



**Horsham
District
Council**



Horsham District Housing Strategy






2008 - 2013

Autumn 2008


This document sets out our plans for housing and housing services in Horsham District for the next five years.

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Providing Healthy, Safe and Strong Communities

Foreword

Everyone should have the opportunity to live in a decent home at a price they can afford in a place they want to live and work. Our Housing Strategy sets out how we will try and achieve this. The Strategy covers private and public sector housing, rural settlements, small market towns and larger urban areas. It goes beyond building new homes and improving existing ones and, linking in with other key strategies and plans, deals with the wider role housing plays in increasing quality of life. It is only through proper co-ordination and effective partnership working that high quality housing and support services are provided in a way that makes best use of available resources and targets those in need.

Although this Strategy takes account of national and regional priorities, it is a Strategy with local people in mind. We have written it to address the housing needs of people living in Horsham District now and in years to come and it sets out our priorities and actions. We have determined our priorities through analysis and consultation with a wide range of people living and working in the District, including residents, landlords, voluntary and community organisations, housing associations, health workers, the police and those in education. We are grateful for all the comments received. Although the Strategy sets out our road map for 5 years, we need all our partners to stay involved, so we'll be back every year to review the progress we have made. This will allow us to respond proactively to national or regional Government policy, to housing market changes and to new research and intelligence. Having said that, we want to know what you think at any time, so please contact us by letter, phone or email with your ideas and comments.

We strive to improve the quality and quantity of affordable homes and the standard of housing services provided in the District. This Strategy builds on the success we have achieved since our last Housing Strategy was published. Together we can achieve our vision for housing in Horsham.



Cllr. Andrew Baldwin
Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Support



Chapter 1

What is the Housing Strategy?

The Council is required to publish a Housing Strategy. The Strategy is the result of an analysis of local housing needs, sub-regional, regional and national housing and planning trends and policies, and consultation with partners, businesses and residents.

It is the overarching document which sets out the housing objectives and priorities for action for the District. The Strategy shows how these priorities will contribute to delivering the vision of the Council's Corporate Plan 2008 -2011, which states that Horsham is:

'A dynamic district where people care and where individuals from all backgrounds can get involved in their communities and share the benefits of a district that enjoys a high quality of life'.

(HDC Corporate Plan - p.8)

The Plan includes housing as a key priority:

Affordable housing, as part of sustainable communities, has been and remains one of our biggest challenges in a part of the country with high housing costs and our consultations confirm it is a major priority for our residents. Our inclusive approach also involves actively identifying housing opportunities for minority groups such as gypsies and travellers. The Council has identified major strategic developments, as part of its Local Development Framework, in the west of Horsham and the west of Crawley. Affordable housing is a major component of those major developments, as it is of smaller scale proposals within the Local Development Framework.

(HDC Corporate Plan - p. 16)

It commits the Council to:

1. Maximise the supply of new affordable housing and housing related support, in part through generating inward investment into the District, to meet the needs of our rural and urban communities

2. Improve the quality of temporary accommodation in the District in line with changing Government Standards

(HDC Corporate Plan - p.17)

The Strategy, although produced by the District Council, is a partnership document and its success relies on the commitment of not only the District Council but other key players including West Sussex County Council, Parish Councils, Police, Health agencies, Housing Associations, private developers and community and voluntary organisations. This means customer-centred housing services should be provided in the right place at the right time by the right partner, maximising investment and connecting housing to other corporate and other agencies' activities.

In July 2008 the Government published *Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities*, the final statutory guidance resulting from the Local Government White Paper. This guidance gives local authorities flexibility and room to deliver a strategic approach to housing. We have tried to do this and believe the Strategy should:

- ◆ Fully reflect the wider vision of Horsham District Council and its partners
- ◆ Reflect a clear and evidenced approach
- ◆ Provide a strong focus on how partners will deliver their commitments

Background

Our previous Housing Strategy covered the period 2003-2008. In 2004 the Government introduced a new set of criteria by which to assess local authorities' housing strategies - 'fit for purpose'. In response Horsham District Council produced a Strategy Update in 2005 which successfully met the 'fit for purpose' criteria.

Progress through Partnership - Housing Strategy 2003-2008

The previous Housing Strategy highlighted the following 8 objectives:



- ◆ Meeting the need for affordable housing
- ◆ Helping key workers to access accommodation
- ◆ Reducing homelessness
- ◆ Meeting the housing needs for black and minority ethnic people
- ◆ Improving the quality and sustainability of the housing stock
- ◆ Promoting regeneration and neighbourhood renewal
- ◆ Encouraging the development of sustainable rural areas
- ◆ Supporting crime reduction through housing provision

How did the Council develop this Strategy?

By 2007 there had been many policy changes at national, regional and local level which had affected our approach to housing in the District. The Council needed to update its plan of action and its Strategy. We consulted widely with partners and residents by:

1. Producing a Housing Issues and Options Consultation Document 'Looking to 2013'

This was sent to over 200 different stakeholders including all Parish Councils and District Councillors and was accompanied by a press release.

A questionnaire was attached to the document which highlighted issues and asked for residents' views on the Council's priorities and how those priorities should be addressed. It was also posted on the Council's website, so that residents could participate in the consultation on-line.

Seventy eight percent of respondents agreed that the Council's main objectives in the next five years should be:

- ◆ Tackling affordability and meeting housing need
- ◆ Preventing homelessness

- ◆ Improving the quality of life for vulnerable people through housing support
- ◆ Supporting sustainable rural communities
- ◆ Ensuring we have the means to deliver

The Council's proposed values were also set out in the accompanying questionnaire, and respondents invited to confirm whether or not these were the values the Council should be upholding:

- ◆ Equality, diversity and social cohesion
- ◆ Fairness
- ◆ Quality and value for money
- ◆ Community & partner involvement

Seventy three percent of respondents agreed with these values, and suggested four more:

- ◆ Contributing to safe and strong communities
- ◆ Customer-centred and focused
- ◆ Supporting independence
- ◆ Sustainability and enhancing the quality of the environment.

Parish Councils identified the provision of affordable housing and prevention of homelessness as the two most important objectives to be met.

2. Presenting the consultation document to key partnership meetings such as the multi-agency Housing Liaison Forum and the Housing Theme Group of the Horsham District Community Partnership

3. Sending a short questionnaire to every household and business in the District via the October 2007 Horsham District News

Availability of a home that meets the needs of the respondents and that was affordable to buy or rent ranked as the highest priority. Bringing empty homes back into use was also considered to be a very high priority, followed by the need



to support a person to carry on living in his or her own home if he or she has special needs. Provision of affordable homes in rural locations was also considered to be important.

Residents were also asked to identify the two most important actions the Council should be taking. The need to provide more affordable housing was identified as the highest priority followed by establishing proper infrastructure, bringing empty homes back into use and more efficient use of the planning system.

Residents were also asked to state if and how they had been affected by the high cost of housing. The principle consequences of the high cost of housing were an inability to live in their desired location, and children unable to afford to leave home.

4. Holding an internal Housing Services staff consultation session

5. Consulting Horsham District Council's Officers' and Members' Affordable Housing Advisory groups and two specific working groups.

6. Consulting Horsham District Council's Scrutiny and Overview Committee

The results of these meetings helped to shape the four major themes of the Housing Strategy day.

7. Holding a one day conference attended by over 80 delegates from across the housing sector from private developers to tenant and resident representatives



All stakeholders were invited to 'Ready, Steady, House' - a consultation event designed to feed into the preparation of the new Housing Strategy. Subjects covered included homelessness prevention, changes in planning policy relating to affordable housing supply, sustainable rural communities and accessible services for vulnerable people.

Presentations were followed by workshops covering the main themes, and the following priorities were identified:

Increasing supply of affordable housing

1. Promote networking - ensure open and clear communication between all involved in the delivery of affordable housing
2. Share best practice
3. Campaign to raise awareness of the need for affordable housing and reinforce its priority
4. Proactive approach to freeing up land - perhaps by introducing Compulsory Purchase Orders
5. Monitor and review impact of current planning policy and respond to remove any negative impact on the delivery of affordable housing

Preventing homelessness

1. Early intervention to prevent households becoming homeless
2. Designate key agencies
3. Joint training at all levels including interpersonal skills
4. Empowerment - provide rent deposit and housing related support
5. Customer service skills

Increasing supply of rural affordable housing

1. Positive and supported community engagement



2. Explore funding solutions for individual projects
3. Evidence base to be rurally sensitive
4. Clear positive planning policy that reflects local priorities
5. Establish an experienced partnership to deliver the Rural Housing Strategy

Joining up services for vulnerable people

1. Active and motivated partners - provide incentives and regulation
2. Necessary to agree outcomes and clear purpose for partners - as well as key shared priorities
3. Convincing leaders and ensuring good communication downwards
4. Use of joint commissioning and Local Area Agreement to improve consistency
5. Access - needs to be comprehensive and focussed on the individual - needs partners to agree priorities

8. Holding an intergenerational meeting between the Districts's Senior Council and its Youth Council

This was held in December 2007 to identify specific housing needs and influence the Housing Strategy. A wide cross-section of the community ranging from 13-80 years of age attended the event, including representatives from HYPER (Horsham Youth Council) and the Senior Persons' Council, residents of the Y-Centre, District Councillors, staff from Age Concern and Horsham District Council.

The priorities identified by those attending the event were:

1. Support to individuals at risk of becoming homeless; for example, through domestic abuse, repossession and relationship breakdown

2. Support that enables a person to carry on living in his or her own home
3. Access to information and support to buy or rent a home, affordability and availability of a suitable home
4. Bringing empty homes back into use
5. Supporting young people to live independently
6. Provision of good quality accommodation for older people
7. Providing homes in rural communities to enable young and old to stay in or return to their village
8. A wide choice of homes to buy or rent

The results of the consultation on the Issues and Options Document were assessed and incorporated into the draft Housing Strategy, which was then published for further consultation in July 2008. Additional comments from stakeholders and residents have been taken into account in the final preparation of the document, and we would like to thank those who contributed for their views and suggestions.



Billingshurst



Housing Vision, Objectives and Priorities

The vision for housing in Horsham District is to:

Work with our partners to improve the quality of residents' lives through the provision of a wide range of high quality sustainable affordable housing and customer centred housing services accessible to all.

The vision for housing originates in the District's Corporate Plan and the Housing Services Plan flows from that. It sets out what has been achieved in the past year, key plans for 2008/2009 and criteria against which success will be measured.

The values underpinning the Strategy and against which all actions in the Strategy are judged are as follows. Additional values to those set out in the Issues and Options Document have been added as a result of consultation with residents of the District:

- ◆ Customer centred - understanding customers' needs and delivering services that are accessible to all
- ◆ Equality, diversity and social cohesion - ensuring the Strategy meets a range of housing needs and does not unfairly advantage or disadvantage any group of people
- ◆ Safer and stronger communities - contributing to reducing crime and disorder and promoting respect in our communities
- ◆ Quality and value for money - using resources efficiently while not compromising quality of services
- ◆ Community and partner involvement - ensuring the Strategy is informed by meaningful consultation and that effective partnerships are in place to deliver the Strategy
- ◆ Evidence based - ensuring the Strategy is informed by good quality information

- ◆ Sustainable - contributing to the economic and environmental well-being of the District now and for the future

Each member of the Housing Services Team has a part to play in delivering the five principal objectives listed below. Each objective flows from the vision for housing in the District and is set in the context of the values outlined above. The detailed action points of Housing Service Plan are derived from these five main objectives.

The priorities that are set against the objectives have all been confirmed by those who have participated in the consultation process.

	Objectives	Priorities
Objective	Tackling affordability and meeting housing need	<p>Increase supply of new affordable housing, including affordable rented and shared ownership properties</p> <p>Provide customers with access to housing in a way that promotes choice</p> <p>Increase number of empty homes in the private sector brought back into use</p> <p>Increase residents' access to private sector housing opportunities</p> <p>Improve knowledge and understanding of housing need and housing markets in the District</p> <p>Improve the quality and sustainability of housing in the District</p> <p>Strengthen the Council's ability to assess, manage and meet housing need in the District</p>



	Objectives	Priorities
Objective 2	Preventing homelessness and supporting homeless households	<p>Improve customers' access to high quality housing options advice and information from the Council and its partners</p> <p>Improve the integration of housing support services provided by different agencies for young people</p> <p>Improve the quality of temporary accommodation provided in the District to meet Government Standards and provide support where necessary</p>

	Objectives	Priorities
Objective 3	Improving the quality of life for vulnerable people through provision of integrated housing support	<p>Ensure sufficient housing opportunities and housing support services exist to meet the needs of the District's ageing population, residents with support needs, and young people with complex needs</p> <p>Ensure good quality accommodation with a high standard of management and support for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people</p> <p>Improve access to assistive technology for the elderly, their families and other vulnerable households in the District</p> <p>Gain a comprehensive understanding of supported and specialist housing need in the District</p>

	Objectives	Priorities
Objective 4	Supporting sustainable rural communities by meeting local housing need	<p>Set a framework that involves all key stakeholders to raise awareness of the need for and improve the delivery of rural affordable housing</p> <p>Accurately identify and assess rural affordable housing need, through which investment in sustainable rural affordable housing can be directed and prioritised</p> <p>Secure new resources to maximise the delivery of affordable housing units in rural areas to meet identified need</p> <p>Deliver new affordable homes in a manner which complements and contributes to the vibrancy of local villages and settlements including driving up design and sustainable construction standards</p>



Objectives	Priorities
<p>Ensuring the District has the means and capacity to deliver the Strategy</p>	<p>Establish the right fora and partnerships, resources, policies and plans that improve joint working and information sharing between agencies</p> <p>We and our partners need the right tools to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legal agreements and protocols between partners • funding for service improvements • innovation and training • policies and procedures • housing policy matched by allocation of resources through the Council's corporate plan review and future budget decisions

Performance Management

The Housing Strategy 2008-2013 will be monitored and managed both internally and external to the Council, primarily by means of an Annual Progress Review.

The Horsham District Community Partnership Housing Theme Group, Horsham District Council Cabinet and the Cross-Party Advisory Group for Housing will participate in the Annual Review of the delivery of the Housing Strategy.

Actions that are the responsibility of Horsham District Council will be monitored and managed through the Housing Service Plan. Corporate monitoring will take place through meetings of the Corporate Management Team and group, as well as Performance Management Working Groups. Tasks that are the responsibility of other departments - for example - Strategic Planning - will be monitored through the quarterly meeting of the inter-departmental affordable housing group which consists of officers from Strategic Planning, Development Management, Environmental Health, Legal and Asset Management.

Actions that are the responsibility of other partners such as Registered Social Landlords, Adult & Children's Services, community and voluntary groups will be monitored in specific thematic groups.



