

Mid Sussex District Council

Customer Impact and Needs Assessment

Title of Policy/Service: Housing Strategy

Division: Housing Services, Environmental Health and Building Control.

Lead Officer: Neal Barton

Date Assessment completed: June 2009

1. SCOPING

1.1 What are the aims of the policy/service?

The strategy sets out the Council's housing objectives for the period 2009-14. These objectives are:

1. Increase the supply of affordable housing
2. Prevent homelessness
3. Improve the quality and sustainability of housing
4. Promote independence and inclusion
5. Provide efficient and customer focused housing services

Related Council strategies include the Homelessness Strategy, Rural Housing Strategy, Older Persons Housing Strategy and the Empty Homes Strategy. It also links into a range of other local policies and strategies including the Sustainable Communities Strategy, Local Development Framework and Local Area Agreement.

1.2 Who does the service/policy affect? Who are the main customers (internal or external)?

General public, those unable to access the housing market due to high property prices and rents. People presenting themselves as homeless or potentially homeless. Those applying for grants to improve their homes. Key partners involved in the delivery of the strategy include housing associations, developers, landlords and letting agents, Shelter, Signpost, Supporting People, Action in Rural Sussex, CAB's, West Sussex County Council, Town and Parish Councils, County Courts and Anchor Staying Put. Other stakeholders include the Homes and Communities Agency, GOSE, Audit Commission, CLG. Internal customers and partners in the delivery of the Strategy outside of Housing Services include Environmental Health, Planning Policy, Revenues and Benefits, Building Control, Property Services and Development Control.

1.3 If your service uses contractors, how do you ensure that they comply with the Council's equality policies and schemes and relevant legislation?

Some of the services are provided through Supporting People. All of the organisations funded through Supporting People have to be meet stringent quality standards that involve equal opportunities policies compliant with national legislation and Council policies. In delivering its private sector housing renewal programme, the Council works in close partnership with the Anchor Staying Put Agency, which assists older and vulnerable households with all aspects of adaptation and renewal within their homes. We contract with Anchor Downland, and have SLAs with both setting out equalities requirements. Administration of the Common Housing Register by Downland Housing Association is covered by a Service Level Agreement. This sets out our equal opportunities expectations and requires the contractor to monitor its work and the outcomes i.e. who gets housed.

2. Assessment of Impact and Needs - Supported with evidence from Data and Consultation
(See Guidance Notes for information on completing this section)

	Barriers to service/differential impact	Evidence base	Current actions taken to address these	Further actions required
Race	<p>People in need of housing related services may have English as a second language.</p> <p>BME families tend to require larger dwellings and there is a shortage of this size of affordable/social housing.</p> <p>There is a shortage of Gypsies and Travellers sites. They suffer from some of the worst levels of health amongst minority groups.</p>	<p>Ethnic monitoring of Housing Register, Homelessness and other applications.</p> <p>Need for more pitches identified in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.</p>	<p>Use of Signpost and interpreter services.</p> <p>Tackling underoccupation to free up larger social housing. Targets for the development of larger social housing.</p>	<p>None.</p> <p>Further action to address underoccupation. Target in development programme to deliver at least 4 x 4+ bedroom affordable homes a year.</p> <p>Specific allocation for gypsy and traveller sites to be included in LDF Allocations Development Plan. Development of a Gypsy and Traveller Strategy.</p>
Religion or Belief	None identified.	N/A	N/A	None
Gender	Women suffering domestic violence require temporary refuge or secure home accommodation.	Monitoring of homelessness applications and those in refuge accommodation.	Provision for women fleeing domestic violence, through funding for refuge accommodation, together with the drop in centres in Haywards Heath and East Grinstead. Safe at Home Scheme with RSLs. Floating support outreach service from refuge assists with sustaining accommodation.	Extensions of the Safe at Home Scheme to involve further RSLs.

