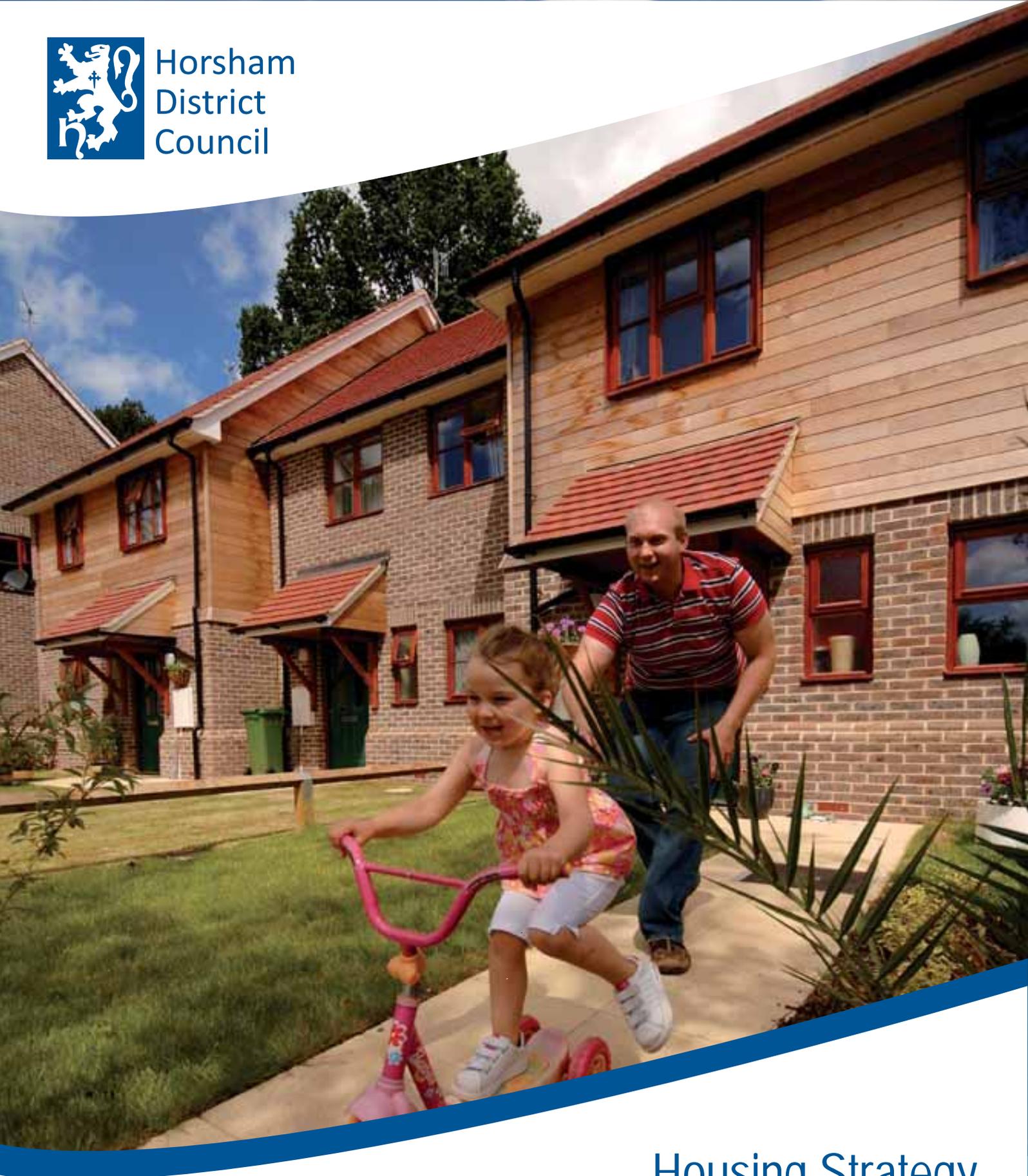




Horsham
District
Council



Housing Strategy 2013-2015

Serving our
& towns
& villages



Horsham
District
Council

serving our towns and villages



Promoting a better quality of life

Have your say
on who is housed
through the Council

Every home in Horsham District received a copy of the
'Have your say on who is housed through the Council' survey form.

Forward



Our Housing Strategy describes how we intend to meet the housing needs of our residents, making the best use of all the resources we have at our disposal and achieving the priority identified in the Horsham District Plan 2011-15: *to access appropriate and affordable housing to meet local needs.*

We think that clear direction and leadership is needed at a time of deficit reduction, welfare reform and wider austerity measures. Our strategy is based both on an understanding of what people need in Horsham District, across all tenures and household circumstances, and who should be housed through Horsham District Council. Residents tell us that affordable decent housing is the third most important aspect of life in the District that should be improved.

Our vision

We want Horsham District to be a place where people and businesses feel they belong and are proud to call home.

Our Housing Strategy will contribute to this.

We want to see:

1. An increasing supply of homes that people in need can afford
2. Effective support for homeless households
3. Appropriate housing provision for vulnerable people
4. Thriving rural communities
5. The Strategy effectively delivered and reviewed

We aim to:

- Work with our partners over the next two years to increase the delivery of affordable homes and ensure that all in housing need are given the best advice and offered the most realistic solutions. This requires early intervention and working with partner agencies to prevent rather than cure homelessness
- Support individuals and communities so that they are more able to contribute to society, to take control of the services they receive and the choices they make.

