

Harlow Housing Strategy Summary 2020 – 2025

February 2020

Introduction

Harlow Council is producing a new Housing Strategy that will provide the priorities for strategic housing in Harlow over the next five years (2020 to 2025). We are currently consulting local residents, our partners and other stakeholders on what the strategic housing priorities and issues are for Harlow to ensure that the Housing Strategy reflects the right things. This document provides a summary of the proposed content of the new Housing Strategy and will hopefully be helpful as background reading when responding to the Housing Strategy survey.

The Housing Strategy will identify the key priorities for strategic housing in Harlow and will set how the Council intends to address the key housing issues. The Housing Strategy will help guide future planning and delivery of new homes to help meet local needs.

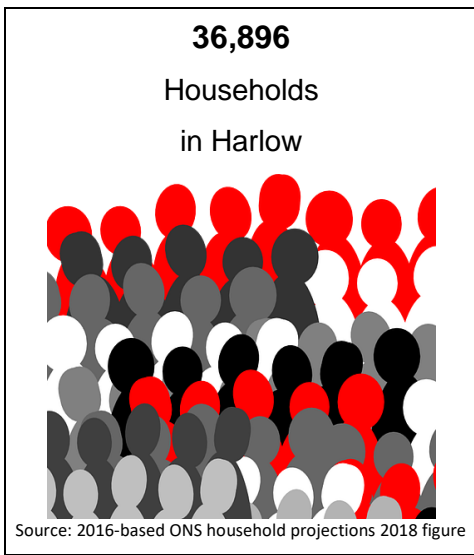
It should be noted that the Harlow Local Plan and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment provide greater information and data about housing needs for Harlow over the next 25 years.

The Housing Strategy will not cover Council Housing tenancy issues or Homelessness issues, as these are covered by separate strategies.

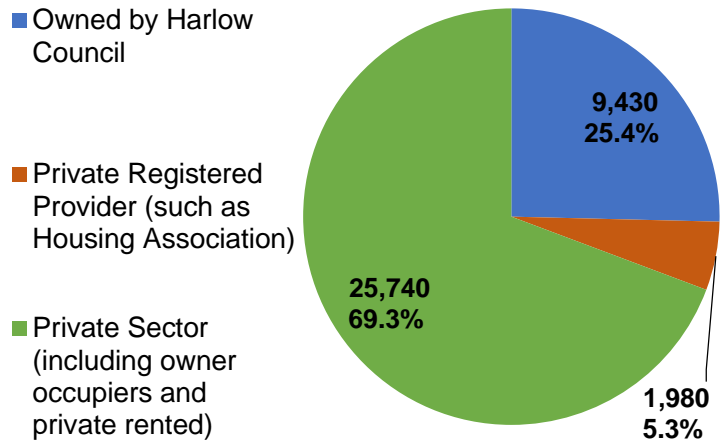


Harlow Key Housing Characteristics

The following provides a summary of the current housing market in Harlow.



