With a background of tough financial times, Ashford Borough Council’s housing services team is looking ahead and asking you to agree on its priorities between now and 2018.

There are many competing priorities and a limited budget.

Delivering affordable housing, preventing homelessness, reducing the impact of welfare reforms, and tackling empty properties are just some of the issues the borough faces.

Therefore, Ashford Borough Council has drafted a Housing Framework document that outlines what it feels the priorities of its housing services team are for the next five years.

Residents and local organisations with a keen interest in the provision of housing in the borough are now being asked to comment on the council’s future plans.

The Mayor and Mayoress of Ashford with residents at the opening of the Luckley House extension in Wye

For more information please visit: www.ashford.gov.uk/housing
So what are the council’s priorities?

The framework document looks at the big picture of housing services in the borough and distils the suggested overall work of the housing services team into three main areas.

**The council**
Ashford Borough Council provides a wide range of core housing services. It provides options advice to people applying to live in social housing and manages the housing register of these applicants, assesses the housing need of those who present themselves to the council as homeless and works with landlords the private sector.

It manages its own lettings scheme. The council also brings empty homes back into use where possible and issues disabled facilities grants and looks at energy efficiency, making homes easier and cheaper to heat.

**The housing revenue account**
The council uses the money in this account (raised from tenants’ rent collection) to maintain the houses it owns and to provide services to tenants, such as sheltered housing.

**The regeneration and housing company**
This has been approved in principle at this stage. This will give the council an opportunity to be entrepreneurial in its work under the ‘power of competence’ given to local authorities by central government. This will enable the council to build more homes helping to address the housing needs of residents, and will complement the delivery of the council’s regeneration objectives.

For more information please visit: www.ashford.gov.uk/housing
The five priorities to be delivered by the Housing Framework are:

- Improve the supply of affordable housing to meet local housing needs in the borough’s urban and rural areas
- Improve the environmental quality of homes and address fuel poverty in all tenures
- Increase the availability and choice of accommodation, including for vulnerable people
- Increase residents’ satisfaction with their homes and neighbourhood and allow them more involvement
- Prevent and reduce homelessness and increase access to settled accommodation for homeless households and those at risk of homelessness.

For more detailed information
This leaflet is very much a bite-size version of the full Housing Framework document. The document is available to view on our website: https://haveyoursay.ashford.gov.uk/consult.ti/draft_housing_framework/consultationHome

In addition to looking at the council’s priorities it details:

- The challenges the borough faces
- How the council intends to deliver its housing services
- Figures showing population growth trends
- How the council will adapt to an ageing population
- How the council will look at affordable housing provision
- The links between good housing and health and wellbeing
- How the housing framework is guided by the council’s tenancy strategy, homelessness strategy and private sector strategy.
Tell us what you think

Your views will help us to shape how we will deliver our housing services.

Between 7th January and 4th March the council is asking residents, public-serving organisations and charities who will have an interest in the work of the council’s housing services team to let us know what they think of:

• The priorities as listed in the document
• Where the council has said it will put its resources
• The duration of the framework document

Please complete our online questionnaire, which is available at https://haveyoursay.ashford.gov.uk/consult.ti/draft_housing_framework/consultationHome to tell us what you think.

If you have any further questions please:

• Email: Jennifer.shaw@ashford.gov.uk
• Phone: 01233 330688
• Visit: Ashford Gateway Plus in Church Road, Ashford

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Telephone: 01233 331111
Email: customer.care@ashford.gov.uk

For more information please visit: www.ashford.gov.uk/housing