This Strategy forms part of an overall suite of documents that is designed to equip us to meet the challenges of the next two years. We have developed our Tenancy Strategy and Housing Register and Nominations Policy in parallel to this strategy. We have deliberately kept the timeframe short as so much change will take place as a result of Government legislation.

We'll check where we have got to after a year and then thoroughly review our strategies in 2015. We hope all our residents will help us, calling us to account and suggesting where things could improve. Government policies and initiatives on housing come thick and fast and we are determined to keep up to date and adapt quickly to any changes introduced - our one aim is to provide the housing service our residents need.

Cllr Sue Rogers
Cabinet Member for
a Safer and Healthier District

Cllr Ian Howard
Cabinet Member for Living
and Working Communities

1. How we have developed the Strategy

Horsham District Council will be responsible for this strategy and making sure it is delivered.

The evidence we based our decisions on can be found in the Housing Register and Nominations Policy.

We will monitor and review the strategy after one year and following the general election in 2015, further review the existing strategy or publish a new one.

We have not concentrated on explaining how we have delivered and updated our previous Housing Strategy 2008-13 - full details can be obtained from the Housing Strategy Annual Progress Reviews 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12.

For further information about this strategy and opportunities for involvement, or in relation to housing matters in general please contact Andrew Smith, Housing Services Manager, Horsham District Council.

Tel: 01403 215202

Email: Andrew.smith@horsham.gov.uk

Before preparing the strategy, we considered what residents and customers of housing services say, carried out research and analysis, spoke to parish councils and community groups, and held discussions with partners and stakeholders.

2. Challenges to overcome

We have identified a number of challenges that we need to overcome if we want to achieve our vision and meet housing need. These are:

- Affordable housing is in short supply
- The private rented sector will need to play a greater role in future in meeting housing need, especially for homeless households
- There is an increasingly older population and people are living longer
- The economic downturn, government spending plans and welfare reform are expected to reduce household income, increase the need for affordable housing and increase vulnerability
- The Council and its partners' capacity to respond is also reducing due to Government spending cuts

3. Our outcomes in more detail and priorities for action

1. An increasing supply of homes that people in need can afford

We will have an appropriate supply of homes that people in need can afford when:

- New well-designed and sustainable affordable homes are delivered to meet different needs
- Property sizes and types reflect needs including smaller accommodation and older persons' accommodation
- The best use is made of existing housing including empty homes and under-occupied homes
- Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople have access to good quality site provision

We will build on:

Our flexibility in negotiating with developers and our Housing Association partners in the delivery of affordable homes

Our partners' success in delivering new affordable homes - 267 between 2008 and 2012

Our assessment of housing need

Affordable housing need for the District has been predicted by:

1. *The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update - in partnership with Mid Sussex District Council and Crawley Borough Council*
 2. *Detailed analysis of the Housing Register and older persons' and intermediate housing waiting lists over the last two years*
1. Strategic Housing Market Assessments provide an evidence base for a mix of all kinds of housing - market and affordable - based on current and future demographic trends and the needs of different groups in the community.

The assessment also identifies the size, type, tenure and range of housing required.

The SHMA update proposes a range of affordable housing to meet need, based on various household growth scenarios.

The average figure for the number of units needed is 224 per year.

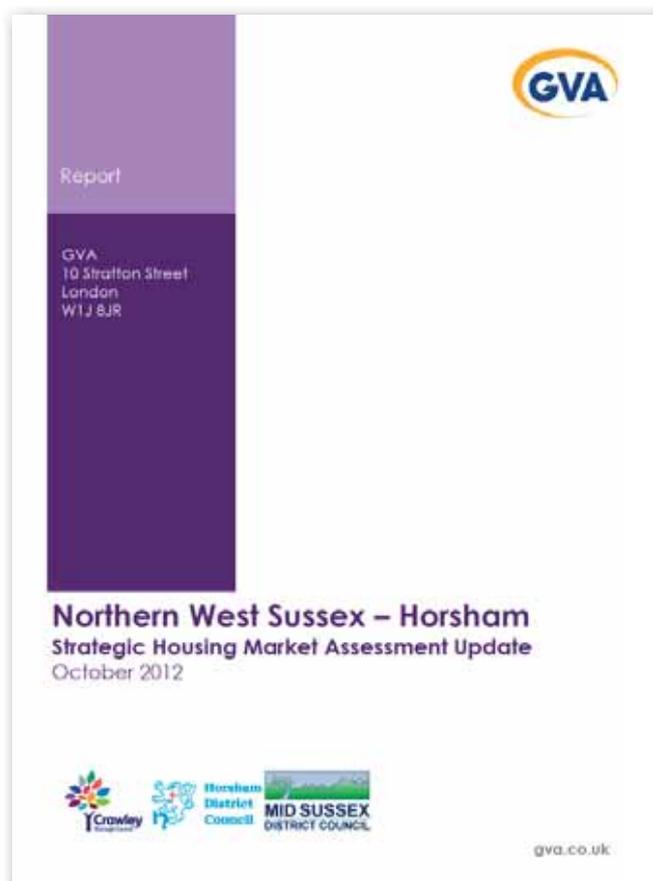
A range of different sizes is set out - the majority of households may require smaller properties, but those in need of larger

properties often have to wait much longer for a home and their domestic problems are more urgent.

The SHMA recommends the following percentages of affordable unit sizes:

- 20% 1 bed homes
- 35% 2 bed homes
- 35% 3 bed homes
- 10% 4 bed homes

For further details, please see SHMA Update: http://www.horsham.gov.uk/images/NWS_SHMA_Report_Horsham_FINAL.pdf



2. The detailed analysis of the Housing Register and waiting lists predicts the number of new affordable homes required to be 240 units a year. For more detailed information, see Horsham District Council Tenancy Strategy.