Tenure of dwellings in Harlow 2017

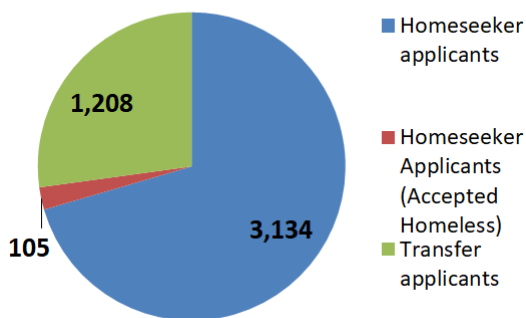


There has been a shift in the tenure that people live in between 2001 and 2018

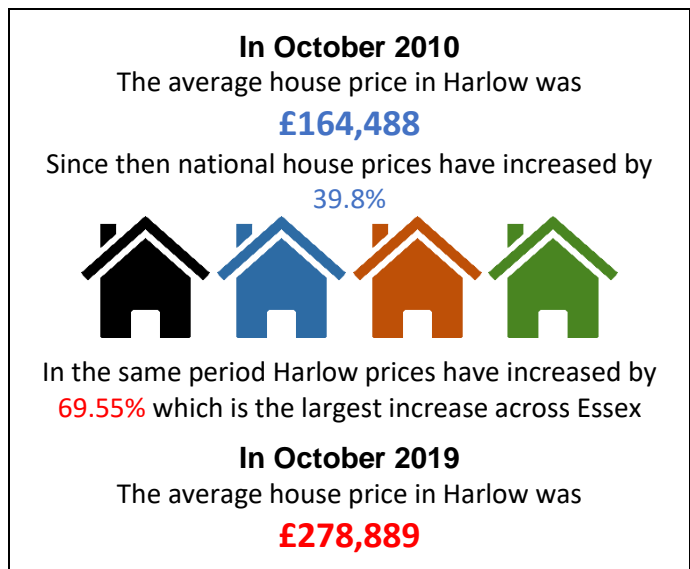
| | Census 2001 | | | YouGov 2018 | | | Percentage point change 2001 to 2018 | | |
|-------------------|---|----------------|-----------------------------------|---|----------------|-----------------------------------|---|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Owens outright, mortgaged or shared ownership | Social Housing | Private rented or lives rent free | Owens outright, mortgaged or shared ownership | Social Housing | Private rented or lives rent free | Owens outright, mortgaged or shared ownership | Social Housing | Private rented or lives rent free |
| Harlow | 64% | 32% | 4% | 40% | 34% | 26% | -24% | 2% | 22% |
| East Herts | 80% | 10% | 9% | 69% | 8% | 23% | -11% | -2% | 14% |
| Uttlesford | 79% | 11% | 10% | 70% | 14% | 16% | -9% | 3% | 6% |
| Epping | 80% | 13% | 7% | 71% | 9% | 20% | -9% | -4% | 13% |
| England | 73% | 16% | 11% | 59% | 13% | 28% | -14% | -3% | 17% |

Source: Shelter, Growth in the private Rented Sector 2001-2018

Applicants on the Council's Housing Needs Register (as at December 2019)



Source: Harlow Council Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2019 to 2049



Source: HM Land Registry 2019

Proposed structure and content of Harlow's Housing Strategy 2020 to 2025

The following four priorities have been identified as being key for Harlow over the next five years:



The Housing Strategy will have a chapter on each priority.

Each Chapter will:

- Outline why the priority is important
- Set out key objectives for The Council regarding the priority
- Identify themes that will help focus activity to meet the objectives
- Outline what we plan to do to help meet the priority

Priority 1 – Creating a suitable supply of new housing to meet local housing needs

Objective 1.1

Increasing the **supply of new housing** generally across the town to meet the needs of local residents and workers

- Theme a - Increasing new build completions
- Theme b – Supporting growth through the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town
- Theme c – Enabling self-build and custom build housebuilding

Objective 1.2

Maximising the supply and diversity of affordable housing options to ensure the right type of housing is available in the right places

- Theme a - Affordability of local housing market for local people
- Theme b - Affordable housing negotiated through the planning system
- Theme c - Diversifying the range of affordable housing options to provide greater affordable choice for local people

Objective 1.3

Develop a **Council House Building Programme**

- Theme a - Develop the Council's housebuilding programme
- Theme b - Building homes that are energy efficient / carbon neutral

Key issues:



Housing need in Harlow:

The **total housing need** (taking account of existing residents' needs and planned growth) identified for Harlow between 2011 and 2033 is **7,409 new dwellings**.

The amount of **affordable housing** identified for Harlow between 2011 and 2033 is **3,400** new dwellings.

The average number of **new affordable houses required each year** is **182**



Harlow and Gilston Garden Town:

The development of **Harlow and Gilston Garden Town** will deliver an estimated additional 16,000 homes by 2033 in and around Harlow.

2,600 homes are planned within the boundary of Harlow, (30% of which will be affordable)



Self-build and custom build housebuilding:

Statutory duty on Council to maintain a self-build register and to provide adequate planning permissions for serviced plots that can be sold to interested individuals or groups.

Over 50 people have registered on Harlow's self-build and custom build register.

