan?

The Local Plan is necessary to provide a robust planning framework to support the regeneration and development of the Borough. Without it the Council would lose the ability to secure and co-ordinate the development and infrastructure that is needed to do this. The Government has made it clear that if we do not prepare a plan by early 2017 they will do it for us, and re-charge the Council the costs. It has also indicated that it will hold back various grants the Council receives from Government, affecting our ability to provide existing council services.

3. How does the Draft Local Plan affect me?

The Council has prepared a *Draft Local Plan* which plans for development in the Borough up to 2034 by setting standards and targets for development. The *Draft Local Plan* identifies that the Borough should provide 15,260 new homes and 49ha of employment land up to 2034. It also identifies the particular sites that will be built on to accommodate this. As the *Draft Local Plan* sets out policies which may affect your neighbourhood, it is important for you to consider them and have your say.

4. Where has the housing target come from?

The *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* produced by the Government in March 2012 requires all local authorities to help significantly boost the supply of housing in England. Local authorities are required to use evidence based studies to ensure that all Local Plans meet '*full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in their housing market area...*'.

It also expects that any potential barriers to investment in the local economy are addressed through the local plan, including amongst other things a lack of housing provision. The provision of housing is linked to the labour supply (how many people are available for local employers to fill jobs) available to support economic growth. Insufficient housing provision could therefore constrain the ability of businesses to grow and innovate. Whilst it is not realistic to expect everyone to live and work in the same place, the movement of jobs to other competitive areas and the growth of businesses in other locations if land is not available locally has implications for congestion on the road and rail network if more workers have to commute into another area to work.

The Borough's 'objectively assessed need' has been established through independent research carried out with the other Councils in the South Essex Housing Market Area. The evidence used to support the housing figures set out in the *Draft Local Plan* can be found in the *Emerging South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment Topic Paper for Basildon Borough Council 2016*. This sets out a comprehensive extract of the Basildon findings from the emerging South Essex *Strategic Housing Market Assessment Review*. The research which underpins this work has evaluated the diverse factors that are influencing housing needs such as population change, economic growth and housing affordability.

The *Emerging South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment Topic Paper for Basildon Borough Council 2016* presents a range for the 'full, objectively assessed needs' for housing. It identifies a range of 15,260 and 16,740 homes over a 20 year period, reflecting varying assumptions regarding the labour supply requirements of

the local economy. The *Draft Local Plan* is making provision for the lower end of this range. The scope to look beyond this range, in particular at a target which is less than 15,260 is limited, as the proposals in the *Draft Local Plan* must be based on evidence in order to withstand scrutiny of the Planning Inspectorate.

5. How is the Council providing for the ageing population?

The *Emerging South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment Topic Paper for Basildon Borough Council 2016* identifies that Basildon Borough should provide approximately 1,620 units of specialist accommodation for older people up to 2034. This figure has been encompassed within the overall housing target of 15,260 homes set out in the *Draft Local Plan* (Policy SD1) and will be delivered by the application of other policies within the *Draft Local Plan*, primarily Policy H2 – Specialist Accommodation Strategy and Policy H33 – The Size and Types of Homes. The Council, acknowledge that need and the type of specialist accommodation can change and may need to respond to the aspirations for more independent living and diverse types of social care which allows for this, thus enabling people to continue living in their own homes for as long as possible.

It is however recognised that some older people will require specialist residential/nursing care provision. The *Emerging South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment Topic Paper for Basildon Borough Council 2016* identifies a requirement for around 720 additional residential/nursing care beds by 2034. Policy H2 – Specialist Accommodation Strategy sets out the approach to delivering this requirement alongside other housing in the Borough.

6. What about social housing?

The *Draft Local Plan* seeks to secure 25% affordable housing on development sites of 11 or more homes, or on land of 0.2ha or more. This amounts to around 3,300 homes of the 15,260 being built as affordable homes for the Council or Housing Associations to rent, or new Starter Homes for sale. This figure is based upon the findings set out in the *Emerging South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment Topic Paper for Basildon Borough Council 2016*. This figure represents the objectively assessed affordable housing need for the Borough over the plan period of 2014-2034 and is set out in more detail under Policies H1 - Housing Strategy and H34 – Affordable Housing Provision.