This level of supply would significantly reduce the number of households already on the register and meet the needs of:

- households requiring shared ownership properties (higher incomes)
- an aging population - retirement homes/ Extra Care
- those with disabilities
- local households with a village connection who wish to remain in that village

The figure of 240 homes a year can be broken down as follows

- 120 units minimum for general needs social/affordable rent
- 30 units minimum for general needs shared ownership
- 40 units for retirement/Extra Care social/affordable rent
- 20 units for retirement/Extra Care shared ownership
- 30 additional units (general needs or retirement) - to compensate for local connection schemes drawing from lower bands on the register for nominations (those in less need).

It is essential to distinguish affordable housing need from the target the Council sets for actual affordable housing delivery.

The Council does not build affordable homes. It has an enabling role and facilitates and negotiates the highest number of affordable homes that can be delivered.

We have to factor in:

- Viability
- Housing Associations' ability to deliver and fund
- Changing Government policy
- Funding

Our current funding situation

Local Investment Plan

The Homes and Communities Agency requires all local authorities to have a Local Investment Plan in place to qualify for potential government subsidy for affordable housing.

The plan is the basis of dialogue between the Homes and Communities Agency, Horsham District Council, Crawley Borough Council, Mid Sussex District Council and other key partners. Its main purpose is to highlight the priorities for housing investment over the short to medium term and to enable investment to be planned strategically. It helps inform the Homes and Communities Agency on the level of investment required to support the delivery of affordable housing and associated infrastructure in the three local authority areas comprising northwest Sussex.

The partners to the Local Investment Plan have adopted the following vision:

Ensuring the delivery of high quality housing which is affordable, sustainable and in the right place to support economic vitality, to enhance the quality of life in North West Sussex and to make it an even better place in which to live and work.

The Plan will be reviewed and updated during 2013.

The Council's major housing association partners were all successful in bids to secure Homes and Communities Agency support for their development programmes running until 2015, which all feature in the Plan.

Our housing association partners now let properties at the Affordable Rent tenure, which can offer shorter fixed term tenancies at a rent higher than social rent, up to a maximum of 80% of local market rents.

The Affordable Rent model introduces a different way of paying for the development of social housing by housing associations: the additional income derived from Affordable Rent can only be used to subsidise new development. This effectively reduces grant allocations awarded by the Homes and Communities Agency and replaced the model used to build new social housing that has been in use for many years.

The new system allows for a proportion of existing housing stock to be re-let at Affordable Rent levels, although this must fit into the stated aims of the relevant local authority strategic tenancy policy (see HDC Tenancy Strategy).

Commuted Sums

Commuted sums are paid to the Council when developers negotiate to provide affordable

housing off site. In lieu of units, the Council receives a cash payment which is generally agreed on the basis of policies in the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document. The money must be spent on delivering affordable housing in the District.

The most common approach is to provide grant funding for Housing Associations to deliver new schemes.

Although we always work with developers to provide affordable homes on site as the first and best option, a cash payment instead can mean developments are able to go forward if providing the required level of affordable housing on site will seriously affect viability. The commuted sums pot does allow the Council to fulfil its enabling function by subsidising affordable housing developments that would be very difficult to deliver without an injection of capital.

Almost £4 million in commuted sums was granted to Housing Associations from 2008-2012 enabling 209 new affordable homes to be built.

Based on planning consents granted, we predict approximately £7m will be collected during the period covered by this Strategy. This sum will be used to fund new affordable housing, possibly up to 300 new homes.



Martindale Farm, Southwater (Moat Housing Association)



Standings Court, Saxon Weald's Passivhaus development in New Street, Horsham.
 From the left, Robert Napier (HCA Chairman), Andrew Osborne (Osborne Chairman), David Avery (Saxon Weald Chairman), Leonard Crosbie Horsham District Council Chairman, Anthony Holden Khan (resident), Paula Goatcher(resident), Gemma Osgood (resident) and David Standfast (Saxon Weald Chief Exec

Our planning policy

Our current planning policy sets a target of 40% affordable homes on all developments of 15 units and over. This target is split 25% rented and 15% shared ownership.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was introduced at the end of March 2012. In broad terms, it sets out the purpose of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development through economic, social and environmental means, with a presumption in favour of sustainable development through plan making and decision taking.

Key measures specific to affordable housing can be highlighted:

- Local planning authorities should plan for a

mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends and the needs of different groups in the community

- Identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing required
- Where affordable housing is needed, set policies for meeting this on-site, unless off-site provision or a financial contribution of broadly equivalent value can be robustly justified
- Retention of rural exception sites - we specifically asked for these to be included in our consultation response on the NPPF

The onus is very much on the local authority to demonstrate the need for affordable housing. This means the current Strategic Housing Market Assessment update, our own analysis of homelessness figures and numbers and types of households on the Housing Register and our

programme of housing needs surveys (see page 23) take on even greater importance.

Preparation of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) is underway and a detailed assessment of affordable housing viability was produced in August 2010. The study demonstrates that at the time of preparation, 40% affordable housing on developments of more than 15 dwellings was viable. Although the funding mechanisms have changed since the publication of the Study it does include a 'dynamic viability' tool that will enable the Council to reflect changes in the market and affordable housing viability over time. The study also recommends a sliding scale of affordable housing contribution on developments of 14 homes or less.

The study has been used to inform new affordable housing policies in the HDPF.

