

Appendix 1

Bury Draft Housing Strategy Consultation Summary Report – Key Themes, Views from Respondents and Post Consultation Revisions, Comments and Updates.

1.0 Introduction

The consultation questions were structured around the 6 main sections of the Housing Strategy:

- *New homes.*
- *Action on existing homes.*
- *Enabling access to a suitable permanent home.*
- *Supporting people to live well in the community.*
- *Healthy people, homes, and places.*
- *Towards low carbon homes.*

1.1 Respondents were asked to reflect on their importance and identify any additional considerations that the Council should take into account when finalising the Strategy and developing an action plan.

2.0 New homes

2.1 Respondents were asked to state (unprompted) the top 3 most important things they want from their homes. The most common responses are summarised in the table below.

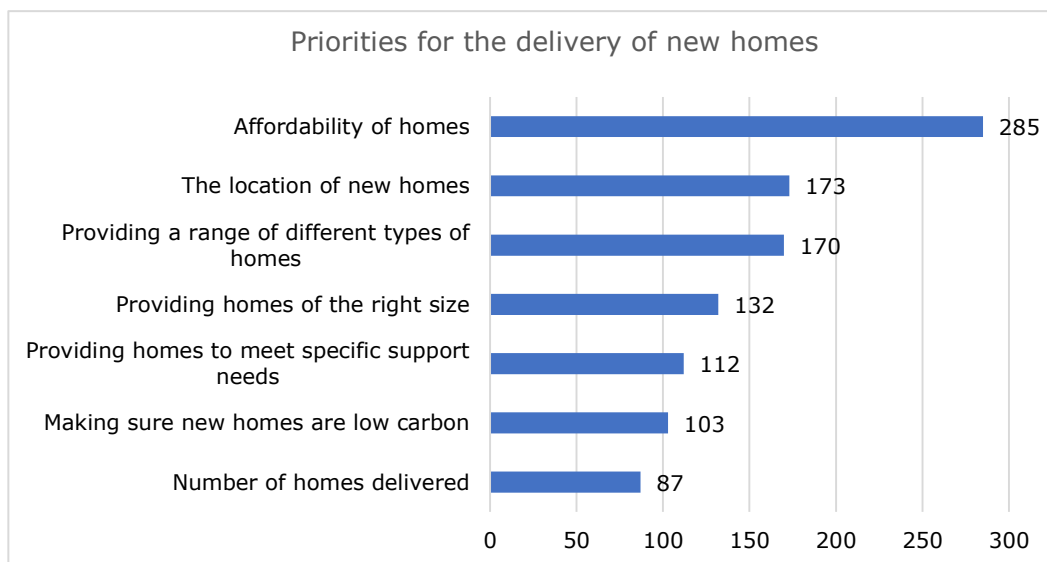
Theme	Number of Responses
Safety/security	178
Affordability of housing	89
Green space/protect greenbelt land	81
Right size/right number of rooms	78
Internal maintenance/repairs	72
Good community/neighbours	67
Warmth/not damp	56
Location	54
Garden	52
Local amenities	49
Accessibility	36
Eco-friendly/energy efficient	35

The most common concern was the importance of feeling safe and secure in one's own home/neighbourhood, followed by affordability then easy access to green space/protection of the greenbelt. This shows a mixed focus on both internal aspects of homes such as size and condition, and wider community factors.

2.2 64 respondents indicated that they had one or more specific housing needs and would be prepared to join a co-production group to influence the support and services they require. The split of housing needs acknowledged by these respondents is as follows:

Housing Need	Number of responses
Physical disability	36
Serious mental health problem	20
Care leaver, asylum seeker, faith observer or other	17
Current or previous experience of homelessness or fleeing domestic violence	12
Learning disability	11

2.3 Respondents were then asked to select the top 3 things that they felt the Council should focus on in supporting the delivery of new homes. Their responses are summarised in the table below.



The most common response and clearly a priority amongst respondents was affordability (75%), followed by location and providing a range of different types of homes (approx 45% respectively). Respondents felt that affordability and location is more important than the number of homes delivered. 81 respondents gave further suggestions. By far the most common suggestion was a desire to protect greenbelt land (62

respondents). A number of respondents stressed that care should be taken to ensure that infrastructure is sufficient around new developments.