7. Will there be enough work for people?

In 2013, the Council commissioned consultants to carry out an *Employment Land and Premises Study* for the Borough which looked at the current employment and businesses within the Borough and considered what would need to be done to retain and improve economic vitality for the future. Policy E1 – Economic Growth Strategy is central to securing employment prospects and opportunities for residents of the Borough and to attract businesses into the area. Through policy E1, the Council sets out the intention to provide approximately 8,600 jobs across the plan period and provide 49ha of land for new employment development. 38ha of this is within existing employment areas, including the A127 Enterprise Corridor, and two new areas at Dunton and at Burnt Mills, Basildon will provide 5.5ha of employment land each. The Council are also encouraging apprenticeships and training opportunities for local residents to maintain a thriving local economy and provide different employment options.

8. How can the area's existing infrastructure cope with further development?

The Council recognises that new housing, employment and other forms of development will need to be supported by relevant infrastructure including utilities, transport, education, recreation and health services. The Council engaged with infrastructure service providers *before the Draft Local Plan was finalised* to establish the infrastructure which will be necessary to balance the growth in the Borough in a sustainable way. This has been used to establish a baseline position for infrastructure within Basildon Borough and to determine the future requirements for infrastructure having regard to growth and the locations of growth within the Borough.

This information has been used to develop an initial *Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)*, which looks at existing infrastructure/service deficits and identifies how they will be overcome and who will be responsible for doing so. The *IDP* will be updated regularly to inform the production of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule, and to respond to opportunities for infrastructure funding. The Council will use the *IDP* to ensure that development is aligned to infrastructure provision and to ensure new development contributes to the funding of upgrades to necessary local and strategic infrastructure.

9. How do you know that the drainage systems can cope with more housing?

All sites identified within the *Draft Local Plan* have been located away from obvious sources of flood risk such as flood plains. Furthermore, Policies CC1 to CC4 set out the Council's approach to flood risk management, including the measures that will be applied when applications for new housing are considered in order to minimise flood risk to new and existing properties. The locations of development and the policies within the *Draft Local Plan* related to flood risk management have been informed by the *South Essex Surface Water Management Plan*, the *South Essex Strategic Flood Risk Assessment*, and the *South Essex Water Cycle Study*.

The Council have and will continue, to work with the Environment Agency and Essex County Council, which is the Lead Local Flood Authority, as appropriate and will seek mitigation works and/or financial contributions towards drainage, flood prevention etc. from developments, in consultation with the relevant bodies. Furthermore, the Council will work in partnership with Anglian Water to determine what improvements are needed to the drainage network and elaborate on these in the *Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)*.

10. What about localism?

The Council recognises the changes the Government has made and the responsibility that has been placed on local authorities to determine housing targets at a local level. This consultation is an opportunity for local people to have their say. The *Localism Act 2011* also enables Neighbourhood Plans to be prepared by local communities, but they must be in accordance with up to date Local Plans.

11. What happened to my site that I submitted through the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)/ Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)/Call for Sites?

All of the areas of land submitted to the Council for development consideration before April 2015 have been subject to the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), formerly known as the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The HELAA has been reviewed to assess whether each site is in a suitable location, is available for development, and would be viable to be developed for development purposes. The *HELAA Review 2015* forms part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.

The allocations for housing set out in chapter 11 of the *Draft Local Plan* has been informed by the *HELAA Review 2015*, alongside other evidence as specified in the supporting text. This ensures that the sites identified in the *Draft Local Plan* are suitable, available and achievable, consistent with the requirements of the *National Planning Policy Framework*.

12. What is Green Belt?

Green Belt is a special planning policy designation intended to keep land open, and prevent urban sprawl by unregulated development which causes neighbouring towns to merge with one another.