Our Empty Property Strategy which aims to bring long term empty properties back into use

In 2011-12 we used a mixture of persuasion and legislation to convince at least 20 home owners that their houses would be better occupied. Over 300 homes are known to be 'long-term empties' in the Horsham District. More homes are referred to us weekly and a corporate group of officers from many Council Departments works together to find solutions for this issue.

Our Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople (GTTS) Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD)

The Council continues to work towards the production of a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople (GTTS) Site Allocations

Development Plan Document (DPD). A Preferred Options document was the subject of consultation over the summer of 2012.

The document's production will run alongside the Horsham District Planning Framework which will set the overarching strategy for the District, including a policy relating to Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites; as well as setting a target for the number of pitches/ plots required.

The target is required as a consequence of new Government guidance, 'Planning for Traveller Sites', which came into force at the same time as the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework at the end of March 2012. It has been published separately as the Government intends to review the policy when fair and representative practical results of its implementation are clear. The key issues are the requirement for an updated assessment of local needs to inform a policy target and a new requirement for a five year supply of deliverable sites which will come into force in March 2013. This brings GTTS pitch requirements in line with normal housing (bricks and mortar) policy as set out in the NPPF.

There is also a specific policy relating to rural exception sites to enable small sites to come forward specifically for affordable traveller sites.

At Government level there is wider work to tackle inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers being undertaken by a cross department Ministerial Working Group under the chairmanship of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

Between now and 2015 we will:

Develop and implement new planning policies within the Horsham District Planning Framework to secure appropriate levels of affordable housing

The affordable housing policy for the Horsham District Planning Framework will seek to achieve a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet the District's housing needs as identified in the Strategic Market Housing Assessment. The intention will be to create sustainable and balanced communities.

The proposed targets and thresholds are as follows:

- On sites providing 15 or more dwellings, or on sites of over 0.5 hectares, the Council will require 40% of dwellings to be affordable
- On sites providing between 9 and 14 new dwellings, the Council will require 30% of dwellings to be affordable
- On sites providing between 5 and 8 new dwellings, the Council will require 20% of dwellings to be affordable, or where on-site provision is not achievable a financial contribution equivalent to the cost of the developer providing the units on site

Work with our Housing Association partners to develop over 500 new affordable homes

These have already been granted planning permission. By 2015 we expect to see these homes either completed or under construction.

At present, the programme includes over 300 homes for affordable rent, over 100 for shared ownership, and around 100 older persons' homes.

There is a pipeline of new schemes that are at various stages in the planning process.

Full details of the Council's affordable housing development programme is available on request.



A new home at Parsonage Farm Henfield. The development contains 52 affordable homes and is owned and managed by Southern Housing Group

Set a new ongoing Council target for affordable homes delivery

We will set the target through the Members Affordable Housing Advisory Group, and it will be based on evidence provided by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update and the detailed analysis of the Housing Register. The analysis will be carried out on an annual basis.

The new target will break down into rented accommodation, shared ownership, older persons and special needs accommodation.

Continue to implement our Empty Homes Strategy

We will continue to implement the Empty Homes Strategy which aims to encourage homeowners and landlords to bring vacant homes back into use.

(See full policy at:

http://www.horsham.gov.uk/Files/Private_Sector_Assistance_Policy_Booklet_Nov11.pdf)

Continue to implement our Housing Assistance Policy

This provides a financial safety net for disabled, elderly and vulnerable households in all sectors.

Our enforcement of housing standards helps to ensure that the private rented sector provides homes suitable to live in.

Explore the possibility of self-build schemes within the District with organisations promoting self-build

Implement Our Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople (GTTS) Site Allocations

Development Plan Document (DPD)

It is to be hoped that we will have allocated at least two sites.

The risks

- Although planning permission has been granted for over 500 new affordable homes, the Council relies on developers and housing associations to build. Delays in implementing planning permissions for a variety of reasons and further effects of the recession may impede construction and completion of affordable homes.
- The Government is introducing legislation allowing an immediate planning appeal by the developer of a site deemed unviable because of the requirement to develop a specific number of affordable homes. The Planning Inspectorate will then review the planning application to determine the number of affordable homes that need to be removed to make the development viable, and the original section 106 agreement will be set aside for three years.
- For planning agreements made before April 2010, the Government is already consulting on legislation that will allow developers to renegotiate section 106 agreements for a temporary period so they do not have to deliver affordable homes on new sites where they can prove such requirements make the project commercially unviable.
- The Government hopes this approach will unlock an estimated 75,000 new starts which have stalled because sites are deemed commercially unviable.
- As a Council we always negotiate with developers where viability is an issue. We try to take a realistic and pragmatic view and

generally we have been successful. There do not appear to be any sites that have stalled because of prohibitive provision of affordable housing, certainly prior to 6 April 2010.