Chapter Two

2. Policy & Legislative Framework

Horsham District Council actively seeks to influence national and regional policy through participation in various sub regional and regional fora and by responding to national Government policy consultation. The aim is to achieve the best possible outcome for Horsham District. These fora include the South East Regional Housing Forum, West Sussex Chief Officers Group, West Sussex Housing Needs Managers Group, West Sussex Planning and Affordable Housing Group, West Sussex Supporting People Commissioning Body, Sussex Rural Affordable Housing Partnership, Sussex Empty Homes Forum, Sussex Housing Group and Disabled Facilities Grant Research Group.

This Housing Strategy has been developed within a framework set by national, regional, sub regional and local policy. This chapter summarises the key national, regional and local influences on the Strategy and focuses on those that have the most significant impact. The section will be revised as part of the annual progress report to keep information as up-to-date as possible.

2.1 National

The *Homelessness Act 2002* placed new duties on local authorities to carry out reviews and to publish strategies to tackle and prevent homelessness in their area.

In 2005 the Government produced its Strategy document *Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives* which sets out the Government's aim to halve the number of households living in insecure temporary accommodation by 2010.

The Housing Act 2004 came in to force in November 2004 and contains key legislation to help protect the most vulnerable members of society while creating a fairer housing market across all tenures.

The *Sustainable Communities Plan: Building for the Future 2003* set out the Government

priorities for investment for the following 3 years and an agenda for action for the longer term of 15 - 20 years. The overarching aim is to create places where people want to live and can afford to live.

- ◆ Provide for major growth in four areas
- ◆ Ensure the right framework for law, structures and decision-making process, supports the agenda of the plan

The Sustainable Communities Plan: Homes for All 2005 sets out the next phase in delivering the Sustainable Communities Plan. Covering five years, the key objectives are to offer everyone the opportunity of a decent home at a price they can afford, promoting choice, fairness and the opportunity to own or rent a good quality home that meets needs.

The White Paper, 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' sets out the Government's vision to give local people more power and influence to improve their lives. This will require greater community involvement to create strong prosperous and cohesive communities.

In July 2008 final statutory guidance was published, *'Creating Strong, safe and Prosperous Communities'*. This explains how local authorities can engage citizens, lead their communities and find new and more effective ways to deliver a high quality service with partners. The guidance reaffirms that housing is at the heart of shaping the life of any community. There is an expectation that local authorities will incorporate Housing Strategies within sustainable community strategies where possible (See 2.4 Local Plans, Policies and Strategies).

The Government launched a consultation on its housing green paper, *Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable* in July 2007. This sets out ambitious plans for more housing, setting a new national target of 240 000 new homes a year.

The latest major Government bill that will influence this Strategy is the *Housing and Regeneration Bill 2008*, which, amongst other things, aims to reform social housing and social housing regulation to promote better services



for tenants, as well as supporting the delivery of three million new homes by 2020.

The Bill contains provisions to merge the housing investment and regeneration functions of the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships in a new *Homes and Communities Agency*. The Agency will, by bringing together land and housing, and shifting from grant funding affordable housing to investing in infrastructure, support the regeneration and delivery of new social and affordable housing, both social and private, and deliver a strategic approach to regeneration.

The Agency would also be enabled to make better use of surplus public sector land and maximise the potential for Brownfield development.

The Bill creates a new regulator of social housing, the *Tenant Services Authority*. The task of this new regulator will be to improve the level of service that social tenants receive and ensure that they have more choice and influence in matters central to their everyday lives.

2.1.1 Other national policies

Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS 3): Housing (2006) sets out the national planning policy framework for delivering the Government's housing objectives.

Our Health, Our Care, Our Say (2006) - the white paper on health care in communities that reaffirmed national Government's commitment to ensuring residents are helped to maintain their independence in their own homes.

The *Code for Sustainable Homes* sets sustainability standards which can be applied to all homes and supports the Government's aim to cut carbon emissions, and *Building a Greener Future: a policy statement (2007)* establishes the national targets for carbon emissions reductions in new homes leading to 'zero carbon' homes by 2016.

The *Fuel Poverty Strategy* sets out the framework for delivering the Government's overall goal to end fuel poverty for vulnerable

households by 2010 and for all households by 2016.

The Strategy will also be influenced by:

Housing Corporation policies, strategies and standards which range from tackling homelessness (2006), rural housing and the countryside (2006), to quality and design standards for new affordable homes including the Code for Sustainable Homes (2007).

Central Government's *Comprehensive Spending Review 2007* promises £500 million over three years for a new Housing and Planning Delivery Grant, to help deliver the Government's target of 2 million new homes by 2016.

Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry: the key questions considered by inspectors to assess services being delivered, and what the Commission would expect to find in a 'fair' and an 'excellent' service.

2.2 Regional Policy and Plans

The Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11 is produced by the Regional Housing Board and sets out the region's priorities for funding allocation.

The Regional Housing Board is recommending, in line with the SE Plan that 10,581 homes are to be built each year in the region with an increasing priority for affordable 3 bedroom homes, rising from 20 to 25% with a strong emphasis on sustainable development.

The draft South East Plan 2006 - 2026 (also known as the Regional Spatial Strategy) sets a target for homes in Horsham District of 13,000, delivering an average of 650 per annum. The Government launched a public consultation on the proposed changes to the Plan. Consultation ran from 17 July to 24 October 2008.

Housing is recognised in the *Regional Economic Strategy 2006 - 2016* as an essential part of supporting the region's economy and achieving sustainable prosperity. The level of housing provision needs to support an average annual increase in economic growth of at least 3% per head. Affordable housing is seen as an essential component of that vision.



2.3 Sub-Regional Policy, Plans and Strategies

The following documents also influence the Strategy:

West Sussex Rural Strategy (2007) Objective 8: addresses issues of affordability in the rural housing market to enable more local people to live and work within their communities and to work towards the aim of creating sustainable communities.

South Downs Management Plan (2007) will provide, when agreed, a common statement of public policy for the area as a protected landscape and, as such, a framework for action by a range of local and national public bodies over a given period. The issue of affordable housing in the South Downs will be addressed.

West Sussex Supporting People Strategy (2005) addresses the supply of and need for housing support services in West Sussex, and is currently under review. The vision of the proposed new Strategy seeks to achieve is:

“In partnership, commission and deliver efficient customer driven housing support services that promote and maintain independence.”

West Sussex Housing Strategy for People with Learning Difficulties (2003) aims to give people with learning difficulties more choice over where they live, who they live with and who gives them support. The Strategy is due for review.

West Sussex Accommodation Strategy is due for publication and seeks to address the housing and support needs of vulnerable people, working with partners across the County. *Local Area Agreement (LAA)* sets out the priorities for West Sussex. Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are an important component of the service planning framework and one which the Government expects to be the focus for future service delivery arrangements. An LAA is a contract between central and local Government to deliver a balance of national priorities together with the priorities of local people. West Sussex County Council leads on the development of the LAA for West Sussex, but all public services in West Sussex are involved, as well as voluntary organisations, private companies and users of local services. Housing targets include:

- ◆ Number of affordable homes provided
- ◆ Vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living
- ◆ Care leavers in suitable accommodation



2.4 Local Plans, Policies and Strategies

The Horsham District Community and Local Strategic Partnership is preparing a *Sustainable Community Strategy* which co-ordinates the

activities of public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations in trying to achieve an agreed vision and priorities for improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of Horsham District.



The objectives of the Housing Strategy are aligned with the District's proposed current or emerging priorities, as detailed in the forthcoming Sustainable Community Strategy. The Sustainable Community Strategy is produced by the Horsham District Community Partnership, which is Horsham's Local Strategic Partnership, and is a broad partnership of groups and organizations, covering a wide range of public,

private, voluntary and community interests. In short it is a practical tool for joining up services to address local issues and priorities and to make more efficient use of available resources. It provides the framework for the delivery of services across the District. The Housing Strategy's objectives feed into 'A better Place to Live'.



In order to prepare for the Sustainable Community Strategy, *Visioning Horsham* was published in March 2008.

One objective that forms part of the framework for the *Visioning Horsham* analysis is:

To enable the provision of a sufficient number of dwellings ensuring that there is an appropriate mix of types, sizes and tenures, particularly to address affordable housing needs.

Visioning Horsham, Final Report, Horsham District Council, March 2008, p.9

Included in the policy responses to achieve the vision for Horsham District is a statement on affordable housing:

It is important to keep affordable housing provision as high as possible, at a 40% minimum. Housing Needs Surveys need to test the desirability of and demand for different affordable/intermediate housing products, for the 5% of the population who are income-deprived along with low-skilled, low-paid residents, key workers and hard-to-reach groups...

Visioning Horsham, Final Report, Horsham District Council, March 2008, chapter 4, paragraph 4.2.2, p.58

The *Horsham Local Development Framework* is the district's portfolio of local planning policies. The Core Strategy, Site Specific Allocations of Land and General Development Control Policies, Development Plan Documents and the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document were all adopted in 2007.

Horsham District Council Corporate Plan 2008-11 sets out the Council's values, priorities and key targets and will shape service delivery and financial decisions for the next three years.

Linked to the Corporate Plan is the *Housing Service Plan*, published in April 2008. The outlines what has been achieved, the key plans for 2008/09 and the criteria that will be used to measure success.

The Housing Strategy will also take account of:

- ◆ Horsham District Council Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2003
- ◆ Annual Audit letter & Direction of Travel Assessment
- ◆ Horsham Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (2005)
- ◆ Horsham Older and Younger Persons Strategy (2007)
- ◆ Horsham Economic Development Strategy (2005-2008)
- ◆ Horsham District Council Asset Management Plan

Our progress against the objectives of the 2003-2008 Strategy is reported in each of the subsequent chapters in order to demonstrate how we are building on the achievements set out in our previous Strategy. Chapter three provides a summary of housing need in the District.

Chapters four to eight cover each of the objectives in turn including our priorities under each objective, the key actions we will be pursuing to achieve the priorities, recent achievements and key risks which may impact on our success and how we aim to mitigate these risks.



Chapter Three

3. Understanding Housing Need

The Strategy is based on an analysis of housing need which is drawn from:

- ◆ Horsham District Housing Needs survey 2003
- ◆ Horsham District Housing Needs survey Update 2006
- ◆ Horsham District Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2003
- ◆ Local and sub-regional housing market data - A West Sussex Strategic Housing Market Assessment will shortly be published
- ◆ Local and sub-regional health, demographic and employment data
- ◆ Local housing data including homelessness, lettings and supported housing needs

3.1 Overview

Horsham District occupies a central position within West Sussex, covering over 200 square miles of the county, from the undulating relief of the South Downs northwards through the Low Weald. It incorporates two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty - the Sussex Downs and the High Weald.

There is a wide range of communication and infrastructure links within and across Horsham District. By road the A24 and A29 link to the M23 and M25 supplying direct routes to London, the south coast and further afield. Locally the A281, A272 and A283 provide east/west routes to Haywards Heath, East Grinstead and Crawley.

Rail services on the Arun Valley Line run to East Croydon, London Bridge and London Victoria and to Bognor Regis, Portsmouth and the West Country from Horsham, Littlehaven, Faygate,

Christ's Hospital, Billingshurst, Pulborough and Amberley. London Gatwick Airport is also in close proximity to Horsham town, less than 20 minutes to the northeast by train or car. Horsham & Warnham are also served by the Dorking and Surrey Hills Line to London.

The District currently comprises 33 parishes with a total population of approximately 130,500 (Office of National Statistics, 2008).

As at 2008 there are 55,503 households in Horsham District (HDC Council Tax data). By 2016 the number of households in the District is forecast to be 59,229. This represents a 7% increase over the 2008 figure. This rise will result mainly from in-migration along with an increase in the number of single person households resulting from elderly people living longer, separation, divorce and young people forming single person households.

3.2 Population and households

The number of households is likely to increase at a faster rate than the population growth: 7% compared to 4% by 2016.

The District has a predominantly rural population, with 76,405 (59%) residing in those locations classified as rural (OCSI 2007). Although those in rural areas are widely dispersed, the urban population of the district is heavily concentrated within Horsham town (35.8% of the total population), along with the smaller market towns of Billingshurst, Pulborough, Southwater, Henfield, Storrington and Steyning.

The District's population structure largely follows national trends. There are some notable exceptions; in particular, the above average number of those aged 35-54 and the below average levels of those between 15 and 34.

However, West Sussex County Council population forecasts for the District show that in the future there will be some significant changes to population structure of the District. In particular there will be a decline in the numbers of those aged 30-44 and proportionally this group may return to a figure closer to the national average. The numbers of those aged 19 and under will continue to experience a decline.



Significant changes are also likely to occur in other age groups. By 2016 it is forecast that the number of over-65s in Horsham District will increase by 24.4%, those aged 45-64 by 17.5% and those aged 20-29 by 43%.

This projected population imbalance, with increasing proportions of middle-aged and retired residents and decreasing numbers of younger individuals, families and children, places a burden on services such as healthcare. At the same time it decreases the economies of scale for childcare and schools, potentially placing some services at risk.

The ethnic population in Horsham District is very small, constituting only 5.3% of the total population of the District. This is well below the national average of approximately 14% and the regional average of approximately 9%. These figures represent residents of non-white British descent.

3.3 Employment and wealth

The levels of employment in Horsham District are high, with only 1.57% of the population unemployed compared to a national average of 3.35%. A high proportion of this employment is made up of professionals, managers and senior officials.

The high number of employees in these fields is not solely a reflection of the economy located in Horsham District, but also its proximity to Crawley, Gatwick and London. This makes the District popular with those wishing to commute. It should be noted that 22.9% of Horsham's working population travel more than 20km to work, a figure well above the 14% national average. This trend has a significant impact on the housing market in the District, often placing Horsham residents on lower incomes in direct competition for homes with those receiving higher than average incomes who wish to move to the area.

The general perception is that Horsham is a relatively affluent District. A high average income and high employment conceal any inequalities, isolating those that are deprived and making them difficult to identify. It is not only the extent of deprivation that is significant, but also the

differentiation between the wealthiest and the poorest residents.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 measures relative deprivation. It uses an index of measures to assess different spatial areas in relation to each other.

The Index shows Horsham District ranked as 337 out of the 354 local authorities in England and Wales, with 354 representing the wealthiest. However, this overall high level of wealth is not evenly distributed. The District is ranked 278 by income and 284 by employment.

3.4 Affordability and Need

3.4.1 Affordability in Horsham District

Across England and Wales the average house price has risen from £117,398 in 2001 to £185,616 in February 2008. This represents a 37% increase. Over this timescale average annual incomes have risen from £23,338 to £24,796, an increase of 6.2% (Institute of Fiscal Studies, 2008).

