



£7.6m for new homes

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the single housing and regeneration agency for England investing in communities, has confirmed £7.6m funding to provide approximately 163 new homes to be started this financial year in Thames Gateway South Essex.

Projects are being enabled in Basildon, Castle Point, Southend and Thurrock Local Authorities with funding from the National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP), and in total will provide homes for approximately 591 people on the housing needs list.

Naisha Polaine, Head of Area for the HCA in the East of England said: "This is positive news for both local residents and our partners. The £7.6m over the next three years will enable new homes to be built which in turn will address the local housing needs of South Essex."



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East Thames affordable housing scheme at Grovewood Court, Kiln Road, Benfleet



Basildon's £1 Billion Town Revamp

Basildon town centre is set to undergo one of the biggest redevelopments in the country, after 'Basildon Regeneration (Barratt Homes Wilson Bowden Developments) Ltd (BWB)' were approved as the Council's development partner for

the 20-year project valued at £1 billion.

BWB will now be required to prepare a master plan within 12 months that will outline the detailed plans for the town centre and the timings of the various work.

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NEW HOMES STORY CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

All bids were assessed for quality, strategic fit, value for money and deliverability. A summary of schemes being supported in South Essex via Local Authority Areas are as follows:

- Basildon;**
37 homes, 164 people housed
- Castle Point;**
22 homes, 58 people
- Southend on Sea;**
39 homes, 192 people housed
- Thurrock;**
65 homes, 177 people housed

For more media information contact Emma Drake, communications manager for East of England - emma.drake@hca.gsx.gov.uk.



Basildon's £1 Billion Town Centre Revamp

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Cllr Tony Ball, Leader of the Council says: "This is a long-term project that will help to get Basildon back into the top 50 town centres in the country, where it belongs. Plans will be submitted for the first homes, which are vital to provide initial funding for the regeneration and start the process of creating a town centre community which will support the commercial elements of the regeneration."



Plans for the project include:

- 52,000 square metres of new retail and leisure space
- Up to 54,000 sq metres of new offices
- 1,900 new homes
- Major extension to the Towngate Theatre
- A hotel and scope for a new college
- Improvements to squares in the town centre
- Improvements to Gloucester Park including a 'city park' and a 'Green Link' Boulevard from the town centre
- Improvements to transport facilities

Partnership are Green Apple Winners

The sub region has won a bronze award at the Green Apple Environment Awards. Thurrock Council leads the sub regional Warm & Healthy Homes Partnership, in conjunction with four neighbouring local authorities, Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford and Southend.

This is the second time this year that the partnership has been recognised for its housing renewal and energy work. First, a regional prize and now a national one. Thurrock, on behalf of the partnership, was presented with their Green Apple Award at the

House of Commons on the 15th November.

They were joined by the International Green Heroes, an elite group of environmental achievers who use their experience to help others – and the environment. Over the last two years, the 'Warm & Healthy Homes Partnership' has offered a range of options that can improve homes across the region, with over 3000 residents have been lifted out of fuel poverty.

Cllr Andrew Smith from Thurrock Council commented "To be recognised twice in one year for the partnership's work is a great

achievement and shows that sub-region is committed to the housing renewal and energy saving initiatives".

To find out more, freephone 0800 9806022 or go to www.healthywarmhome.org.uk



Partners support national empty homes week

Following the success of National Empty Homes Week in November 2010, the Housing Group is encouraging property owners to take advantage of their generous Empty Homes Scheme operating throughout the South Essex sub-region.

The Group is working with Pathmeads Housing Association to refurbish and bring back into use wasted empty homes and make them available to people waiting for housing.

Empty property owners can apply for a grant / loan to renovate their property and agree terms with Pathmeads and their Council to recover the loan through regular repayments when a tenant has been placed in the property.

Rab Fallon, Chair of the Thames Gateway South Essex Strategic Housing Officer's Group supported the scheme by saying:

"The sub regional Empty Homes Scheme is a good opportunity for empty property owners to access funding for refurbishments and secure a regular rental income.

Not only does this help property owners but it will also improve the choices of families waiting for housing and will provide a long-term contribution to the region's housing needs. The recent event helped to raise awareness by highlighting the amount of empty homes that could be brought back into use making a real difference to people's lives."

The scheme was launched in June 2009 with a share of regional Government investment of £1.5m. Any empty property owners/landlords interested in applying to the scheme should contact their relevant Local Authority Private Housing Team.



TGSE Accreditation Scheme launch



The Thames Gateway South Essex Landlord Accreditation scheme was formally launched on 6 September at the Freight House in Rochford. At the event some 18 Landlords and 32 Managing Agents attended.

Accreditation is the voluntary compliance by private landlords with

good standards in the condition and management of their properties and their relationship with their tenants. Accreditation acknowledges and encourages good landlords. It also creates the opportunity for partnership working at a local level to ensure a good supply of privately rented property is readily available.