The Green Belt in Basildon Borough is the London Metropolitan Green Belt. The objective of the London Metropolitan Green Belt is to contain the growth of London.

Land which is designated as Green Belt is not:

- Always accessible to the public. Most of the land in the Green Belt is privately owned and not accessible for public use;
- Always of a high landscape value. Land in the Green Belt is designated for its openness, not for any particular landscape quality;
- Always open greenfield land. Green Belts were originally designated in the late 1940s. In most cases they include whole villages or individual houses or farmsteads. The Plotland areas in Billericay, Wickford and Basildon are an example of this. They are all in the Green Belt, but are home to over 3,000 people;
- All of our parks and open spaces. Whilst these are green areas, they are not always in the Green Belt.
- Protected from indefinite change. Day-to-day, Green Belts are protected by strict planning policies which affect how land and buildings within them can be used or changed. However, the boundaries of Green Belts can be reviewed when Local Plans are updated, which is typically every 15-20 years. The borough's last Green Belt review was completed in 1998 – 18 years ago.

13. How will the Plan affect the Green Belt?

In the *Draft Local Plan*, the development potential of the Borough's existing urban settlements, the number of homes that have been built since 2014 and those that have been granted planning permission have been considered in the first instance to limit the loss of Green Belt land. Based on the evidence this amounts to 7,329 homes. The Borough's finite urban land availability, however, means that the Borough's Green Belt will therefore need to be considered as the source of the remaining 7,931 units to meet the Borough's objectively assessed housing need, securing a robust and defensible Green Belt boundary beyond the plan period.

The proposals in the *Draft Local Plan* include the retention of 6,470ha of land within the Green Belt. This covers 58% of the borough's land area. This is a reduction of 475ha compared to the current extent of the Green Belt. Currently, the Green Belt covers 6,745ha.

14. What about Plotland infill?

In response to earlier consultations and the *National Planning Policy Framework*, the *Draft Local Plan* does propose to allow for limited infilling within parts of the Plotland settlements that are identified as Plotland Infill Areas. Not all parts of the Plotlands are included and specific criteria for determining planning applications for infilling are set out in Policy GB3 - Plotland Infill.

15. Is the Nethermayne/ Dry Street site within the Draft Local Plan?

The Council's aspirations for land north of Dry Street, Basildon are set out in Policy H8 – Land North of Dry Street, Basildon within the *Draft Local Plan*. The 725 homes identified in the policy obtained planning consent in December 2013 and preparations for construction work on site has now started. It has been included in the *Draft Local Plan* to ensure the onsite infrastructure and off site highway works are delivered and to enable it to contribute towards meeting the 15,260 housing target.

16. Is the Dunton Garden Suburb proposal within the Draft Local Plan?

In the period from January to March 2015, the Council and Brentwood Borough Council jointly consulted on a proposal known as Dunton Garden Suburb. This was a proposal for a community comprising 4,000 to 6,000 new homes and associated employment provision and community facilities, straddling the boundary between the two boroughs.

Having considered the outcomes of this consultation, the Basildon Borough *Draft Local Plan* does not include proposals for Dunton Garden Suburb, as at the time the Local Plan was prepared Brentwood Borough Council had not provided sufficient information to show it was the best location for new housing provision in the Brentwood borough. The Draft Local Plan has, however, identified land within the Basildon Borough, around the current village of Dunton Wayletts to help meet local housing and employment needs until 2034. It includes proposals for onsite infrastructure including a new primary school and pre-school, a new open space, as well as a local centre providing opportunity for local shopping. It also proposes a new road link from West Mayne, near the existing Toomey roundabout to serve the development and existing village. These are included in Basildon Borough's new housing and employment figures.

