

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is a Core Strategy?

A Core Strategy is a document of the Local Development Framework or LDF, a critical part of the statutory Development Plan which sets out the key elements of the planning framework for a particular Council area. The Core Strategy contains a spatial vision and strategic objectives, a spatial strategy, core policies and a monitoring and implementation framework. It identifies the broad locations for development, as well as the infrastructure required to deliver what it proposes. When adopted the Core Strategy will be Basildon Borough Council's principal Development Plan Document.

2. How does the Core Strategy affect me?

The Core Strategy sets out the over-arching planning policies that others must be in accordance with. It plans for development in the borough over the next 20 years by setting standards and targets for development. For example, the Core Strategy Preferred Option suggests that the Borough should provide 6,500 new homes over the next 20 years. Another LDF document (the Site Allocations Development Plan Document) will identify the particular sites that will be built on to accommodate the 6,500 dwellings. As the Core Strategy sets out the overall policies that determine the level of development for the Borough, it is important to have your say.

3. How do I make comments?

You can make comments in several ways. You can make comments online by visiting <http://basildon-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/>, click on the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report and answer the questions. Please note however that all comments are a public record and cannot be made anonymously.

Alternatively, you can make comments by filling in the Comments Form which you can pick up from Council offices, local housing offices, the main Borough libraries or one of the Public Roadshows. If you email ldf@basildon.gov.uk, or ring [01268 294155](tel:01268294155) we can email or post you a copy of the Comments Form.

Once you have filled in the Comments Form, you can send it back to us using the following **FREEPOST** address:

Planning Services, The Basildon Centre, Basildon Borough Council, **FREEPOST** ANG11276, St Martin's Square, Basildon, Essex, SS14 1ZZ

4. When do you need my comments by?

The consultation starts on the 27th February 2012 and will run for six weeks closing at 5pm on the 11th April 2012. The six week consultation period is in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement – Feb 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. .

5. What happens with my comments?

All comments received by 5pm on the 11th April 2012 will be taken into consideration when the Council prepares the next version of the Core Strategy. 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 address if appropriate..

6. Why do you need my comments if the Preferred Option has already been identified?

The Core Strategy Preferred Option Report consultation is not asking you to choose an option. The Council has chosen Option A as its Preferred Option, after considering Options B and C, but it is asking you if you agree. The Preferred Option also requires supporting policies to ensure it can be delivered. These are set out in the Chapter 7 of the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report and your views on these are also sought. .

Options B and C do not have accompanying delivery policies for, however there is information about Option A, B and C in TP9: 'The Spatial Options' topic paper, which can be found online on the Council's LDF webpage, or at <http://basildon-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/>. It can also be found at all deposit points such as the Council offices, local housing offices and main Borough libraries.

7. What does the settlement hierarchy do?

The settlement hierarchy identifies and groups together settlements in the Borough that are of similar size, have similar characteristics, and have a similar number of services and facilities. The settlement hierarchy can then be used to distribute development across the Borough. For example, the settlements at the top of the hierarchy are more likely to have more development than the settlements lower down the hierarchy. To see how the Borough's settlement hierarchy has been determined, refer to the topic paper TP8: Settlement Hierarchy.

8. Where has the housing target come from?

The Council needs to make proactive decisions about the level of development to accommodate in the area to meet local needs in accordance with Government policy. Failure to do so could otherwise lead to a situation called 'planning by appeal' which occurs when an area's land supply runs low. It would mean the Council would have less control over where new development goes and for these reasons, the Council must set a future housing target based on local information.

The housing target in Option A is established from the potential number of homes that can be provided on land in the existing urban areas; what is referred to as the urban capacity.

The housing target in Option B and C are informed from population forecasts commissioned by all Essex councils that take into account people moving into an area, people being born, death rates, etc. These population figures are then converted into housing targets, based on the amount of new households that could be created by an increasing population.

9. Is the Council identifying empty properties?

Yes. The Council's Housing Service frequently monitors empty properties and how long they have been vacant before using a strategy to get them back into use by working with the owner and a Registered Provider.