The Scheme in South Essex is being run by the London Landlords Accreditation Scheme (LLAS) and is known as the Thames Gateway South Essex Landlord Accreditation Scheme. This can be accessed through the LLAS website via the TGSE portal.

Benefits of joining include: information support on key issues of property management, understanding new legislation plus from a business perspective use of LLAS logo and discounts on services and products.

The next training event will be on the 13 January 2011 at Thurrock Borough Council offices. If you are interested in the training and becoming a member of the TGSE scheme, please go to www.londonlandlords.org.uk

Calling all property owners!

Thames Gateway South Essex

EMPTY HOMES SCHEME

Do you own one or more empty properties in Basildon, Thurrock, Castle Point, Southend or Rochford?

Need financial assistance to refurbish them?

Would you like to have a regular rental income from the property?

*** Up to £35,000 could be available for refurbishment work ***

Hurry!

This is final year of scheme funding!

pathmeads
The scheme is run by the Free Social Authority of Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend & Thurrock which have partnered Pathmeads Housing Association in their delivery partner, with Thames Gateway South Essex as the approved agent.

For further information, please contact your Council's private housing service.

Basildon Council
Thurrock Council
Rochford Council
Southend-on-Sea Council
Thurrock College

Housing schemes in the sub region



^ Schoolfield Road West Thurrock

Essex based housing association, CHP, is to launch over 80 high-quality affordable homes in the Thames Gateway region in 2011 after receiving over £2.6million in Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) funding.

Built to meet the Communities and Local Government's Code for Sustainable Homes, the properties in Stanford-le-Hope and West Thurrock will provide much needed social housing properties to the area.

Developed by Parkfield House Developments and leading estate provider Savills, the town centre regeneration scheme in Stanford-le-Hope – which received £792,000 in funding from the HCA – will provide 18 homes (seven

one-bedroom, seven two-bedroom apartments and four studio properties) for affordable rent. Due for handover in February 2011 the Schoolfield Road development in West Thurrock will see a further 52 affordable homes being constructed after receiving £964,000 in HCA funding.

Working with Barratt Homes and Savills, the scheme will provide 37 properties for discounted rent – six four-bedroom and two five-bedroom homes and 20 two-bedroom and nine one-bedroom apartments. Providing a further 15 dwellings for discounted rent, the development will also feature six three-bedroom homes and nine two-bedroom apartments.

David Cotterill, CHP Director of Development, said: "We are delighted to be able to deliver a wide range of new homes in the Thames Gateway region, despite difficult economic conditions. We appreciate the support of our partners in our endeavours."



Royal Court << Laindon

Phase 1 of Family Mosaics Royal Court, Laindon regeneration project providing 53 new homes – a mixture of affordable rent flats, family houses and a convenience store – was handed over in October 2010.

The project is a partnership between Basildon Council, Lovell PLC and Family Mosaic with Employers Agent services provided by EC Harris. Residents moved into the development immediately following completion. Some tenants were decanted from the neighbouring tower blocks which are now vacated and transferred to Family Mosaic for demolition and redevelopment. Phase 2 of the project will provide a mixture of affordable rent and shared ownership homes.

The final phase of the development will follow consisting of private sale homes developed by Lovell. The project has been part funded with HCA and Basildon Council grants.