Affordability of housing in Harlow:

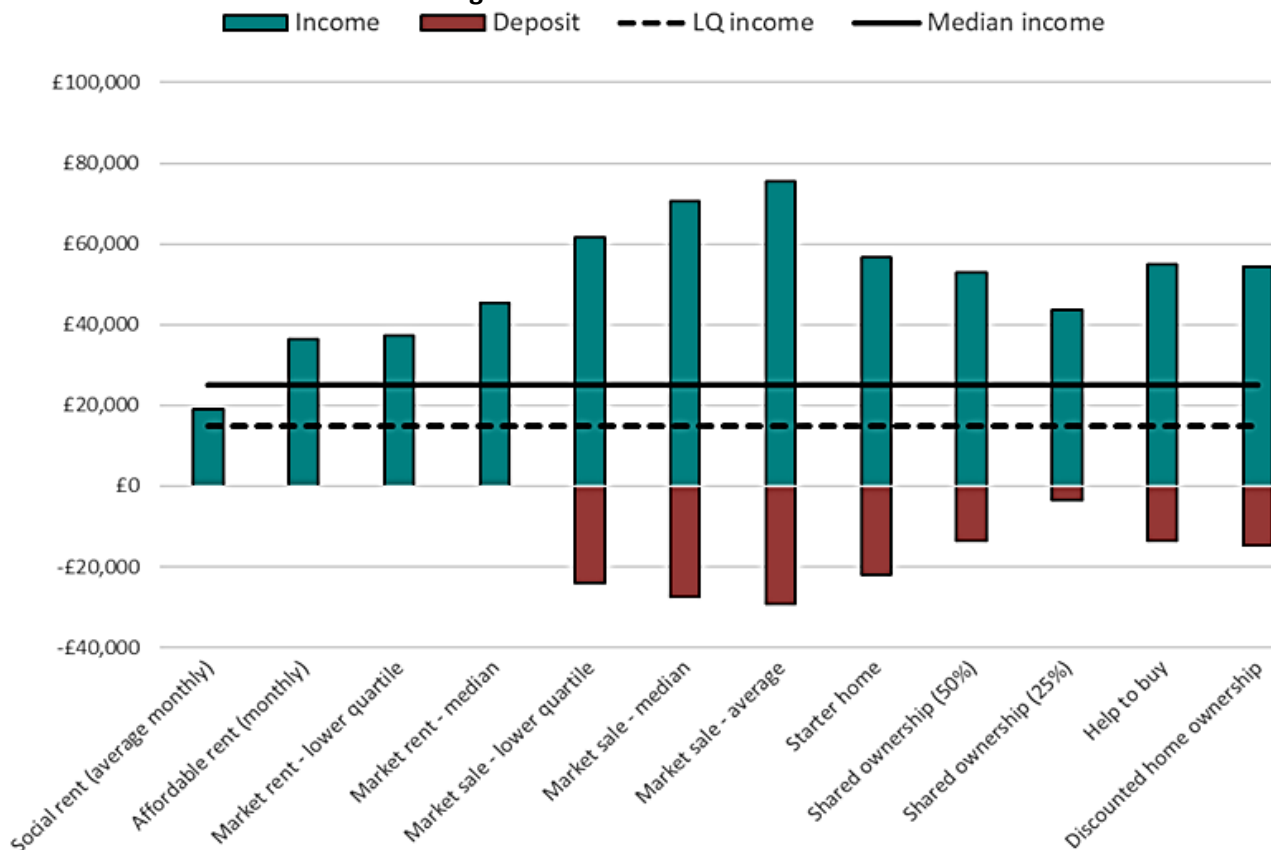
| Comparative medium private rental price (PCM) 2010 – 2018 | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-------|---------------------|
| Location | Median price by year (£) | | % change 2010 -2018 |
| | 2010 | 2018 | |
| Harlow | 724 | 949 | +31.1 |
| East of England | 698 | 849 | +21.6 |
| England | 893 | 1,075 | +20.4 |

