



**WELCOME** to the Winter 2008 edition of Horsham District Council's Housing News, which we send to everyone on our Housing Register. A lot has happened since our last newsletter and we want to keep you up to date with what we are doing the ways that we can help you.



## Our New Strategy

We have developed a new Housing Strategy to take us to 2013. Following extensive consultation, we are now committed to five priorities:

1. Tackle affordability and meet housing need
2. Prevent homelessness and support homeless households
3. Improve the quality of life for Vulnerable people
4. Support sustainable rural communities
5. Ensuring we have means to deliver.

**The Strategy is on our website. If you have any views on how we can deliver these priorities, please get in touch...**

## The Housing Register...How it works

As a new homeseeker or existing Housing Association tenant you can apply to join the Housing Register by completing a Housing Options form available from our website or from our offices and other outlets, such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau. A medical form is also available if you feel that your current accommodation is affecting your health or that of a family member. If not eligible to register, we will notify you in writing with the reason for our decision, and giving you a right to request a review.

In April 2008, we changed the way that applicants are assessed for housing from a points based system to bands. We have bands A-D, and we nominate for properties by band and date order. We define our bands as follows (a more comprehensive description is in our nominations policy, which is available from our offices or on our website):

**A** Urgent / Top Priority    **B** Urgent Need to move    **C** Identified Need to Move    **D** Desire to Move

### Homeless Drop-in Service

We operate a drop-in service each weekday between:

**10am -12pm**  
**2pm - 4pm**

We will see anyone who is homeless that night and anyone in priority need. If you are already on the Housing Register, contact your Housing Options Officer.

Karen Spencer..... 01403 215554  
Leslie Billany..... 01403 215541  
Mary Pullin..... 01403 215212  
Rob Jarvis..... 01403 215449

## Keep us updated

It is vital that you keep us updated if your circumstances change so that we can provide the best help possible. Remember, you need to renew your application for the Housing Register every year when requested. We will send you a Housing Renewal Form on the anniversary of your original application.

**It is your responsibility to return this to us.**

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# Frequently asked questions

Affordable homes in the District are owned by Housing Associations. These must first be offered to the Council before we can nominate people from the Housing Register.

The Council operates the Housing Register, which is currently made up of over 1,300 people. There is a significant shortage of affordable homes in the District. You can increase your chances of being housed by selecting more areas of choice on your Housing Options form.

## Question: How long will I have to wait before I get housed?

**Answer:** This will depend on the band that you are placed in, and the numbers that join the Register over time. Circumstance and housing need varies, and so applicants are switching between bands and becoming more or less of a priority. We try to ensure that all groups receive a fair proportion of nominations to Housing Associations.

## Question: How long will I stay in my band?

**Answer:** You will remain in your band unless your circumstances change, at which point your new housing needs will be assessed. You must inform us immediately if your circumstances change, and provide all necessary supporting evidence. If any change results in a band change, we will try to inform you.

## Question: Can I take my pets with me?

**Answer:** Not necessarily. Please be aware that many RSLs have a no pets policy, or, only by special agreement. The rules vary between Housing Associations and are more likely to apply to flats.

## On the horizon...



## Continuing Care Retirement Communities

Significant changes will occur in the age groups in the District. By 2016 we forecast that the number of over-65s will increase by 24.4%. We are looking into the potential of a scheme in the District to address the needs of our ageing population. Continuing Care Retirement Communities offer full residential and nursing care as part of the integrated care provision, and we are investigating the potential to provide a scheme in the District.

CCRCs can provide a number of benefits to residents, the local community and the local economy. Examples of such benefits include:

- Security and freedom from the stresses of family care, to the benefit of both residents and their relatives.
- Maintenance of the independence and physical and mental well-being of residents.
- Access to services and activities for residents, including a supportive and stimulating community environment.
- Job creation.
- Reduced demands on local health, social care and other health facilities.
- Provision of facilities for the use of the wider community.

The potential for a scheme will go to consultation soon, and we hope to hold an event. In the meantime, **we are very interested in your views.**

## Want to move Home? Consider swapping....

Tenants in Affordable Housing use HomeSwapper to exchange homes. HomeSwapper is quick and easy to use with powerful and effective matching. Hundreds of families swap each month through HomeSwapper – the largest mutual exchange service for Council and Housing Association tenants waiting to swap homes.