- Housing Associations are only required to 'have regard' to Tenancy Strategies. They may introduce their own allocation policies that enable them to house low risk working households that are not dependent on benefits.
- Potential refusal of planning permission for gypsy sites brought forward by the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

We aim to provide effective support for homeless households by:

- Eliminating the use of B & B for expectant mothers and households with children
- Enabling people to remain in their homes, possibly with financial support
- Ensuring that customers have access to the best housing options advice and information from the Council
- Maintaining the quality of temporary accommodation provided in the District, expanding the stock of one and two flats and providing enhanced support where necessary



New homes at Alders Edge, Billingshurst (Saxon Weald)

with newly acquired stock to be centrally located, near to services

- Expanding our forum of private landlords willing to offer tenancies to homeless households. Any landlords accepting tenants through Horsham District Council will need:
 - their property to meet the minimum standard required by the Council
 - their rent to be at or below Local Housing Allowance Rates
 - to issue a minimum 12 month tenancy
 - to accept applicants fully or partially dependent on Housing Benefit or Universal Credit

We will build on:

- Our redesigned daily triage drop-in system for applicants which will be further developed in accordance with 'No Second Night Out'* principles. Applicants will receive face-to-face advice from a Housing Officer which will be tailored to their individual circumstances and homeless applicants will be given a written summary of this advice to take away with them
- Our practice of registering applicants in housing need when they first approach the Council without the need for them to make a full application at that stage. The application process now only commences when a household comes to the top of the list for nomination to a property
- Improving the information available to households in housing need through the Council's website
- Ensuring that vulnerable and minority groups are not disadvantaged and that appropriate measures are in place to assist all who require support
- Working closely with staff from the Census Partnership to maintain high standards, particularly with reference to Housing Benefit and to monitor the impact of the Local Housing Allowance (rent payments made by Housing Benefit)
- Use of the Council's Homelessness Prevention Loan Fund and the Prevention Grant to facilitate access to the Private Rented Sector, possibly as discharge of homelessness duty where this is affordable and in accordance with HDC's Allocations Policy
- Our practice of working with both landlord and tenant when an applicant has been served a Section 21 Notice**. The Council endeavours to prevent action to seek possession through the courts where this is deemed to be appropriate and sustainable

'No Second Night Out'

*No Second Night Out was launched on 1 April 2011 as a pilot project aimed at ensuring those who find themselves sleeping rough in central London for the first time need not spend a second night on the streets.

**'Section 21 Notice'

A 'Section 21 Notice to Quit', so called because it operates under section 21 of the Housing Act 1988, is the notice a landlord can give to a tenant to regain possession of a property at the end of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST). The landlord is able to issue the tenant with a section 21 notice without giving any reason for ending the tenancy agreement

The Council relies on partner agencies to assist in the prevention of homelessness. Current effective working practices will be further developed over the next two years:

- Two days work a week by the Citizens Advice Bureau, funded by the Council
- Working with West Sussex County Council to enable the permanent co-location of a floating support officer
- The 'Court Desk Service' which provides valuable assistance to local residents at repossession hearings
- The 'Sussex Oakleaf' scheme which supports those recovering from substance misuse problems and the Independent Living Scheme which supports people with mental health problems and learning difficulties to live independently
- The emergency rooms at the 'Y' Centre, partly funded by Horsham District Council, which provide two bed spaces for young homeless people to whom the Council owes a duty of care
- Sixteen/seventeen year olds have been supported by a young person's worker and a Connexions worker based in Crawley. West Sussex County Council Children's Services have the ultimate responsibility for determining whether a young person is a 'child in need' and Horsham District Council rarely becomes involved in this assessment. This service has worked well with the result



that Housing Services has not accommodated a homeless 16 or 17 year old in the past two years

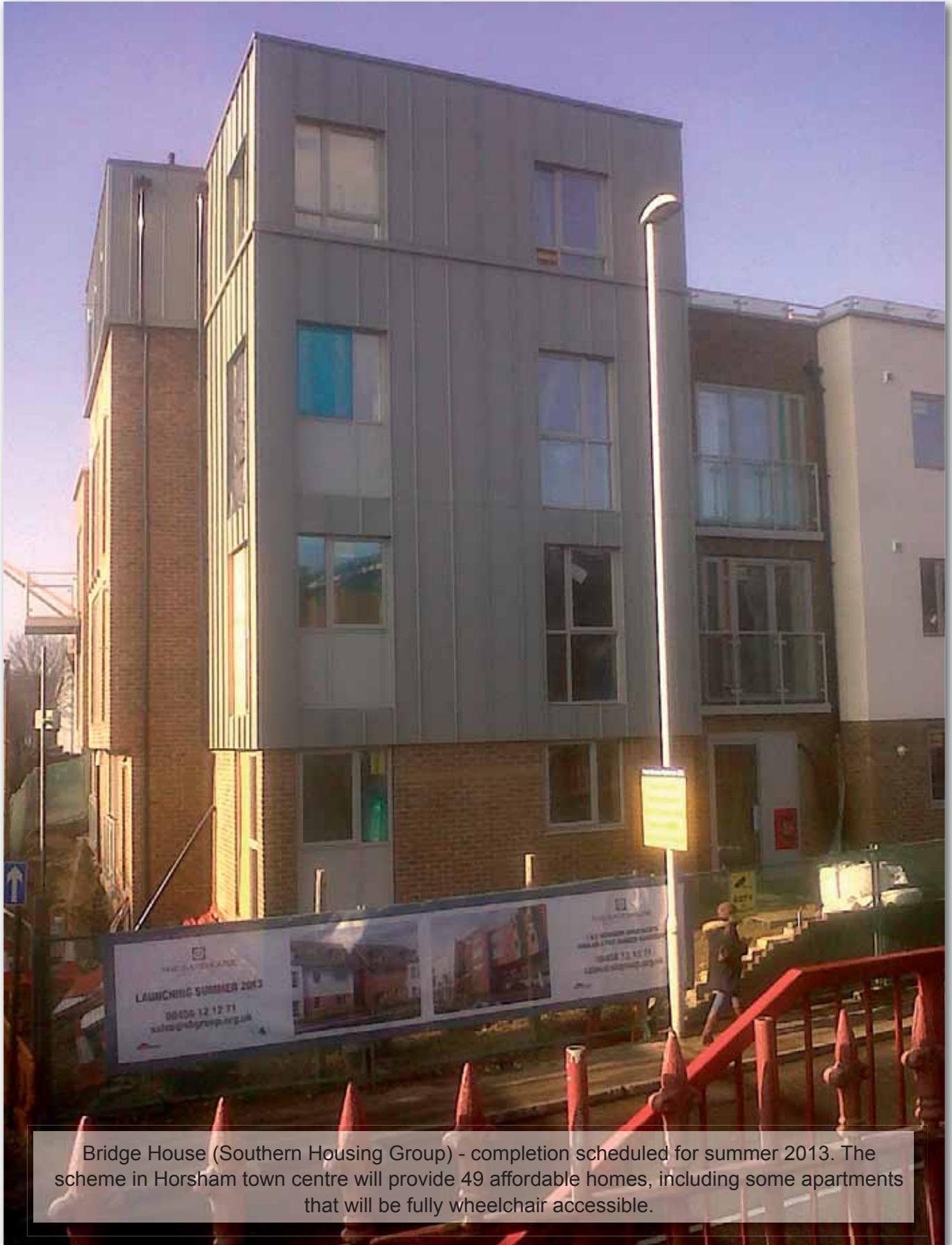
- Churches Together, Horsham Matters, Salvation Army to tackle and relieve the effects of homelessness, especially for those not owed a duty by the Council (non-priority homeless people)

