SOUTHEND ON SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Housing Needs Report

2003 - 2006

2004 update

HOUSING SERVICES

Department of Social Care

CONTENTS

NEEDS ANALYSIS

- ASSESSING CURRENT AND LIKELY FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS

The Housing Needs Report 2004 is an updated analysis of the Borough's housing needs. Like the 2003 report, it demonstrates a continuing requirement for additional affordable housing and investment in private sector renewal and the Council's own stock. The report is closely linked to the Housing Strategy, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and the Housing Action Plan. These are separate documents all relating to the Council's housing responsibilities. Updating the Housing Needs Report on an annual basis ensures that these documents are kept up to date and relevant.

VIEWS OF LOCAL PEOPLE

The needs, wishes and aspirations of the Borough's residents are central to the development of an effective Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan.

The Council undertakes considerable consultation with its tenants and residents, in order to ensure that the services provided meet their needs and expectations, including:

- Tenants Information Exchange Day (TIE-In) surveys
- Leaseholders' and tenants' surveys
- Focus Group meetings
- Tenant Associations, Federation and Forum meetings
- Working groups
- BME groups

Over the last year from November 2003 to September 2004, the Council has carried out an extensive Housing Options' Appraisal process. This was undertaken by ***Housing Moves Forward (HMF)*** (a multi-stakeholder group) in accordance with the criteria issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). An Independent Tenants' Advisor fully participated in HMF.

HMF communicated with all stakeholders through newsletters, enquiry points, "drop-in" sessions, survey forms, "Visioning Days", consultation events and Member/staff briefings. The following aspirations became apparent:

- All bathrooms and kitchens that need replacing to be renewed within the first 10 years
- All bathroom renewals to include an electric shower
- All homes to have double-glazing within the next 7 years
- Tenants of sheltered housing to have a choice of a shower over the bath or a shower cubicle
- Improve external lighting for sheltered housing over the next 10 years
- Door entry systems to all blocks of flats with at least four units served by communal access over the next 10 years
- Maintain and improve the current responsive repairs service
- More resources to deal with anti-social behaviour
- Provide more affordable housing in Southend
- Maintain and possibly improve the current Housing Service with at least the existing area housing offices
- Improve the caretaking, cleaning and gardening maintenance services

A Tenants' Survey carried out for the Council in 2000 was also repeated in September/October 2003. Both surveys have provided a wealth of information into the views of local communities. In 2000, satisfaction was high with 79% of tenants being satisfied with the overall housing service provided by the Council. Satisfaction was found to increase with the age of the tenant and the length of the tenancy. Tenants were less likely to be satisfied with the overall service if they were in full-time employment, from an ethnic minority and/or had a disability that limited activity. In 2003, the satisfaction level with the overall housing service provided by the Council decreased to 73%. As in 2000, satisfaction increased with the age of the tenant and decreased if they were in full-time employment, from other than a white population and/or had a disability.

In the 2003 survey, tenants were asked about various aspects of the Council's housing service. Their responses included the following:

- Rent levels were seen as good value for money by 82% (41% very good value)
- 84% were satisfied with their accommodation (47% very satisfied)
- Property condition was rated as very good by 27% and fairly good by 52%
- 59% of respondents had been in contact with the housing service in the last 12 months (other than to pay rent). The contact was most often about repairs (63%). Most said that it was easy to get hold of the right person to speak to (63%). 78% found the staff helpful and 70% said Council staff had been able to deal with their problem. 60% were satisfied with the final outcome of the contact.
- 75% of respondents were satisfied with the way the Council dealt with repairs and maintenance
- 80% rated the Council as good (40% very good) at keeping them informed about things that might affect them

Finally, tenants were asked to say what they considered to be the three most important items from a list of six items related to Council housing. Repairs and maintenance was most often chosen (79%). Just over half selected keeping tenants informed (53%) and a similar proportion chose overall quality of home (52%). Only 9% chose involving tenants in home management.

The results of the Housing Options' Appraisal process and the Tenants' Survey over the last year strengthen those included in the Housing Needs Report 2003 by helping to ensure that the Council's Housing Strategies and Plans continue to address the needs of service users and the wider community.

HOUSING NEEDS

Housing Needs Study 2004 Update

In 2002, the Council commissioned Fordham Research Ltd to review the housing need and affordability in the Borough until 2007. The study covered all areas and tenure groups and provides a robust indication of the scale and type of housing required to satisfy the identified needs. Fordham's were commissioned again in April 2004 to update the 2002 study.

A crucial part of a housing needs study is an assessment of households' ability to afford private sector housing. The Local Housing Market Study consulted local estate and letting agents in order to provide an estimate of the minimum (entry-level) prices of housing in the area:

Minimum Prices/Rents in the Southend-on-Sea Borough (April 2004)		
Property Size	**Minimum price**	**Minimum rent (£/month)**
1 Bedroom	£80,500	£362
2 Bedrooms	£111,000	£486
3 Bedrooms	£142,000	£604
4 Bedrooms	£161,000	£694