10. With the population ageing, how are the elderly provided for?

The Core Strategy Preferred Option looks to encourage the future provision of specialised housing for older people. If the evidence suggests that care homes are required in the Borough, the Council could look into allocating sites for this type of housing specifically, where it is proven to be financially viable.

11. What about social housing?

The Core Strategy Preferred Option wants to seek a 35% affordable housing contribution from development sites capable of accommodating 10 or more homes. This figure is based on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the South Essex sub-region undertaken in 2008. More housing information can be found in the TP5: the Housing topic paper.

12. What about dwelling mix?

The Core Strategy Preferred Option wants to promote a mixture of dwellings. However, the Development Management Policies Development Plan Document, which is separate to the Core Strategy will provide further detail on dwelling mix to provide a range of housing to cater for different needs.

13. Will there be enough work for people?

The Core Strategy Preferred Option is to allocate two new locations for employment purposes, following their identification in an Employment Land Capacity Study carried out in 2008. This would involve 4ha of land being made available for general industry north of Ford's test track at its plant at Dunton and a further 2ha coming forward in the Nethermayne area on land which includes Basildon University Hospital and South Essex college. There are also more incidental employment opportunities that could be brought forward in the Preferred Option's Primary Areas for Development and Change (PADCs). The LDF's Site Allocations Development Plan Document would formally allocate any additional land for employment if necessary. For more information, see Topic Paper TP3: Economic Development.

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

Infrastructure is a borough-wide issue. The Council must, as part of the next phases of the Core Strategy produce an "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 Council will work in partnership with the Highways Authority, education and health partners as well as utility companies to ensure there is the necessary infrastructure to serve development. Developers often have to make

contributions towards infrastructure and the Preferred Option sees this continuing. More information can be found in the Topic Paper TP6: Transport and Utilities.

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

In 2010, the Council commissioned a Water Cycle Study and Surface Water Management Plan to determine the capacity of the Borough's drainage infrastructure and look at ways it could ease pressure from development and upgrade existing facilities. The Council will work in partnership with Anglian Water to determine if the systems can accommodate different forms of development in certain locations, informed by the results of these studies and elaborate on what improvements are needed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) as referred to in Question 14.

16. What about trains?

All train franchise operators and Network Rail will be involved in the preparation of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The Council need to justify that infrastructure can support new development and will need to look at the capacity of the existing railway network, as much as to do for roads.

17. What about localism?

The Council recognises the changes the Coalition Government has and the need to determine housing targets at a local level along with other measures rather than having regionally imposed targets. This consultation is an opportunity for local people to have their say. The Localism Act 2011 will in time, enable Neighbourhood Plans to be prepared by local communities, but they must be in accordance with up to date plans. This is another important reason why you should have your say on the Core Strategy Preferred Option.

18. Why didn't I know about the consultation earlier?

The consultation could only begin once a decision had been made by the Council to consult on the Core Strategy. This decision was taken on 16th February 2012 and whilst there was some coverage of this in the local press we could not send out letters immediately as the consultation did not legally start until 27th February 2012. Since the consultation has started, the Council is promoting it as best it can in accordance with its Statement of Community Involvement. It is holding public roadshows across the Borough, as well as issuing new press releases, advertising in the local press, the Borough Diary and notifying Parish Councils and anyone on the Council's LDF Consultation Database.

19. Why can't I understand the Core Strategy?

The Council is required to follow a complicated statutory process and provide sufficient justification for the proposals, but the Council notes that this may make the document more complicated. We will be holding public roadshows to provide further information and our officers will be on hand to answer any questions you may have. If you have any about the Core Strategy, then the Council are available to answer them by email/ phone or in person at a roadshow.

20. How can I get more information?

There are nine Topic Papers available on-line or are available from our Council offices, local housing offices and main Borough libraries. They provide additional information alongside the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report. The Core Strategy has been formulated drawing from a wide range of background evidence and supporting documents which can also be found on-line.