This increasing differential between house values and incomes has meant that housing has become less and less affordable:

- ◆ Nationally there were an estimated 300,000 first time buyers in 2007, the lowest annual total since 1980, compared to 532,000 in 2002 (Halifax 2008)
- ◆ Over the same period the average deposit has increased from £13,249 in 2001 to £34,831 in 2007
- ◆ The Halifax (2008) has calculated that a typical first time buyer was unable to purchase the average house in 96% of towns in 2006 (466 out of 483)

The national trends outlined above are evident in Horsham District, and due to the social and economic characteristics of the District the impact has been equally if not more significant. At the time of preparing this Strategy house prices have fallen, but not uniformly.



A major factor in determining the demand for affordable housing is the relationship between income, house prices, housing supply and demand.

In Horsham, as the table below shows, there has been a gradual increase in the income to house

price multiplier as incomes have failed to match the increase in house prices. Between 2003 and 2007 the average annual income in Horsham District increased by approximately 14%, while the average house price increased by approximately 29%.

Average Annual Income Compared to Average House Price

Year	Horsham District Average Annual Income (£) (By Residence*) (ASHE 2007)	Horsham District Average Annual House Price (£) (Home.co.uk)	Income to House Price Multiplier
2007	33 428	270 995	8.11
2006	31 373	280 465	8.93
2005	29 380	267 606	9.10
2004	29 374	255 985	8.71
2003	28 880	224 324	7.77

*'Residence' could refer to more than one household living at the same premises

The increasing disparity between incomes and house prices significantly affects housing affordability. For example, in 2007 the average house price in Horsham District was £270,995. At standard market rates, purchasing a house at this price would require an annual household income of £69,684 and a deposit of £27,100.

Given that in 2007 60% of Horsham District residents earned less than £30,500, even in dual income households, 60% of the District's population earn almost £10,000 less than would be required to purchase the average house. They would also require substantial savings for the deposit.

Average Horsham Resident Income

In 2007 the distribution of incomes in Horsham District showed that:

- 20% of Horsham District residents earned below £12,813 per annum
- 40% of Horsham District residents earned below £20,036 per annum
- 60% of Horsham District residents earned below £30,494 per annum

The high average price for housing when compared to incomes effectively forces local people to look for smaller and cheaper homes.

This situation is also exacerbated by the impact of buy-to-let investment. Particularly prone to this form of investment are those houses at the lower end of the price spectrum, such as flats,

maisonettes and small terraced houses. Buy-to-let removes more of these types of dwellings from the market, increasing the demand for and price of those that remain.

At the end of Quarter One 2008 the average price for a flat in Horsham District was £167,933 and for a semi-detached house was £294,210.



These represent a 40% and 80% rise from the average price for these housing types in Quarter Two 2002. In contrast to this the average annual income for the District rose by only 15.7% from £28,880 to £33,428 over the same period.

The private rented market in Horsham is very limited and increasingly expensive. When the 2003-2008 Housing Strategy was published private sector rents were within the threshold of Housing Benefit. However, these rents have subsequently increased and are becoming less affordable for more households.

In addition, private rented accommodation equates to 6.8% of all housing in the District. This is well below the national average is 8.7%.

The following table highlights the high cost of renting from a private landlord in the District:

Average monthly rent (August 2008)			
1 bed flat	2 bed flat	2 bed house	3 bed house
£625	£795	£795	£949

In comparison housing association rents in the District range from approximately £295 - £412 per month depending on the size of the property.

3.4.2 Housing Need in Horsham District

The 2006 Housing Needs Survey update shows that Horsham District needs to generate 822 new affordable homes each year in order to meet the current levels of demand. This is in addition to the number of re-lets that become available each year. The figure is approximately ten times the current estimated level of supply for affordable homes.

The survey identified 602 households living in unsuitable accommodation who could not afford to move and over 90% of newly-forming households cannot afford to buy or rent in the District.

The number of households eligible to join the Council's Housing Register far outstrips the supply of available affordable housing

The greatest demand in the District is for affordable rented homes. However as demonstrated earlier in the chapter due to increasing house prices and limited supply of smaller dwellings, shared ownership is quickly becoming the only choice of home ownership for a larger proportion of the District's population.

Currently there are around 200 applicants for shared ownership that live or work in Horsham. This is on par with most local authorities of a similar size. The 2008 'credit crunch', downturn in the market and difficulties in obtaining mortgages have all affected demand for shared ownership. However, the West Sussex Zone Agent for shared ownership, Moat Housing Association, reports that interest in shared ownership remains strong, and that the Association is receiving more enquiries and requests for application forms than 18 months ago (September 08).



3.4.3 Affordable Housing Supply in Horsham District

In terms of meeting need the table below shows how many affordable homes have been built since 2003/04 and in which parishes in the District. The average exceeds the target set in the previous strategy of 80 new homes per year.

Year	No. of Affordable Homes	Location
2003/04	40	Billingshurst
	16	Christ's Hospital
	17	Horsham
	18	Henfield
	9	Pulborough
2004/05	2	Shipley
	41	Horsham
	17	Henfield
2005/06	8	Pulborough
	4	Broadbridge Heath
	149	Horsham
	9	Henfield
	2	Pulborough
	53	Southwater
2006/07	20	Storrington
	9	Warnham
	39	Billingshurst
	28	Southwater
2007/08	4	Cowfold
	40	Horsham
	22	Steyning
	6	Washington

The table below shows the number of Registered Social Landlord-owned homes in each of the Parishes for affordable rent and the number of properties that have become available for re-let in the past two years. (April 2008)

Amberley	35	2
Ashington	66	2
Ashurst	3	0
Billingshurst	475	42
Bramber	0	0
Broadbridge Heath	153	10
Coldwaltham	44	2
Colgate/Faygate	23	0
Cowfold	69	6
Horsham	2801	268
Henfield	340	39
Itchingfield/Barnes Green	26	0
Lower Beeding	26	3
Nuthurst/Mannings Heath	44	1
Parham	0	0
Pulborough/Nutbourne	324	31
Rudgwick	54	4
Rusper	24	1
Shermanbury	11	0
Shipley/Coolham	25	4
Slinfold	138	13
Southwater/Christ's Hospital	251	15
Steyning	276	21
Storrington & Sullington	570	39
Thakeham	8	1
Upper Beeding	127	4
Warnham	122	6
Washington	31	1
West Chiltington	55	1
West Grinstead/Partridge Green/ Dial Post	62	3
Wiston	2	0
Woodmancote	10	0

Note: The figures for Horsham include the Parishes of North Horsham



Overall, the supply of both new affordable housing and existing homes for re-let is marginal when compared to the annual need, especially as the annual need for 822 new homes calculated in the Horsham District Housing Need Survey Update in 2006 takes into consideration expected number of re-lets per year.

Significantly, the number of lettings available to the Council is declining. In 2003/04 the Council nominated to 291 re-lets and in 2007/08 260 re-lets.

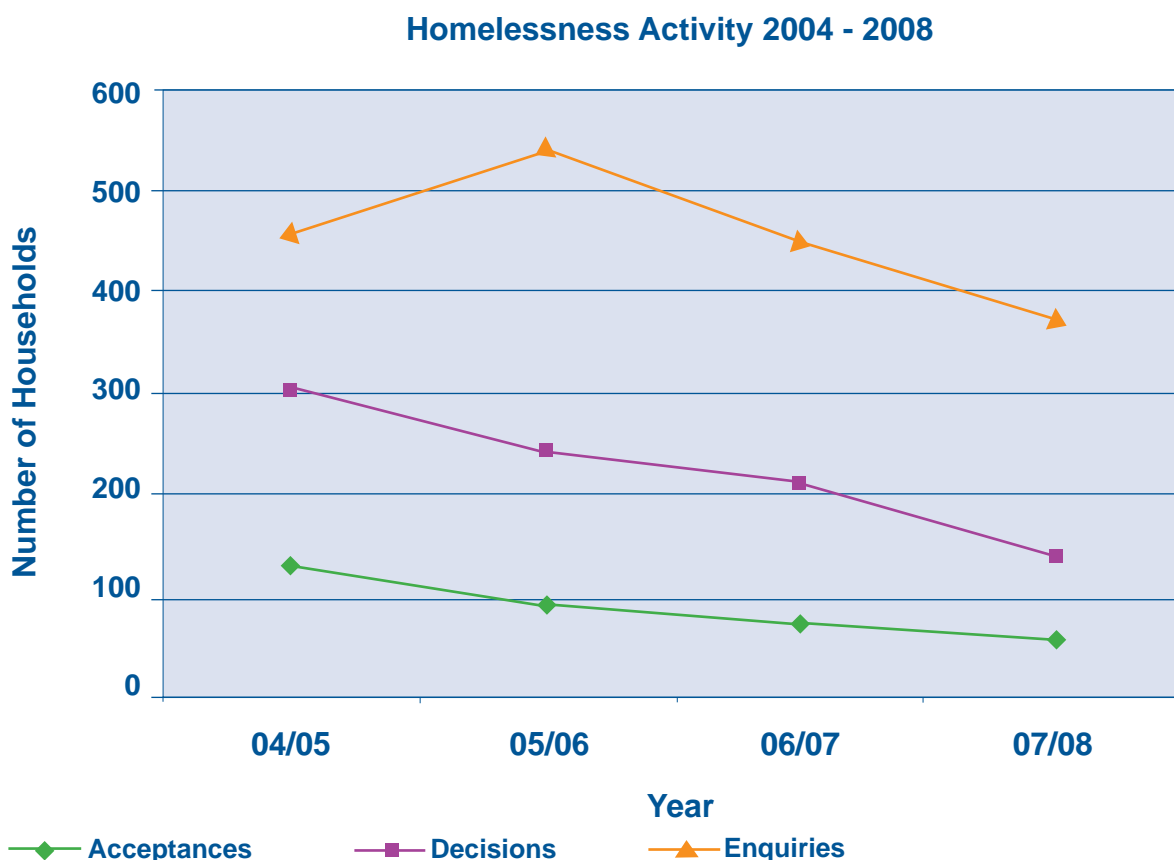
Affordable housing, both rented and shared ownership, accounts for only 11.7% of all housing tenures in the District. This is well below the national average of 19%.

There are approximately 1154 units of affordable retirement housing in the District (HDC Housing Services June 08). This represents 2% of all housing in the District.

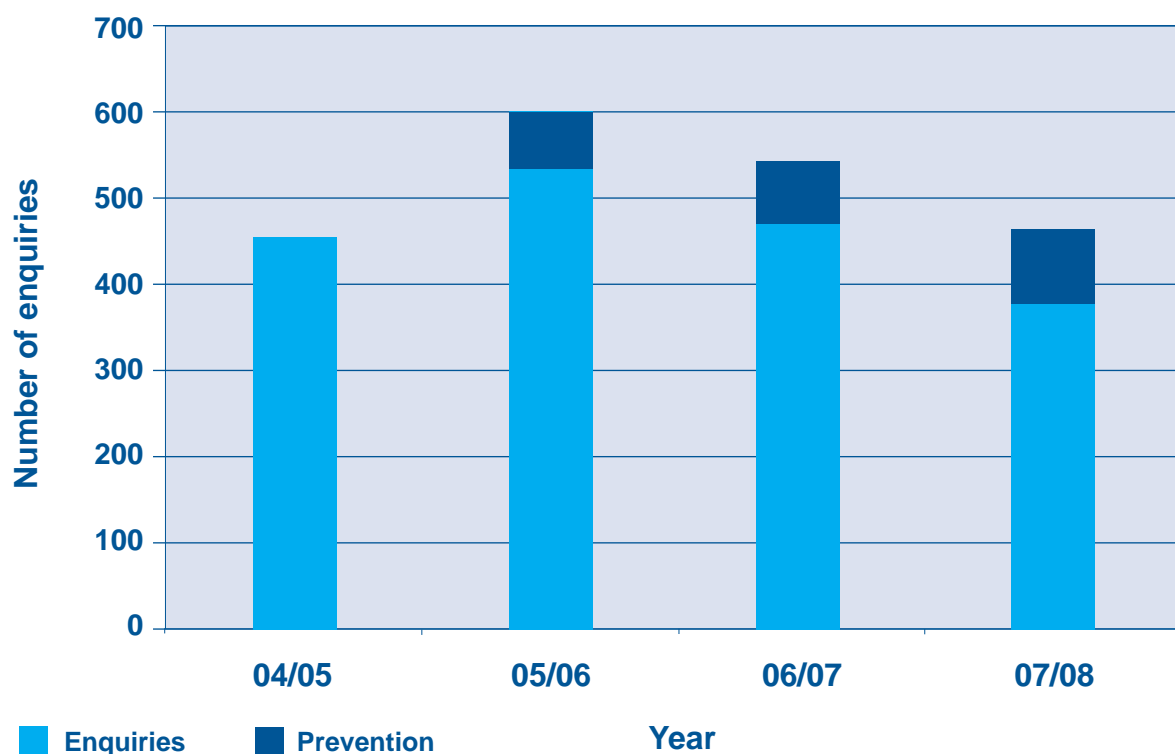
3.5 Homelessness

Homelessness continues to be a significant issue in the District as it is elsewhere in the South East. It is unpredictable and affected by a number of factors both regionally and nationally. In Horsham the overall number of households accepted by the Council as unintentionally homeless and in priority need is declining as a result of the Council's Housing Options and Advice Service. However, there is a slow but growing number of households presenting themselves as homeless due to repossession and a steady number of households with very complex needs that require intensive multi-agency support. This impacts on the staff time and resources of a wide range of organisations in the Horsham District.

The graph below shows the number of enquires, decisions and acceptances over the last five years.



Homelessness Enquiries



Average length of stay in temporary accommodation				
Period	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
Weeks	23.01	39.52	23.78	21

3.6 Vulnerable People

Horsham District Council works closely with both Housing Association partners and *Supporting People* in identifying and meeting the housing needs of vulnerable people. *Supporting People* is a national programme introduced by the Government in April 2003 to ensure the delivery and quality of housing related support services. In West Sussex *Supporting People* is a partnership of housing, adult and children's services, health and probation. The partnership is responsible for the commissioning and quality of housing related support services in West Sussex.

The Supporting People Programme in West Sussex supports over 12,000 vulnerable people to live as independently as possible. *Supporting People* funds a range of services for people with housing support needs including

- ◆ Older people with support needs
- ◆ People with mental health needs
- ◆ People with a physical disability
- ◆ People with a learning difficulty
- ◆ People with substance misuse problems
- ◆ Women and children fleeing domestic violence
- ◆ Ex-offenders

Current estimates of people in West Sussex with learning difficulties, mental health problems and physical/sensory impairment

Mid/moderate Learning Difficulties	15,695
Moderate/severe LD	2,670
Neurotic disorders	81,620
Probable psychotic disorder	2,735
Schizophrenia	1,605
Physical & Sensory Impairment	112,970
PSI severe	31,375

- ◆ Single homeless people
- ◆ Young people with support needs



Since 2003 the *Supporting People* programme in West Sussex has changed services, making them

- ◆ more flexible so that people can be supported in their own homes
- ◆ more responsive so that people get the right type of support at the right time
- ◆ more empowering so that people can make informed choices, make their own decisions and improve their quality of life and individual well being

These changes have helped to contribute to key local priorities such as reducing the use of residential care and reductions in homelessness.