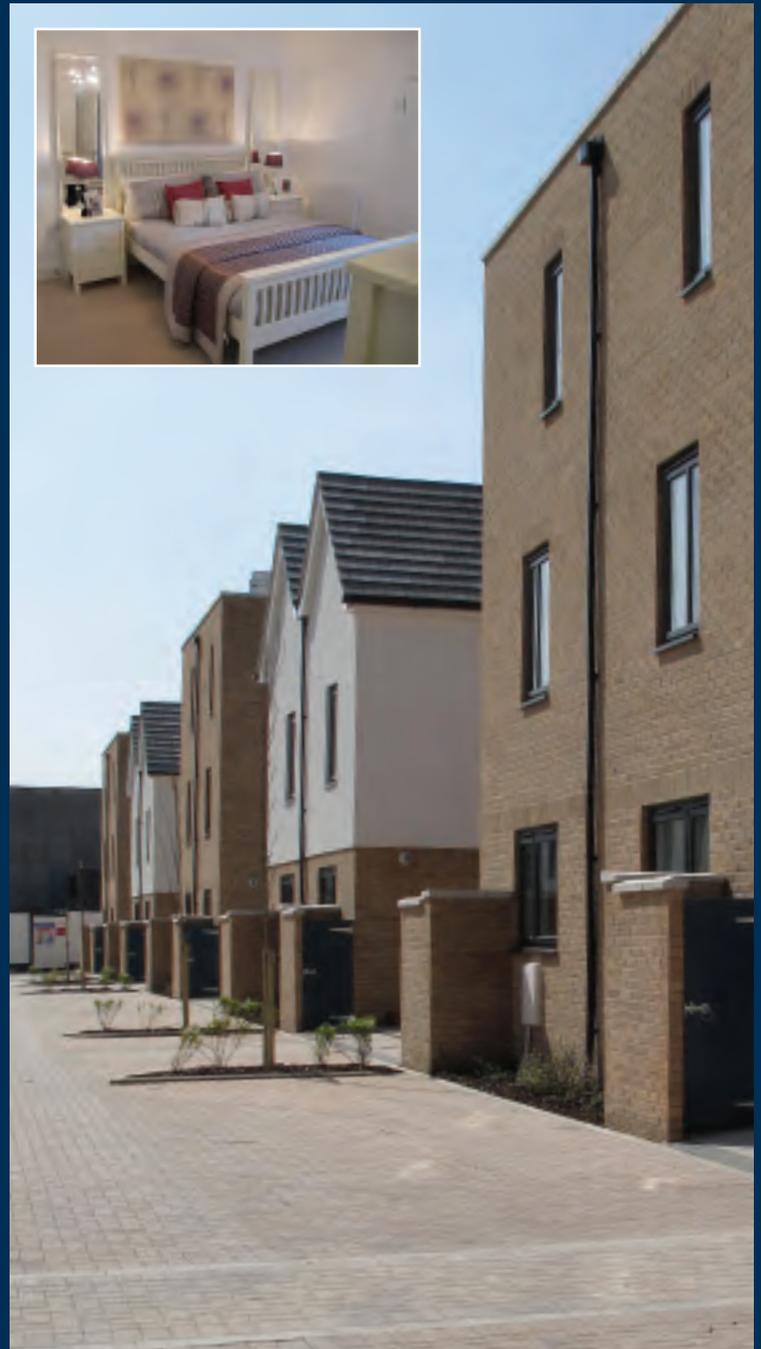


^ Pitsea Marsh Basildon

Stephen Metcalfe MP and Councillor Tony Ball, the leader of Basildon Borough Council, joined Logic Homes when a time capsule was buried to mark the launch of the redevelopment of the Old Dairy site at Pitsea in Basildon, Essex, where 120 new affordable homes will be created.

The time capsule contained a range of relevant historical information such as a copy of the local Times newspaper, commemorative coins, a Logic Homes brochure, bptw's architectural drawings and a Genesis annual report. There were also pictures of the site from the past 100 years, including images of the site before development, and images of what the completed scheme will look like for future generations.

The scheme is due to be completed in March 2012 and will comprise 120 homes. 39 of these will be one-bedroom flats and 91 will be two-bedroom flats. Of these, there will be 56 homes for shared ownership, 25 for intermediate rent, and 39 for general needs rent for people over 55. There will also be a communal shared space, a café and five commercial units.



Pilgrim Heights South Ockendon >>

A Pilgrim Heights one bedroom starts at just £115,000 and buyers would need an income of £17,000 and be able to raise a mortgage of just over £40,000 for a 35% share in their home. The spacious 11 brand new one and two bedroom apartments, designed for modern living have been made to a high specification which include fitted kitchens, bathrooms and stainless steel appliances. All apartments have balconies as well as allocated parking.

Easily accessible Pilgrim Heights is just a five minute walk away from South Ockendon train station and a half hour commute to the city. The development is accessible via the M25 and A13. To arrange a viewing please call the East Homes sales team on 0845 600 0830.

Double Dip in House Prices?



The Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Group monitor house prices using Hometrack's online Housing Intelligence System (www.hometrack.co.uk).

In South Essex, there has been a partial price re-correction based on scarcity of property on the market. Generally, prices are being held up by a limited number of family homes that are turning over in the market. If you would like a copy of the latest Market Trends Bulletin, please contact the TGSE Strategy Co-ordinator, Alastair Pollock on 01268 294327.

HomeBuy event success in Basildon



Basildon has played host to a sub-regional event aimed at providing locals with information on low cost home ownership options.

Organised by Basildon Council, and held at the Towngate Theatre, the HomeBuy event saw a number of housing associations and two

independent financial advisers offering free advice on home buying and mortgages for people from Basildon, Thurrock, Southend, Rochford and Castle Point.

The event was led by Moat, a South East housing association and the government's appointed Local

HomeBuy Agent for Essex, Kent and Sussex. The event saw 57 people registering to find out more about properties available.

Moat has run many similar events throughout Essex, Kent and Sussex and this has been the most successful event to date.