Source: Zoopla PPD 2019

| Cost of alternative tenures in Harlow | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Tenure option | 2018 median price |
| Social rent (average) | £399 |
| Affordable rent | £759 |
| Market rent – lower quartile | £776 |
| Market rent – median | £949 |
| Market sale – lower quartile | £240,000 |
| Market sale – Median | £275,000 |
| Market sale – average | £293,620 |
| Starter Home | £220,000 |
| Shared ownership (50%) | £137,500 |
| Shared ownership (25%) | £68,750 |
| Help to buy | £206,250 |
| Discounted home ownership | £205,534 |

Source: ARC4 P49 – data from Land Registry Crown copyright 2019, Zoopla 2019, MHCLG, RSH SDR 2018

Harlow household income and housing costs



Source: ARC4 p52

Priority 2: Addressing the housing needs of target and vulnerable groups

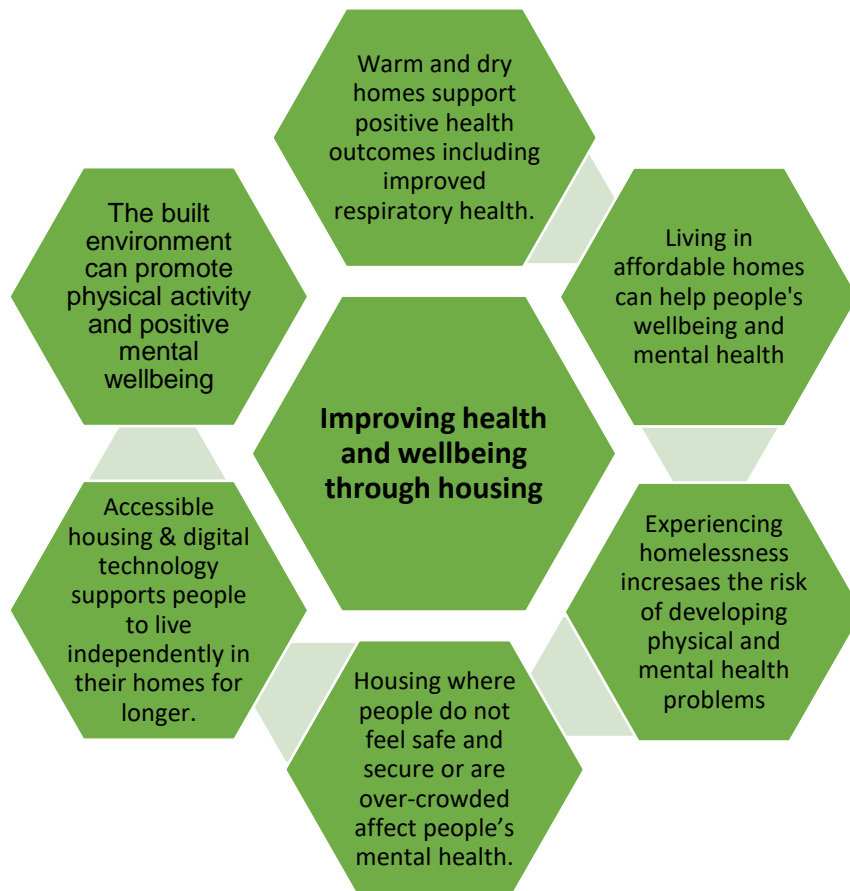
Objective 2.1
Improving health and wellbeing through housing

- Theme a - Ensuring good quality and accessible homes
- Theme b - Ensuring homes benefit from digital technology that supports health and wellbeing of residents
- Theme c - Built environment that promotes healthier lifestyles

Objective 2.2
Address the housing needs of **target and vulnerable groups**

- Theme a - Homeless
- Theme b - Older people's housing
- Theme c - Housing for people with disabilities including physical disabilities, mental health, learning disabilities
- Theme d - Supported housing
- Theme e - Gypsy and travellers
- Theme f - Housing for people under 35 years old
- Theme g - Young people leaving care
- Theme h - Key workers
- Theme i - Ex-Offenders
- Theme j - Veterans

Key Issues:



Further Points:

- The Council has at any one time in the region of 250 to 280 households living in temporary accommodation.
- The main reason for homelessness is “no fault” evictions from the Private Rented Sector (S21 notices).
- The numbers of people sleeping rough in Harlow has fluctuated since 2010 – but after significant work – the number reduced from 24 in 2017 to just 9 in 2018.
- Harlow council adopted a new Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy (2019 to 2024) in October 2019, which has the overarching objective of eliminating rough sleeping and providing a service that focuses on the prevention of homelessness.
- Harlow’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy identifies the increase in clients with mental health and / or complex needs and the reduction in Housing Related Support by Essex County Council as two key challenges faced in tackling homelessness locally.
- Between 2015 and 2025 it was predicted that the number of over 65’s living in Harlow will increase from 13,200 to 16,000; an increase of 21% and will represent 17% of the total population of the District .
- Essex County Council has identified the need for 60 additional extra care units in Harlow.
- People under 35 years old of all incomes are being priced out of the housing market in all tenures.
- Not providing young people leaving care with appropriate support can result in a lack of stability and prevent young people achieving a smooth transition to independence and achieve their best life chances.
- As part of its Local Plan Harlow Council undertakes regular Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessments that identify if additional sites are required.
- Essex-wide Prisoner Housing Protocol introduced which aims to reduce the number of Essex adult offenders who leave custody without suitable accommodation to move into, and especially reduce the number of offenders obliged to sleep rough or to move into accommodation which is unsafe for themselves or others.
- Nationally veterans account for 0.72% of households accepted as homeless by Local Authorities but research suggests that actually 3% of homeless households accepted as homeless are ex-veterans.
- Key Workers support the local economy and help achieve economic prosperity and growth, so affordable housing for key workers could help local businesses to recruit and retain essential staff.

Priority 3 - Improving housing in the Private Sector

Objective 3.1

Understanding the importance of the private rented sector within the local housing market

- Theme a - Growth of the private rented sector
- Theme b - Importance of the Private Rented Sector in helping prevent homelessness in Harlow
- Theme c - The impact of the growth of permitted development office conversions to residential

Objective 3.2

Improving conditions for tenants within the private rented sector

- Theme a - Conditions of private rented sector housing
- Theme b - Evictions from private rented sector resulting in homeless applications
- Theme c - Affordability of the private rented sector

Objective 3.3

Improving the conditions of the wider Private Sector

- Theme a - Empty homes
- Theme b - Improving wider private sector housing

Key issues:



Growth in the private rented sector

The number of households in Harlow that are living in private rented housing has grown substantially from 4% in 2001 to 26% in 2018 (a 22% growth).

This is greater than the national picture of a 17% increase.



Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates have not kept up with market rents since 2010 and are currently frozen at 2016 rates.

The main reason for homelessness is “no fault” evictions from Private Rented Sector (S21 notices).



Growth of Permitted Development office conversions to residential

- Permitted development conversions have created over 1,000 new residential units in Harlow in the last few years, the majority of these are located in inappropriate environments.
- If 1,000 residential units had been built via schemes that need planning permission it would be expected that 30% would be affordable units.



Improving the conditions of the wider Private Sector

The 2008 Harlow House Condition Survey suggested that 24.9% of all housing in Harlow was a non-decent standard. This included 23.1% of owner occupied housing and 34% of the Private Rented Stock.

Priority 4 - Supporting the regeneration of Harlow

Objective 4.1
Ensuring the delivery of new housing in the Town Centre contributes to a **vibrant and sustainable town centre**

- Theme a - Supporting the regeneration of the Town Centre through housing provision
- Theme b - Exploring opportunities for specialist housing within the Town Centre

Objective 4.2
Supporting the **growth of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town**

- Theme a - Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Housing Plan

Objective 4.3
Supporting the **regeneration of Harlow**

- Theme a - Estate regeneration programmes
- Theme b - Regeneration through development

Objective 4.4
Supporting the **economic growth** of the town through housing

- Theme a - Supporting recruitment and retention of staff for key businesses within the town
- Theme b - Skills shortages within the construction industry
- Theme c - Ensuring all housing has high quality digital infrastructure
- Theme d - Supporting the delivery of high quality and environmentally sustainable new house building

Key Issues:

