

Annual Review of the Council House Building Programme 24/25



Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	10 July 2025
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Dan Swords, Leader of the Council
Lead Officer:	David Sellings, Director - Regeneration
Contributing Officers:	Suzanna Wood, Programme Manager (PMO) Lee Johnson, Project Management Office (PMO) Supervisor
Key Decision:	No
Forward Plan:	Forward Plan number I018379
Call In:	This item is not subject to call in procedures because it is for noting only
Corporate Mission:	Rebuild our town
Wards Affected:	All

Executive Summary

- A** In respect of the Councils' corporate mission to 'rebuild our town', the Building Harlow's Future plan states that the council will *"successfully complete Phase 1 of our Council House Building Programme."*
- B** In line with that outcome, this report along with Appendix A provides an update on progress in delivering the Council House Building Programme (CHBP). Phase 1 of the CHBP is delivering a mix of quality new council homes for residents on the Housing Needs Register and the first phase of new homes being available at social rent levels.

Recommended that:

- A** Cabinet notes the report and progress achieved in delivering the Council House Building Programme (CHBP) in the previous 12 months.

Reason for decision

- A** An annual review of the Council House Building Programme was mandated within the Council House Building Programme Cabinet Report in March 2022, Appendix A provides an update on delivery of the programme to date.
- B** The Building Harlow's Future plan states that the council will "*rebuild our town.*" In line with that stated outcome, this report sets out the progress achieved to date and how the Council is on track to "*successfully complete Phase 1 of our Council House Building Programme.*"

Other Options

- A** Not applicable.

Background

1. In March 2022¹, Cabinet endorsed Phase 1 of the council's proposed programme to deliver new, affordable homes that would be available to Harlow residents, on the Council Housing Needs Register.
2. Phase 1 of the programme approved 11 sites that were deemed suitable for redevelopment and should be taken forward, with a target of 99 new council homes to be provided.
3. Since endorsement, the council has been delivering the programme in accordance with the programme objectives and to ensure the targets are met, which were:
 - a) To deliver 99 new social-rented Council homes in Phase 1; and.
 - b) Production of a detailed Phase 2 programme, identifying plans for more than 200 additional homes.

Issues/Proposals

4. Since the last annual review, significant progress across all schemes has been made, with 2 sites complete, 4 sites in the later stages of construction and 5 sites in the pre-construction stage, with contractors appointed and construction to start this month.
5. A target of 99 new homes was set; however the Phase 1 programme will see 121 new homes being provided, which includes 8 new, single occupancy units, that will support individuals in housing crisis and facing homelessness; these units have been secured by Harlow, at no cost as part of the contractors commitment to provide social value that supports local communities.

¹ <https://moderngov.harlow.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=12200>

6. Table 1 provides a summary of schemes and the number of new homes to be delivered by the programme, on a site-by-site basis, further information can be found in Appendix A.

Table 1 - Scheme Summary

Site / Scheme Name	No. new homes to be provided	Status & RAG
Bushey Croft	16	<i>Completed</i>
4 The Hill	2	<i>Completed</i>
Perry Road (Staple Tye)	24	<i>In Construction</i>
Perry Road Depot (Staple Tye)	10	<i>In Construction</i>
Parnell Road (Staple Tye)	10	<i>In Construction</i>
The Yorkes	6	<i>Pre-Construction</i>
Arkwrights	8	<i>Pre-Construction</i>
Sherards House	14	<i>Early Construction</i>
Pytt Field	5	<i>Pre-Construction*</i>
Elm Hatch	7	<i>Early Construction*</i>
Woodleys	6	<i>In Construction</i>
Potter Street Neighbourhood Office	5	<i>Procurement underway*</i>
Lower Meadow (Solohaus) ²	8	<i>Final stages of Construction</i>
TOTAL NEW HOMES	121	

7. Red Lion Lane was identified in the original list of potential sites, upon further evaluation, feasibility and viability the site was removed from the programme following recommendation by the Council House Building Programme Board, due to the sites constraints and inability to deliver the programmes objectives. The site is currently being considered for disposal.

² Lower Meadow, solohaus has been delivered as part of a social value opportunity and will be operated by an external charity, available to individuals' facing homelessness.

8. Five sites in the phase 1 programme (The Yorkes, Arkwrights, Sherards House, Pytt Field and Elm Hatch), were subject to tender submissions being returned over the approved budget parameters. Therefore, an alternative route to deliver these sites was sought, and in December 2024, Cabinet approved a consequential extension of the programme and the appointment of Hill Partnerships Ltd, via the Harlow Regeneration Partnership³ to deliver the projects.
9. Hill Partnerships completed the Pre-Construction Service Agreement period in May 2025, and the Council entered into main contracts following submission of the cost plan (which overall was under budget), with the 5 sites being brought forward to construction.
10. Delivery of the programme is progressing on budget; three projects are rated amber due to the construction contract sum being over the approved budget, however at present, the overall programme has an estimated final account of -£4.4m, therefore the overall phase 1 programme is rated green.
11. An overview of the budget and estimated final account, site-by-site can be found in Appendix A.
12. In addition to delivering the new homes target, the programme has provided additional benefit through contractor's commitment to social value. As well as the delivery of the 8 Solohaus homes at Lower Meadow, several activities have been or will be delivered by the completion of phase 1, with residents, students and community groups being supported. Full details can be found in Appendix A.

Next Steps

13. The Building Harlow's Future plan and the corporate mission to 'rebuild our town' sets a new approach to delivering a "once-in-a-generation rebuilding" programme. It further states that the Council will "establish a comprehensive and clear plan to rebuild our housing estates.
14. The plan for housing estate regeneration will "*revitalise communities and improve the quality of life for residents*" and see a whole estate approach that supports large-scale improvements to the Councils housing assets and our neighbourhoods.

³ <https://moderngov.harlow.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=16080>

Implications

Equalities and Diversity

The Equalities Act 2010 has been carefully considered by officers, and an equalities impact assessment was conducted (E725901092). Delivery of the programme, in particular the provision of accessible residential units for Harlow residents will support residents with protected characteristics on the Housing Needs Register.

Climate Change

The programme will positively contribute towards climate change, through the introduction of a number of measures, including the installation of solar panels, requirements under biodiversity net gain, introduction of new green and habitat landscaping.

Finance

Delivery of the first phase Council House Building Programme and the associated budgets has been approved by Council forming part of the Housing Revenue Account and Non-Housing Capital programme and monitored accordingly. The report and Appendix A shows that the programme is delivering within the approved budget, and any scheme variances can be met within the programme budget.

Author: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Director – Finance and Section 151 Officer

Governance

There are no governance implications arising from this update report.

Author: Daniel Dickinson, Director – Legal and Governance (Interim) and Monitoring Officer

Appendices

Appendix A – 2024/25 Council House Building Programme Update Report

Background Papers

None

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

CHBP – Council House Building Programme
HRA – Housing Revenue Account
HRP – Harlow Regeneration Partnership
PCSA – Pre-Contract Service Agreement