Currently the Supporting People team is undertaking a Strategic Review which aims to further improve the quality and provision of housing support services and increase the housing and support options available to people. Services will be clustered under three categories: disability, homelessness and older people, and a new commissioning plan will be drawn up. The outcome of these Strategic Reviews will result in a procurement exercise to tender for services which will be awarded a three year contract.

The provisional review timetable is as follows:

Cluster	Service provider in place by:
Disability	January 2010
Homelessness	January 2011
Older people	January 2012



3.7 Rural Communities

Housing need in Horsham's rural communities is measured parish by parish - generally small settlements under 3,000 population. The Council adopted a new planning policy in February 2007. In settlements with a population of less than 3,000 permission will only be granted for schemes providing 100% affordable housing unless it is demonstrated that market housing is required for the retention and enhancement of community facilities or services. These settlements are defined as Category 2 settlements, with the larger settlements defined as Category 1.

Schemes brought forward in Category 2 settlements must meet identified need and provide for those with a local connection to the parish. The Council works in partnership with Action in Rural Sussex and Parish Councils to conduct housing needs surveys. Survey forms are delivered to every household in the parish in order to assess need as accurately as possible. In the last 7 years 15 parish housing needs surveys have been completed in the following settlements:

- ◆ Amberley (2003)
- ◆ Ashington (2007)
- ◆ Cowfold (2005)
- ◆ Coldwaltham (2008)
- ◆ Henfield (2008)
- ◆ Lower Beeding (2005 & 2008)
- ◆ Pulborough (2004 & 2007)
- ◆ Rudgwick (2008)
- ◆ Warnham (2001 & 2008)
- ◆ Washington (2004 & 2008)
- ◆ Woodmancote (2001)

These surveys identified a level of need for affordable housing in the parish both for rented and shared ownership homes.



Chapter Four

4. Objective One: Tackling Affordability and Meeting Housing Need

4.1 Why this objective?

Affordability is a growing problem in the District. It is mainly caused by house prices increasing at a much greater rate than incomes and a limited housing supply. Greater pressure is therefore exerted on the existing affordable housing in the District. Households who once would have been able to meet their own housing needs on the open market consider either affordable rent or shared ownership as their only option. Consequently there is not enough affordable housing to meet the need of residents in the District. This has been exacerbated by the 'buy to let' market which predominantly absorbs entry level properties - flats and maisonettes - reducing the number of accessible properties available to first time buyers.

The Council and its partners will continue to tackle the problem of affordability and endeavour to meet housing need through:

- ◆ Developing new affordable housing
- ◆ Maximising access to existing affordable housing through re-lets & resales
- ◆ Making effective use of existing affordable rented homes through management of the Housing Register
- ◆ Improving households' access to rented accommodation in the private sector

These priorities link in with those set out by the Regional Housing Board:

- ◆ *To build more affordable homes*
- ◆ *To bring decent housing within the reach of people in lower incomes*
- ◆ *To improve the quality of new housing and of existing stock*

(SE RHB Housing Investment in the Regions: Funding Recommendations 2008-2011, June 2007)

4.2 Progress Update

Progress has been made in achieving principal objectives set out in the previous Housing Strategy (2003-2008).

We have:

- ◆ worked with our partners to complete an average over the last 5 years of 110 homes each year against a target of 80
- ◆ ensured land owned by the Council has been made available to secure the provision of affordable housing
- ◆ influenced local and sub-regional planning policies to make sure they are sufficiently robust to meet and maximise the availability of affordable housing in the District
- ◆ kept housing needs information up to date
- ◆ raised awareness of access to low cost home ownership

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. The previous Strategy set a target for completing an annual rolling average of 80 new homes each year. During the period 2003-2008 on average 110 new homes were completed each year.

Table 1 Number of new affordable homes completed each year

Year	No. of New Affordable Homes
2003/2004	102
2004/2005	66
2005/2006	246
2006/2007	67
2007/2008	72

*These figures vary from the planning Annual Monitoring Report. There are differing criteria for determining completions.



The Council's Housing Services Team takes the lead in enabling the development of new affordable housing in the District. The team works closely with planning colleagues, Registered Social Landlords, private developers, landowners and the Housing Corporation/ Homes and Communities Agency to provide as many affordable homes as possible in line with planning policy.

Many of the affordable homes built in the District are constructed as part of larger developments and are then sold by the developer to Registered Social Landlords at prices which ensure the homes will be affordable to the eventual occupiers. The Council is responsible for making sure this arrangement takes place and does so through a legal agreement with the developer under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Housing and planning officers work together to negotiate with developers to guarantee the right sizes and types of homes are constructed.

4.2.1 Enabling and development

The Council works with 5 main Registered Social Landlords to deliver new affordable housing in the District:

- ◆ Hyde Martlett
- ◆ Moat
- ◆ Raglan
- ◆ Saxon Weald
- ◆ Southern Housing

In addition, there are other Registered Social Landlords who develop smaller specialist schemes: English Rural Housing Association, Greenoak Housing Association and Southdown Housing Association.

Funding

The Registered Social Landlords apply for grant from the Housing Corporation (The National Affordable Homes Agency) in order to deliver new affordable housing. It is anticipated that this will continue when the Housing Corporation is absorbed into the new Homes and Communities Agency at the end of 2008. Housing Officers work closely with Registered

Social Landlord partners and the Housing Corporation to prepare and submit bids, and the Council plays a crucial role in prioritizing which schemes are to be allocated funding. Through regular dialogue with the Housing Corporation, the Council has a vital role to play in securing grant.

During the life of the previous Housing Strategy the Housing Corporation held two bidding rounds for grant. Another bid round was held in September-November 2007 for the National Affordable Housing Programme 2008-2011. This represents the main source of funding for new affordable housing for the next three years.

The Council's preferred Registered Social Landlord partners submitted bids for funding towards the end of 2007 to deliver a range of schemes across the District including a rural scheme, an urban development and a programme of properties for individuals with a long-term disability. The total amount of grant allocated was £1,251,270 to support the delivery of 27 new homes.

However, on this occasion, the Housing Corporation did not allocate all of the available resources through the initial bidding round. This will allow our partners to access investment for new development opportunities, through additional market engagements, arising during the course of the Programme. The Corporation has recently announced that it will consider bids brought forward by Registered Social Landlords at any time

Since 2006 private developers have also had the ability to bid for grant from the Housing Corporation to deliver affordable housing. The Housing Corporation is very keen to have a mixture of providers and therefore the Council will need to build closer working relationships with private developers interested in bidding for grant.

In its enabling capacity the Council can subsidise new affordable housing by means of funding secured through the planning system. Subsidy may be required for schemes that are not eligible for grant from the Housing Corporation or to support schemes that require more grant than



the Housing Corporation will award. Since it started to collect commuted sums the Council has approved subsidy for two new schemes in the District - one in Billingshurst and one in Southwater.

'Environmentally friendly'

As well as increasing the provision of new affordable homes, the Council and its Registered Social Landlord partners are striving to improve the environmental quality of what is built. All new affordable housing must meet Level 3 of a new Code for Sustainable Homes that national Government introduced in April 2007. There are 6 levels in total - homes that meet the standard at the sixth level will be 'zero carbon'. The Council's Registered Social Landlord partners, where possible, are trying to achieve higher than Level 3. Planning permission was granted in March 2008 for six 3 bed homes that are to be built to Level 4. Another partner Registered Social Landlord is building 12 properties to *EcoHomes Excellent* level - broadly equivalent to Level 4. In addition the Council has recently introduced planning requirements applicable to all housing developments regarding energy conservation and generation of energy from renewable resources (see the General Development Control Policies DPD).



4.2.2 Planning policies

Central to the Local Development Framework is the Core Strategy. This document sets out the key planning policies of the District. The Core Strategy was adopted by the Council in February 2007, and includes a policy on meeting housing need (CP12). This policy stipulates that on residential developments of 15 dwellings or more (or on sites 0.5 hectares and above) an appropriate proportion of affordable homes should be included, the target being 40% of the total number of homes on the site. In settlements with a population of less than 3,000, permission will only be granted for schemes providing 100% affordable housing unless it is demonstrated that market housing is required for the retention and enhancement of community facilities or services. In such circumstances the target of 40% provision of affordable housing will apply to development of 5 dwellings or more on sites of 0.16 hectares and above.

Horsham District Council has also developed and adopted two other key planning documents that support the delivery of affordable housing: the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the Site Specific Allocations of Land Development Planning Document.

The Planning Obligations SPD sets out what type and tenure of affordable housing private developers must provide and at what cost to the Registered Social Landlord. The policy states that developers should provide the units on free serviced land and that reasonable build costs can be reclaimed for the units. This ensures that the Council secures the right type of affordable housing in the right location at a price that guarantees the homes are affordable.

Policies CP6 and CP7 of the Core Strategy and the Site Specific Allocations of Land DPD identify sites in the District that will deliver new homes to meet the District's housing targets. Based on planning policy CP12 and CP5 the Council will be able to secure a proportion of affordable housing on these sites. From 1 April 2009 as a direct result of this policy the target for number of new affordable homes completed annually will increase from 80 to 120. However, this new

target is dependent on the strategic development west of Horsham - see below.

The District continues to operate a rural exception policy that enables the Council to grant planning permission in exceptional circumstances on land adjacent to the boundary of a settlement. Homes built on exception sites are for those in housing need who have a strong local connection to the parish, and the homes remain affordable in perpetuity.

Large-scale strategic developments

In addition, as part of the new Local Development Framework two strategic development sites have been identified - land west of Horsham and land west of Bewbush. These sites will deliver a combined total of 4,500 new homes between 2009/10 and 2017/18.

As a result of the new planning policy which requires 40% of all new housing on residential developments over 15 units or 0.5 hectares to be affordable, the Council is expecting to secure approximately 1,800 affordable homes from the two strategic developments, although nominations for affordable homes west of Bewbush will be shared with Crawley Borough Council.

Horsham District Council has recently committed resources in order to participate in the West Sussex Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This County-wide exercise involves all seven local authorities. National Government expects all local authorities to complete the Assessment for both planning and housing purposes. The West Sussex Assessment is scheduled for completion in autumn 2008 and its findings will be considered as part of the annual review of the Housing Strategy. However, early data collected has been used to inform this Strategy prior to its publication.

4.2.3 Existing stock

Nominations to existing affordable housing remains the method by which the greatest number of people in housing need are assisted. The Council has legal agreements in place with all the Registered Social Landlords



owning affordable homes in the District. The agreement states how many homes can receive nominations from the Council to any particular housing scheme. Standard practice allows the Council to nominate occupants to 100% of all new properties the first time they are let and then to 75% of all subsequent vacancies that occur in a scheme.

By working closely with the Registered Social Landlords, the Council can help move households between the different Registered Social Landlords to make use of all available properties on the Housing Register. Effective management of the Housing Register and a healthy flow of re-lets from Registered Social Landlords allow the affordable homes in the District to be occupied as efficiently as possible.

4.2.4 The Private Sector and empty homes

Although the focus is predominantly on the provision of new affordable homes, long term empty homes in the private sector present a potential resource to the District. The District is fortunate that in comparison to both national and nearby local authorities it has a relatively low number of long term empty homes (approximately 400 - August 2008). Nevertheless



homes that have been empty for a considerable period are usually in very poor condition. Despite the fact that it is the responsibility of homeowners to maintain their own property, the Council does have general legal powers to ensure that privately owned homes are kept in a reasonable state of repair, and can make grants or loans available to if needed.

Improving quality and sustainability

Progress has also been made towards the objectives of the last Housing Strategy regarding improving the quality and sustainability of housing stock in order to:

- ◆ maintain and deliver a comprehensive Private Sector Renewal Strategy
- ◆ encourage and provide a safe and healthy private rented sector
- ◆ enable disabled, elderly, infirm and vulnerable people to live safely in their own homes
- ◆ promote, identify and tackle empty properties in the district
- ◆ publicise the Empty Homes Strategy
- ◆ continue to identify empty homes and to provide information to owners

The following objectives have been met:

- ◆ The Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy has been reviewed annually in response to major changes introduced by the Regulatory Reform Order 2002 and the Housing Act 2004 and to incorporate the Housing Health and Safety rating system introduced in 2006
- ◆ The Council committed resources to undertake a new Private Sector Condition Survey in 2003 which focused on unfitness and disrepair but did incorporate some work on the new Health and Housing Safety Rating System. This was redone in 2008 via the BRE Stock Condition Modelling method

- ◆ The Council has continued to provide a range of financial assistance for repairs (to private landlords and homeowners), energy efficiency, empty properties and disabled adaptations
- ◆ Mandatory licensing has been introduced for certain houses in multiple occupation and several properties in the District have been issued a licence
- ◆ A handyvan service has been provided in partnership with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Panel and Saxon Weald Housing Association.
- ◆ An Empty Homes Strategy has been developed

It is important to ascertain the number of empty homes in the District, and we have commissioned Brighton and Hove City Council to investigate and determine the severity of long-term empty homes in the private sector and to recommend an appropriate course of action. This project is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2008.

Due to a lack of resources, the Council has only been able to provide limited advice and support to owners of long term empty properties in order to persuade and assist them to bring those properties back into use. It has also not made full use of its proactive regulation and enforcement powers to compulsorily purchase properties in serious disrepair where the owners will not remedy the problem.

The Council has a statutory duty to consider housing conditions within its district and must keep them under review with a view to identifying any action that may need to be taken under the Housing Acts. Traditionally local authorities have used house condition surveys as a means of identifying the status of an Authority's housing stock and the subsequent targeting and prioritisation of resources to secure sustainable improvements in the condition of private sector housing. However, in the last few years many local authorities in England have moved to using housing stock modelling as a way to provide information on key housing



indicators. It has been proved that modelling provides more detailed and reliable data than traditional surveys and is considerably cheaper. In view of this, the Council appointed the British Research Establishment to provide information on key housing indicators using their housing stock models. The data influences the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy.

One of the key results from stock projections was that at the end of 2007, 69% of vulnerable households are estimated to have been living in decent homes. The target was for 70% of vulnerable households to be living in decent homes by 2010. Therefore unless unexpected changes occur within the next two years, the Council is likely to meet this target by continuing with its existing Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy.

4.2.5 Key workers

A key objective in the last Housing Strategy which has not been included in the new Strategy was to ensure key workers had access to accommodation. The District carried out several key worker studies, the most recent in 2004, and delivered schemes for key workers during the period of the last Strategy 2003-2008. In the light of this experience the Council believes attracting and retaining key workers is still a significant issue for the District. However, the need for accommodation is not only for those who might be considered key workers, and therefore as a priority in this Strategy we will continue to provide homes for shared ownership and intermediate rent that will be accessible to all households living and working in Horsham and we will target households on lower incomes.