HomeBuy Direct

In the last year, Moat has been working hard to ensure that we continue to deliver the best possible HomeBuy Agency service across the Thames Gateway. Our outstanding service levels were recognised in October, when Moat's Customer Service Team was short listed in the Frontline Customer Service Team category of the National Customer Service Awards.

Despite a challenging year due to the difficult financial environment, demand for the various HomeBuy options available has remained high.

HomeBuy Direct, the new face of shared equity, is going from strength to strength. New homes are available in Thurrock, with a 70% share starting at £115,000

and with no interest to pay on the unowned 30% for the first 5 years.

Interest in other HomeBuy options also remains strong; shares in new homes are available from as little as 25% in Basildon, 30% in Southend on Sea and 35% in Thurrock through New Build HomeBuy.

This scheme allows buyers to pay a deposit only on the purchased share and a low rent on the remaining unowned share.

Where do I go for further advice?

You can contact Moat for further details about how the schemes work and what opportunities are available within the Thames Gateway region.

Telephone: 0845 359 6161

Website: www.homebuy.co.uk

E mail: marketing@moat.co.uk

Other options include:

- Resales
- New Build Discounted Rent
- Rent to HomeBuy
- Social HomeBuy
- Armed Forces Home Ownership Scheme (AFHOS)



More Urban Design Expertise For South Essex

URS Scott Wilson has been training housing & planning teams to recognise and assess the impact of urban design in Thames Gateway South Essex. As part of the course, 14 participants from local authorities and partner Housing Associations attended a study trip on 21 October to Welwyn Garden City and New Hall, Harlow. Participants were able to see design in action and gain a better understanding of how to identify and manage on-site issues, and monitor quality and delivery once building has commenced.

The training has equipped staff with a good understanding of:

- The principles of urban design,
- The benefits of good design for the community and
- How to recognise and manage issues that can arise during either the planning, negotiation or delivery stages of a development.

These skills will also better equip staff to produce their own design briefs for council developments when required and to interpret the resulting offer from the developer, to ensure the work is right for the local area.

The course concluded on 11 November. For further information please contact the TGSE Strategy Coordinator Alastair Pollock, on 01268 294327 or alastair.pollock@basildon.gov.uk.



New allocation policy approved



Castle Point Borough Council has concluded a fundamental review of its allocation policy to ensure that it is "fit for purpose" and meets the expectations of current legislation, "Codes of Guidance", case law precedents and recognised good practice. In addition, a review was necessary to meet the requirements of the proposed choice based lettings (CBL) scheme for the Borough.

After a 2 month period of extensive consultation, including an online survey and tenant, applicant and partner workshops, the Council's Cabinet approved the new allocation policy. Implementation of the new allocation policy will be deferred until early 2011 when the CBL scheme (which will be known as "Home Choice") goes "live".

During the coming months, progress will be made on IT development, a re-assessment of all housing register applicants and transfer list applicants and a programme of awareness raising and training for staff and partners.

Following an evaluation of potential IT partners for its CBL scheme, Castle Point Borough Council is at an advanced stage in its procurement process and expects to announce its partner prior to Christmas.



Sir Ebenezer Howard, a founding member of 'The Garden Cities of Tomorrow' movement described in 1902, a strategy for city growth. He said, "There would be a network of moderate sized industrial and trading towns in close contact with surrounding agricultural countryside, each a healthy, well-equipped and coherent community...with civic design aimed at harmony, rather than standardisation". His plaque is pictured above.

Estuary's Southend Community Art project



A number of residents and volunteers from the community worked with local artist, Paul Allcock, to create 8 pieces of art which are linked to Southend on Sea. These include Rossi's, Southend Pier, Southend United Football Club, Kursaal, Ashby's local butchers and Adventure Island.

The concept of "Our Community" came from Estuary Housing Association (the landlord for the development) and Higgins Construction PLC (the chosen Construction Partner). The reality of "Our Community" only became possible when Southend Adult Community College (SACC) supported the concept and funded this through its Family Learning Programme. It took 8 weeks of hard work and it is hoped that the colourful artwork will brighten up the hoardings surrounding the site and make this an interesting area for passers by to see.

The £10.3 million new build project is due for completion in November 2011. and will provide 65 mixed tenure homes including general needs, market rent, new build homebuy and outright sale for local people.



The TGSE Housing Group forms a sub group of the wider Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership and is represented by Housing Strategy and Development partners from the following organisations:

- Basildon Borough Council
- Castle Point Borough Council
- Rochford District Council
- Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
- Thurrock Borough Council
- Estuary HA Ltd
- Family Mosaic
- Moat Housing Group
- Swan Housing Group
- CHP

A wider group of RSLs meet quarterly through a Forum and include the five representatives above and the following additional organisations:

East Thames Group, Guinness Trust and Sanctuary Group

For further information, please contact:

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www.tgessex.co.uk

Thames Gateway South Essex