



East Hampshire

Housing Strategy

2007-2011

Chapter 1

What is the purpose of the Housing Strategy?

The Council transferred its housing stock to Drum Housing Association in 1996. Despite this the Council retains a strong strategic housing role. It is responsible for:

- measuring the needs for affordable housing
- homelessness and housing advice
- working with partners to maximise the delivery of affordable housing
- making sure private housing is fit to live in
- licensing of mobile park homes
- bringing empty homes back into use and helping tackle disrepair
- making best use of the housing stock
- disabled facilities grants and other services to help vulnerable people
- tackling energy inefficiency and fuel poverty

The purpose of the Housing Strategy is to set out the Council's priorities to meet local housing needs and how housing can contribute to the key aim of "Improving People's Lives". The Housing Strategy runs from April 2007 to March 2011. It will then be reviewed annually by the Building Successful Communities Panel.

A housing strategy is important in that the Government believes that housing has a key role to play in Local Government's role in place shaping as outlined in last years White Paper "Strong and Prosperous Communities". "The local authorities' strategic role is about ensuring that local housing markets meet local demand rather than a narrower focus on directly providing social housing. In particular the strategic housing role is seen as being at the heart of achieving the social, economic and environmental objectives that shape a community and create a sense of place."

There are some key challenges ahead for housing. A Housing Green Paper was published in July 2007 setting out the Government's proposals for housing as follows:

- Two million new homes by 2016, three million by 2020.
- 200,000 new homes to be delivered on surplus public sector land.
- All new homes to be carbon zero by 2016.
- £8 billion programme for affordable housing 2008-2011.
- 70,000 new affordable homes by 2010-2011

The Housing Market Assessment undertaken across central Hampshire and New Forest will be published shortly. Some of the key facts are important:

- East Hampshire has a significantly ageing population. There is growth in the age groups 45-64, 64-75 and 75+
- Younger age groups are moving out of the District. The population of 0-15 age group is declining as is the 25-44 age group.
- There is a significant backlog of the need for affordable housing and affordability is continuing to worsen due to rising house prices.

The wider impact is that if we don't provide the right type of housing, in the right place, at the right price and at the right time it will have a significant impact on the sustainability of our communities.

The Housing Strategy will impact on our planning policies and will be a key document that feeds into the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework (LDF). The Core Strategy has to take account of the Community Strategy and other Council strategies when making decisions on the preferred options document.

The preferred options document will be available for public consultation in June 2008. This document will set out the broad locations for new homes. It will also firm up on the options and our policies for affordable housing. The Housing Strategy and the results of the Housing Market Assessment will form part of the evidence base for the LDF. In particular we will be looking at the location of affordable housing, rural housing delivery and the percentage of affordable housing negotiated on the larger sites.



We will also need to ensure that some of the key issues identified within the Housing Strategy feed into the Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement.

Increasingly local authorities are moving away from individual housing strategies. In particular the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) is developing a sub regional housing strategy that will cover three southern parishes in our District. PUSH is looking to replace individual housing strategies with an all encompassing sub-regional strategy. East Hampshire still needs to have its own overarching housing strategy since it covers several housing markets and more than one sub region. However, the ethos of our strategy is still joint working with a range of partners and local authorities in order to maximise economies of scale and efficiencies.

Where does the strategy fit with the council's priorities?

The Council's aim is "Improving People's Lives" through the following three priorities:

- providing good quality services
- protecting the environment
- building successful communities

Housing has a key role to play in helping the Council meet these priorities. We aim to provide a **good quality housing service** that people can access. The Council's work in housing was recognised by the Beacon Council Award for Affordable Housing in 2005/6. We will not rely on past successes but will continue to move the service forward to ensure that we are providing the services that people want and can access. In 2008 the service will be aiming to achieve Charter Mark status in order to independently validate if we are providing a customer focussed service.

The housing service can help **protect the environment** by working with our partners. We can ensure when building new housing that it is energy efficient but also minimises waste in construction and the impact on the environment. We are also working to tackle poor quality private housing by improving its energy efficiency, helping to tackle fuel poverty and disrepair.

Building Successful Communities is at the heart of what we do. We want to ensure that people have access to affordable housing and can remain living within East Hampshire if they so choose. We also want to ensure that housing is well maintained and integrates well within existing communities.

Within the 3 priority themes listed above are sub priorities. These include the Council's agenda to tackle climate change and social justice. These areas of work are cross cutting across the three themes.