2.4 Post-consultation comments, revisions, and updates

- The housing needs of residents will be incorporated into new housing action plans for each township. These plans will take account of affordability, number of homes needed, specialist housing requirements, location, size, and tenure/occupancy (see priority 1 of our Action Plan - Appendix 2).
- We will review the capacity of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to determine opportunity for growth and affordable housing development.
- Reference to a Joint Commissioning Partnership has been added to the Strategy. This partnership will help facilitate the development of genuine affordable housing including supported and specialist accommodation.
- Our new neighbourhood teams will work directly with residents in the community to identify problems such as hate crime and anti-social behaviour and develop solutions in association with our multi-agency Organised Crime Group.
- An additional paragraph has been added to section 2 of the Strategy confirming the Council's support for a 'brownfield first' approach. Further text has been added confirming that the Housing Strategy does not have the authority to allocate land for development, make changes to the greenbelt or re-set planning policy.
- Infrastructure requirements will be considered as part of the planning process for new residential developments.

3.0 **Action on existing homes**

3.1 Respondents were asked if they think the actions proposed by the Strategy to improve Council stock are the right ones. 46% agreed, 41% said they did not know or did not have an opinion and only 14% disagreed. Some respondents gave further comments/suggestions, the top 7 are listed below:

Theme	Number of responses
Disagree with right-to-buy due to net loss	10
Environmental concerns	9
Council housing to be managed by Council/issues with Six Town Housing	8
More affordable social housing	7
Upgrade existing homes	6
Concerns about costs of upgrades	6
Regulate private landlords	5

It should be noted that some suggestions are not within the Council's gift

such as the Right to Buy which is a Government policy.

A number of respondents had environmental concerns, predominantly about building on greenbelt land, others stressed the need for new-build housing to be eco-friendly.

8 respondents expressed a desire for the management of social/council housing to be brought back within the Council itself and, a number of people stressed the need for more affordable and social housing to be built in the Borough.

Some people argued that more focus should be placed on upgrading existing housing (including Council-owned housing). However, concerns were raised about the cost of upgrades and how they would be met by private tenants/homeowners.

- 3.2 Subsequently, respondents were asked if they think the actions proposed to improve the private rented sector were sufficient. 51% agreed, 35% said they did not know or did not have an opinion and only 14% disagreed. Some respondents gave additional comments and suggestions, the top three are listed below:

Theme	Number of responses
Enforcement for bad landlords	12
Higher standards/inspections	12
Beyond Council's control	9

A number of respondents suggested various methods of enforcement for bad landlords including higher standards/increased inspections, licensing schemes, fines, and compulsory purchase if landlords fail to improve poor quality homes. However, 9 respondents felt that the Council does not have sufficient resources to tackle poor quality private rented homes.

- 3.3 Finally, in this section, respondents were asked if they had any suggestions or ideas for bringing empty properties back into use. The top 8 are listed below:

Theme	Number of responses
Renovate	28
Compulsory purchase	26
Offer to homeless/people on Council waiting lists	17
Buy back, remodel and offer affordably	15
Grants/loans for renovations	14
Penalties for landlords of empty	13

homes/otherwise increase costs	
Sell/offer cheaply with conditions	10
Make them affordable	7

As can be seen, the most common suggestion was to renovate/refurbish empty homes so they are suitable for occupation. This includes unused public buildings and commercial properties. Of those that responded, some felt the Council should do this whilst others said private companies and individuals should take responsibility.

26 respondents indicated that the Council should use its compulsory purchase powers to acquire properties that have been left empty for a long time. 17 suggested that empty homes should be offered to people who are homeless or on the Council's housing waiting lists. A further 15 said that the Council should buy empty properties, remodel, and offer as affordable housing.

14 respondents suggested that grants or loans should be offered to encourage renovation. Conversely, 13 people suggested imposing penalties or increased costs on those who leave properties empty. Proposals included higher taxes (specifically Council Tax) and fines. A further 10 suggested that empty properties should be offered for sale at discounted prices with conditions attached for improvement/renovation.

