

Colchester Borough Council - Housing and Homelessness Summary December 2017

The summary contains key information from the Housing and Homelessness Strategies including the housing stock, housing register, homelessness and housing options service, development of new homes, the housing market, and the private rented sector.

If any of this information is to be used in any publicity, please contact Karen Paton, Housing Strategy Officer by telephone on (01206) 282275 or email: karen.paton@colchester.gov.uk

This bulletin will be published quarterly. Information will be updated if available, but please note that some information is only produced annually.

Housing Stock in Colchester

| Type of home | Percentage of total housing % |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Owner Occupied with Mortgage | 33.7 |
| Owner Occupied without mortgage | 31.4 |
| Private rented | 16.2 |
| Rented from Colchester Borough Council | 9.5 |
| Rented from a Registered Provider | 6.5 |
| Shared ownership | 0.3 |
| Living in tied accommodation* or rent free | 2.4 |
| Total | 100 |

* tied accommodation is accommodation provided as a condition of employment

Source: Census 2011

The table below shows the number of dwellings in Colchester by tenure as at 1st April 2016 (most recent information available).

| Local Authority (incl. owned by other LAs) | Private Registered Provider | Other public sector | Private sector | Total |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--------|
| 6,040 | 4,900 | 960 | 66,700 | 78,610 |

Source: DCLG live tables

Number of homes sold under the Right to buy scheme

During 2016-17 there were **51** Council homes sold to tenants under the national Right to Buy scheme. In the 1st quarter April - June 2017-18 the number of homes sold under the scheme was 19. During the 2nd quarter July – September 12 properties were sold. This brings the mid-year total to 31

Empty homes

On 21st November 2017 there were **1,615** empty homes classified as empty for council tax purposes. Of these **1,549** were privately owned or owned by Registered Providers and **66** were owned by Colchester Borough Council. This definition of empty properties is 'Empty, Unoccupied & unfurnished' which includes short term (possibly vacant between moves) and long term (Uninhabitable/subject to Major Works).

The Housing Register

Colchester holds a housing register of people interested in Council or Registered Provider homes. Households eligible to join the register are assessed according to need and 'banded' as to their priority for rehousing. There are five bands (Bands A - E), depending on the assessed level of housing need.

Not everyone on the housing register will be offered a property. Last year (April 2016 – March 2017) there were only **529** lets of affordable housing compared to nearly **5,000** households on the register.

Households on the register according to band

| Banding | Number of households on register |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| A | 140 |
| B | 665 |
| C | 1115 |
| D | 325 |
| E | 2640 |
| Total | 4885 |

Gateway to Homechoice, 30 June 2017

Households on the register according to number of bedrooms required

| Number of bedrooms required | Number of households on the register |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| One | 1353 |
| Two | 1889 |
| Three | 1305 |
| Four or more | 338 |
| Total | 4885 |

Gateway to Homechoice, 30 June 2017

Lettings of affordable housing

Affordable housing includes both Council owned and Registered Provider homes. The table below shows the number of properties let during 2016 – 2017.

| Landlord | Number of homes let April 2016 - March 2017 |
|----------------------------|--|
| Colchester Borough Council | 311 |
| Registered Providers | 218 |
| Total | 529 |

Source: Gateway to Homechoice, 31 March 2017

Registered Providers of social housing are independent societies, bodies of trustees or companies established for the purpose of providing low-cost social housing for people in housing need on a non-profit-making basis. They are also known as 'housing associations'.

The table below shows the total number of lettings by applicant type on the Housing register.

| Applicant type | Number of homes let April 2016 - March 2017 |
|----------------|--|
| Direct | 192 |
| Transfer | 129 |
| Homeless | 208 |
| Total | 529 |

Source: Gateway to Homechoice, 31 March 2017

Please note this does not include households who have moved through mutual exchange. This is where an existing Council or Registered Provider tenant 'swaps' their home with another tenant.

Homelessness and Housing advice

The Housing Solutions Team provides free, expert housing advice to residents of all tenures in the borough. The team has a strong focus on preventing homelessness and can advise people with housing problems or assist those people in finding somewhere to live.

For the year 2016 - 2017, the Housing Solutions Team;

- In conjunction with partner organisations, prevented homelessness for **648** households by giving advice on budgeting, defending illegal evictions, negotiating with landlords and helping them secure alternative accommodation.

- Accepted a duty under the homelessness legislation for **329** households and helped them into accommodation.

The table below shows the number of cases where a homelessness duty has been accepted and where homelessness has been prevented for each quarter of 2017 – 2018:

| | April-June 2017 | July-September 2017 | October-December 2017 | January-March 2018 |
|---|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Homelessness households accepted | 54 | 37 | | |
| Homelessness prevention | 170 | 200 | | |

Source: DCLG P1E information

The Council has a statutory duty under the Housing Act 2002 to provide temporary accommodation to homeless people that are unintentionally homeless and in priority need, whilst they wait for more permanent accommodation to become available.

The following table shows the number of households in temporary accommodation by type of accommodation as at 30th September 2017.

| Type of temporary accommodation: | Number of households as at 30th September 2017 |
|---|--|
| Bed and Breakfast Accommodation | 5 |
| Nightly paid privately managed accommodation | 12 |
| Social Housing (Council/Registered Provider Stock) | 88 |
| Private rented sector housing | 2 |
| Housing Leased by Registered Providers | 58 |
| Hostel accommodation/Women's refuge | 2 |
| Other | 12 |
| Total in Temporary Accommodation | 179 |

Source: DCLG P1E information

Development of new homes

Number of homes delivered

Between April 2015 and March 2016 a total of **933** new homes were built in Colchester.

Source: Annual Monitoring Report, 2016.

Number of affordable homes delivered

During the year April 2016 to March 2017 a total of **100** new affordable homes were completed in Colchester. Areas where these homes were built included; Mile End, Betts Hill, Severalls Hospital site, Stanway, Dedham, Northfields and Hythe Quay.

| Type of affordable housing | Number of homes completed |
|--|---------------------------|
| Registered Provider for renting | 75 |
| Shared ownership | 25 |
| HOLD – Home Ownership for people with a long term Disability | 0 |
| Total | 100 |

Source: Registered Provider returns

Affordable Home ownership

The Government has set up a number of schemes to help households into homeownership. Two of the key schemes are Help to buy equity loans (a low interest loan towards a deposit for a home) and the Help to buy mortgage guarantee (enables you to buy a home with a 5% deposit).

The number of properties bought in Colchester with the support of the Help to buy Equity loans scheme from April 2013 to 31 December 2016 was **843**.

The number of homes bought with the support of the Help to buy Mortgage guarantee scheme in Colchester from October 2013 to 31 December 2016 was **312**. This scheme has now ceased.

The Housing Market

House prices in Colchester

| Date | September 2016 | September 2017 |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Average price of home | £274,475 | £300,055 |
| Lower quartile price | £182,500 | £202,500 |

Source: Hometrack

The table above compares the changes in both the overall average house price and the average lower quartile house price from the previous year. The lower quartile house price is the bottom of the market - usually smaller homes and flats.

Housing in the Private Sector

The Private Sector Housing Team (PSH) has introduced a robust method of monitoring of hazards removed and homes improved. The targets for 2014/15 include 300 housing hazards to be removed and 300 homes improved.

The number of requests from tenants asking the Private Sector Housing Team to investigate disrepair in their privately rented property in 2016–2017 was: **208**.

The table below shows the number of requests from tenants asking the Private Sector Housing Team to investigate disrepair by quarter during 2017-18:

| Time period | Requests from tenants |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Quarter 1 (April-June) | 42 |
| Quarter 2 (July-September) | 51 |
| Quarter 3 (October-December) | |
| Quarter 4 (January-March) | |

Source; PSH information

The total number of serious hazards removed by the PSH team during 2016 - 2017 was: **324**

The table below shows the number of serious hazards removed by quarter during 2017 – 2018:

| Time period | Hazards removed |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Quarter 1 (April-June) | 69 (inc 8 cat 1 hazards) |
| Quarter 2 (July-September) | 77 (inc 20 cat 1 hazards) |
| Quarter 3 (October–December) | |
| Quarter 4 (January-March) | |

Source; PSH information

The total number of homes improved by the PSH team in 2016 - 2017 was: **158**
 The table below shows the number of homes improved by the PSH team by quarter for 2017 - 18:

| Time period | Dwellings improved |
|------------------------------|--|
| Quarter 1 (April-June) | 29 (10 of which are Cat 1) |
| Quarter 2 (July-September) | 35 (16 of which are Houses in Multiple Occupation) |
| Quarter 3 (October–December) | |
| Quarter 4 (January-March) | |

Source; PSH information

Over the last year (2016 – 17) the Council needed to serve **7** Improvement Notices for Category 1 and 2 hazards on non-compliant landlords to secure compliance with housing standards and **10** other statutory notices.

The table below shows the notices served by quarter during 2017 - 18:

| Time period | Improvement notices served | Other Statutory notices served |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Quarter 1 (April-June) | 1 | 5 Hazard awareness notices 1 Prohibition Order served 1 Overcrowding Notice served 1 notices served to abate a statutory nuisance |
| Quarter 2 (July-September) | 3 (1 of which had the action suspended until the property becomes vacant) | |
| Quarter 3 (October-December) | | |
| Quarter 4 (January-March) | | |

Source; PSH information

During quarter 2 of 2017-18 the Private Sector Housing Team in addition to the above:

- Prosecuted against 1 non-complaint landlords
- Bought back 1 long term vacant properties in to occupation

Assistance to home owners

Colchester Borough Council administers Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to criteria set out by the Government. In 2016 -17 there were **118** grants paid after completion of works to adapt properties to enable people with disabilities to continue to live in them.

In 2016-17 Colchester Borough Council completed **5** Home Repair Loans. This is an income based, 'means tested' loan, secured on the property, and is available to home owners and leaseholders to repair and maintain their property.