The risks

- Reduction in or cessation of national Government Homeless Grant would put a number of homeless prevention initiatives at risk. The Council has decided not to ring fence this money for housing - it will go into the central pot with effect from April 2013

Inconsistent supply of affordable housing which generates peaks and troughs of supply. This means when supply is low additional pressure is placed on maximising re-lets from Housing Associations to help move people out of temporary accommodation as well as meet the need of people on the Housing Register.





Bridge House (Southern Housing Group) - completion scheduled for summer 2013. The scheme in Horsham town centre will provide 49 affordable homes, including some apartments that will be fully wheelchair accessible.

- There is a need to ensure that provision of local needs rural housing and older persons' housing does not take preference over the need to deliver general needs rented homes.
- Increasing number of people who have been through all available support services and cannot be housed due to their complex needs.
- Increasing number of priority homeless and general needs households needing advice and support as a result of increasing number of repossessions
- Increasing personal debt
- Effects of the current economic situation and recession

For further information, see Homelessness Prevention Action Plan 2013-15.

We will provide appropriate housing support for vulnerable people when:

We identify and respond to needs and promote choice and independence.

We have identified which client groups need supported housing and support services and we deliver that service effectively

We will build on:

Our local knowledge, research and data from Supporting People, West Sussex County Council, Horsham District Council Housing Services and community and voluntary sector partners including Housing Associations

The District's need for supported housing and support services for the following client groups:

- Older people with support needs
- Mental health
- Learning and physical disability

- Ex-offenders
- Substance misuse
- Care leavers
- Young people with support needs
- Women and children suffering domestic violence
- Gypsies and travellers

This does not automatically mean the delivery of specific purpose built schemes. Most people with support needs want to live as independently as possible and live as part of the community.

Many who are considered vulnerable do not need a different kind of home but do need some degree of practical support in or adaptation to their home. For example, the availability of Community Link alarms and advances in healthcare technology mean that many older people are staying in their own homes much longer than previously and moving into extra care, residential or nursing accommodation later, and by-passing traditional forms of sheltered housing. Families suffering domestic violence need not necessarily move to a refuge - they can stay in their own home with the *Safe @Home* scheme which provides home security measures.

Funding

Housing related support services are generally funded from one of two sources: the Supporting People Programme or West Sussex County Council Adult & Children Services. Both have limited resources and are under pressure from national Government to make annual efficiency savings.

Supporting People has been replaced by money paid directly to the County Council as part of a single grant known as an Area Based Grant. This has removed restrictions on how money can

be spent and it can be spent on any priority the County Council decides.

As funding for support services is uncertain most housing associations provide units that are flexible. This may involve building new affordable homes to *Lifetime Homes* standard and ensuring that a percentage of homes are fully wheelchair accessible. Careful consideration must be given to design as this type of accommodation requires a larger footprint and contains internal space that does not generate income: for example, communal areas.

Although providing units that are flexible is to be welcomed, this approach is very expensive.

Between now and 2015 we will monitor and where possible, work with our partners to increase our support for:

Older people with support needs

- We continually monitor demand for retirement, intermediate and extra care social housing for over 65s that will inform the mix of affordable homes within the percentage that the Council negotiates with developers when agreeing overall housing provision
- The recent assessment of the current Housing Register demonstrated a predicted need for 60 older persons' homes per year - 25% of the overall total
- Both Housing and Strategic Planning officers are working together to address older persons' needs and to ensure a joined up policy approach during the preparation of the Horsham District Planning Framework.
- Saxon Weald Homes have submitted planning applications for a retirement/older persons' scheme in Upper Beeding and in Steyning, and a small scheme in Partridge Green.



Residents enjoying the opening celebration at Saxon Weald's Leggyfield Court Extra Care Scheme in Horsham - December 2012

- Saxon Weald continues to review its older persons' accommodation in the District and further planning applications are expected during the period covered by the Strategy.
- A new Extra Care scheme is due to come forward as part of the 'Highfields' development by Berkeley Homes to the west of Horsham

Mental health

- The Richmond Fellowship provides a specialist floating support service for people with mental health needs and learning difficulties. This support is staffed by 7 full time support workers, 3 part time peer support workers and 8 volunteers.
- The Fellowship also manages 7 residential units at Blatchford House in Horsham for adults aged 18 to 65. Those suffering from mental health issues ranging from depression to schizophrenia can refer themselves to this scheme. Although there is no 24 hour on site presence a 24 hour on-call system is in place.