3.4 Post-consultation comments, revisions, and updates

- Priority 6 of the Action Plan (Appendix 2) summarises the actions we intend to take to improve the efficiency of the Borough's housing stock across all tenures, in order to reduce fuel poverty and achieve carbon neutrality by 2038, in conjunction with our emerging Climate Strategy.
- Section 7 of the Housing Strategy Action Plan summarises the actions we intend to take to regulate the private rented sector to improve poor quality housing and create safer communities.
- Text around the core values of the Ethical Lettings Agency has been added to the Strategy to demonstrate how this approach can offer support to vulnerable and homeless people.
- Text has been amended to reflect changes to the scope of the Good Landlord Scheme.
- The figures around empty properties have been revised and text amended, to demonstrate where the Council intends to target future resources.
- We will review the capacity of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to determine opportunity for investment in existing stock.
- An Empty Homes Officer has been recruited to reduce the number of empty properties across the Borough with a range of targeted interventions and minimise the negative effects they have on local communities. Our new Joint Commissioning Partnership will help us with this work.
- The appointment of an energy officer to help deliver the Green Homes Grant Scheme and other initiatives will enable low-income homeowners and landlords to access funding to carry out home improvements.

4.0 Enabling sustainable access to a suitable permanent home

4.1 Respondents were asked whether they think the range of measures proposed across all housing tenures, will help more people access a suitable home that they want to live in. 56% agreed, 30% said they did not know or did not have an opinion and only 13% disagreed. Some of those that disagreed gave additional comments/suggestions, the top 6 are summarised below:

Theme	Number of responses
More options and support for older people	6
Appropriate homes for people with disabilities	6
Brownfield sites for affordable housing	5
More support for people who can't access social housing	5
Pressure developers to build what's needed	4
More affordable homes/less expensive ones	3

Some respondents want to see more options and support for older people e.g. full-time wardens in sheltered housing schemes, support to adapt current home and incentives for downsizing; more appropriate/adapted homes for people with disabilities and, more ground floor flats, bungalows and community-based housing for people with learning disabilities.

5 respondents indicated that more support needs to be provided to ensure people can either access social housing more easily or, are supported to find an acceptable alternative. On a similar note, 3 respondents said that more affordable homes need to be built and, 4 said that developers should be compelled to build homes that are affordable and meet the needs of local communities.

4.2 Post-consultation comments, revisions, and updates

- Addressing the shortfall in housing provision and increasing housing options for older people and specialist groups including people with disabilities, form two of the key priorities in our Action Plan (priority 3 and 4, Appendix 2).
- The Allocations Policy, Strategic Tenancy Policy, Disabled Adaptations Policy and Affordable Housing Strategy will be reviewed, to enable residents to explore the full range of housing options and make a choice that is right for them. It will also enable the Council to better match disabled people to suitably adapted homes. In addition, we are planning to create easy read summaries of these policies and other housing related documents in association with Bury People First, to give support to those who need it.

- We are also considering developing a Common Housing Register which would include properties belonging to registered providers, to increase choice and boost numbers.
- The Council has a duty to determine all planning applications submitted in accordance with national guidance. Nevertheless, the Housing Strategy is supported by our Housing Needs and Demand Assessment which shows what types of homes are needed and, we intend to use this information to help influence private developers and registered providers to build the types of housing required by local communities.

5.0 Supporting people to live well in the community

5.1 Respondents were asked whether they think the range of support proposed by the Strategy to help people live well in the community is sufficient. 53% agreed, 31% said that they did not know or did not have an opinion and 16% disagreed. Those that disagreed were asked what else they would recommend; the top 6 are summarised below:

Theme	Number of responses
More support in the community	6
Listen to/talk to people to find out what they need	6
Consider community cohesion	5
More housing options in the community	3
Deal with underlying issues	3
Environmental concerns	3

A number of respondents stressed the need for additional holistic community-based support not just housing support but, support for young tenants and new mothers specifically and, more activity focused community groups.

Five people described the importance of considering community cohesion in housing decisions, such as where to allocate housing for people with support needs. Three others want to see more housing options provided in the community for people with support needs and, a further three noted that additional investment would be required from the Government to achieve the desired aims.