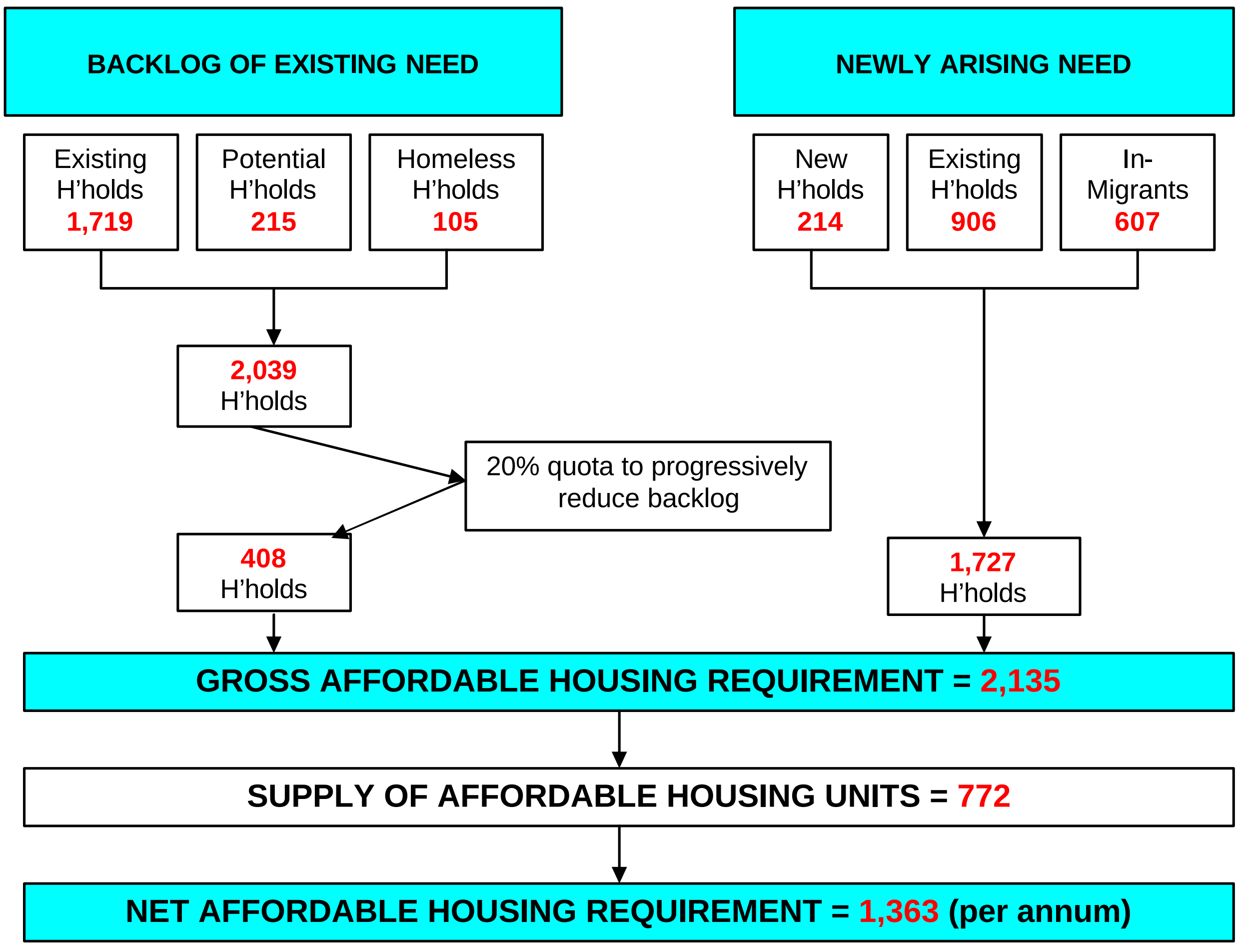
The data shows that minimum purchase prices have risen overall since the 2002 study by an average of around 40%. Minimum rents have also increased but to a much lesser degree (ie an overall increase of around 5% since the 2002 study).

The 2002 study estimated that the average earned household income was £20,793 per annum (excluding any benefits). The equivalent figure for 2004 is estimated to be £22,422, an increase of roughly 8%. This is largely the result of general wage inflation and demographic changes.

The studies analyse housing need through the following stages:

- Backlog of existing need
- Newly arising need
- Supply of affordable units
- Overall affordable housing requirement

The following diagram provides an estimate of the total requirement for additional affordable housing to meet housing need within the Borough, as indicated by the 2004 update:



This review of the housing needs situation suggests that around 1,363 additional affordable units would be required per year if all the affordable needs are to be met. This compares with an estimate from the 2002 study of around 1,487 per annum. The slight reduction in the overall requirement principally reflects a slight increase in the supply of affordable property re-let.

The 2004 update also assesses the requirement for additional affordable housing by size, considering both size requirement and potential demand. The main shortfalls are for:

- 36% One bedroom properties (493 per annum)
- 40% Two bedroom properties (549 per annum)

The 2002 study considered the specific costs of low-cost market and shared ownership housing to meet the need in the borough and indicated that the majority of affordable housing should be social rented. The 2004 update indicates that a third of the need could be met by "intermediate" forms of housing, although at a cost significantly below the market. Of the total need, only 7.0% could afford intermediate housing just below the market (the price at which shared ownership is typically available).

The consultants concluded from the 2004 update that:

- The Council should try to secure as much additional affordable housing as possible. This would include attempting to secure a reasonable proportion of all allocated sites as affordable (eg having a 40%+ affordable housing target). Additionally, the Council should, wherever possible, secure affordable housing through other means (eg on 100% sites and also through other schemes such as conversions or empty homes).

- It is clear that in the medium term, there will be a shortage of affordable housing for the people of Southend-on-Sea. It is likely that the private rented sector will continue to be used to make up for the shortfall of affordable housing although this would not be considered to be a long-term solution.

- In the owner-occupied sector, the Council should encourage the building of smaller one- and two-bedroom homes. Whilst a shortfall of these smaller properties together with four-bedroom properties is shown, three-bedroom properties show a significant surplus.

The practical outcome of the 2004 update is the same as that derived from the 2002 study: ***build more affordable housing.***

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING

Homelessness - The Statistical Evidence

The buoyancy of the local housing market continues to have a large impact upon the levels of homelessness within the Borough. With the exception of 1998/99 and 2001/02 Southend has experienced a year-on-year increase in homeless applicants since 1997. The first quarter of 2003/04 saw a 32% increase in homeless applications compared with the first quarter of 2002/03. However, the work of a newly established Homeless Assessment and Prevention Team in July 2003 has been a key factor in bringing the overall increase for 2003/04 down to 8.38%.

Year	Number of applications for assistance to LA	% Increase on previous year	Number of persons in B&B at year end	% Increase on previous year
1997/1998	291	+32%	3	+300%
1998/1999	290	- 1%	3	0%
1999/2000	377	+30%	21	+600%
2000/2001	457	+21%	50	+138%
2001/2002	454	0%	21*	See note below
2002/2003	513	+13%	66	+214%
2003/04	556	8%	18	-74%

* 21 is the year-end figure following a peak figure of 53 in December 2001. The reduction is a short-term trend brought about by a recent increase in nominations to RSL developments.

Tackling the homelessness situation continues to be challenging. In relation to single people there are now additional duties placed upon Local Authorities by the Homelessness Act 2002. In November 2004, the Council was accommodating 50 single people in Bed and Breakfast and hostel accommodation, many of whom have mental health issues or are dual diagnosis with drug and alcohol problems. Since 1 April 2004, the legal requirement that no family should be in Bed and Breakfast accommodation except in an emergency, and then for no longer than six weeks has been in effect. It therefore continues to be necessary to pre-book single rooms in Bed and Breakfast accommodation and family rooms in private hostels in order for the Council to meet its statutory responsibilities.

Needs of Different Groups

Families

The following table shows a period of year-on-year increases in the number of families for whom the Council accepted a statutory duty under homelessness legislation.

Year	Number of families for whom the Council accepted a duty	% Increase on previous year
1999/2000	91	N/A
2000/2001	121	+33%
2001/2002	157	+30%
2002/2003	230	+46%
2003/04	218	-5%

Source: P1E(AS)

The decrease in 2003/04 reflects the strength of the Council's response to these increases and the aforementioned legislation around housing families in bed and breakfast accommodation. The majority of families making homeless applications and applying to the Homeseekers Register continue to come from the private rented sector.