- Local and national service
- Match alerts by email and text
- Easy to register
- Forum to share more information
- Generates 1000's of potential swaps weekly
- Powerful searching

If you are a housing association tenant, please contact your landlord, or visit [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk). Alternatively see the Council's Mutual Exchange Register in reception.

## New Housing Web Pages – [www.horsham.gov.uk](http://www.horsham.gov.uk)

We have redesigned our web pages to make clearer how we operate and how we can help you. Pay a visit to download application forms, and find out more about:

- the Strategies that are taking us forward
- your housing options - joining the register or staying at home with our help
- what to do if you think you may become homeless
- how we work with our partners in the community, and how they can help you

# New Build News

In developing new affordable housing the Council's role is that of an 'enabler'. This involves identifying housing need and bringing together key partners to generate new opportunities to deliver affordable housing. The goal is to provide homes of the right size; type and tenure that meet housing need and are constructed to a high standard, are energy efficient and promote sustainable, balanced, mixed communities. Even in the challenging economic times, Housing Services is working closely with RSLs, planners and communities to keep development moving in order to address the District's housing shortage.

This scheme is Strawberry Villas in Amberly – demonstrating that we are not compromising on the quality of our developments in the challenging economic climate. We are currently working on further pipeline projects in: **Pulborough - Coldwaltham - Horsham - Billingshurst - Storrington - Roffey**



Elevation (Plots 6-10)



East Elevation (Plot 1)

## HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES

### What is Housing Related Support?

The primary purpose of Housing Related Support is to develop and sustain your capacity to live independently in your accommodation. Some examples of housing related support services include enabling you to access their correct benefit entitlement, ensuring you have the correct skills to maintain a tenancy, advising on home improvements and accessing a community service alarm.

The Council's Housing Services Department works in partnership with a range of organizations that provide advice and support on wide range of issues. See overleaf for details of some of these.





The **Supporting People** programme is committed to providing a better quality of life for vulnerable people to live more independently and maintain their tenancies. The programme provides housing related support to prevent problems that can often lead to hospitalisation, institutional care or homelessness and can help the smooth transition to independent living for those leaving an institutionalised environment.

**The Supporting People programme provides housing related support services to over 1.2 million vulnerable people, and is provided locally in the Horsham District.**

For more information see our website, or contact: <http://www.spkweb.org.uk/>



Whether you are a homeowner, a tenant, at risk of becoming homeless or have already lost your home, **SIGNPOST** could help you - working with you by giving advice, guidance, information and encouragement to help you get back on your feet.

If you are at risk of losing your home through: debts, rent or mortgage arrears, low income, experiencing anti-social behaviour or problems with your family, **SIGNPOST** can support you to find solutions.

For more information see our website, or contact: 01403 263202 email: [signpost.north@southdownhousing.org](mailto:signpost.north@southdownhousing.org)



In partnership with the Horsham **Citizen's Advice Bureau**, the Housing Services Department have developed a debt advice pack. This new resource is an ideal first port of call in times of financial difficulty. It provides budget sheets to help you work out your money, and how to identify priority and non-priority debts.

The folders will be available from late January in the Council Offices (Park North Reception) and at Horsham's **Citizen's Advice Bureau**. Please get in contact. The sooner we know, the sooner we can help.

Citizen's Advice Bureaux, Lower Tanbridge Way, Horsham  
Tel: 01403 261916 [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)



## How to contact us:

We hope that you have found our newsletter useful. For more information, please don't hesitate to contact us. Be sure to check our website first however, as the answer to your query could already be there. All application forms can be easily downloaded, along with our nominations policy, explaining all you need to know about the Housing Register.

[www.horsham.gov.uk](http://www.horsham.gov.uk)

Housing Advisory Service:.....Tel: 01403 215560  
Housing Services (gen. enquiries): ..Tel 01403 215204  
Community Link:.....Tel: 01403 215230  
Housing Benefits: .....Tel: 01403 215359

Public Health (Grants): .. Tel: 01403 215405  
Housing Allocations: ..... Tel: 01403 215222  
Private Sector Housing:.. Tel: 01403 215560  
email: [housing@horsham.gov.uk](mailto:housing@horsham.gov.uk)