Council Strategy

The Council Strategy sets out six priority actions for 2007/8 as follows:

- To mitigate the affects of climate change and help our communities adapt to the change which will arise from this
- To work with our partners to deliver the Whitehill/Bordon Opportunity and the Horndean Project
- To increase the recycling rate within East Hampshire to 38% within the year
- To provide better services for young people and allow them to have more say over issues that affect them
- To champion social justice within the district
- To improve the customer service offered by the Council.

Within the Housing Strategy there are a number of projects that we are delivering that directly contribute to four out of the five priorities. We are major contributors to the targets of tackling climate change and social injustice. The target for better services for young people is directly linked to providing them with affordable housing so that they do not have to move out of the district to find cheaper accommodation.



Local Area Agreement/ Local Strategic Partnership

The Local Government White Paper, published in November 2006, put Local Area Agreements (LAAs) central as to how they will distribute funding for Councils in the future. The LAA is an agreement between the County Council and the District Councils. The new three year agreement will run during 2008-2011 and set out the priorities for a local area, agreed between central government, the local authority and key local partners. The new LAA will take effect from June 2008.

There are a number of targets within the existing LAA that focus on housing. These include increasing the supply of land for housing, bringing empty homes back into use, the use of telecare technology to help older people remaining in their own home, well maintained private sector dwellings and more rural housing.

Achievements in 2006/7

- 134 new affordable homes
- Homelessness applications reduced by 25%
- Debt advice project extended for a further 3 years
- Domestic Violence and Abuse Co-ordinator funding secured
- Use of temporary accommodation reduced from 202 to 154 units
- 149 grants for aids/adaptations
- New powers adopted for tackling empty homes
- Impact assessment study completed on our two largest development sites resulting in policy changes
- New preferred partnership established
- £125,000 Government funding secured for Beacon Peer support work

Key actions 2007-2011

- Reducing the use of temporary accommodation for homeless families from 202 in 2004 to 101 by 2010
- Introduce a Choice Based Lettings scheme by 2009
- Charter Mark accreditation by 2008
- Focus on customer satisfaction/surveys acting as a driver for stock rationalisation if appropriate
- Decent Homes by 2010
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2007/8 to inform housing policies and priorities
- Working with planners on a new affordable housing policy that will form part of the Council's Core Strategy
- Implementing new Government policy for mobile park homes
- Increasing the amount of affordable housing delivered in rural communities



What are the council's housing priorities?

The Council's housing service priorities are to:

5 Provide a range and choice of housing by:

- providing a range of tenures including affordable homes to rent, low cost home ownership and intermediate rent
- introducing a Choice Based Lettings Scheme
- making best use of the existing housing stock
- meeting the needs of a range of client groups

4 Deliver sustainable communities by:

- contributing to the social justice agenda
- improving the energy efficiency of the housing stock and reducing fuel poverty
- community project workers on larger development sites
- providing an accessible housing service and promoting equality and diversity
- listening to our customers and reviewing what we do

1 Tackle homelessness by:

- using bed and breakfast only in emergencies
- reducing homelessness applications and acceptances
- focussing on homelessness prevention measures
- halving the use of temporary accommodation by 2010

2 Increase the supply of affordable housing by:

- identifying housing need
- understanding our housing market and affordability
- working with planning to maximise affordable housing opportunities
- maximising development opportunities and funding
- maximising rural housing opportunities

3 Promote a healthy private housing sector by:

- tackling disrepair using the housing health and safety rating system
- inspecting and licensing Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and mobile park homes
- giving Home Safety Grants to vulnerable households whose health and safety is at risk due to poor quality housing
- providing Disabled Facilities Grants to enable people to remain living in their own home
- bringing empty homes back into use

Chapter 2

National and regional priorities

There are a number of key Government policies that impact on how affordable housing can be delivered in East Hampshire.

It is the Government that provides funding for affordable housing and therefore their priorities will impact on how resources are directed at a national, regional and local level. Some of the key policies are listed below:

The Communities and Local Government department issued a document called "Delivering Affordable Housing" in November 2006. The Government believes everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home, which they can afford, within a sustainable mixed community. Affordable housing policy is based around three themes:

- providing high quality homes in mixed sustainable communities for those in need;
- widening the opportunities for home ownership;
- offering greater quality, flexibility and choice to those who rent.