Single People

Whilst it does not reveal homelessness in its entirety, rough sleeping counts are generally thought to be good indicators of the extent of homelessness among single people. In May 2000, 16 people were found sleeping rough in the borough and Southend was found to have had the equal 30th highest concentration of rough sleeping.

The last annual rough sleepers count was undertaken on 31 March 2004 and revealed one rough sleeper in the borough. This is the second year running that the count has revealed a low level of rough sleeping in Southend and the results are a good indicator of the success of activity undertaken in Southend-on-Sea to combat homelessness.

Further evidence regarding the needs of single people can be found from information about the applications processed by the Homelessness Team in 2003/04. These reveal 17.2% of all the applications for homelessness assistance came from single person households under 25 years old - 40% of which were found to be eligible for assistance and in priority need.

THE HOMESEEKERS' REGISTER

Demand for Council / RSL Accommodation

The Council's Homeseekers' Register comprises the Private Sector Group (formerly the Housing Register), the Homeless Group (for applicants who are statutorily homeless and owed a full homeless duty by the Council), the Transfer Group (which amalgamates the former Southend Council Transfer Register and Housing Association Transfer Register), the Incoming HOMES Mobility Register, the outgoing HOMES Mobility Register, and the newly created Out of Area Group (comprising applicants who are currently tenants of local authorities or housing associations elsewhere in the country but wish to move to Southend). The Homeseekers' Register is the most significant and direct method of meeting housing need in the Borough. It provides clear quantitative evidence of the level of housing need for those who cannot afford to buy or rent housing on the open market.

The number of applications for inclusion on the various Groups of the Council's Homeseekers' Register is an indicator of demand. The following table shows the applications received in 2003/04 compared with 2002/03.

Group of Homeseekers' Register	2002/03	Monthly average	2003/04	Monthly average	Percent change
Private Sector #	# 1459	# 121.58	1608	134.00	+10.21%
Homeless ~	~ N/a	~ N/a	161	13.42	N/a
Transfer *	* 436	* 36.33	491	40.92	+12.61%
Incoming HOMES	91	7.58	80	6.67	-12.09%
Outgoing HOMES	116	9.67	80	6.67	-31.03%
TOTAL	**2102**	**175.17**	**2420**	**201.67**	**+15.13%**

Part of the way through 2003/04, the Housing Register was split into two Groups, namely the Private Sector Group (#) and the Homeless Group (~). The figure for the Private Sector Group for 2002/03 therefore comprises of Housing Register applications only in that year. The number of Private Sector Group applications has increased, compared with the equivalent Registers over the last year. Indeed, the amalgamated figure for Private Sector Group and Homeless Group applications in 2003/04 (1769) compares with the total of 1459 Housing Register applications in 2002/03, marking an increase of 21.24%.

The Transfer Group (*) replaced the former SBC Transfer Register and HA Transfer Register, so the figure for 2002/03 is the amalgamated figure for these two Registers. The number of Transfer Group applications has also increased, by 12.61%. The only areas of decrease in the numbers of applications received are in the HOMES Mobility Registers, with both incoming and outgoing applications decreasing. Overall, the number of applications received by the Council has increased by 15.13%, compared with the previous year.

The following table gives details of the numbers on the various Groups of the Homeseekers' Register, at 31st March 2004, compared to 2003.

Group	As at 31/03/03	As at 31/03/04	Percent change
Private Sector	2,272	2,819	+ 24.1%
Homeless ~	~ N/a	162	N/a
Transfer Group *	* 658	879	+ 33.6%
Incoming HOMES	15	30	+ 100.0%
Out of Area #	# N/a	109	N/a
TOTAL	**2,945**	**3,999**	**+ 35.8%**

NB The Homeless Group (~) was newly created in 2003/2004. Prior to this, statutorily homeless applicants who were owed a full homeless duty by the Council were included in the former Housing Register, so were included in the figure of 2,272 as at 31/03/03. The Transfer Group (*) replaced the former SBC Transfer Register and HA Transfer Register, so the figure for 2002/03 is the amalgamated figure for these two Registers. The Out of Area Group (#) was newly created in 2003/2004.

The numbers on each Group of the Homeseekers' Register increased significantly compared with the previous year. There were some changes in the eligibility criteria for acceptance onto the Private Sector Group and Transfer Group, with the removal of some restrictions to entry. This is reflected in the overall increase in the number of applicants on the Homeseekers' Register of 35.8% between 31st March 2003 and 31st March 2004. This percentage increase is higher than in the three previous years (cf increases of 31.78% between 31st March 2000 and 31st March 2001, 11.86% from 31st March 2001 to 31st March 2002, and 14.81% between 31st March 2002 and 31st March 2003). Hence, there has been an overall increase in the number of applications received, and due to the discrepancy between supply and demand of accommodation, the rate of increase in the number of applicants waiting for housing in the Borough has risen.

There has been an increase in the number of applicants on the Private Sector Group (formerly the Housing Register) from 1,264 at 31st March 2000 to 2,819 at 31st March 2004 (ie an increase of 123% in four years), with a further 162 applicants on the Homeless Group (who would previously have been included in the Housing Register figures). This is of considerable concern to the Council.

The following table shows the demand for various sizes of accommodation, across the various Groups of the Homeseekers' Register, as at 31st March 2004.

Property Type	Private Sector	Homeless	Transfer	Incoming HOMES	Out of Area	Total
Sheltered Studio Flats	186	1	75	13	13	288
Sheltered One Beds	41	0	63	13	6	123
TOTAL SHELTERED	**227**	**1**	**138**	**26**	**19**	**411**
Studio flats	891	19	107	1	24	1042
One beds	190	6	94	0	11	301
Two beds	743	60	229	1	30	1063
Three beds	442	53	199	0	18	712
Three bed parlour / four beds	121	22	103	0	3	249
TOTAL, GENERAL NEEDS	**2387**	**160**	**732**	**2**	**86**	**3367**
Unclassified	205	1	9	2	4	221
OVERALL TOTAL	**2819**	**162**	**879**	**30**	**109**	**3999**

The demand for general needs studio flats (for single people) has increased from 631 at the end of 2001/02 (ie by 65.13% over the last two years), reflecting the problems of homelessness amongst single people. The numbers on the Register for all types of family accommodation have also increased over the last two years. Demand for two beds has gone up from 715 (48.67%); three beds up from 410 (73.66%) and three bed parlour and four beds up from 165 (50.91%). It is significant that, over the past two years, there has only been one large Housing Association development in which a reasonable number of family-sized properties have been let to applicants from the Council's Homeseekers' Register.