Learning and Physical disability

- Southdown Housing Association supports 148 clients across West Sussex as part of its Independent Living Scheme (ILS): 38 clients are housed in Horsham District
- The current ILS provision in Horsham is being re-tendered and will be linked to Crawley in a single contract. Southdown currently works in both areas delivering traditional ILS, Floating Support, TIPS (peer support) and a range of small initiatives supporting people to develop independent living skills. Southdown will submit a tender for the Horsham/Crawley lot offering a range of unique development ideas ideally linking to the new Generic Floating Support pathway with the aim of creating a local pathway provision

- Southdown was successful in tendering for the Countywide Generic Floating Support service which replaces Signpost and will commence in January 2013. Southdown will deliver Floating Support Services to vulnerable adults in the community, working within the service framework agreed by commissioners and to localised criteria developed in partnership with Horsham District Council. Southdown will aim to deliver a responsive, client centred, outcome focused service, thereby supporting clients to prevent homelessness and/or resolve homelessness using a range of housing options and emphasising those that are non statutory wherever possible
- Southdown has submitted a bid to Crisis to develop a Countywide Access Private Rented Sector service tailored to the needs of each district and borough. The outcome of this bid will be known in early November. If successful the service will work with Horsham District Council to support non priority vulnerable clients to access the PRS and provide ongoing floating support to sustain independence
- *Myplace* is a unique service delivered in partnership between Southdown and the West Sussex Older Looked After Children services. Though Horsham does not have a dedicated service, there are 10 units allocated on a countywide basis and accessed by OLAC for care leavers. Any care leavers with a local connection to Horsham would have access to pre-tenancy Support and would be entitled to assistance to access the PRS
- Southdown also has a number of Learning Disability services in the Horsham District including My Network (a peer support service) and Residential Care/ Supported Living schemes

Ex-offenders

- The Council works with the Probation Service and other agencies such as the Crime Reduction Initiative (CRI) and YMCA on Integrated Offender Management
- We participate in multi-agency forums on persistent prolific offenders and multiagency public protection agreements
- We retain a statutory duty to house 'vulnerable' people discharged from prison. In 2011-12 we housed five in social housing, two through the Y centre, one into private sector accommodation and two in our own temporary accommodation
- A rent deposit scheme for West Sussex authorities is available for persistent prolific offenders and is managed by Worthing Borough Council in conjunction with the Probation Service
- We work with a range of young people involved in anti social behaviour and in danger of progressing into criminal activity and help support them into housing
- We are proposing to introduce Additional Preference (priority) in the Council's new Housing Register and Nominations Policy for six housing allocations a year for individuals discharged from CRI (half way houses)

Substance misuse

- A scheme is currently in place to provide both housing through a Registered Social Landlord and a support package through Sussex Oakleaf, funded by Supporting People

Care leavers

- West Sussex County Council Leaving Care

Team funds two bed spaces at the Y-Centre for those leaving care

Young people with support needs

- Supporting People funds a housing support service for 12 vulnerable young people at the Y Centre. A further five units of support for young people are provided at Crossley Hughes House

Women and children suffering domestic violence

- The Council supports North Sussex Refuge Service and attends the monthly North Downs Domestic Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, in partnership with West Sussex County Council, Crawley Borough Council, Mid Sussex District Council and the participating statutory and voluntary agencies
- Supporting People commissions and funds the Women's Refuge Project to provide refuge, floating and resettlement support services in Horsham for women and children fleeing or experiencing domestic violence. This integrated service helps to ensure that women do not have to abandon their homes and can make planned changes to their lives
- The Council runs established the *Safe @ Home* scheme, which aims to make it possible for victims to remain in their own home and feel safe. The scheme involves upgrading home security measures where possible in the home and installs a Community Link lifeline unit. It is available to anyone - owner occupiers and tenants
- The Council also supports domestic violence drop-in sessions and a support providers forum

Gypsies and travellers

- See under 'Housing that people can afford' - Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document

Other related support for vulnerable groups

Community Link (Assistive technology)

- This service, run by the Council, provides a home safety and personal security system that enables people to live independently within their own homes. The service involves the provision of a telephone link 24 hours a day between the home and the control centre.
- The service is not specifically for the elderly - it saves lives, gives families peace of mind, and is a very cost-effective way to keep people in their homes - including those suffering with dementia. It can also be of great use to young people living on their own, and currently serves residents from aged 14-102.
- Since the scheme was introduced in 1986, at present nearly 1700 households benefit from a Community Link system.
- The priority for the 2013-2015 Housing Strategy is to improve access to assistive technology for vulnerable residents of all ages and their families in the District, as this has been proved to be a popular and value-for money service that enables those who are vulnerable to live independently at home

Between now and 2015 we will:

- Continue to promote assistive technology to residents of Horsham District
- Extend the range of assistive technologies available

The Voluntary Sector

- Extensive low level preventative support is delivered to people in need via the Voluntary Sector. The Sector plays a vital role in helping to deliver the District Plan, and both District and County Councils are major funders of these services. Voluntary organisations deliver a wide range of support to people of all ages, and most are linked to 3 year Service Level Agreement with annual reviews of performance.