Housing Green Paper

The Housing Green Paper "Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable" was published on 23 July 2007. It sets out the Government's priorities for housing as follows:

- Two million new homes by 2016, three million by 2020. This equates to 240,000 new homes a year compared with 185,000 which are currently being delivered
- 200,000 new homes to be delivered on surplus public sector land – NHS, MoD, transport, highways
- Better homes with higher standards and improving the housing stock that already exists
- All new homes to be carbon zero by 2016
- £8 billion programme for affordable housing 2008-2011 – a £3 billion increase
- 70,000 more affordable homes a year by 2010-2011
- Conversion of temporary accommodation to settled homes
- More shared ownership and housing for key workers
- Greater private sector involvement in increasing social housing

South East Plan

The South East Plan is fundamentally linked to the Regional Housing Strategy. The draft South East Plan identifies a need for an annual average of 28,900 net additional dwellings over the 20 year period to 2026. Of these homes it suggests that 25% should be social rented and 10% intermediate affordable housing. This equates on average to 10,115 new affordable homes per annum. The Plan identifies a key role for the Regional Housing Board in maximising the opportunities to act as a catalyst for the delivery of affordable housing. At the present time the delivery of affordable housing is below that identified in the Plan at 6662 units in 2006/7 and 7,995 for 2007/8.

South East Regional Housing Strategy 2007-2011

The Regional Housing Board published its draft strategy for consultation in February 2007. The consultation period closed on 27th April 2007. The document is important as the priorities identified will direct how funding is distributed throughout the region. Bids for funding for affordable housing for the period 2008-2011 will have to be submitted in the Autumn 2007. The priorities identified for investment are as follows:

- Strong focus on delivering affordable housing – split of 70% rented and 30% other tenures
- Decent homes
- Investment in urban areas
- Increased emphasis on providing the right size and type of housing (less flats, more family homes etc)
- Assisting key workers
- Accommodation for gypsies and travellers
- Increased funding for rural housing

This document is very important to East Hampshire in that we rely on around £5 million of investment per annum for housing associations to develop affordable housing. Without this level of investment housing associations would not be able to build the type of properties that we need. This would impact on our ability to deliver affordable housing and therefore tackle housing need and homelessness.

The Council responded to the consultation paper and argued strongly for more funding for rural areas and market towns.

There are a number of other documents and policies that impact on how we will deliver housing in East Hampshire. These can be found at Appendix A.



Chapter 3 Priority 1

Tackling homelessness

Our aims are:

- to only use bed and breakfast accommodation in emergencies
- to reduce homelessness applications and acceptances
- to focus on homelessness prevention measures
- to halve the use of temporary accommodation by 2010

Over the past two years the Housing Needs Team has reviewed the way in which we approach homelessness including the provision of housing advice. The review followed the introduction of the Government's targets on reducing homelessness applications and halving the number in temporary accommodation. In 2004 the Council was set a target to halve the numbers of households in temporary accommodation from 202 households to 101 by 2010.

Greater emphasis is now placed on preventing homelessness and early intervention is critical. A Housing Options interview is now undertaken with the emphasis on considering all other housing options before taking a homelessness declaration or moving someone into temporary accommodation. This could involve home visiting, mediation with parents, liaison with landlords, referrals to other services such as floating support, tenancy training, debt advice, supported lodgings and so on.

The Housing Options approach encourages the applicant to take ownership of their situation with help, advice and support from the Housing Advisor. Use of the private housing sector has increased and the appointment of a Temporary Accommodation Officer later this year will mean that our working relationship with landlords and agents in the area will strengthen even more.

For the past two years we have monitored the number of homelessness cases. BVPI 213 looks at the number of cases resolved in full following intervention by an officer and where the applicant is settled for at least six months. In 2005/6 the number of cases resolved through preventative work totalled 22, in 2006/7 this has risen to 79 and in the first 3 months of 2007/8 it was 50. The cases were resolved as follows:

	2006/7	2007/8 (3 months)
Private Rented Accommodation	42	18
Mediation	14	9
Re-housed	16	19
Refuge	4	2
Supported Housing	4	1

The Council and Drum Housing Association prepared a joint response to the Housing Corporation's consultation paper on Homelessness and we are already working on a number of homelessness initiatives together. One key initiative is preventing potential tenancy breakdowns and evictions due to rent arrears. Early notification of possible problems result in joint visits and advice given at an early stage. This approach is being extended to all our partner associations.

In addition all of our "Preferred Partners" contribute to the East Hampshire Independent Debt Advice Service.

Good Practice: Debt Advice

The Debt Advice Project, which is multi-agency funded, has been running since April 2004 and to date has assessed referrals with a total debt of £2,125,660. Referrals to the service can be made by any of the partners, or clients can self refer direct to the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CABx) if they so wish.