For the purposes of allocating accommodation from the Council's Homeseekers' Register, the Borough is currently split into eight lettings areas. The following table shows the demand for all types of accommodation in the various areas, as at 31st March 2004. The totals far exceed the number of applicants on the Register, as applicants can choose between one and eight areas, in which to live.

Allocation Area	**Number of Applicants**
Lettings Area 1 – Eastwood	1905
Lettings Area 2 – Leigh	2356
Lettings Area 3 – Southend / Prittlewell	2677
Lettings Area 4 – Westcliff	2486
Lettings Area 5 – Central Southend	2227
Lettings Area 6 – Southchurch	2151
Lettings Area 7 – West Shoebury	991
Lettings Area 8 – East Shoebury	1118

The demand is greatest for accommodation in the west (excluding the far west) and central areas of the Borough, and lowest for all property types in the east of the Borough, although the numbers on the waiting lists have still increased significantly in West and East Shoebury, for the second year running. This pattern of demand corresponds with the owner-occupier market, with the highest house prices also occurring in similar areas.

In addition to the above, the Council expects increased demand for accommodation to result from the development of the new Essex University campus in the town over the next 4-5 years.

COMMUNITY NEEDS AND SOCIAL CARE

The Council's establishment of a Department of Social Care has brought about a greater understanding of the housing related needs of the local community. A "joined up" perspective allows more attention to be paid to the support arrangements appropriate for people to enable them to lead better lives where they wish and in the locality of their choice. The failure to meet these needs can result in expensive placements having to be found within or outside of the borough.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities

The ***Essex Equality and Diversity Project***, "Facing the Facts (2003), sponsored by the Essex Housing Officers' Group and the Housing Corporation identified the following housing priorities for the borough:

- Across Essex as a whole, 21% of the BME residents stated that they were aware of the services provided by local authorities and housing associations. The figure among the Southend-on-Sea sample was just 10%.

- Across the county, 10% of the BME residents stated that they found access to housing problematic. This compares with a much higher figure among the Southend-on-Sea residents of 31%. The main barriers to accessing housing were believed to be a lack of knowledge about how to register for housing (31%), a lack of appreciation of the services provided by the housing association sector (31%), an inability to get advice on other types of housing within the area (18%) and a general lack of awareness of the process involved if an individual or household found themselves homeless (12%).

The ***BME Communities Survey 2003*** for the Borough carried out by MORI found that overall, one in five of respondents said that they would like more information about Housing, and the same proportion would like to use social housing. Affordable housing was a pertinent issue particularly among black respondents and those under 35.

In common with other MORI research, residents typically state a lack of awareness, lack of information, lack of time and cost as the main barriers for using Council services.

The ***STATUS Tenants Satisfaction Surveys 2000 and 2003*** for the Borough show the following satisfaction rates for BME and non-BME groups:

		2000	2003
Satisfaction with overall landlord service	BME	73%	62%
	Non-BME	79%	74%
Satisfaction with opportunities for participation	BME	60%	59%
	Non-BME	63%	64%
Satisfaction with landlord's repairs and maintenance	BME	76%	67%
	Non-BME	75%	76%

Physical Disabilities

The ***STATUS Tenants Satisfaction Survey 2003*** shows that there are unmet challenges for the Council in effectively responding to diversity. 56% of respondents stated that they had a longstanding illness, disability or infirmity and of these respondents, 85% stated that this limited their activities.

The following satisfaction rates were apparent for disabled and non-disabled tenants:

		2000	2003
Satisfaction with overall landlord service	Disabled	78%	72%
	Non-disabled	83%	79%
Satisfaction with opportunities for participation	Disabled	63%	60%
	Non-disabled	65%	74%
Satisfaction with landlord's repairs and maintenance	Disabled	74%	76%
	Non-disabled	77%	83%

There is an increasing requirement for accommodation to meet the needs of people with physical disabilities. For too long, the Council has had no other option than to house people (eg after hospital treatment) in accommodation that is expensive, and far from the Borough and the persons family. The major priorities include:

- Supported housing for young people (under 30 years)
- People given "leave to remain" (eg illegal immigrants having a serious medical condition)
- Long term residential care for adults
- Adapted accommodation (eg wheelchair adapted housing, specialist lighting, etc)
- Extra care housing and supported living schemes for people with physical and sensory impairment.

Learning Disabilities

It is recognised that the types of housing required to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities include extra care housing, supported living and shared ownership schemes. An in-depth scrutiny project of the Council's Learning Disability Services carried out in 2004 identified the following major issues:

- The need to develop more appropriate housing models for people with learning disabilities as better supported living arrangements are put in place in accordance with the national vision for learning disability services set out in the Valuing People White Paper.
- The future of the Council's directly provided care home services for 35 people at Shelford, Berland House and Saxon Lodge which do not meet national minimum standards.
- The need to move away from traditional day service models for people with learning disabilities in accordance with the thrust of the Valuing People White Paper.
- The future of the Council's traditional day centres (Avro/Viking and Maybrook) in the light of this.
- The need to manage the changes sensitively and effectively bearing in mind the effects of service changes on both Service Users and carers and taking into account where possible the views of both groups.
- The resource and budgetary implications of any changes in the context of both the provision of services specific to people with learning disabilities and of all adult care services covered by Fair Access to Care Services criteria.

The Council's Learning Disability Accommodation Strategy 2003-08 ("Opening Doors") placed an emphasis on working together to enable people with learning disabilities and their families to have greater choice and control over where, and how, they live. The aim is supported living at the expense of further reliance on residential care.

Mental Health

The growing inter-dependence of community services highlights the relevance of good housing and adequate support to the improvement of mental health. Research studies have indicated a link between aspects of the quality of housing and mental and emotional health, particularly for women.

The Council is keen to explore further opportunities in partnership with the local voluntary agencies, which have a vital role. The major priorities include:

- Providing support to mentally-ill people placed in general needs accommodation
- "Move on" accommodation
- Crisis accommodation (eg to offer a "retreat" for people who are undergoing a crisis or cannot return home)
- A long-term scheme for chronically, mentally-ill people requiring 24 hour support
- Detoxification schemes providing a staged programme of treatment, managed by nursing staff
- Housing for dementia sufferers

Children and Young People

The ***STATUS Tenants' Satisfaction Surveys 2000 and 2003*** show the following satisfaction rates for tenants aged 16-24:

	2000	2003
Satisfaction with overall landlord service	59%	46%
Satisfaction with opportunities for participation	52%	41%
Satisfaction with landlord's repairs and maintenance	58%	58%

The Council faces a complex series of housing needs presented by many young people. Housing and support solutions often need to take account of the mobility, occasional homelessness and drug/alcohol abuse that are features of many young lives. For example, 146 clients in the 16/17-year old age group visited the HARP day service during the 12 months ending March 2003 with 74 under-19s being accommodated on a short-term basis by the Night Service in the same period. For the 12 months ending March 2004, these totals were 160 and 106 respectively. The major priorities include:

- Emergency and assessment accommodation for vulnerable, young homeless people
- Teenage pregnancy hostel
- Housing for young substance misusers
- Young people given "leave to remain"
- Housing for vulnerable young people (eg homeless 16/17 year olds and young people up to the age of 21 leaving care)
- "Move on" accommodation for young people currently placed in supported schemes

The Council is a member of the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board which meets regularly to review progress and develop new work. In partnership with Ashley Homes, supported housing for pregnant teenagers and mothers has been developed. The scheme prepares mothers for move-on accommodation by concentrating on the following areas:

- Parenting skills
- Tenancy sustainment (including budgeting and cooking skills)
- Access to further education or training or assistance in maintaining school attendance

Older People

The ***STATUS Tenants' Satisfaction Surveys for 2000 and 2003*** show the following satisfaction rates for tenants aged 65 and over:

	2000	2003
Satisfaction with overall landlord service	88%	83%
Satisfaction with opportunities for participation	72%	75%
Satisfaction with landlord's repairs and maintenance	85%	87%

There has been considerable progress on services that enable older people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. The Supporting People programme, with its remit to help with a range of preventative services for people while at home, allows greater consideration to be given to dealing with some of the housing related problems that affect people's ability and desire to remain at home.

Two priority areas have been identified:

- Support for certain daily activities for people felt to be socially isolated or having a need outside of their current home care package
- Establishment of a local Home Improvement Agency to provide advice and practical help on aspects of improvements and adaptations

CONDITION OF THE HOUSING STOCK

Local Authority Housing

HRA Assets as at 1 April 2004 (HIP format)	
Traditional dwellings	
1. Pre-1945 small terrace houses	8
2. Pre-1945 semi-detached houses	41
3. All other pre-1945 houses	401
4. 1945-64 small terrace houses	1
5. 1945-64 large terrace/semi-detached/detached houses	751
6. 1965-74 houses	86
7. Post-1974 houses	83
Non-traditional dwellings	
8. All houses	585
Traditional and non-traditional dwellings	
9. Pre-1945 low rise (1-2 storeys) flats	118
10. Post-1945 low rise (1-2 storeys) flats	1,511
11. Medium rise (3-5 storeys) flats	1,205
12. High rise (6 or more storeys) flats	1,300
13. Bungalows	206
14. Total all dwellings	**6,296**

NB: The Council also manages approximately 30 properties on behalf of the Council's General Fund. Resources for these properties come from the General Fund not the HRA so the condition of these properties is not analysed in this document.

Baseline Data

In 2004, the Council appointed Ridge and Partners to work with them to commission and project manage a new stock condition survey based on current best practice. FPD Savills and Curtins Consulting Engineers were subsequently appointed to undertake a condition survey and engineering appraisal respectively and as a complete stock condition survey, this was independently evaluated and validated by Ridge and Partners. The survey used a sample of 20% of the stock and a robust method of stratification to provide a high level of accuracy for a whole stock assessment. The survey set out the condition of the stock by the following categories:

- **Catch up Repairs** – Work required for bringing the housing stock up to a lettable condition immediately
- **Future Major Works** – Periodic refurbishment / replacement of building components to keep the property in a lettable condition
- **Estate works** – works required to property related assets that are not dwellings
- **Improvements** – The provision of features that do not currently exist or associated enhancements
- **Responsive and void repairs** – Works that cannot be planned and that will be required to bring the property to a lettable condition
- **Cyclical** – Maintenance work such as external painting and gas servicing
- **Contingent Major Repairs** – Foreseeable structural defects or other major contingency repairs (eg wall tie failure, asbestos removal, etc)
- **Exceptional Extensive Works** – Significant defects which fall outside normal routine repairs and maintenance
- **Disabled adaptations** – to inform the need for major and minor adaptations

The survey also collated information about year of installation, quantity and remaining life (forecast year of renewal) for all components and included information relating to the Government's Decent Homes standard. The results of the 2004 stock condition survey have provided the Council with more up-to-date and meaningful information. For the first time this data will be meaningful for individual estates and this will be a key improvement in terms of planning.

Key Findings

Catch up Repairs	£10.2m (rounded) over 5 years
Future Major Works	£179.9m (rounded) over 30 years
Estate works	£10.3m (rounded) over 30 years
Improvements	£13.4m over 5 years and £15.2m (rounded) over 30 years
Responsive and void repairs	£67.4m (rounded) over 30 years
Cyclical	£46.4m over 30 years
Contingent Major Repairs	£7.6m over 30 years
Exceptional Extensive Works	£8.4m over 30 years
Aids and adaptations	£12m over 30 years

Decent Homes Standard

The survey reports the Council's position in relation to meeting the Decent Homes standard as follows:

- Approximately 31% of the stock is currently non-decent;
- The cost to meet the Decent Homes standard is estimated at £34.9m.

The following are key areas requiring work to meet the Decent Homes standard. Financial information reflects the mains areas of spend listed under 'Key Findings' above.

Kitchens	£34.2m	Electrics	£12.8m
Heating and boilers	£24.7m	Bathrooms and WCs	£12.2m
Windows	£22.4m		

Energy Efficiency

Key to decent living conditions is the energy efficiency of a households dwelling. An energy efficient dwelling can decrease energy costs for tenants. A survey undertaken in 1995 revealed the level of the Councils housing stock energy efficiency in several ways, including the establishment of the average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating of the stock (48.6), and CO^2 emissions of 6.86 tonnes per annum.

This survey information, along with historic policy targets, has been the key factor influencing the energy efficiency works undertaken by the Council since 1995. The Council has been successful in meeting the historical policy targets and continues to report increases in the average SAP rating of its stock. Latest calculated average ratings show a 2 point increase in the SAP rating and a 2% decrease in CO^2 emissions by the 31 March 2004.

The Council recognises the need to concentrate resources on the poorest performing properties. In advance of Government legislation, the Council is already including the installation of condensing boilers in its programme of energy efficiency works. Furthermore, the Council has been working in partnership with a well known utility company, who have provided the Council with grant money to expand the energy efficiency programme. This grant will be used to fund the installation of insulated external rendering, condensing boilers and radiator controls.

Non Residential Stock

The HRA Business Plan includes an allowance for income from the HRA's non-residential properties. The Council has a portfolio of commercial properties such as estate-based shops, office buildings and garages that produce an income for the HRA though require maintenance of the buildings. The Council will be reviewing the management of its non-residential properties in the following financial year, as it is recognised that these are important assets which form part of the HRA stock and provide local services and amenities close to residents' homes. The works to this stock have been included in the Capital Programme but only form a small proportion of the total expenditure.