The main providers are:

- Citizens Advice Bureau: debt advice, benefit maximisation, support for people with mental health problems, court assistance, outreach services
- Y Centre: houses 48 young people aged between 16 and 30 and provides support into adulthood
- Horsham Area Council of Voluntary Services (HACVS) and Volunteer Centre
- Age UK: meals and companionship, assisted bathing and chiropody, shopping and befriending, help at home, day centre activities, pension credit and benefits advice
- Homestart: support to families with children under 5 years of age who are in crisis
- Relate: relationship and family breakdown support, advice and counselling
- West Sussex Mediation: neighbour disputes and neighbourhood breakdown
- North Sussex Refuge Service: Provides advice, information and support in the community to women and their families affected by domestic violence



- Friendly societies and lunch clubs: individual small groups who provide companionship, respite care and support to vulnerable people and their carers throughout the District

Increasing understanding

Between now and 2015, it is vitally important for the Council and its partners to gain a comprehensive understanding of supported and specialist housing need in the District.

Robust evidence and sound analysis will ensure that finite resources are focused on those most in need and that services can remain responsive to changing demographic patterns and health priorities.

Between now and 2015 we will:

Work with Registered Provider partners to continue to support West Sussex County Council Adult & Children's Services and Supporting People Team to develop and maintain day to day

information about supported housing needs in the District

Continue to contribute to and be informed by West Sussex County Council's and Supporting People Team's strategic planning process, including the analysis of trends and forecasts for supported housing need

Risks identified

- Vulnerable groups increasingly marginalised and polarised in an otherwise affluent area
- Ability to deliver specialist housing schemes on sites where affordable housing is provided by developers through a Section 106 Agreement
- 'Affordable Rent Product' - Housing Associations restricting tenancies to those who can pay up front costs, or 'cherry picking' new tenants.
- Higher unit cost of specialist housing

- Year on year requirement to reduce Supporting People funding on support services
- Difficulty in obtaining robust needs data
- Pressure on grants budget
- Inability to recruit and retain appropriately skilled and motivated staff in key areas
- Problems of recruitment within voluntary sector
- Street homelessness amongst those who have become 'unhouseable'

Thriving rural communities

We will see thriving rural communities when local people can access housing in their own village

The provision of affordable housing has a significant role in supporting rural communities. A lack of affordable housing means that rural communities become socially exclusive and households on low to average incomes are forced to move away. This has an impact on the Council's aim to promote sustainable and balanced communities and it has severe consequences for the social and economic well being of rural areas.

Meeting housing need in the rural settlements faces key challenges:

- Identification and procurement of suitable sites - landowners unwilling to release land due to an expectation of a higher return in the future (hope value)
- Misconception of affordable housing and who is qualified to occupy the homes
- Anxiety that an affordable housing development is 'the thin end of the wedge' and will lead to increasing development

However, considerable work has been done in our rural communities since the last Housing Strategy was prepared to overcome the challenges and misconceptions outlined above.

We will build on:

- Our healthy relationship with parish councils established by regular contact and a series of visits to those councils to raise awareness of affordable housing. These took place between April 2010 and March 2012 under the banner of the Horsham District Community Partnership.
- Our partners' success in delivering rural housing schemes in Amberley, Lower Beeding and Ashington



Griffin Close, Billingshurst (Saxon Weald). The homes are primarily for those with a strong local connection to the village.

- Our strong partnership with Action in Rural Sussex
- Our membership of the Sussex Rural Affordable Housing Partnership, which meets quarterly and is chaired by Action in Rural Sussex. As well as representatives from local authorities in East and West Sussex the Partnership includes housing associations and representatives from the South Downs National Park Authority

Between now and 2015 we will:

- Continue the programme of carrying out housing needs surveys in partnership with Action in Rural Sussex, concentrating on parishes that have not been surveyed in the last 3 years
- Work with Saxon Weald Homes to develop local needs rural housing schemes in Cowfold, West Chiltington and Partridge Green
- Explore developing a mixed tenure model for local connection schemes with housing association partners

The risks

- The risks associated with delivering this objective of the Housing Strategy are essentially the same as for delivering affordable housing in general. However, one additional risk that must be borne in mind is the local opposition to development in small villages. This opposition can be very well organised and effective in delaying or even stopping affordable housing development.
- The relative time and cost taken to deliver rural schemes is high

We will see the Strategy effectively delivered and reviewed when

- Both the Council's Housing Monitoring Group and the Members' Affordable Housing Advisory Group review progress against the Strategy objectives and take action when those objectives are not being delivered
- We report on progress, issues and trends in the sector, opportunities and threats, and seek input and decisions to inform the direction of the strategy to:
 - Horsham District Council (HDC) Members Affordable Housing Advisory Group
 - HDC Finance and Performance Working Group
 - HDC Housing Monitoring Group
 - HDC Corporate Management Team
 - HDC Housing Liaison Group
 - HDC Housing Association Development Forum
 - West Sussex Housing Enablers' Group
 - West Sussex Housing Needs Managers' Group
 - Homes and Communities Agency
 - Strategic Housing Group (Chief Housing Officers in West Sussex)
- Share information on a regular basis, particular in relation to matters that may affect the delivery of the strategy or housing needs. This is important in the current climate where the impact of policy proposals from the government and the effect of the economy are unknown.
- Smaller groups of relevant partners will come together to deliver the strategy, sharing information and resources. There are a number of objectives in the strategy where we want to hear residents', customers' and stakeholders' views.

This document is available in alternative formats upon request, such as large print, electronically or in community languages. Please contact the Housing Services Manager on andrew.smith@horsham.gov.uk or telephone 01403 215202 (Text Relay calls welcome)