5.2 Post-consultation comments, revisions, and updates

- Our new neighbourhood teams will work directly with residents in the community and support those who face the most difficult and often multiple challenges, such as long-term unemployment, significant mental health issues and drug and/or alcohol dependency. They will also provide housing and tenancy

sustainment services, signposting to activities and help people take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing, in order to create stronger, more resilient, and connected communities.

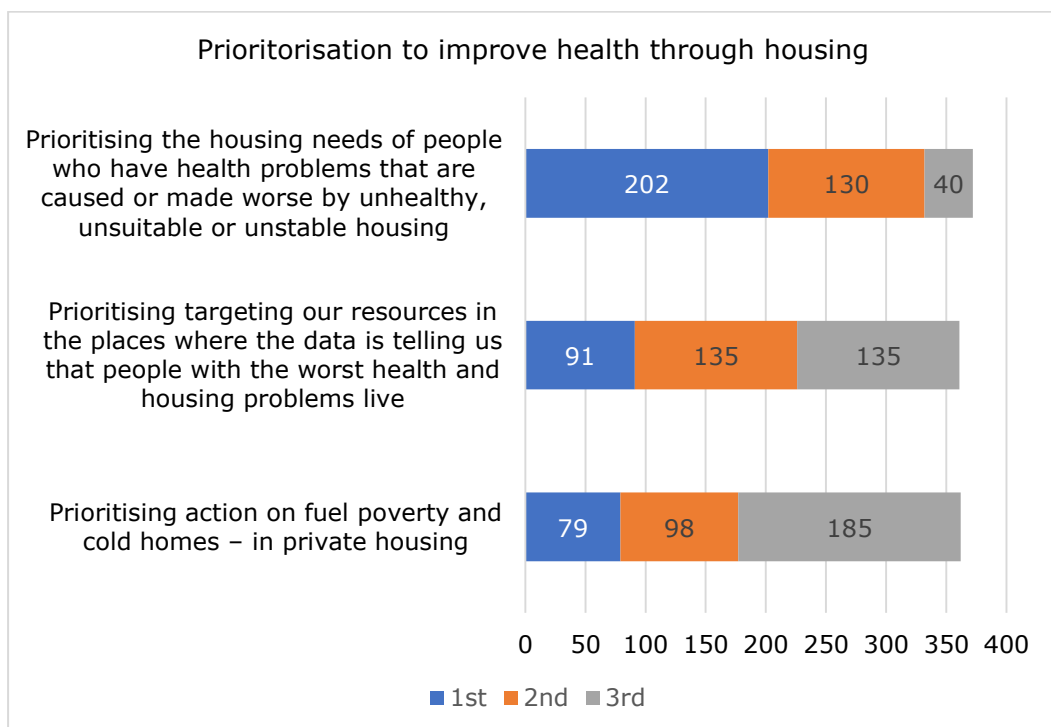
- We will work with our commissioning teams and service users to ensure that any new housing we commission with our partners for people with support needs is appropriate (see priority 4 of our Action Plan, Appendix 2).

6.0 Healthy people, homes, and places

6.1 In this section, respondents were asked to indicate how the Council and health commissioners should rank the following 3 priorities to help improve people’s health through their homes:

- Prioritising the housing needs of people who have health problems that are caused or made worse by unhealthy, unsuitable, or unstable housing.
- Prioritising targeting resources in the places where the data is telling us that people with the worst health and housing problems live.
- Prioritising action on fuel poverty and cold homes – in private housing.

The diagram below summarises the responses to this question.



By far the most common response was ‘prioritising the housing needs of people who have health problems that are caused or made worse by unhealthy, unsuitable or unstable housing’. Targeting resources in places with the worst health and housing problems was prioritised slightly higher than action on fuel poverty and cold homes in private housing.