Case study

- A single parent in her 20s living in temporary accommodation but facing eviction due to non-payment of rent, and arrears had accrued to £1,190. In addition other creditors were pushing for repayment of other outstanding debts. A referral was made to the Debt Advice Service and over a couple of months, a combination of negotiations with creditors; ongoing support and advice brought the debt under control. Ten months later the arrears were cleared in full and the client is now awaiting an offer of permanent housing.



- Without a referral to the Debt Advice Service it could have been a very different story and the household could have been faced with eviction followed by a short stay in B&B and then an intentional decision. The referral not only meant that this young family did not lose their home but also saved the Council the cost of having to place them into B&B.

All our homeless families in temporary accommodation are offered tenancy support including tenancy training if it is thought necessary. A Tenancy Support Officer is employed by Drum Housing Association to support homeless families accepted by the Council and placed into temporary accommodation. The support officer assists the households in maintaining their tenancies with budgetary and general advice including their benefit claims. The officer also refers to relevant support organisations where appropriate. If there are any particular issues which may result in someone facing eviction (ie Anti Social Behaviour) a joint visit is undertaken by the Support Officer and the Housing Advisor to maximise the support and to try and ensure the eviction does not take place.

The Council and Drum Housing Association have always worked very closely together on nominations and lettings policies and continue to meet weekly to assess housing need and best use of vacancies on a weekly basis. All our partner housing associations are aware of the Council's plans to introduce a sub-regional Choice Based Lettings scheme and are kept up-to-date with progress on a regular basis. A full consultation process on the Allocations Policy will take place in 2007/8.

The Homelessness Strategy runs until July 2008, but with greater emphasis on reducing homelessness and the introduction of new targets and initiatives, it is thought timely to begin the review process this summer. A new strategy will be completed next year.

During 2006/07 the Council received a grant of £36,000 from the Government to assist in tackling homelessness. This part funded the following initiatives:

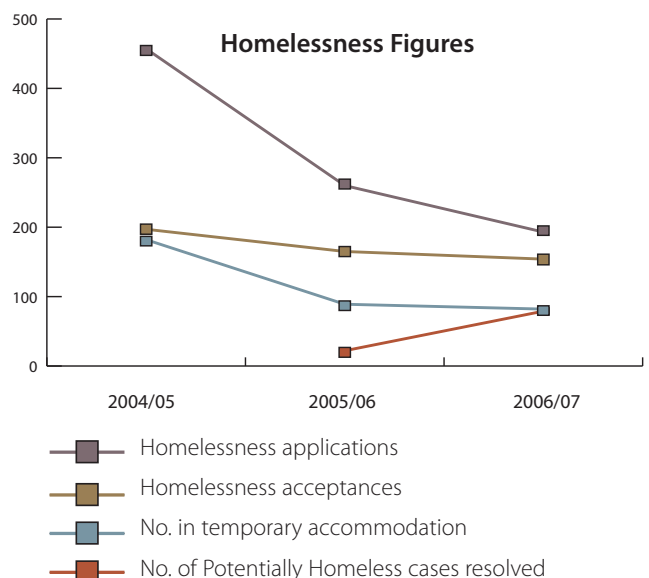
- Supported Lodgings Scheme
- Debt Advice Service
- Provision of Damage Deposits
- Training for Housing Advisors

In October 2006 we were advised that a further £20,000 was to be awarded to the Council specifically to be used for the reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation. We decided to carry out a comprehensive survey of all those living in temporary accommodation to look at the following:

- Consider whether any tenancies could be converted from Assured Short Hold tenancies to Assured
- Reasons why applicants wish to remain in properties
- Rent arrears
- Maximising household's choice
- Raising awareness of allocations policies and options
- What do households think about us?
- Introduce concept of Choice Based Lettings

The survey resulted in a number of tenancies being converted into permanent tenancies.

The number in temporary accommodation has reduced to 135 (as at July 2007) which means we are ahead of schedule to reach our target of 101 by 2010. An Accommodation Liaison Officer will be appointed to continue to work with those in temporary accommodation and build on the Council's relationship with the private sector. This will mean that referral to a property in the private sector will be a viable option to many homeless or potentially homeless households.