Private Sector Housing

There are markedly different characteristics in the private sector that pose significantly different challenges in relating housing strategic objectives to meeting local needs. These include:

Property Condition

The worst housing conditions in Southend are to be found in the private sector. The last local house condition survey of private dwellings in 2004 found 3,400 dwellings unfit for human habitation[1]. Another 11,400 properties were found to be in substantial disrepair.

The overall cost of bringing the private sector stock into a fit condition was estimated to be £42m, with another £85m needed to tackle the backlog of repairs and maintenance.

In terms of the new decency standard, 13,800 properties were found to be non-decent. It is notable that this is double the number of the whole Council stock put together.

Of the considerable number of unfit private properties found , most were located within the most deprived Wards of Milton, Victoria and St Lukes. These properties were often occupied by the most vulnerable groups of residents - the elderly, single parent families, and single persons. These types of household do not have access to appropriate funding to enable essential repairs and improvements to be carried out, as they are often on low incomes and in receipt of some type of benefit.

[1] That is dwellings not reasonably suitable for occupation by reference to the statutory minimum housing fitness standard found within the Housing Act 1985.

The Council's local house condition survey of the private rented sector included an assessment of:

- Unfitness and disrepair
- Energy efficiency audit
- Fuel Poverty
- Non-decent dwellings
- Social survey on access/take up of potential 'housing assistance' options

Fuel Poverty

The 2004 survey found 9,400 households to be in fuel poverty. Many of these properties are poorly insulated and have inadequate means of heating. Inadequate insulation and heating, physical disrepair causing, for example, dampness, and the lack of adequate amenities, such as internal WCs, bathrooms and kitchens, all contribute to producing poor housing conditions. Such conditions are known to have an adverse effect on physical health (eg bronchitis, asthma and other chest infections), but also negatively influence mental well-being, by affecting comfort and security. The average SAP rating of the private stock was found to be relatively low at a rating of 45.

To meet the wider longer-term objectives of the Council's Energy Conservation Strategy, it will be necessary to encourage the provision of basic insulation measures to all private sector dwellings, (where missing). This includes double glazing and more efficient heating if the overall aim of a 30% saving in energy consumption is to be achieved.

Shared Amenities and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

In some private sector properties, amenities have to be shared, which adds to "housing stress". This is particularly so in houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) of which there are 154 in the Borough (119 bedsits and 35 guesthouses) occupied by about 1600 households mostly comprising single people, but also in shared houses and flats, and student accommodation. There are an estimated 26,000 flats in the Borough[2]. The proportion of HMOs in the private stock is relatively high at 4%.

Overcrowding of accommodation is a problem in some properties, either in relation to amenities or to space (number of bedrooms).

A combination of such factors can critically compound "housing stress", and because low incomes often coincide with poor housing, residents can often feel "trapped" and socially excluded not simply from better accommodation but from wider social community relationships, opportunities and so forth.

Empty Homes

A very small proportion of the private sector stock is in so bad a condition as to be derelict and abandoned from occupation. But other private properties are also to be found unoccupied for a variety of reasons. Empty homes form a small proportion of the overall private sector stock (3%), but are nevertheless important in relation to the critical supply of accommodation in a Borough which is fully developed geographically and therefore short of accommodation in relation to ongoing demand. Around 1,000 dwellings have been vacant for over 6 months.

Disabled Adaptations

For disabled occupiers or those with chronic ill health, a proportion of the private stock needs adaptation works each year to meet these special needs. There are a significantly high proportion of elderly and disabled residents in the Borough (23%), and therefore the demand for adaptations to dwellings remains relatively high.

Around 65 recommendations for adaptation works are made every year following the professional assessment of presented needs by Occupational Therapists. The demand for such adaptations has risen steadily since

[2] The figure for the number of flats in the Borough was 23,180 (1991 Census). There are approximately 300 flat conversions/constructions per year in the Borough so this has been rounded to form the 26,000 figure for 2001.

1990. Last year, 58 disabled facilities grants were offered to meet the mandatory special needs of the local community in the private sector.

Nuisance in the Private Sector

The density of dwellings, together with the mix of non-residential nuisances, and predominance of flat conversions, gives much potential for nuisance, particularly from noise. There has been a steady increase in nuisance complaints and general anti-social behaviour to the detriment of amenity. Crime or the fear of crime is a significant factor in certain central wards in the Borough so home security is an issue in these areas.

Each year around 350 complaints are received from private sector tenants regarding disrepair. In addition, around 100 complaints are received from the occupants of HMOs about a range of matters, including disrepair, overcrowding, lack of fire precautions, poor management and lack of amenities.

Approximately another 100 complaints are received about premises-related nuisances, including empty properties; most of these complaints arise from deteriorating property condition as a result of neglect of repair and maintenance.

Direct neighbour nuisance arising from resident's behaviour accounted for more than 3,000 complaints to the Council in 2003/04.

Enquiries from owner-occupiers for assistance with renewal grants numbered 354 in 2003/04 and referrals for disabled adaptations were 63 for the same period.

Housing Act 2004

The Council will now consider the provisions and requirements of the Housing Act 2004, particularly in relation to the new Housing Health and Safety Rating System, licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), selective licensing of other residential accommodation, etc, in future revisions of its housing strategies.

LOCAL HOUSING MARKET

Southend's proximity to London, attractive coastal environment, good transport links and lower house prices than in the capital mean that the local and sub-regional housing markets continue to remain very buoyant. Many people moving into the area have high incomes that exert an upward pressure on house prices.

House prices in London increased by 9.7% in the 12 months ending September 2004 whilst the average price of a property in Southend has risen by 18.3% over the same period. The prediction of a slow down in the rise of property prices has not materialised in the London Region despite interest rate increases intended to depress the buoyancy of the housing market.

The table below compares the average residential property prices between Southend, Essex and England and Wales.

Type of Property	Average for Southend Borough	% Change from 2003	Average for Essex	% Change from 2003	National Average	% Change from 2003
Detached	295,806	+8.4	306,769	+9.35	£284,145	+13.33
Semi-detached	202,053	+16.1	196,589	+12.51	£170,816	+17.34
Terraced	162,122	+15.9	160,914	+12.57	£143,771	+19.13
Flat/Maisonette	122,597	+18.3	131,267	+14.59	£172,196	+12.96

Source: HM Land Registry, Residential property price report – July - September 2004

The house prices in many parts of Southend are higher than the affordability of most people who live and work in Southend. The average yearly gross income for each full-time employed person within the Borough is estimated at £24,346 (£374.00 per week net). This figure is skewed by the number of people living in the

Borough who enjoy the high salaries of the capital and conceals a wide variations among different household groups. In fact, the wage levels of many Southend employees are likely to fall below the “average wage” level.