This priority is in accordance with the Regional Housing Board's view:

We recommend that opportunities to promote intermediate homes for rent are explored as part of the broader range of affordable housing options. We strongly support measures to help workers in key public services gain access to affordable housing. However, our consultation shows a consensus that access to low cost home ownership schemes should not be limited to this group. We therefore recommend that local

authorities and their partners continue to define eligibility criteria for such schemes so that they reflect local needs and circumstances. (2007)

4.3 Priorities for Action

The Council has consulted on a range of options to meet its objectives in tackling affordability and meeting housing need. Progress to date has been monitored, data has been analysed, and resources that are or may be available have been considered.

Therefore, the priorities for the 2008-2013 Housing Strategy are as follows:

- ◆ **Increase supply of affordable housing, including affordable rented and shared ownership properties.** This is a priority because the need for affordable housing continues to far outstrip supply.

To achieve this priority, Horsham District Council will:

- continue to fund a Housing Strategy and Development Manager. A Housing Enabling & Projects Officer has been recruited during 2008
- continue to facilitate and participate in local and sub-regional forums that share best practice, networking and shared goals; for example: West Sussex Planning and Affordable Housing Group, Horsham Registered Social Landlord development forum, Horsham District Community Partnership Housing Theme Group
- encourage Registered Social Landlords developing in the District to proactively seek opportunities for new affordable housing and work with them to bid to the Council and Housing Corporation/Homes and Communities Agency for grant to fund new schemes. This will be monitored monthly through the Housing Services Development Programme



- in partnership with Crawley Borough Council, secure affordable housing in the strategic development west of Bewbush.
- secure affordable housing in the strategic development west of Horsham.
- annually monitor the impact of the Council's Core Strategy on the delivery of new affordable housing and take action as appropriate
- continue to negotiate onsite provision of affordable housing by private developers as directed by planning policy and work collaboratively with house builders and other members of the private sector to secure the delivery all housing in the District including affordable housing
- continue to use funding secured through the planning system to enable new affordable housing that provides the optimum mix of homes in terms of location, type and tenure
- manage the Housing Register to best fit properties to households in need
- lobby national and regional Government bodies for additional resources and submit bids to new Government initiatives as appropriate by regular contact with the Homes and Communities Agency, Government Office of the South East and Regional Housing Forum
- make best use of the Council's land and property portfolio to enable new affordable housing developments, as well as actively investigating the possibility of acquiring land for affordable housing
- continue to support the Homebuy Zone Agent for West Sussex promoting new low-cost home ownership schemes, with publicity initiatives, advertisements,

leaflets and attending information events

- in partnership with Registered Social Landlords commit funding to an incentive scheme for under occupiers renting from Registered Social Landlords to encourage them to move to housing more appropriate for their needs, thereby releasing family homes

- ◆ **Provide customers access to housing in a way that promotes choice.** This is a priority because everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home at a price they can afford in a place they want to live and work.

To achieve this priority, the Council will:

- work with Registered Social Landlord partners to review the options for implementing a choice based lettings scheme by 2010
- investigate the possibility of a self-build housing scheme during 2008/09, which would meet the need of a group of individuals/families who currently do not own their own home, but who would be willing to work in partnership with each other and a specialist consultant. Each family group would contribute labour, skills and a minimum amount of time per month, and it is calculated that the discount on the equivalent open market price would be approx 40%

- ◆ **Increase residents' access to private sector housing.** This is a priority because it will help to generate a wider range of options for those in housing need.

To achieve this priority, the Council will:

- work with landlords and letting agents to provide advice on a range of issues through a designated Housing Options Support Officer.



- deliver a comprehensive Private Sector Renewal Strategy which will be monitored annually
- encourage and provide a safe and healthy private rented sector
- promote, identify and tackle empty properties in the district
- implement the Empty Homes Strategy - continue to identify empty homes and to provide information to owners and review progress annually
- continue to provide a range of financial assistance for repairs (to private landlords and homeowners), energy efficiency, empty properties and disabled adaptations
- increase the funding for the tenancy deposit scheme and consider a deposit guarantee scheme or bond
- support the West Sussex Homeshare Scheme
- support Southdown Housing Association to deliver a programme of homeownership for individuals with a long term disability via the HOLD scheme (Home Ownership for People with long term Disability). Housing Corporation funding has been allocated to acquire nine properties from 2008-2011

- ◆ **Improve understanding and knowledge of housing need and housing markets in the District.** This is a priority because without such information targets cannot be set for the delivery of affordable housing.

To achieve this priority, the Council will:

- continue to participate in the County-wide Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The Council has committed funding and staff resources

to the project, which will be concluded and the report published in autumn 2008. The Council will continue to be closely involved in the ongoing updating and reviewing of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment

- collect information monthly on key housing indicators

- ◆ **Improve the condition, quality and sustainability of housing in the District.** This is a priority because it is essential that local communities are safe, inclusive, well located places where people want to live and that their impact on the environment is reduced.

To achieve this priority, the Council will:

- continue to carry out the annual Private Sector Renewal Review and actively responds to all issues relating to Private Sector housing
- investigate bringing empty properties back into use and explore how this can be achieved
- the Council, together with Arun, Adur, Crawley, Mid Sussex and Worthing Councils (West Sussex Partnership) successfully bid to the Regional Housing Board for funding to provide energy efficiency measures to vulnerable households within the region and to undertake Decent Home Surveys. The programme commenced in June 2008 and is proving to be very successful

And:

- new developments of affordable housing will have to achieve Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. This may be raised to Level 4 in the future for bidding to the Homes and Communities Agency. An average of Level 4 is expected for the major new developments west of Horsham and Bewbush



The outcomes will be:

- ◆ more affordable housing - target of 120 new homes per year from 1 April 2009, subject to the west of Horsham strategic development.
- ◆ stronger partnerships with Registered Social Landlords and private developers
- ◆ better intelligence on the housing market and housing need to influence new council policies
- ◆ decent homes in the private sector
- ◆ improved environmental sustainability of all new affordable homes
- ◆ proactive approach to empty homes



We consulted stakeholders on a wide range of issues, and the Housing Strategy cannot focus on delivering all the objectives raised. As a result of consultation feedback, consideration of resources and other options available the following actions will not be pursued:

- ◆ re-negotiation of nomination agreements between the Council and the Registered Social Landlords
- ◆ improve data base on Registered Social Landlord properties in the District to include information about adaptations

4.4 Risk is identified

- ◆ Reduction in number of affordable homes as private sector developers reduce building programmes due to market downturn
- ◆ The Housing Corporation/Homes and Communities Agency may focus affordable housing funding on growth areas in the region away from Horsham District and other similar rural local authority areas
- ◆ Private developers now able to bid for

grant from the Housing Corporation/ Homes and Communities Agency to develop new affordable housing. They will be considerably less regulated than Registered Social Landlords and may not be so willing to work in partnership with Local Authorities

- ◆ Landowners/developers not bringing land forward in category two settlements due to planning policy CP12 and anticipated 'hope value'
- ◆ The effect of the current economic situation and forthcoming recession
- ◆ House prices causing more households to look to affordable housing: either shared ownership, intermediate rent or affordable rent
- ◆ Developers wishing to meet their affordable housing obligations by delivering the smallest units possible
- ◆ Sub-regional nomination processes where funding for new affordable housing development is conditional on sharing nomination rights to homes with neighbouring local authorities



- ◆ South East Plan focusing on growth areas and having higher housing targets than originally stated
- ◆ Additional costs in ensuring homes are more sustainable
- ◆ EU accession has generated a new group of households that the Council has an obligation to house subject to circumstances
- ◆ The Housing Corporation's efficiency drive which exerts increasing pressure on Registered Social Landlords and councils to make maximum use of resources to deliver affordable housing
- ◆ Increasing private sector rents which have priced out households who would have taken care of their own housing needs and who are now seeking affordable rented housing
- ◆ A working group of councillors was set up under the Council's Scrutiny and Overview

Committee to examine the consequences of the shortfall of affordable housing. It pointed out particular problems for the District that may make the need to provide affordable housing more acute:

- The District's proximity to London and the Gatwick/Crawley area for employment and to the amenities of the south coast makes it attractive to both commuters and retired people, especially those moving from urban areas of the south east
- The District is already forecast to have a very high proportion of older people in the future; the effect of young people moving out of the District will worsen this imbalance
- Affordable housing underpins the economic activity of the District; housing for lower paid workers is needed to keep the economy vibrant and maintain high levels of employment



Chapter Five

5. Objective Two: Preventing Homelessness and Supporting Homeless Households

5.1 Why this objective?

Homelessness means not having a home. A person or family can be homeless for a variety of reasons:

- ◆ Domestic abuse
- ◆ Increase in family breakdown
- ◆ Fire and flood
- ◆ Relationship breakdown
- ◆ Rent/mortgage arrears
- ◆ Family/friends unable/unwilling to accommodate
- ◆ End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST)

The Council has a responsibility to provide housing to meet a range of needs, including homelessness. The prevention and reduction of homelessness is key to any housing Strategy and is intrinsically linked with meeting housing need since ultimately most people require settled affordable accommodation whether in housing need or homeless. This means the Council must make the best use of existing housing and increase the supply of affordable housing as outlined under Objective One. Temporary accommodation for priority need homeless households must also be provided while their housing options are being assessed. These households will need to access support services to maintain or rebuild normal daily lifestyles. Horsham District Council has to predict accurately the need for temporary accommodation and maintain the flexibility and control to respond swiftly and effectively. This requires the Council to retain direct control of its temporary accommodation as well strong relationships with its partners.

There has also been a significant shift in national policy on how to tackle homelessness and greater emphasis has been placed on preventing homelessness. The Housing Act 2002 placed a clear duty on the Council to prevent homelessness, ensuring there is sufficient accommodation available for those who are or who may become homeless and that appropriate support is provided to homeless households.

Early intervention is vital. A comprehensive Housing Options Service that is linked to support from a wide range of other agencies has enabled the Council to focus on preventing homelessness. This follows the national Government's preferred approach - 'invest to save'.

Recognising the integral link between tackling affordability, meeting housing needs and preventing homelessness the Council has decided to include its priorities for action for preventing homeless within its new Housing Strategy. However, a separate Prevention of Homelessness Strategy has been published as a companion document to the main Housing Strategy and can be accessed on the Council's website.

The homelessness priorities for action are informed and supplemented by an extensive assessment of the Council's approach to homelessness carried out via a homelessness Strategy health check. This self-assessment toolkit, carried out by Housing Services, partner agencies and councillors in December 2007, examines how effective the Council's homelessness services are and identifies gaps in that service.

Overall, the health check shows that within the financial and staffing constraints of the Council's Housing Department significant progress is being made. However, further work is necessary to enable the department to tackle homelessness more effectively. The health check reinforces the need for an integrated multi-agency approach to homelessness. The results of the health check and consultation on the Housing Strategy have shaped the priorities for action at the end of this chapter.



5.2 Progress Update

Progress has been made in reducing homelessness since the last Housing Strategy 2003-2008 and the Review of the District's Homelessness Strategy in 2004/05. The following objectives were stated:

- ◆ to minimise the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for homeless families and single homeless people and to comply with the Government's requirement to place families in such accommodation in emergencies only
- ◆ to increase the availability of and access to accommodation for single people to minimise rough sleeping
- ◆ to reduce the number of homeless requests and repeat requests
- ◆ to ensure that homeless people are provided with suitable accommodation and where necessary relevant support
- ◆ to work closely with partner agencies to develop strategies for dealing with economic changes - e.g. more repossessions; reduction in mortgage availability for certain groups



Working in partnership with Registered Social Landlords, West Sussex County Adult & Children's Services and a range of voluntary sector support providers the objectives above have been met in the following ways. The Council has:

- ◆ reviewed its temporary accommodation and as a consequence two schemes which did not meet current standards were decommissioned and demolished. One site has been redeveloped for 14 new permanent affordable homes and the other for 12 permanent affordable homes and eight flats for temporary accommodation. Two further schemes have been identified for refurbishment and conversion - particularly to create a broader range of sizes and types of flats, including two that are wheelchair-accessible
- ◆ trained Housing Options Officers to provide advice to households presenting to the Council as homeless. This involves advice to tenants, landlords and letting agencies and working with support services to enable households to maintain their existing accommodation as well as offering drop-in surgeries and home visits
- ◆ referred vulnerable people to the local *Signpost* service. This service is commissioned by Supporting People to enable vulnerable people to sustain their tenancies and homes by providing information, advice, floating and resettlement housing support services
- ◆ managed a successful rent deposit scheme
- ◆ developed the Y Centre to provide supported accommodation for young people. This includes 16 bed spaces for young people with medium support needs and involves close liaison with the West Sussex County Council Adult & Children's Services Leaving Care Team
- ◆ continued minimal use of bed and breakfast accommodation (an annual average of 5% of people housed that the



Council has accepted as homeless)

- ◆ Reduced the number of homeless acceptances from 130 in 2004/5 to 57 in 2007/08
- ◆ reduced the number of households in temporary accommodation from 95 in 2004/05 to 36 in 2007/08
- ◆ worked with Registered Social Landlords to enable individuals and households with high support needs to secure housing
- ◆ developed and facilitated a multi-agency forum that meets quarterly and involves all partners involved in preventing homelessness and housing homeless households
- ◆ advised tenants and housing applicants of their responsibilities and the impact of anti-social behaviour/rent arrears on their housing options
- ◆ provided references for individuals who have been housed in the Council's temporary accommodation and either successfully maintained or improved their tenancy
- ◆ returned a portfolio of private sector leased properties to their owners, thereby meeting a national Government target to reduce the number of households living in temporary accommodation
- ◆ set up and run a young persons multi-agency group

Although the number of customers seeking help and advice from the Council's Housing Options team has remained high (377 households requesting advice and assistance in 2007/08), the number of households the Council accepts as homeless has declined (the Council accepted 57 homeless households in priority need that it had a duty to assist). In addition the number of complex cases is increasing. In consequence the Housing Options and Advice Service is under greater pressure despite less presenting households. There is a small but growing

number of individuals and households whose support needs are so high and the support they require is so intense that they are often refused housing by Registered Social Landlords. Traditional support services have no effect and this group has become practically impossible to house. Therefore, the Council targets specific 'at risk' groups while maintaining a housing advice service to households experiencing homelessness - for example, households that have become homeless due to repossession.