	Barriers to service/differential impact	Evidence base	Current actions taken to address these	Further actions required
Disability	Shortage of accommodation for people requiring disabled units- purpose built or adapted. Not all the supported housing schemes are accessible to those with physical disabilities. Disabled Facilities Grants are only available to those individuals who are registered or capable of being registered as disabled.	Housing Needs surveys. Experience of helping those with disabilities to access the service. Demand for Disabled Facilities Grants. Survey of disabled residents.	Provision of Disabled Facilities Grants- 90 disabled adaptations per year. We work with Anchor Staying Put to help older, disabled and vulnerable people to access the service. Housing Enabling Officer supports disabled applicants and the Housing Enabling Team ensure properties are developed to meet their needs.	Act on feedback from disabled residents to inform future design. Deliver a minimum 2 wheelchair accessible affordable homes per year.
Sexual Orientation	Same-sex couples need to be recognised in tenancy agreements.	Housing Register.	They are offered joint tenancies by RSLs in the Common Housing Register and enjoy the same rights as other couples.	None.
Age	Affordable housing needs to be physically accessible to older people. Consideration needs to be made in affordable housing developments of provision of additional support services to make independent living successful for both old and young. Identified need for extra care shared ownership accommodation, currently not available. Also, the allocation scheme may need to consider the support needs of both	Analysis of those approaching the Council for housing advice. Common Housing Register and Supported Housing Needs database, together with experience of helping the old and young access the service.	Older people accessibility issues- see disabilities above. We are currently reviewing the existing housing stock for older people with a view to remodelling to make it fit for purpose. This will include an assessment of the need for more extra care housing for older people. We address the needs of young people through the Youth Homelessness Action Group and the young persons supported housing	Work with partner RSLs to deliver affordable homes built to Lifetime Homes standard. Develop action plan based on review of existing sheltered housing. Adopt Core Strategy including requirement for provision for older people. Develop an effective homelessness education programme with secondary schools Introduce an effective homelessness mediation scheme

	<p>support needs of both young and older people. There are particular issues with young people and homelessness. It can be difficult to allocate tenancies to people under 18. Young people seeking housing advice may not want to access information from Council offices. Young people in need of temporary accommodation, ideally need to be placed close to their support networks and education.</p>	<p>Number of young people stuck in temporary accommodation. Feedback from youth groups on the Youth Homelessness Forum.</p>	<p>persons supported housing panel.</p> <p>Young people are provided with housing advice through visits to schools and colleges in the District, commencing with Haywards Heath 6th Form College.</p> <p>Review of temporary accommodation under way with Downland Housing Association. All young people in temporary accommodation are visited by Signpost.</p>	<p>to assist both young people and parents.</p> <p>Extend use of tenancies held in trust to minors to more RSLs.</p> <p>Reduction in use of B&B for 16/17 year olds to zero by 2010</p>
Income or Skill Level	<p>Entry level home ownership is inaccessible to most newly forming households. Housing need is most acute amongst those on low incomes, and particularly those with poor skills. Help may be required with completing application forms etc.</p> <p>Homelessness applications and requests for housing advice most common from people on low incomes.</p> <p>Worklessness tends to be high amongst RSL tenants. People on low incomes are most likely to experience Fuel Poverty.</p> <p>All of the Housing Renewal assistance is means tested</p>	<p>Information from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.</p> <p>Housing Needs Survey and Common Housing Register.</p> <p>Experience of front-line staff. Customer survey undertaken by Downland.</p> <p>Monitoring of homelessness and housing advice applications.</p> <p>Housing Needs Surveys.</p>	<p>Support for shared ownership schemes. Working with development partners to deliver more affordable housing. Use of planning policies for affordable housing.</p> <p>Help offered in applying.</p> <p>Some RSL's offer assistance with support and training for people to return to work, e.g. Hyde plus.</p> <p>Some supported housing providers have additional services to assist their tenants into employment and productive daytime activities, e.g. Southdown, Sussex Oakleaf.</p> <p>Targeting of top up energy efficiency loans.</p>	<p>Amendment of affordable housing policies in the Core Strategy.</p> <p>Maximise use of rent in advance/deposit guarantee schemes and Discretionary Housing Payments to assist people in finding permanent accommodation.</p> <p>Encourage RSLs to provide employment, education and training advice.</p> <p>Development of an Affordable Warmth Strategy.</p> <p>Promotion of take up of warm Front Grants and top ups.</p>

	as resources are limited and are therefore targeted at those in greatest need.			
Residential Location (Rural/Urban)	<p>Concern that local people, particularly in villages, don't get enough priority for rehousing in their own village.</p> <p>Difficulty in accessing services at Oaklands based in Haywards Heath.</p>	<p>Housing needs surveys undertaken with parish councils.</p> <p>Strategic Housing Market Assessment.</p>	<p>Work to deliver more affordable housing in rural areas in partnership with the Sussex Rural Affordable Homes partnership and Action in Rural Sussex. Priority given in allocations scheme to people with a local connection.</p> <p>As well as Oaklands Haywards Heath, service is provided at help points in Burgess Hill and East Grinstead. Use of telephone, letter and e-mail.</p>	<p>Include Rural Affordable Housing and Exception Site policy in Core strategy.</p> <p>Complete further parish housing needs surveys.</p>

3. ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLANNING

Any gaps in information or provision and/or barriers to services identified above need to be translated into SMART targets and recorded here.