Property prices in Southend and surrounding areas (July to September 2004)										
	Southend		Thurrock		Basildon		Rochford		Castle Point	
Detached	£295,806	100%	£279,504	94.5%	£301,421	101.8%	£299,642	101.2%	£218,043	73.7%
Semi-Detached	£202,053	100%	£183,031	90.5%	£194,709	96.3%	£187,794	92.9%	£179,542	88.8%
Terraced	£162,122	100%	£155,348	95.8%	£143,652	88.6%	£170,224	104.9%	£157,603	97.2%
Flat/ Maisonette	£122,597	100%	£115,705	94.4%	£117,006	95.4%	£118,294	96.4%	£127,734	104.1%
Total	**£179,759**	**100%**	**£165,237**	**91.9%**	**184,634**	**102.7%**	**£216,508**	**120.4%**	**£186,047**	**103.4%**

Source: HM Land Registry, Residential property price report – July to September 2004

High house prices also have an impact on the private rented and social housing sectors within the Borough. Southend has a large private rented sector, but it is expensive. This makes home ownership even more attractive, particularly as it is often more cost effective to own a property than to rent one in either the Registered Social Landlord sector or the private rented sector. These various factors exert pressure on house prices to continually rise.

The upward trend in house prices has had adverse effects for residents on low incomes. For many, the private rented sector is their only immediate source of accommodation. However, consultation with local landlords (through the Landlords’ and Property Agents’ Forum) found that the percentage of private rented lets to residents with Housing Benefit claims and/or low incomes had dropped from approximately 50% to 10% over recent years[3]. High house prices were cited as a particular restriction on the supply of private rented housing for residents on low incomes.

Consequently, there is a great demand for other sources of housing such as the Council’s own stock. This can be shown by**:**

- A significant increase in demand for social housing, in the last four years, within the Borough despite there being no major changes in the eligibility criteria for acceptance onto the Council’s Homeseekers Register.

- The Housing Needs Survey 2004 update identifies a number of unmet housing needs in the social housing sector of Southend. The sizes of dwellings required to meet the identified housing/accommodation needs are:

  36% 1 bedroom
  40% 2 bedrooms
  24%% 3 or more bedrooms

Affordable Housing Needs in South Essex				
Planning Authority	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Basildon	881	881	881	881
Castle Point	444	444	444	444
Rochford	338	338	N/A	N/A
Southend	1,363	1,363	1,363	1,363
Thurrock	578	578	N/A	N/A
South Essex	**3,728**	**3,728**	**>2,812**	**2,812**

Source: Latest Housing Needs Survey or Housing Strategy from the above authorities

[3] By May 2000, the number of households in receipt of Housing Benefit in the Private Rented sector had fallen by 30% in the 4 years since the new limits on eligible rents were introduced in 1996. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, April 2001). Southend’s rate of decline is above the ‘national’ average resulting in a further demand for alternative sources and low cost housing.

Trends for the Future

The local housing market is likely to remain buoyant for the foreseeable future and the rise in property prices is likely to continue in the coming months. As wage rises have not kept pace with the increase in property prices the issues regarding the affordability of homes will still remain in the long term. The issue of affordability is further compounded by the future household projections[4]:

Projections: Household Type	2001	2006	2011
Married Couple Household	33,266	32,444	31,938
Cohabiting Couple Household	8,076	9,599	10,793
Lone Parent Household	4,744	4,837	4,820
Other Multi Person Household	6,480	7,191	8,112
One Person Household	25,004	26,275	27,996
Total	**77,570**	**80,346**	**83,659**

The projections show that the most significant growth is for one-person households, so assumptions can be made that there will be an increasing need for smaller-sized accommodation. This is in line with the Housing Needs Study 2004 Update which indicates that the largest need for affordable housing is for two bedroom properties.

LOCAL DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

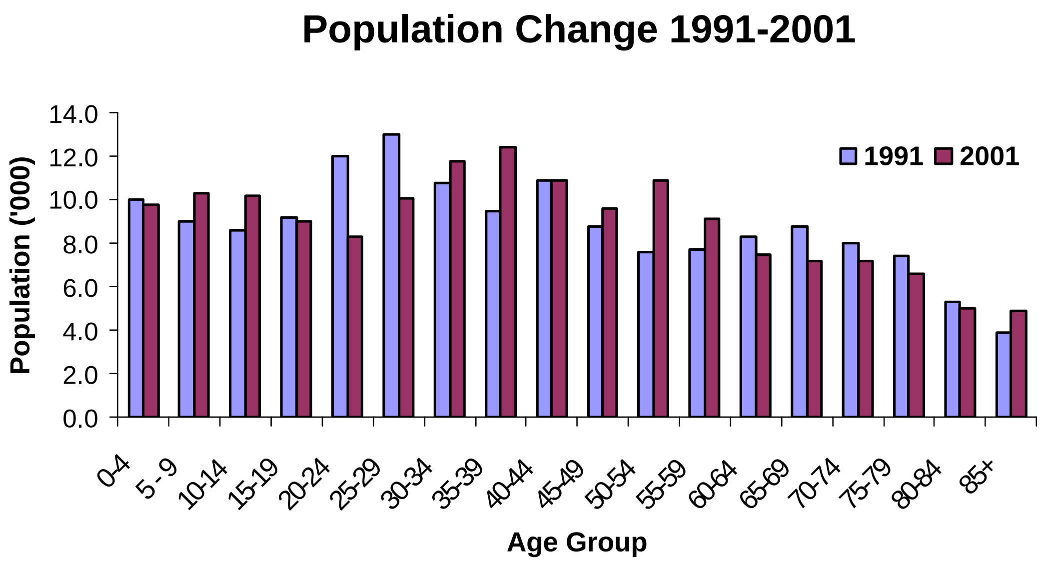
Population profile

In 2001, Southend-on-Sea had a population of 160,400. The borough forms a major part of the largest urban conurbation in the East of England. At 38 persons per hectare, it is nearly 10 times the average population density of Essex, East of England region and England overall.

Overall, the population has not changed significantly since the date of the last Census. There have been key fluctuations in certain age groups. Between 1991 and 2001, the number of 20-29 olds has reduced from over 25,000 to just over 18,000. This amounted to a reduction of nearly 40% in this age group. In contrast, Southend has experienced an increase in those aged 30-59. In 1991, there were around 53,500 people in this age group though now the figure has risen to 64,700 - an increase of 21%. The continuous reduction in the 60-85+ age group between 1991 and 2001 amounted to a loss of over 3,300 resulting in an age profile which is becoming relatively younger. However, at 24%, the proportion of residents of pensionable age and over in Southend is still higher than that of Essex County Council (21.8%), East of England (21.4%) and England (20.8%).