Young people

One target group consists of young people with complex and challenging needs. As in many other parts of the country the main cause of homelessness is relationship difficulties at home, leading to parents, family or friends no longer willing to provide accommodation. In 2007/08 the largest percentage (39%) of homeless households accepted by the Council comprised individuals whose family and friends were no longer willing to accommodate. The Council gives financial assistance to help run a successful Y Centre that supports young people with low and medium support needs. However a small but persistent number of young people are outside the scope of traditional services. They require intensive support in a family-type environment to counter an often dysfunctional and chaotic home life. It is anticipated that these young people would move on from a family unit to semi-supported housing such as the Y Centre prior to living independently.

Mental health and substance misuse

The second target group consists of those with mental health and/or substance misuse problems. Clients within the group are frequently referred to the Council's Housing Services direct from hospital. The majority of clients require supported housing for a period of time to make sure they are fully able to cope with everyday living. A Registered Social Landlord is more likely to accept an individual for permanent housing who receives floating support from a specialist provider.



Prolific ex-offenders

The third target group contains prolific ex-offenders who may have additional support needs. They require supported accommodation in order to develop their independent living skills and maintain a stable daily life. This will help them sustain their tenancies when they move on to permanent housing.

Homelessness is not only a housing problem. Wider issues ranging from education to employment are involved and it will be very difficult to eradicate homelessness entirely. However there is much that the Council and its partners can and are doing to reduce homelessness and improve services to homeless households. Achieving long term sustainable changes requires wider ownership of the problem and a joined-up approach working across Council departments, with partners and with other local authorities at District and County level.

5.3 Priorities for Action

The Council has consulted on a range of options to meet its objectives in tackling homelessness. Progress to date has been monitored, data has been analysed, and resources that are or may be available have been considered.

Therefore, the priorities for the 2008-2011 Housing Strategy are as follows:

- ◆ **Improve customers' access to high quality housing options advice and information from the Council.** This is a priority because providing more comprehensive advice at an earlier stage will help prevent homelessness.

To achieve this priority, the Council will:

- investigate use of a text reminding service for customers with mobile phones in order to maximise officer time and to help avoid customers missing Housing Options interviews
- carry out a major overhaul of its housing

advice leaflets to present the information in a clear and attractive format, as well as providing access to the information on its website

- build on the role of the Council's tenancy deposit scheme to include tenancy sustainment help, periodic inspections and home visits
- continue to keep staffing structures under review to take account of new Government legislation, initiatives and additional sources of funding
- improve accessibility to the Housing Options Service to ensure vulnerable groups / minorities are not disadvantaged/ and appropriate measures are in place to assist all who access the service
- work with staff from the new Census partnership to maintain high standards, particularly with reference to Housing Benefit, and monitor impact of Local Housing Allowance liaising closely with the Census partnership to ensure measures are in place to deal with non payment of rent by vulnerable households
- continue to make best use of Discretionary Housing payments
- maintain appropriate budget for the successful tenancy deposit scheme to raise number of households funded
- set up a homelessness prevention fund
- continue to support Citizens' Advice Bureau so that debt crisis counselling can be provided. This should reduce the number of households presenting as homeless due to repossession
- improve data collection and management systems on homeless presentations, acceptances and outcomes by using the new IT system



- consult with neighbouring Districts and Boroughs and develop closer partnership working with other agencies to ensure consistent services, and understanding of client needs. This could include joining panels on a cross-boundary basis
- ensure Housing Options staff receive ongoing training to ensure they are up to date with changes in legislation and good practice. This will also be reflected in Personal Development Plans and annual appraisals

- ◆ **Improve the integration of housing support services provided by different agencies for young people.** This is a priority because young people for whom traditional support services are not working require more intensive intervention to prevent them from continually representing themselves as homeless.

To achieve this priority the Council will:

- maintain the existing protocol between Horsham District Council and West Sussex County Council for support to young people
- continue to work with Horsham Y Centre towards a Supported Lodgings Scheme (Nightstop) to ensure that homeless 16-17 year olds are not placed in bed and breakfast
- second a Community Development Worker to Housing Services to work with other key agencies to prevent youth homelessness
- develop a homeless prevention education and training package that can be used by schools and colleges
- investigate the possibility of two additional units of furnished accommodation at the Y Centre to

assist in short term emergency re-housing for younger people

- investigate the possibility of a free mediation service for 16-17 year olds

- ◆ **Improve and integrate housing support services provided by different agencies for households with complex needs at risk of homelessness.** This is a priority because improving the way information is shared between partners and operating an effective referral system provides a better support to the most vulnerable households in the District.

To achieve this priority the Council in partnership with key agencies will:

- continue to support the Harm Reduction Action Group
- continue to support the 'Safe @ Home' scheme and involvement by Council staff
- investigate a joint working protocol with West Sussex PCT, Sussex Partnership NHS Trust and WSCC Adult & Children's Services to provide a joined-up service to help households with complex needs maintain their tenancies - for example: supporting case conferences and professionals meetings
- increase the focus of supported housing services on homeless prevention activities including providing housing related support to vulnerable homeless people via 'Signpost'
- increase Move-On opportunities for households in supported housing schemes by working in partnership with WSCC Supporting People SPARC service
- improve tenancy sustainment through adopting measures such as a vulnerable persons protocol and exploring opportunities to provide additional



support to households placed in private rented accommodation or temporary accommodation

- work with Registered Social Landlords and Citizens' Advice Bureau to share information regarding households at risk of eviction and to ensure that support is provided
- investigate further the housing and support needs of vulnerable, disadvantaged and minority groups and assess options to improve services

- ◆ **Improve the quality of temporary accommodation provided in the District to meet Government Standards and provide support where necessary.** This is a priority because it is important that a home, albeit temporary, provides the comfort, security and stability needed to maintain as normal a lifestyle as possible.

To achieve this priority the Council will:

- redevelop an existing temporary accommodation scheme in the south of the District that does not meet current standards, replacing with 8 new flats
- two schemes will be converted and refurbished to create a broader range of sizes and types of flats, and to provide two wheelchair accessible units
- continue to fund a Buildings Supervisor to maintain the accommodation and a dedicated Housing Officer to provide support to households entering, staying and leaving temporary accommodation
- continue to invest in improving the spread of temporary accommodation across the District to help homeless households maintain their links to schools, employment and support networks

The outcomes will be:

- ◆ Reduction in homelessness
- ◆ No homeless households in bed and breakfast other than for very short term emergencies
- ◆ Better quality temporary accommodation
- ◆ Improved integrated services to households with very complex needs
- ◆ Improved integrated services for young people with challenging needs

The Council consulted stakeholders on a wide range of issues, and the Housing Strategy cannot focus on delivering all the objectives raised. As a result of consultation feedback, consideration of resources and other options available the following actions will not be pursued:

- Supported accommodation provision for teenage parents
- Increasing senior level capacity in the Council's Housing Options Team to provide support for households with complex needs as well as maintaining an advice service to non-priority households

Risk is identified

- Confirm resources to ensure all HDC temporary accommodation meets Government Standards
- Reduction in or cessation of national Government Homeless Grant would put a number of homeless prevention initiatives at risk
- Reduction in Supporting People funding which would reduce floating support service 'Signpost' available to households at risk of homelessness



- 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 Registered Social Landlords to help move people out of temporary accommodation as well as meet the need of people on the Housing Register
- Increasing number of people who have been through all available support services and cannot be housed

- Increasing number of priority homeless and general needs households needing advice and support as a result of increasing number of repossessions

Note: In September 2008, the Government announced a mortgage rescue scheme. It needs to be taken into account that unemployment and repossessions, while

increasing, are still low in comparison to the 1980s and early 1990s. Interest rates are far below the 16% high during that period. However, those currently in mortgage arrears and who have become unemployed will find affording mortgage payments increasingly difficult and local authorities can expect to see increased homelessness presentations. The rescue scheme will help some, but it will take some time to come into operation. The Council will monitor the rescue scheme closely and explore possibilities of implementing it. Further details can be found in the Horsham District Council Prevention of Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013.

- Increasing personal debt
- Effects of the current economic situation and forthcoming recession
- New bed & breakfast target of zero for 16/17 year olds



Comptons Lea, Horsham (Southern Housing Group)



Chapter Six

6. Objective 3: Improving the Quality of Life for Vulnerable People through Housing and related Support

6.1 Why this objective?

Traditional services for people with support needs are now frequently seen as leading to institutionalisation, dependency and social exclusion rather than encouraging independence and social integration. Therefore in providing housing and related support services for vulnerable people we aim to identify and respond to needs and promote choice and independence.

Using local knowledge, research and data from Supporting People, West Sussex County Council, Horsham District Council Housing Services and community and voluntary sector partners including Registered Social Landlords we have identified that the district is in need of supported housing and support services for the following client groups:

- ◆ Older people with support needs
- ◆ Mental health
- ◆ Physical disability
- ◆ Learning 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 a *handyvan* scheme means that many older people are staying in their own homes much longer than previously and moving into extra care, residential or nursing accommodation later, by-passing traditional forms of sheltered housing. Families suffering domestic violence need not necessarily move to a refuge - they can now stay in their own home with the *Safe@Home* scheme which provides home security measures.

6.2 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. In addition, West Sussex County Council is piloting 'individual budgets' where by the individual requiring care is able to commission his or her care provider. The individual can choose a member of the family to be his or her care provider. For more information on Supporting People, please see chapter 3, paragraph 3.6.

From the next financial year the Supporting People grant will be replaced by money paid directly to the County Council as part of a single grant to be known as an Area Based Grant. This will remove restrictions on how money can be spent and, in theory, it could be spent on any priority the County Council decided upon.

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.

6.3 Progress and looking ahead

6.3.1 Specific groups

Since the last Housing Strategy 2003-2008, progress has been made in meeting the needs of those who require support or supported housing. The Council has worked in partnership with Registered Social Landlords, West Sussex County Council Adult & Children's Services and a range of voluntary sector support providers. There is a great need to do more. Taking the headings listed above, we outline what has been achieved, what is currently taking place, and the priorities for action from 2008 - 2013:

Older People



The country as a whole faces an ageing population and the number of those over 60 in Horsham District is forecast to increase significantly by 2016. In view of this, it is imperative that older people's accommodation, either supported or non-supported, is a high priority for this Strategy.

Moreover, this must be closely linked with tackling housing affordability in general to ensure that care and support workers can live at a

reasonable distance to their clients and maintain sustainable working patterns.

There is a healthy demand for new affordable extra care retirement housing in Horsham - for example, Osmund Court in Billingshurst, which was developed by Saxon Weald Housing Association on land donated by Horsham District Council and includes Smes available for shared equity

However, some accommodation is very unpopular due to bedsits or shared bathing facilities and poor accessibility. This accommodation needs remodelling or redeveloping. Saxon Weald Housing Association owns the majority of the affordable retirement housing in the District followed by Southern Housing Group and London and Quadrant Housing Association. The problems of outdated, low demand accommodation are being addressed by the provision of high quality self-contained accommodation for older people. This will not only meet customer expectations but also encourage older residents in larger properties to downsize and release much needed larger family homes.

In order to raise awareness of housing and other related issues, the Council holds an annual *Life is for Living* day for older people plus smaller *Life is for Living* coffee mornings throughout the District.

- ◆ The priority for the 2008-2011 Housing Strategy is to **ensure sufficient housing opportunities and housing support services exist to meet the needs of the District's ageing population.**

To achieve this priority, schemes scheduled for delivery during the next five years include:

- Redevelopment of the sheltered housing scheme at Leggyfield, Horsham
- Redevelopment of the Gardeners and Fletcher sheltered housing scheme in Southwater

Both schemes replace bedsits that share



bathrooms with high quality self contained one and two bedroom flats

Also:

- Saxon Weald will investigate the feasibility of a new and improved retirement scheme in the South of the District
- The Council will work with London & Quadrant Housing Association on the re-modelling proposals for older persons accommodation on the South Holmes Estate
- The Horsham District Community Partnership's Housing and Older Persons' Theme groups are hosting an event to discuss Continuing Retirement Care Communities
- The Council will work to secure 30% of the new affordable housing on the West of Horsham strategic development site as supported housing. This may include designated older persons accommodation
- A number of retirement, sheltered and extra care units may well come forward through Section 106 agreements
- The Council and its Registered Social Landlord partners must also investigate occupation rates in general needs housing stock. For example, Saxon Weald estimate that approximately 60% of its general needs housing stock is occupied by older people

Mental health

- ◆ The Richmond Fellowship provides a specialist floating support service for people with mental health needs and learning difficulties

Learning and physical disability

Since the last Housing Strategy was published:

- ◆ Southdown Housing Association and Raglan Housing Association, with support from Horsham District Council, developed a scheme for individuals with a learning disability and a scheme for individuals with both a physical disability and a learning disability. Southdown is a specialist provider of supported housing and community services to vulnerable people
- ◆ Southdown, in partnership with Affinity Sutton, successfully supported 3 individuals requiring supported housing to purchase shared ownership homes in the District
- ◆ The priority for the 2008-2013 Housing Strategy is to **ensure sufficient housing opportunities and housing support services exist to meet the needs of those with special needs.**

In order to achieve this priority:

- Southdown Housing Association will support nine individuals in Horsham requiring supported housing to purchase a home through a new shared ownership product
- Saxon Weald will provide six homes for those with learning disabilities within the new redevelopment at Bryce Lodge, Horsham, and four homes in the scheme at Forge Way, Billingshurst
- As part of the Government programme to close NHS Campuses, 19 residents are to be resettled from the Martyn Long Centre bungalows in Horsham by Dec 2009. Most want to live outside the District, but it is planned that the seven wishing to remain will move to the new schemes at Forge Way in Billingshurst and Westhope in Horsham
- The Council is investigating the possibility of working with Saxon Weald to part-fund a scheme to acquire one off



properties which would meet the need of those with extreme physical disability

- *Supporting People* are reviewing all schemes they fund for people with disabilities with the strategic review

The Council is also working with its partners in meeting the needs of the following groups:

Ex-offenders

The Council has participated in Multi-agency forums on persistent prolific offenders and multi-agency public protection agreements.

A persistent prolific offenders housing scheme is being explored. The scheme has been promoted by the Home Office following successful pilot schemes in other areas which indicated a reduction in offending of over 50% among the participants.

The scheme would:

- ◆ Be under 24 hour supervision
- ◆ Be a 'halfway house' arrangement
- ◆ Provide a multi-agency approach to working with offenders
- ◆ Be settled but not permanent - available for a period of 12-24 months
- ◆ Coincide with PPO team working with the offender (i.e. immediately following release from prison so that there is no period of homelessness)
- ◆ Allow people to drop out of the scheme without being found to be intentionally homeless and reapply without penalties
- ◆ Allow people to move on to settled accommodation when certain criteria have been met

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* (See Chapter 3 Section 3.4).

The Council has supported the *Sands Project*, a county-wide initiative for substance misuse clients, delivered by Christian Care Associations in conjunction with Supporting People.

Care leavers

West Sussex County Council Leaving Care Team set aside £32k to secure bed spaces at the Y-Centre for those leaving care, and there are now two single units.