6.2 Subsequently, respondents were asked whether they think the actions proposed by the Strategy at community and place level will help improve resident's health and wellbeing - 63% agreed, 29% said that they did not know or did not have an opinion and only 9% disagreed. A number of respondents gave further comments/suggestions, the top 7 are summarised below:

Theme	Number of responses
Don't build on the greenbelt/maintain green and open public spaces	20
Not convinced actions will be successful	12
Develop community	4
Improve quality of existing homes	3
Fuel poverty	3
More focus on mental health	3
Listen to health/disability experts	3

12 respondents were unconvinced that the actions stated will actually be delivered or achieve their stated aims. 4 people described a need to bolster local communities and community engagement, to support mental health and wellbeing – similar to 5.1 above.

The importance of addressing current homes was noted again: 3 people said that improvements must be made to current homes in a poor state of repair and, 3 others stressed the importance of tackling fuel poverty. 3 people wanted to see greater focus on mental health, and a further three pushed for the Council to listen more to health and disability experts (including people with lived experience).

As with the other questions, a number of people stressed the importance of protecting the greenbelt and maintaining access to green space for physical and mental health and, how critical this has been during the pandemic. They were also concerned about the impact on air quality through increased urbanisation and traffic congestion.

6.3 Post-consultation comments, revisions, and updates

- We will build proactive relationships with private landlords through accreditation and licensing to encourage high standards and help improve poor housing conditions in the private sector.
- We will strengthen our enforcement resources to enable a more proactive approach and help improve the health and wellbeing of our residents (see priority 7 of our Action Plan, Appendix 2).
- We will work with our health and social care partners and service

users to develop an agreed joint commissioning strategy to meet the needs of specialist groups and people with disabilities including those with a learning disability (see priority 4 in the Action Plan).

As with previous sections, some of the responses in this particular section have already been considered and addressed in previous sections.

7.0 Towards low carbon homes

7.1 The final section of the survey asked residents questions about moving towards low carbon homes. Firstly, respondents were asked if they think the actions proposed by the Strategy for the shift to low carbon homes will be sufficient. 42% agreed, 39% said they did not know or did not have an opinion and 18% disagreed.

Those that disagreed were asked what else they would recommend. The top 4 comments/suggestions are summarised below:

Theme	Number of responses
Tackle existing homes	11
Target/support for private homes – solar panels, window upgrades to prevent heat loss and ban wood burning stoves.	11
Don't build on greenbelt/incentivise development on brownfield	9
Concerns re affordability	6

Again, a number of respondents stated that it is important to tackle existing homes, both in terms of carbon emissions and other issues. Some of these issues have already been considered and addressed in previous sections.

The protection of the greenbelt was again a common response. Some respondents suggested planting more trees, particularly in areas prone to or at risk of flooding and, charging developers a premium to build on greenbelt land.

7.2 89% of responders said they would consider having measures installed to make their homes more energy efficient. 20% of those who responded to the questions in this section said that they would like to join a group to explore roles that local residents might play in making the shift to low carbon homes. We are anticipating that this group will have a role in the delivery of our emerging Climate Strategy.

7.3 Post-consultation comments, revisions, and updates

- In relation to the Council's housing stock, a draft action plan for the retrofit of 8,000 homes over the next 17 years has been developed.

Measures include internal and external insulation, solar panels, energy efficient heat pumps to provide low carbon heating and LED lighting. Just under 100 properties have already been fitted with energy efficient heat pumps and customers have benefited from substantially reduced energy bills. Solar panels have been installed on the Red Bank extra care scheme and to 13 residential blocks of flats in the Borough. Loft and cavity wall insulation, energy efficient central heating and double glazing is provided as standard.

- The Council has previously approved £250,000 for tree planting including an allocation of £100,000 to City of Trees as match funding towards further external funding for tree planting. This will be used for a wide range of tree planting within parks and open spaces as well as community tree planting and tree planting aimed at reducing flooding.
- We will develop a new Bury Eco Standard to support planning policy and help decarbonise communities.
- A Greater Manchester Energy Efficiency and Stock Condition Survey is underway for each local authority area. This will enable us to determine the condition of the Boroughs housing stock and carbon status including, for example, EPC ratings.
- Priority 6 of our Action Plan sets out what we intend to do to improve energy efficiency in homes across the Borough and progress to carbon neutrality by 2038, in conjunction with our emerging Climate Strategy.

Additional minor revisions have been made to the Strategy to ensure it is up to date and reflects the current position.