These actions then need to be incorporated into service plans so that they can be monitored at service level and also as part of a corporate equalities action plan.

Issue	Action	Lead Officer	Deadline	How will impact be measured?
Race				
Shortage of Gypsies and Travellers sites.	(See Action 19 in Action Plan) - Adopt an Allocation Development Plan Document including sites for additional additional pitches. - Adopt Gypsy and Traveller Strategy	Lynne Standing/Claire Tester	August 2012 March 2010	Monitoring of sites identified against the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.
Gender				
Women suffering domestic violence require temporary refuge or secure home accommodation.	(see Action 7 in Action Plan) - extend the Safe at Home scheme for women suffering domestic violence with Downland to other RSLs by March 2010	Julian Till/Nicollette Russell	March 2010	Number of women who are assisted and RSL take up of the Safe at Home Scheme.
Disability				
Shortage of accommodation for people requiring disabled units-purpose built or adapted and support for independent living	(See Action Plan 15, 16 and 17) - Promote independent living through the Disabled Facilities Grants Scheme and working with Anchor Staying Put - Increase the number of vulnerable people assisted to live independently in Mid Sussex via the provision of housing related support. - Develop new homes for people with learning disabilities and additional wheelchair units	Yvonne Leddy Emma Shuttleworth Emma Shuttleworth	See Strategy milestones	Monitoring of the number of adaptations through the DFG scheme. Monitoring of delivery of homes to lifetime homes standards by RSLs. Customer satisfaction studies. Number of new wheelchair units. Monitoring of LAA targets.

Age				
Prevention of homelessness amongst young people who are especially vulnerable to homelessness and sometimes reluctant to come to the Council's offices.	(see Action 5 in Action Plan) - Develop an effective homelessness education programme with secondary schools. - Introduce an effective homelessness mediation scheme to assist both young people and parents. - Extend use of tenancies held in trust to minors to at least 3 more RSLs.	Julian Till	March 2010 March 2010 March 2010	Monitoring of homelessness applications from young people.
Provision of affordable housing, which is physically accessible to older people and promotes independent living.	(See Action Plan 15, 16 and 18) - Promote independent living through the Disabled Facilities Grants Scheme and working with Anchor Staying Put - Increase the number of vulnerable people assisted to live independently in Mid Sussex via the provision of housing related support. - Deliver the Older Persons Housing Strategy and encourage building to Lifetime Homes Standards	Yvonne Leddy Emma Shuttleworth Emma Shuttleworth	See Strategy milestones	Monitoring of the number of adaptations through the DFG scheme. Monitoring of delivery of homes to lifetime homes standards by RSLs. Customer satisfaction studies.
Income/Skill level				
Entry level home ownership is inaccessible to most newly forming households	(See Action 2 in Action Plan) Deliver more new affordable housing	Emma Shuttleworth	See Strategy milestones	Number of new affordable homes provided. Updated Housing Market Assessment.
Fuel Poverty suffered by those on low incomes	(See Action 12 of the Action Plan) Development of an Affordable Warmth Strategy Promote take up of Warm Front grants and top ups for vulnerable	Celia Austin Yvonne Leddy	October 09 Annual targets	Monitoring of the number accessing the scheme and those in Fuel Poverty through NI187 performance indicator.

	households- achieve 5% per annum increase in Warm Front installations.			
Residential Location				
Need for affordable housing in rural areas.	(See Action 2 in Action Plan) - Include Rural Affordable Housing and Exception Site policy in Core strategy. - Annual target to deliver 20 rural affordable homes. - Complete further parish housing needs surveys (3 this year).	Emma Shuttleworth/ Claire Tester	January 2010 March 2010 March 2010	Information form Housing Needs assessments. Monitoring of number of affordable homes delivered in rural areas.