The age group which saw the largest increase between 1991 and 2001 was the 50-54 group (an increase of 43% representing an additional 3,300 people) followed by the 35-39 group (31% growth with an 2,900 additional people) and the 10-14 group (19% increase with an extra 1,300 people by 2001).

[4] 1996 Based Unpublished Household Projections. Source: Anglia Polytechnic University / CPHM run based on DETR projections.



Source: ONS Census Data for 1991 & 2001

Future population growth

The pre-Census government population projections indicated that, if historical trends continued, Southend's population would grow by another 2.4% between 2001 and 2006. The projections also indicated a continuation in the reduction of older (65 and above) age groups. The highest growth, both in terms of numbers and the percentage growth, was projected for the 45-64 year olds with an increase of 6,700 people in the age group amounting to an 18% growth between 1996 and 2006. These projections are heavily dependent upon assumptions based on estimates relating to past experiences which were made before the 2001 Census. New projections at local authority levels are not expected to be released by the ONS until 2004.

Household characteristics

In 2001, the mid-year estimate provided 74,310 households in the Borough giving an average household size of 2.3 persons. The total number of households in 1991 comprised 3.4% lone parent households, 31.1% single person households and 30.3% pensioner only households (these categories are not mutually exclusive).

Ethnic Profile

The 2001 Census estimated that 6,774 people belong to ethnic communities other than white. This is a significant increase on the estimate of 4,000 in the 1991 Census. The Indian community continues to be the largest ethnic minority group, with 1,223 people (a two-fold increase since the 1991 Census). There is a diverse ethnic community, with the Indian (0.76% of resident population), Chinese (0.5%), African (0.64%) and Pakistani (0.43%) groups being the largest minority groups.

Unemployment Rates

Although unemployment rates within the Borough have fallen, they are still higher than the UK average:

Unemployment Claimants and the workforce based unemployment rate						
Area	**Sept 2004**		**Aug 2004**		**June 2001**	
	Claimants	**Rate (%)**	**Claimants**	**Rate (%)**	**Claimants**	**Rate (%)**
Southend UA	**2,344**	**2.5**	**2,337**	**2.5**	**2,904**	**3.1**
Rochford District	475	1.0	490	1.0	622	1.3
Castle Point District	652	1.2	661	1.3	747	1.4
Basildon District	1,764	1.7	1,764	1.7	2,173	2.1
Thurrock UA	1,855	2.0	1,825	2.0	1,936	2.2
Essex County Council	11,106	1.4	11,278	1.4	12,142	1.5
UK	**827,833**	**2.3**	**847,601**	**2.3**	**937,033**	**2.6**

The Southend economy is yet to complete its recovery from the recession in early 1990's. The Borough's unemployment rate at 2.5% (September 2004) is significantly above that of Essex (1.4%) and the UK (2.3%). The number of claimants is falling at a slow but steadier rate than that experienced by Basildon and Thurrock.

2004 Indices of Deprivation

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister regularly publishes the Indices of Deprivation (IoD) which influences public policy and resource allocation. This means the Indices are of key importance to the Council. The IoD measures and provides information for seven individual aspects of deprivation:

- barriers to housing and key local services
- crime
- education, skills and training
- employment
- health and disability
- income
- living environment

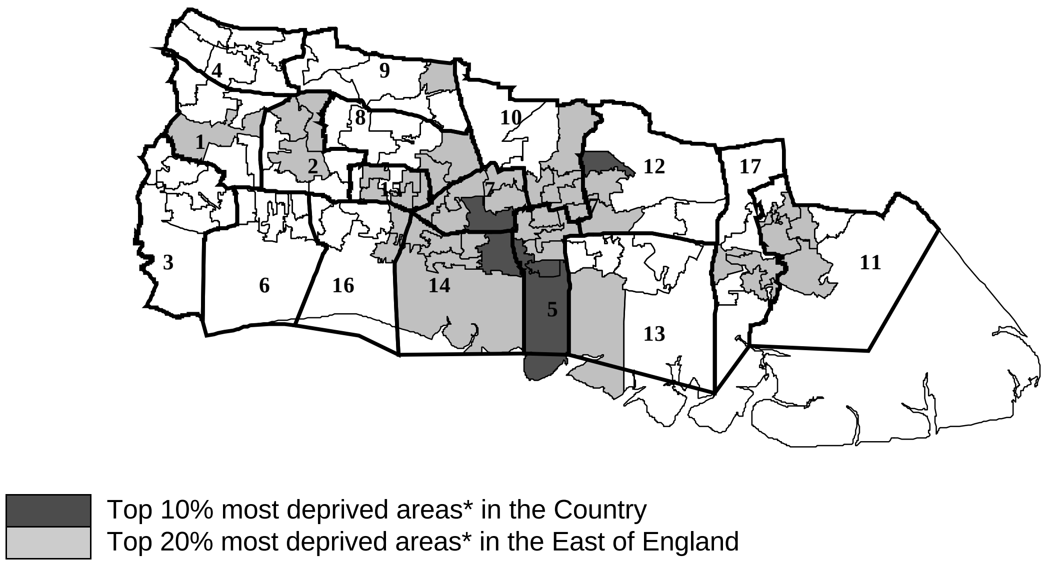
The data for the Indices of Deprivation 2004 has been refined to achieve a more accurate portrayal of deprivation (see map below).

Key findings for Southend include 26 areas among the 10% most deprived in England and 73 areas among the 20% most deprived in the region in at least one of the above aspects of deprivation (see map below).

There are neighbourhoods of multiple deprivation in most Wards, but a majority of the areas identified as deprived flow outwards from the Town Centre, extending westwards across Milton Ward into Chalkwell Ward, eastwards into Thorpe Ward across Kursaal Ward, and north across Victoria and St Luke's Wards into Westborough, Prittlewell and Southchurch Wards. Of the worst performing areas in Southend, (those in the worst 20% regionally), 75% are located centrally and adjoin each other, thereby containing the majority of the borough's deprivation.

Deprived areas in Southend-on-Sea within the top 10% most deprived in England & top 20% most deprived in the East of England Region

1 = Belfairs	7 = Victoria	13 = Thorpe
2 = Blenheim	8 = Prittlewell	14 = Milton
3 = West Leigh	9 = St Laurence	15 = Westborough
4 = Eastwood Park	10 = St Lukes	16 = Chalkwell
5 = Kursaal	11 = Shoeburyness	17 = West Shoebury
6 = Leigh	12 = Southchurch	



*For the first time, the Index of Multiple of Deprivation 2004 ranks 32,482 Super Output Areas in the Country. The top 10% most deprived in the country are those areas ranked 1 to 3,248.

Further Enquiries

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Copies of this Housing Needs Report can be provided in large print, audio tape or translated into a language other than English