Young people with support needs

The Council has run a young person's panel which includes West Sussex County Council Adult & Children's Services and providers of young person's accommodation in the District. The aim is to try and find collective solutions for meeting the needs of young people.

An officer from Community Development is seconded to Housing Services on a part-time basis to work with other agencies on the feasibility of developing an intensive young persons supported housing scheme in the District.

The officer will also produce housing options information specifically targeted at young people involving them in the design and circulation of the information.

Supporting People commissions and funds a housing support service for 16 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 experiencing domestic violence

The Council has:

- ◆ supported North Sussex Refuge Service
- ◆ supported the development of 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

And:

- ◆ *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 has:

- ◆ 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
- ◆ supported domestic violence drop-in sessions and a support providers forum

Gypsies, travellers & travelling showpeople

The Council is committed to **providing accommodation with appropriate management and support for gypsies and travellers**. The West Sussex Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Assessment established that Horsham needs to supply 39 pitches in the District. This figure will be

submitted to SEERA, who will then consider the lead options for distribution of pitches in the County. A 12 week consultation period began in September 2008 and will be finalized during spring 2009. The Council will then seek to identify suitable sites.

The priorities for the 2008-2011 Strategy are as follows:

- The Council will produce a gypsies and travellers Development Planning Document that will identify sites for the required pitches. One option that could be considered is that some pitches which have received temporary permission could be granted permanent consent, thus reducing the number of new sites to be identified
- The Council, working with its Registered Social Landlord partners, will develop a management plan for those allocated sites that will not be managed privately or by West Sussex County Council

6.3.2 General

Progress has been made during the life of the previous Housing Strategy. Working closely with its partners, the Council has:

- ◆ Worked with the Supporting People team to set up the *Signpost* service. This provides cross-tenure housing-related floating support
- ◆ Facilitated a special needs and supported housing panel
- ◆ Facilitated a multi-agency forum of Registered Social Landlords and support services that meets to share best practice, discuss new legislation and Government guidance and develop collective solutions to emerging problems and needs
- ◆ Participated in the Supporting People Working Group and the Supporting People Commissioning Body



- ◆ Allocated a grant programme (2008-2009) of £235,288 to community and voluntary groups to deliver services
- ◆ Allocated Disabled Facilities Grant: £400,000 in 2003/4, £400,000 in 2004/05, £450,000 in 2005/06, £625,000 in 2006/07 and £625,000 in 07/08
- ◆ Reviewed its Older and Younger Persons Strategy in 2007

The Council has also set priorities to be met in the Housing Strategy 2008-2013: It is committed to:

- work to secure 30% of the new affordable housing on the West of Horsham strategic development site as supported housing. This will serve the need of a wide range of vulnerable client groups
- work in partnership with Crawley Borough Council to secure 28% of the new affordable housing on the West of Crawley strategic development site as supported housing, which will also meet the need of a variety of vulnerable client groups
- work with its Registered Social Landlord partners to secure 40% of all new affordable homes to be developed to Lifetime Homes standard and for 10% to be fully wheelchair accessible
- review its Equality Action Plan to ensure its services are accessible to all including ethnic monitoring of applicants to the Housing Register

6.4 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.

Since the scheme was introduced in 2000, 2484 households have benefited from a Community Link system.

The priority for the 2008-2013 Housing Strategy is to **improve access to assistive technology for the elderly, their families and other vulnerable households in the District**, as this has been proved to be a popular and value-for-money service that enables vulnerable residents to live independently at home.

To achieve this priority, the Council 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 Corporate Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy, 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 Concern: meals and companionship, assisted bathing and chiropody, shopping and befriending, help at home, day centre activities, pension credit and benefits advice
- ◆ Dingeman's Day Centre & Help at Home: similar to the above and meets the needs of residents in the south of the district via Impact Initiatives
- ◆ 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
- ◆ Handyvan: a practical 'minor works' service that enables people to stay in their own homes
- ◆ Friendly societies and lunch clubs: individual small groups who provide companionship, respite care and support to vulnerable people and their carers throughout the District

6.5 Increasing understanding

Between now and 2013, it is vitally important for the Council and its partners to gain a comprehensive understanding of supported and specialist housing need in the District. This is a priority because robust evidence and sound analysis ensures that finite resources are focused on those most in need and that services can remain responsive to changing demographic patterns and health priorities.

To achieve this priority, the Council will:

- with Registered Social Landlord partners 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

After careful review it has been decided that the Housing Strategy will not be able to focus on the following:

- ◆ Carry out specific housing needs surveys for vulnerable groups. However, the Council will feed into the research



commissioned by West Sussex County Council's Adult & Children's Services or Supporting People teams

- ◆ Investigate the feasibility of a multi-agency intensive support service for individuals with multiple needs
- ◆ Develop supported accommodation for teenage parents

6.6 Risk is 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
- ◆ Higher unit cost of specialist housing
- ◆ Year on year requirement to reduce Supporting People funding on support services
- ◆ Uncertainty regarding new Area based Grant that will replace Supported People funding but not be ring fenced for supported housing
- ◆ Difficulty in obtaining robust needs data
- ◆ Pressure on grants budget
- ◆ The absorption of the Housing Corporation into the new Homes and Communities Agency
- ◆ Failure to achieve agreement on joint commissioning arrangements with partners
- ◆ Inability to recruit and retain appropriately skilled and motivated staff in key areas
- ◆ Problems of recruitment within voluntary sector
- ◆ Street homelessness/rooflessness of those who have become 'unhouseable'.



Chapter Seven

7. Objective 4: Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities

7.1 Why this objective?

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 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

In June 2007 the Council commissioned Action in Rural Sussex to produce a Rural Affordable Housing Strategy for the District, and the Strategy was published in April 2008. The Strategy establishes:

- ◆ The context for the Strategy and relates it to national, regional and local Government housing, planning and economic policies
- ◆ The scale and nature of affordable housing needed in rural villages and settlements in Horsham District including specialist and supported housing. It also highlights those areas where need is still to be identified and sets out the process, timescales and resources for assessing that need
- ◆ The options for addressing need and recommendations on the most appropriate

actions to be taken by Horsham District Council and its public and private partners

- ◆ The role and involvement of stakeholders in delivering the Strategy
- ◆ A SMART¹ action plan by which progress can be monitored
- ◆ The process for monitoring progress and updating the Strategy
- ◆ Links with the Parish Plan process

The Rural Affordable Housing Strategy 2008-2013 and its action plan should be read in conjunction with this Housing Strategy. The Strategy explains the key housing issues facing rural communities in Horsham District and how working in partnership the Council aims to increase the supply of rural affordable housing to meet identified need.

The key achievements since the last Housing Strategy 2003-2008 are set out below, followed by the priorities and action identified in the Rural Affordable Housing Strategy 2008-2013.

7.2 Progress to Date

Working in partnership with Parish Councils, local communities, Registered Social Landlords and rural housing enablers, significant progress has been made in encouraging the development of sustainable rural communities:

- ◆ The Council adopted a new planning policy in February 2007. In settlements with a population of less than 3,000, permission will only be granted for schemes providing 100% affordable housing unless it is demonstrated that market housing is required for the retention and enhancement of community facilities or services
- ◆ The Rural Housing Enablers have maintained a rolling programme of housing

1 SMART means including actions in the section plan that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.



needs surveys. In the life of the previous Strategy the following parishes completed surveys: Amberley, Ashington, Cowfold, Rudgwick, Washington and Lower Beeding and Coldwaltham

- ◆ Two new housing schemes have been completed - in Cowfold and in Washington. A third will start on site in autumn 2008 in Amberley

7.3 Priorities for Action

The Council has consulted on a range of options to meet its objectives in tackling housing need in rural areas. Progress to date has been monitored, data has been analysed, and resources that are or may be available have been considered. The priorities are:

- ◆ Set a framework that involves all key stakeholders this will raise awareness of the need for and improve the delivery of rural affordable housing.

To achieve this priority the Council will:

- Maintain regular contact with Parish Councils and local communities
- Create an accessible environment for consultation and action
- Maintain a multi-agency task group for rural affordable housing
- Continue promotion and production of parish plans

- ◆ Accurately identify and assess rural affordable housing need, through which investment in sustainable rural affordable housing can be directed and prioritised.

To achieve this priority:

- A minimum of three housing needs surveys will be completed per year
- Parishes will be prioritised for site appraisals based on survey findings

- Understanding of older person's housing need will be improved

- ◆ Secure new resources to maximise the delivery of affordable housing units in rural areas to meet identified need

To achieve this priority:

- A year-on-year increase in funding for rural affordable housing schemes will be sought
- Two new affordable housing schemes should be delivered every two years

The Council will:

- Secure commitment from West Sussex County Council and its Development Control team to comment on potential schemes at an early stage
- Lobby the Regional Housing Board and the Housing Corporation to raise the profile of rural affordable housing provision in Horsham
- Monitor, review and respond to the consequences of the Core Strategy policies CP5 and CP12
- Regularly liaise with the Housing Corporation
- Support a Registered Social Landlord partner to develop a 'Best Practice' rural affordable housing scheme that includes sustainable development technologies

- ◆ Develop new methods of meeting affordable rural housing need

To achieve this priority the Council will:

- Investigate alternative shared ownership products
- Investigate potential of a Community Land Trust. A CLT is an independent



non-profit making trust that owns or controls land and housing in perpetuity for the benefit of the community.

- Investigate feasibility of live/work units in a parish
- Investigate potential of a hub and satellite older person's housing scheme to serve rural communities in the south of the District
- Revisit nomination agreements with Registered Social Landlords that manage stock in villages to maximise nominations to those on the Council's housing register
- Analyze impact of new planning policy on climate change on the delivery of rural affordable housing
- Carry out private sector stock condition survey in rural communities and identify need for intervention
- Ensure Registered Social Landlord stock will meet Decent Homes Standard by 2010
- Work with large employers in rural communities to identify and respond to any affordable housing issues

- ◆ Deliver new affordable homes in a manner which complements and contributes to the vibrancy of local villages and settlements including driving up design and sustainable construction standards

To achieve this priority, the Council will:

- Develop a Design Principles and Character Areas Supplementary Planning Document
- Develop sustainable construction targets as part of the review of the Core Strategy

- Encourage and assist villages and towns to produce a Design Statement

Achieving these priorities depends on a commitment by the District Council to an annual grant to the Action in Rural Sussex Rural Housing Enabling Programme. This is in addition to annual funding from the Horsham District Community Partnership and the Rural Registered Social Landlord partners - Saxon Weald Housing Association, Raglan Housing Association and English Rural Housing Association. Each Registered Social Landlord contributes approximately £3,000 - £4,000 per annum.

7.4 Risk is identified

- ◆ The risks associated with delivering this objective of the Housing Strategy are essentially the same as for delivering affordable housing in general (see chapter 4). However, one additional risk that must be born 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.
- ◆ Delivering the Rural Housing Strategy is also heavily dependent on the rural housing enabler team at Action in rural Sussex
- ◆ The relative time and cost taken to deliver rural schemes is high



Warnham



Chapter Eight

8. Objective 5: Ensuring we have the Means to Deliver

The success of the Strategy depends on identifying the resources required to deliver its priorities. Each priority for action plan gives details of the resources required to carry out that action.

8.1 Progress to Date

The Council does not have a housing revenue account, as it transferred its housing stock to Saxon Weald Housing Association through a large scale stock transfer in 2000. The Council has committed corporate funding to retain a strategic housing function. The Housing Services Team is responsible for housing advice and support, temporary accommodation, running the housing register, housing Strategy and enabling, prevention of homelessness, voluntary sector grant funding and support, Community Link Alarms and Telecare.

Capital funding for new affordable housing includes grants from the Housing Corporation, private borrowing by Registered Social Landlords, reserves and recycled capital grant from the Registered Social Landlords. In addition, the Council can provide subsidy, either through contributing land at less than market value or through funding (commuted sums) it receives via the planning system for new affordable housing. In 2006-2008 the developing Registered Social Landlords in the District secured over £5,274,000 grant from the Housing Corporation delivering 316 new affordable homes. It needs to be stated that the grant only met part of the cost and the Council also made funds available to secure affordable homes. This funding was raised through *commuted sums* – money paid to the Council by private developers in lieu of providing affordable homes as part of an overall development.

The Council also provides capital funding for major refurbishment and improvement of its temporary accommodation stock.

Partnership arrangements that aid delivery are in place to address specific housing issues - these are clearly set out in previous chapters. However there are groups that meet to discuss all issues at a strategic level. The West Sussex Chief Housing Officers Group is attended by the Council's Head of Housing Services who also represents all housing authorities in West Sussex on the Regional Housing Forum.

