

How many homes should be built?



An Overview of the Council's Housing Target

The Council is proposing to build a minimum of **15,250** homes in the borough, a self-imposed target that is likely to be exceeded by some margin. As well as environmental damage this number will have severe negative economic and social impacts.

The Council is expected to produce a Local Plan and as part of this must produce an 'Objectively Assessed Need' (OAN) for housing.

The first point to note about **Objectively Assessed Needs** in any area, is that '**Need**' is a misnomer, as it must include an allowance for migration and this is usually taken to mean that past rates of migration to an area are assumed to continue. Basildon's approach is extreme and is based on its policy of accelerating migration from London; meaning that at least **37%** of the new homes will be for people from outside the area.

Authorities in non-Green Belt areas are usually expected to meet their OAN, but those fortunate enough to have Green Belt are not, they can produce a sub-OAN Housing Target. Castle Point has recently decided to produce a Plan that protects Green Belt in this way.

We don't have to build on Green Belt.

Basildon can build around **8,000**, arguably more, without loss of Green Belt or other green sites we choose to protect. This is the minimum number that the borough can choose to build.

Basildon's local need, the housing needs of its people and their children is in the region of **9,600**. Building that many would unfortunately mean choosing to lose some Green Belt, but nothing like the scale proposed. Our borough differs in this respect from neighbours like Brentwood and Castle Point, who can easily cover their local needs on brownfield sites.

As described, Basildon is proposing a policy of accelerated migration from London. Their rationale is as follows...

There is a long-term economic forecast/guesstimate that the borough could see **8,600** jobs created over the next **20** years.

Basildon's consultants have concluded there is not enough people in the area to fill these jobs and Basildon should choose to bring in many thousands of extra workers and plan for the building of new homes for these workers and their families.

The consultants assume that the thousands of local unemployed will remain so and they have discounted them from their calculation, they also assume that none of the borough's **18,000** part-time workers will take the opportunity to go full time and that half of the borough's workforce will continue to commute rather than take jobs closer to home.

As described, the minimum Basildon must build is **8,000** though our local need is **9,600**. A standard approach to calculating OAN, based on past rates of migration would bring us to **11,200 – 13,200**, but Basildon is choosing to accelerate migration from London and build a minimum of **15,250**.

Despite the economic aims of this local policy, the paradox is that our economy will suffer too, as the infrastructure is strained under the extra load. The railways are a particular problem as there is now very little extra capacity that can be added to the railway line and demand is expected to increase enormously over the coming years. The impact of this mismatch between supply and demand will be that commuting to highly paid jobs in London will become less viable, less tolerable as people won't be able to get on trains let alone find a seat.

The social impact of the proposals is that – even if these jobs do come - there will be an oversupply of workers leading to increased rates of joblessness and lower wages and job security. And what happens if the jobs don't come?

The economic policy will have a social cost and will also be self-defeating taken across all sectors.