On the 27 January 2016, Brentwood Borough Council agreed to consult on their own Draft Local Plan for a six-week period from the 10 February 2016. This includes proposals for "Dunton Hills Garden Village" which Brentwood is proposing would be a new self-contained village in the vicinity of Dunton and the A128, but within the Brentwood borough area, comprising 2,500 homes and associated community facilities. Basildon Council will be considering the implications of this new proposal and responding to Brentwood Borough Council's consultation on this matter by the closing date. If Basildon Borough residents wish to comment on the Dunton Hill Garden Village proposals within Brentwood borough they must respond separately to Brentwood Borough Council once their consultation starts. Comments will not be valid on this proposal if submitted to Basildon Borough Council. To find out more about the proposals in Brentwood visit: www.brentwood.gov.uk/localplan or phone 01277 312500.

17. Will there be development on areas of open space under the Draft Local Plan?

There are three housing site allocations within the *Draft Local Plan* which have been identified for development on land that currently contain open space and recreation. However the Draft Local Plan proposals do not result in a net loss of open space, as there is a requirement for open space and formal playing pitches to be relocated nearby. This is in accordance with Policy H7 - Mixed Use Development Site - Land West of Gardiners Lane South,

Basildon, Policy H13 - Housing Development Site - Land East of Basildon, and Policy H16 – Housing Development Site – Land East and South of Barn Hall, Wickford.

The *Draft Local Plan* seeks to retain all other public open space within residential areas and encourage their improvement where possible through contributions from nearby development. This is set out in Policy HC5 – Public Open Spaces. Some poor quality open spaces located within and adjacent to employment areas will however be reallocated for employment purposes to bring them into effective use.

18. What about providing for the needs of Gypsies and Travellers?

The *National Planning Policy Framework* supplementary policy document *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* requires local planning authorities to meet local objectively assessed need for all communities in the Borough, including Gypsies and Travellers. The Council commissioned independent consultants to undertake a *Gypsy & Traveller Local Needs Accommodation Assessment (GTLNAA)* to identify the accommodation need for the travelling community. The study has identified a requirement arising from population growth on existing authorised sites, existing temporary sites and small scale unauthorised sites of 104 pitches by 2033 and this is set out in Policy H3 – Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Strategy. The study also identified a need arising from the former large scale unauthorised site at Dale Farm of an additional 136 pitches.

The *Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Provision Study (PPSPS)* was completed in 2015 and evaluated whether there were suitable and available locations or specific land parcels available to meet the Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision within the Borough. This concluded that there was only the potential to provide in the order of 98 and 109 pitches. This is closely aligned to the 104 pitches required for population growth on existing authorised sites, existing temporary sites and small scale unauthorised sites. As such there is insufficient land available to meet the pitch provision arising from the former large scale unauthorised site at Dale Farm and the Council is seeking cooperation from other Essex authorities to help meet this unmet need in the rest of Essex.

19. When do you need my comments by?

The consultation starts on Thursday 28th January 2016 and will run for eight weeks closing at **23:59 on Thursday 24th March 2016**. The eight week consultation period is in accordance with the national Regulations and the Council's adopted *Statement of Community Involvement (February 2012)* and gives anyone interested a chance to read the background documents and ask questions of clarification if they want to, before making their formal comment submission.

20. How do I make comments?

If you wish to comment by email or post, please ensure that you include your name, email address and your postal address including postcode, and identify which policies or sections of the *Draft Local Plan* on which you are commenting.

Any email responses should be sent to: planningpolicy@basildon.gov.uk

Comments may be submitted by post to the following Freepost (no stamp required) address:

Draft Local Plan Consultation 2016, Policy and Democratic Services, Basildon Borough Council,
FREEPOST ANG 11276, St Martin's Square, Basildon, Essex, SS14 1ZZ.

All comments submitted by email or post must be received by **23:59** on the **24 March 2016**. Any comments received after this date and time will not be accepted, so please ensure you have accounted for their postage time.

Please Note: All comments provided are done so in the knowledge that they will become a public record and cannot be kept anonymous. The Council will not accept or consider comments which are unlawful or use discriminatory or offensive language. Any comments of this nature will be invalid and may be referred onto other authorities for further action.

21. Where can I get more information?

You can view all the consultation documents, plus background papers and full references to our evidence base on the Council’s website at www.basildon.gov.uk/localplan. Hard copies of the relevant documents will also be available to view at The Basildon Centre, St Martin’s Square, Basildon, Essex, SS14 1DL on request from Customer Services, at the main libraries in the Borough, or at any of the public exhibition events.

There will be ten public exhibitions around the Borough between 13 February and 16 March 2016. Council Planning Officers will be on hand to help you understand the proposals in the *Draft Local Plan* and answer your questions. There will also be summary leaflets, including comment forms for you to take away. All exhibitions are the same and you can visit the one which is most convenient to you.

The exhibitions details are:

Area	Date	Time	Venue
Pitsea	Saturday 13 February 2016	10.30am – 4.30pm	The Place: Pitsea Leisure Centre, Northlands Pavement, Pitsea
	Monday 29 February 2016	2:00pm – 8:00pm	
Basildon	Wednesday 17 February 2016	10.00am – 4.30pm	Upper Mall, Eastgate Centre, Southernhay, Basildon
	Saturday 5 March 2016	10.00am – 4.30pm	
Laindon	Saturday 20 February 2016	10.30am – 4.30pm	President’s Community Centre, Hoover Drive, Laindon
	Monday 7 March 2016	2.00pm – 8.00pm	Womens’ Institute Hall, Samuel Road, Langdon Hills
Billericay	Monday 22 February 2016	2.00pm – 8.00pm	Billericay Day Centre, Chantry Way, Billericay
	Saturday 12 March 2016	10.30am – 4.30pm	
Wickford	Saturday 27 February 2016	10.30am – 4.30pm	Wickford Community Centre, Market Road, Wickford
	Wednesday 16 March 2016	2.00pm – 8.00pm	

22. Can I purchase a copy of the Draft Local Plan and/or Policies Map?

Hard copies of the Draft Local Plan are available to purchase for £10.00 each. If you also require a copy of the associated Policies Map this will cost an additional £10.00. Cheques should be made payable to Basildon Borough Council or arrangements to pay by debit/credit card payments can be made by calling us on 01268 533333 (Option 6). Please remember to tell us your contact details when making a payment so we can send your documents out to you swiftly.

23. Can I get a copy of the document in an alternative format?

Yes. If you need copies of any of the documents in audio, large print or Braille, please contact us on 01268 207955 or email planningpolicy@basildon.gov.uk. Customers with a hearing or speech impairment can contact us using the Text Relay service. Dial 18001 followed by the full telephone number of the service you require. Calls are charged at your telecommunications provider’s standard rate.

24. I have a disability and am unable to come to the Council Offices or to any of the public exhibitions.

The Council will be sending to residents a copy of the Borough Diary – Local Plan Special Edition which provides a summary of Draft Local Plan and a detachable copy of the Comment Form for you to write down your comments. If you haven’t received a copy of the Borough Diary – Local Plan Special Edition it can be downloaded online at (www.basildon.gov.uk/localplan) or alternatively, we can email or post you a copy if you contact us on 01268 533333 (Option 6).

25. What happens next?

All comments received by 23.59 on the 24th March 2016 will be taken into consideration when the Council prepares the next version of the Local Plan for submission. A Statement of Consultation will be prepared and

reported back to the Council's Cabinet to ensure it can consider the comments made and understand the main issues raised and how they could be addressed if appropriate.

Following the consultation the Local Plan will be redrafted to take into account the comments made on the Draft Local Plan and the findings of any outstanding studies. There will be at least one further opportunity to comment on the Local Plan before it is submitted to the Secretary of State, together with its Sustainability Appraisal and supporting documentation. A Planning Inspector will then be appointed to carry out an "Examination in Public" into the soundness of the Local Plan. The Inspector will issue a report and subject to the findings of that report and any modifications which are necessary, the Council will then adopt the final version of the Local Plan.

26. When will the Local Plan be adopted?

The Council are aiming to submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination early 2017 with the intention for it to be adopted early 2018.

27. What would it mean if someone put a planning application in at the moment?

All planning applications at the present time will be assessed against existing Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies (September 2007) and the 1998 Proposals Map which can be found on the Council's website.