8.2 Priorities for Action

The Council has consulted on a range of options to meet its objectives and resources that are or may be available have been considered. In order to deliver the objectives in the Housing Strategy, the Council must:

- ◆ **Ensure it has the right fora and partnerships that improve joint working and information sharing between agencies**
- ◆ **Ensure that the Council and its partners have the right tools to deliver:**
 - **legal agreements and protocols between partners**
 - **funding for service improvements**
 - **innovation and training**
 - **policies and procedures**
 - **housing policy matched by allocation of resources through the Council's corporate plan review and future budget decisions**
- ◆ **Ensure the Council has the capacity to achieve the objectives and priorities of the Housing Strategy**

To achieve these priorities the Council will:

- Continue to hold regular meetings with housing providers regarding lettings, management and housing support services



- Continue to hold regular meetings with affordable housing providers regarding housing need, funding sources, design and quality standards and sustainable development
- Continue to bid for external funding for new housing initiatives
- Continue to monitor and develop planning policies that assist the delivery of new affordable housing including supported and specialist housing
- Continue to develop, implement and monitor the Housing Strategy as a framework for the Council's Housing Services and the actions of its partners. This will involve the production of an Annual Progress Review
- Continue to raise the profile of the District's housing need by full involvement in all appropriate sub-regional and regional fora
- Continue to respond to national policy consultation and lobby key Government departments and parliamentary committees on housing issues that relate to Horsham District and the West Sussex sub-regional area

- Maintain and develop the multi-agency housing theme group of the Horsham District Community Partnership in order to make sure the widest range of organisations as possible are feeding into and supporting the delivery of the Housing Strategy
- Establish a performance management system for the delivery of the housing Strategy

8.3 Risk is identified

- ◆ The delivery of the Strategy relies on the Council's partners. Team effort is critical, with investment of time, energy and resources from all who contribute
- ◆ Local authority enabling function must continue to be resourced
- ◆ Funding required from the Council and Housing Corporation/Homes & Communities Agency. Inward investment must be attracted in a competitive region



Equality Impact Assessment

Horsham District Council - Housing Strategy 2008-2013

GENERAL	
1	<p>Please provide a brief description of the function and/or related policy(ies) including its aims and objectives</p>
	<p>This Strategy sets out the Council's housing objectives and priorities during the period 2008-13. The Strategy identifies these as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling Affordability and Meeting Housing Need • Preventing Homelessness and Supporting Homeless Households • Improving the Quality of Life for Vulnerable People through Housing and related support • Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities • Ensuring we have the means to deliver <p>Related policies / strategies include the Council's strategies for: Rural, Homelessness, Empty Homes, Community, Crime and Disorder Reduction, Older and Younger Persons, Economic Development and Asset Management, as well as the general policy framework within which the Housing Services Department operates (eg Housing Register and Nominations policy).</p> <p>The Strategy has been developed in line with a range of National, Regional and Local policies, and links with the Council's Local Development Framework and Core Strategy.</p>
2	<p>Please list the main stakeholders/beneficiaries/recipients of the function, or the target group at whom the policy is aimed</p>
	<p>The main recipients of the function include:</p> <p>Those unable to enter the private sector due to high property / rent prices Residents and members of the community presenting themselves as homeless or potentially homeless Private Developers, Landlords and Lettings Agents, Registered Social Landlords</p> <p>Other stakeholders include: Partner agencies involved in homelessness prevention: ie West Sussex Mediation Service, CAB, Local Crime and Disorder Partnership, Harm Reduction Action Group, Y Centre, Neighbouring Districts and Boroughs, West Sussex PCT, West Sussex Mental Health Trust, WSCC Social Services, WSCC Supporting People, Probation Service, Community Drug / Alcohol Teams</p> <p>County Courts</p> <p>Horsham District Council internal departments - Community Development, Housing Services, Environmental Health, Property and Economic Development, Development Management, Strategic Planning, Reception Consultants – GVA Grimley Action in Rural Sussex</p>

CONSULTATION	
3	<p>Please list the minority ethnic groups/other target groups you have consulted with (or should consult) and changes they recommend</p>
	<p>Details of consultation process are included within Strategy. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing a Housing Issues and Options Document ' Looking to 2013' • Presenting Issues and Options Document to key partnership meetings • Sending questionnaire to every household and business in the District via Horsham District News • Holding an internal Housing Services Staff consultation session • Holding a one day conference attended by over 80 developers • Holding an intergenerational meeting between the District's Senior Council and its Youth Council <p>The Issues and Options document, and the draft Strategy, were uploaded onto the HDC website for public consultation, and representations / comments were taken into account. The document was also discussed at length with GOSE.</p> <p>There is no direct representation from minority ethnic groups, due to an absence of organizations directly representing these groups in the District. It is anticipated however that that Housing Liaison forum representatives include ethnic minorities in their service provision. In the long term, the Council will work with the 'Change up Consortium' which are working in Crawley and Horsham to improve frontline and voluntary services to hard to reach groups, including ethnic minorities. This work is at a very early stage and when further developed could provide useful guidance and contacts for the Council in involving these groups.</p> <p>WSSC Adult Services recognize a variety of organizations representing black and ethnic minority groups throughout the district (eg Islamic Social and Welfare Society, Asian Women's Network and Black and Ethnic Minority Steering Group), although it is unclear which have representation within the Horsham District, with most operating in the Crawley Borough. Efforts could be made to contact these groups to gauge interest in forum membership and seek views of the strategy.</p>



DISCRIMINATION	
4	<p>Please list any evidence or ideas you have of the function or policy having an adverse impact on different groups – might members of these groups perceive or experience things differently?</p>
	<p>The purpose of the Strategy is to address the needs of those without the means to access private sector accommodation, those presenting themselves as homeless and vulnerable groups, and target resources towards developing affordable housing and early intervention in the prevention of homelessness. Particularly those likely to be affected by homelessness are in the minority of the District's residents. This specific concentration of resources may attract criticism from tenants and those in private sector accommodation that will not recognize benefit from the strategy.</p> <p>Affordable housing development may face planning opposition from local residents, particularly in rural areas (NIMBYISM). These groups may not immediately recognize the benefits of affordable housing.</p> <p>The Strategy is uploaded on the Council's website for consultation. The website is speech-enabled with 'Free to download' software. This assists those with reading difficulties, literacy problems, mild vision difficulties and where English is not their first language. The site provides free Browsealoud software with download instructions. Content on the website can also be read using its page magnifier function which assists the partially sighted. There is also an Access Key function, where short-cut keys direct users to the sites most popular pages – one of which is Council Services, where Housing pages can be accessed. This assists site visitors with learning disabilities or visual impairments. This site also contains a service to translate the contents into Dutch, French, Italian or Spanish, although there is a case for extending these options to non-European languages such as Arabic, Mandarin, Urdu etc.</p> <p>The Strategy is therefore accessible on the website to some of those with disabilities, and those for whom English is not their first language. A page at the front of the Strategy offers services to provide document in Easy Read, Braille, BHSL and other languages.</p>
5	<p>Have you received any complaints about your function/policy from traditionally excluded groups? If so, please give a brief description</p>
	<p>Objections to planning applications for the development of affordable housing.</p> <p>Not aware of any complaints, although any complaints would be likely to come from traditionally excluded groups to which parts of the Strategy is directed.</p>
6	<p>Please list any alternative ways the policy could improve access to or use of your service by different groups</p>
	<p>Add full translation page at front of Strategy. Make available in hard copy, for example in public libraries, for the non-computer literate.</p>
EQUALITY MONITORING	
7	<p>Does the policy show how you carry out equality monitoring of take up of your function/policy and how the results are analysed</p>
	<p>Not specifically, although data is collected from all individuals presenting themselves as homeless, by way of ethnic monitoring, family circumstances, reasons for homelessness etc.</p>



8	Does an analysis of your customer base against baseline population figures for the borough show that the policy enables you to reach all groups in your area? If not, which groups could be adversely affected by the policy?
	The Strategy is aimed at those unable to access the housing market, and vulnerable and excluded groups that are at risk of homelessness. The initial consultation process included representation from a wide variety of groups within the housing sector and the Housing Liaison Forum (see 3).
MISCELLANEOUS	
9	If the policy pertains to services provided by a private sector or voluntary sector organisation on a contract basis, please list any arrangements you have made or plan to make to ensure that these comply with equality
	<p>The Council's previous housing stock is now managed and maintained by Saxon Weald Homes Ltd. The July 2008 Audit Commission report on the Housing Association states:</p> <p>'The Association has a clear and comprehensive framework in place to support and deliver its diversity agenda. The equalities and diversity strategy is a key document that clearly sets out the challenges facing the Association and how it intends to address these. Disability and gender equality schemes have been introduced, with clear action plans and timeframes for progression. A diversity champion chairs the equalities and diversity working group and ensures that the Association is kept up to speed on diversity legislation and good practice. This structured approach ensures the Association keeps up to date with new diversity developments and helps it to mainstream diversity across the organisation.'</p> <p>No contracts with private sector or voluntary sector but joint working with CAB, Age Concern and Southdown Support Service 'Signpost'. CAB grant funded by HCD to provide debt advice/counselling service.</p>
10	Please list any staff training issues on equality arising from this assessment, (include this in your improvement plan summary attached)
	Widespread training carried out via personnel to all levels of organisation during 2006/7.
11	Does your function or policy result in any financial support being given to black and minority ethnic or other equality groups within the voluntary and community sector. If yes, please list organisations and amounts
	<p>Service level agreements and financial support are supplied to the following organisations that impact on homelessness:</p> <p>Horsham District Age Concern - £51,950 Horsham Area Community Voluntary Service - £17,310 Horsham Voluntary Bureaux - £7,500 Citizens Advice Bureaux – £82,636 IMPACT - £23,542 Horsham Y - £20,000 Relate - £4,330 Homestart - £4,120 Mediation - £3,090</p>



Glossary

Affordable housing

Housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. The property is subsidised by the public or private sector to enable the sale price or rent to be substantially lower than prevailing market prices. Mechanisms are in place to ensure the housing remains affordable for future eligible households

Affordable rented housing

Affordable rented housing is owned and provided by local authorities or Registered Social Landlords, and provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Rents should not be greater than target rents determined through the national rent scheme, and service charges should be at a level ensuring that the tenancy is affordable

Assistive technology

Any product or service designed to enable independence for the disabled, elderly and those requiring extra assistance to allow them to remain in their own home

Assured Shorthold Tenancy

A tenancy with a minimum term of six months, guaranteeing the landlord the right to repossess the property at the end of the term

Choice Based Lettings

A policy enabling applicants to have greater choice in where they live. Individuals register for housing, are awarded a priority rating based on circumstances, and can then bid for properties as they become available rather than waiting to be nominated

Commuted sum

The Council may accept a payment from a private developer in lieu of the developer providing affordable housing in a residential development

Core Strategy

A document that sets out the key elements of the planning framework for the District. It is comprised of a spatial vision and strategic objectives for the area; a spatial strategy; core policies; and a monitoring and implementation framework with clear objectives for achieving delivery

Extra Care

Housing designed to meet the needs of those less able among the elderly population, with varying levels of domestic care and support provided by on-site staff. Those living in Extra Care housing have their own self contained homes with front doors, and have a legal right to own the property. The housing comes in varying forms, including flats, bungalow estates and retirement villages. Extra Care housing provide extra facilities to those provided in traditional retirement housing, including restaurants, health and fitness facilities and hobby or computer rooms. Properties can be rented, owned or part owned/rented

Floating support

A service that provides housing related support to vulnerable adults (over 16) to enable them to maintain their independence in their own home. Floating support will generally be short term (less than two years) and will have the flexibility to support a person wherever they live – unlike accommodation based services, where support is tied to particular accommodation

General needs housing

The majority of housing stock for affordable rent is classed as General Needs housing. The properties are not designed for specific client groups requiring support and do not have special design features specific to supported housing

Housing Corporation

The government agency that funds new affordable homes and regulates housing associations in England. Under the Housing and



Regeneration Act 2008, the Housing Corporation is to separate into the Homes and Communities Agency, responsible for funding, and the Tenant Services Authority, responsible for regulation

Housing need

Households that cannot afford to buy a home on the open market or rent a home from a private landlord are deemed to be in housing need

Housing related support

Services provided to an individual in their own home which enables them to develop and sustain their ability to live independently in their accommodation

Housing Register

A list of people seeking to move into or between homes owned by RSLs in the District

Intermediate Housing

Intermediate Rent: Housing available at prices and rents above those of affordable rent but below market prices and rents

Low Cost Home Ownership: A general term covering the range of home ownership initiatives including Shared Ownership (currently described as New Build Homebuy) or shared equity. These schemes provide access to homeownership at shares usually ranging from 25% to 50% of the shared value of the property. Rents may or may not be payable on the remaining share dependant on the model. In most cases the occupant may purchase more shares to own the property outright

Key worker

Defined by national government as public sector employees such as nurses, police, teachers, prison staff and fire fighters. Not all public sector employees are considered key workers and the definition can vary across regions

Lifetime homes standard

Consists of 16 design and building requirements

which a new home must meet to be considered a lifetime home. The purpose of these features is to allow greater flexibility and movement within the home for any changing circumstances of a household, for example, an accident which may result in a physical disability for a family member. Alternatively the dwelling has the flexibility to meet the needs of subsequent occupiers of the property regardless of their requirements

Local Development Framework

The Local Development Framework is not a statutory term, however it sets out the Local Development Documents that collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the local planning authority's area. The Local Development Framework will be comprised of Local Development Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents, Statement of Community Involvement, Local Development Scheme and Annual Monitoring Report

Newly forming household

Households created within existing households, for example, when a young adult leaves the family home to live independently of the breakdown of a relationship

Private rented sector

Homes available for rent from private individuals and companies, rather than rented from housing associations

Registered Social Landlord

An independent housing organisation registered with the housing corporation under the Housing Act 1996. They may be industrial and provident societies, registered charities or private companies

Specialist housing

Affordable rented homes that are non-standard in terms of their design and layout, built with a particular client group in mind that will have support needs



Supporting People Programme

The programme funds housing related support services to a wide range of individuals in order to prevent problems that can often lead to hospitalisation, institutional care or homelessness. The programme can help with the smooth transition to independent living for those leaving an institutionalised environment

Statutorily homeless

Households that local authorities must by law ensure have somewhere suitable to live

Supported housing

Affordable rented housing purposely designed as supported housing, of designated supported housing, in whereby the tenant receives more support than that provided to a general needs tenant

Temporary accommodation

Accommodation provided by the Council for those in immediate housing need, whilst a more permanent solution is sought



Translation

If you would like help communicating with us in your language, please contact the number below and we will arrange for an interpreter to help.

Polish: Jeżeli potrzebują Państwo pomocy w komunikowaniu się z nami w Państwa języku, prosimy o skontaktowanie się z nami pod poniższym numerem telefonu. Zorganizujemy pomoc tłumacza ustnego.

French: Si vous avez besoin d'aide pour communiquer avec nous dans votre langue, veuillez nous contacter au numéro de téléphone ci-dessous et nous vous offrirons les services d'un interprète.

German: Wenn Sie in Ihrer eigenen Sprache mit uns kommunizieren möchten, wählen Sie bitte die unten genannte Nummer, und wir sorgen dafür, dass ein Dolmetscher bei dem Gespräch hilft

Turkish: Bizimle kendi dilinizde iletişim kurmanızda yardımcı olmamızı istiyorsanız lütfen aşağıdaki telefon numarasını arayınız, yardımcı olması için bir çevirmen sağlayacağız.

Portuguese: Se por acaso você precisar de ajuda para comunicar-se conosco em seu próprio idioma, queira por favor ligar para o número de telefone abaixo e nós providenciaremos um intérprete para ajudá-lo.

Cantonese

如欲尋求協助，以你的母語和我們溝通的話，請撥以下電話，我們便會為你安排傳譯員，提供協助。

Bengali

যদি আপনি আমাদের সাথে আপনার ভাষায় কথা বলার জন্য সাহায্য চান, দয়া করে নিম্ন লিখিত নাম্বারে ফোন করুন এবং আমরা একজন দো-ভাষীর ব্যাবস্থা করব আপনাকে সাহায্য করার জন্য।

Gujarati

જો તમને તમારી ભાષામાં અમારી સાથે વાતચીત કરવામાં મદદ જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી નીચેના નંબરે સંપર્ક સાધવાથી અમે મદદરૂપ બનવા ઈન્ટરપ્રિટરની ગોઠવણ કરીશું.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਮਦਦ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੀਟਰ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਮਦਦ ਦੁਆਵਾਂਗੇ।

Urdu

اپنی زبان میں ہم سے بات چیت کے لیے اگر آپ کو مدد کی ضرورت ہو تو برائے مہربانی مندرجہ ذیل نمبر سے رابطہ کیجئے۔ ہم آپ کے لیے مترجم (انٹریپرٹر) کا انتظام کریں گے۔

Horsham District Council,
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