

# A Housing Strategy for Colchester 2015-2020



Colchester's Housing Strategy 2015 – 2020 provides an important summary of how the Council and its partners will achieve its vision to:

*Make Colchester a place where people choose to live in a decent, safe and healthy home which; meets their needs, at a price they can afford and in locations and neighbourhoods that are sustainable and desirable, and to improve the quality of life of local residents.*



# The local picture

- Colchester is the second largest district in Essex; the borough is mainly urban (71% of the population) with a significant rural population (29%).
- Colchester's population was estimated at 180,420 people in mid-2014, and is estimated to grow to approximately 194,600 people in 2022, an increase of 9.6% (17,000 people) over a 9 year period. This is the second highest population growth in Essex County



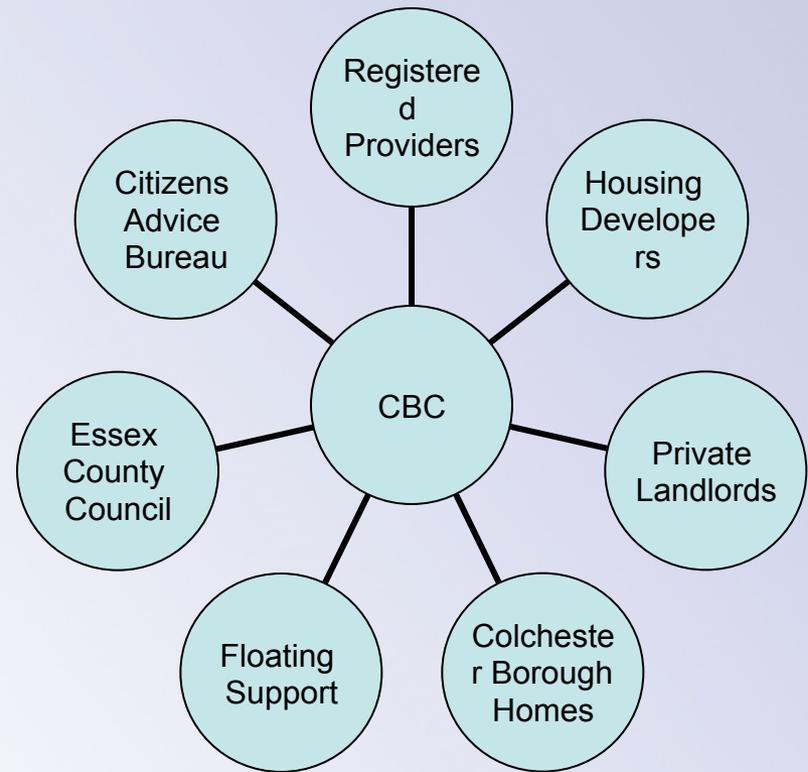
# Local picture continued...

- The ethnic minority population in Colchester continues to grow, but is still less than 10% of the total population at 8%.
- The average household size in Colchester in 2011 was 2.4.



The Housing Strategy was developed by Colchester Borough Council and its partner organisations.

A Partnership of Key Stakeholders was set up in May 2014



- Considered the achievements that had been made since the last Housing Strategy in 2008.
- Compiled an evidence base bringing together all available data on all aspects of housing in Colchester.
- Researched national and local policy that may impact on the strategy.
- Consulted with residents and organisations to identify priorities for housing.
- Highlighted key issues and determined long term goals and priorities for housing in Colchester.
- Developed an action plan to deliver the priorities.



# Evidence Base

Data from the 2011 Census recorded:

- The level of owner occupation in Colchester (66%) which was lower than in Essex (71%) but higher than nationally (63%).
- The level of social stock (14%), the same as Essex but lower than the East Region (16%).
- The level of private rented accommodation in Colchester (19%) which was slightly higher than both the East Region (15%) and nationally (17%).



# Evidence base continued...

- The number of homes built in Colchester between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014 (725)
- In the same year the number of new affordable homes that were completed (96)
- The number of households on the Housing Register (as at 1st April 2014 was 3951).
- The number of affordable homes let from April 2013 to March 2014 (725).
- The average house price in Colchester (as at April 2014 was £216,000).



# The Review

The Partnership identified challenges that they considered local residents and providers of housing services will face over the next few years.



# Key priorities for the strategy

- *Maximise the supply of housing to meet local needs*
- *Work with partners and residents to create mixed communities which are economically, environmentally and socially healthy and resilient.*
- *Prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.*
- *Improve the life chances of Colchester's residents including their Health and Wellbeing*



## Key priorities continued...

- *Work with customers to help them make informed choices about their housing options.*
- *Make the best use of existing homes*
- *Work to ensure that existing and new homes are healthy, safe and energy efficient.*
- *Ensure that housing and related services meet a range of specialist needs.*



# Consultation

- Out of those that responded 27% were under 35, 58% were 36-59 and 15% were over 60.
- In terms of the Ethnicity of the respondents, 96% were white, 3% were Black or Black British and 1% were Asian or Asian British.



# Key messages

- Lack of affordable housing – especially family homes.
- Infrastructure needed to support new housing.
- Better access to supported housing for vulnerable people.
- Lack of and difficulty accessing affordable private rented accommodation.
- Lack of specialist housing options for young people aged 16-19 years old.
- Overcrowding and under occupation.
- Ensure good standards of housing condition and repair.
- Provide housing options for older people.
- Provision for first time buyers



# How the Housing Strategy is monitored

- The Delivery plan and Evidence base is updated yearly.
- A report on the progress of the strategy and delivery plan is produced yearly and circulated to the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for housing, and key stakeholders and published on the CBC website.
- <http://www.colchester.gov.uk/housingstrategy>