21. What is wrong with the old Plan that you need to replace it with something new?

The Borough's existing plan was produced in the mid 1990's, adopted in 1998 and now only includes about 1/3rd of its original policies which were saved by the Government in 2007. The Council is obligated by the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to prepare a development plan for its area as a Local Planning Authority.

22. What happened to my site that I submitted through the Call for Sites in 2007/ 2008?

All of the areas of land submitted to the Council as part of the Call for Sites exercises have been subject to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). Under the Council's Preferred Option, only those sites that are not in the Green Belt would be considered further for their development potential.

23. What about Plotland infill?

The Council's preferred Option does not include Plotland infill. The Borough's Plotlands are all within the Green Belt and accordingly under Option A, which affords the greatest protection to the Green Belt, Plotland infill is discounted. Options B and C are the only options which allow some release of Green Belt and are the options which would permit infill development in the Plotlands

24. What has happened about the old Dry Street and Barn Hall Areas of Special Reserve?

Options A, B and C would see the areas previously defined as the Dry Street and Barn Hall Areas of Special Reserve come forward for new development through the SHLAA and PADC10: the Nethermayne Cluste, the latter of which also includes the Hospital, Hospice and South Essex College. Not all of the 850 new dwellings which the Core Strategy envisages would come forward on the Dry Street Area of Special Reserve as some would be based on the current college site, once it has been relocated into Basildon Town Centre. With regards to Barn Hall, the public open space could only be developed where an equivalent sized replacement open space is provided on other land in the vicinity. Any development would however need to acknowledge the environmental sensitivities that relate to some of the land and ensure appropriate environmental safeguards and mitigation measures are put into place.

25. What about the Bowers Gifford proposals I've heard about?

The Council's Preferred Option puts considerable emphasis on protecting the Green Belt above other considerations within the borough. The land purchased by Nottinghamshire County Council's pension fund does not form part of the Council's Preferred Option given its Green Belt status.

26. What has happened to the Gardiners Lane South site, as it is not specifically mentioned anymore?

The Core Strategy Preferred Options Report does not refer to the Gardiners Lane South site specifically; but it does include it within PADC7: the A127 Enterprise Corridor. The inclusion in this broader designation would enable it to be brought forward for development in the future subject to financial and infrastructure constraints being overcome; however the Council's Core Strategy Preferred Options does not rely on it coming forward for employment or housing purposes and instead envisages other locations meeting this development need..

27. Does Option A mean that there will be development on the area's open spaces?

No, not necessarily. Option A aims to make the most of what is already in place, by regenerating urban areas and town centres, utilising the existing services and infrastructure. Under this option the Council would only consider developing public open space, where there is an acknowledged over supply in a given locality, or where an equivalent sized open space can be provided in the vicinity to unlock a development site, should the Council be unable to accommodate the number of new homes it envisages within the built up areas.

28. What about Gypsies and Travellers?

The Council believes that all members of the community should be treated fairly and equally. Accordingly the needs of Gypsies and Travellers will be considered in the Core Strategy and a separate Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document. Before any specific policies can be prepared the Council needs to undertake a Local Needs Accommodation Assessment (LNAA) which it hopes to commence in 2012.

29. What happens next?

Following the consultation the Core Strategy will be redrafted to take into account the comments made on the Preferred Options Report and the findings of any outstanding studies. There will be at least one further opportunity to comment on the Core Strategy before it is submitted to the Secretary of State, together with its Sustainability Appraisal and supporting documentation. He will appoint a Planning Inspector to carry out an **examination in public** into the soundness of the Core Strategy. The Inspector will issue a binding report and the Council will adopt the final version of the Core Strategy. This process usually takes between 6 - 9 months from submission..

30. When will the Core Strategy be adopted?

See response to the question 'What happens next?'

31. Can I get a copy of the document in another language or alternative format?

Yes. If you need copies of any of the documents in a different language or in audio, large print or Braille, please let us know by telephoning our alternative format/ language request line on 0800 952 0119, quoting the reference 22066..