Chapter 4 Priority 2

Increasing the supply of affordable housing

Our aim is to increase the supply of affordable housing by:

- identifying housing need
- understanding our housing market and affordability
- working with planning to maximise affordable housing opportunities
- maximising development opportunities and funding
- maximise rural housing opportunities

The definition of affordable housing (PPS3 November 2006) is as follows:

Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should:

- **Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and house prices.**
- **Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycle for alternative affordable housing provision.**

Social rented housing is owned and managed by local authorities or registered social landlords (mostly housing associations). Intermediate affordable housing is housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market prices or rents. This includes shared equity products, shared ownership and intermediate rented schemes.

“Low cost market housing” is not considered to be affordable housing under the definition but clearly has a role to play when the Council is looking at the whole housing market. However, through modern methods of construction we hope to achieve less expensive homes for the private sector. In particular the Council will await with interest the results of the Governments £60,000 house pilot project to see if there is a place for this within East Hampshire. This could enable more low cost market housing to be built in the District.

Housing demand and supply is strongly influenced by factors such as the local housing market, demographic changes and the development of the economy. As a local authority, we must continually update and review our methods of assessing current and future demand for housing. EHDC use four main methods for assessing need as follows:

- East Hampshire Joint Housing Register
- Joint Transfer Register
- Affordability of market housing - incomes to house price ratio
- Housing Market Assessment

In the future we will of course use the Choice Based Lettings data to understand the demand for housing. This will replace data held through the Joint Housing Register and Joint Transfer Register. There will be one register and “bids” made for housing will be used to assess the demand for all types of affordable housing.



Joint Housing Register (JHR)

The Council continues to manage the JHR on behalf of its housing association partners. From the register we are able to extract detailed data relating to the specific needs of each individual household. The table detailed below reflects all those applicants who have a local connection with the parish they have selected.

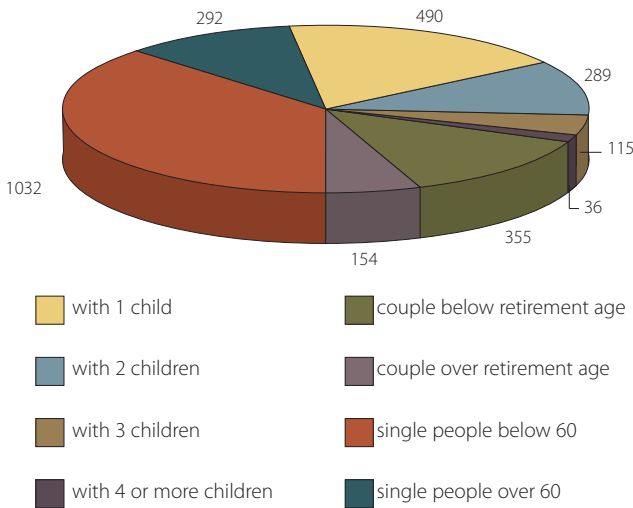
Local Connection Totals as at the end of February 2008

Parish	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	Sheltered	Total
Alton	332	145	42	8	64	591
Bentley	16	13	0	0	3	32
Bentworth	2	1	5	0	2	10
Binsted	4	4	0	0	0	8
Bramshott / Liphook	123	48	17	4	23	214
Buriton	10	7	2	0	2	21
Chawton	4	4	2	0	0	10
Clanfield	42	32	10	3	11	98
E. Meon	22	9	1	0	5	37
E. Tisted	3	1	1	0	3	8
Farringdon	7	2	2	0	2	13
Four Marks	32	12	6	1	4	55
Froxfield	14	5	2	1	3	25
Froyle	19	9	4	1	7	40
Grayshott	24	14	3	1	4	46
Greatham	9	3	2	0	5	19
Hawkley	2	0	1	0	0	3
Headley	43	12	6	2	6	69
Horndean	91	64	14	4	43	216
Kingsley	4	3	0	0	2	9
Langrish	1	0	0	0	3	4
Lasham	3	1	0	0	0	4
Lindford	29	17	6	2	11	65
Liss	97	33	18	2	34	184
Medstead	12	4	3	0	6	25
Newton Valence	1	1	0	0	1	3
Petersfield	246	133	31	6	114	530
Ropley	25	9	1	0	6	41
Rowlands Castle	18	6	5	0	5	34
Selborne	10	11	2	0	5	28
Shalden	1	0	1	0	1	3
Steep	9	4	2	0	7	22
West Tisted	4	5	2	1	0	12
Whitehill / Bordon	233	123	48	6	56	466
Wield	3	5	0	0	1	9
Worldham	3	1	0	0	4	8
Total	1498	741	239	42	443	2962

There is no figure for Stroud since there is no affordable housing stock in the village and is therefore not offered as a choice to those on the JHR.

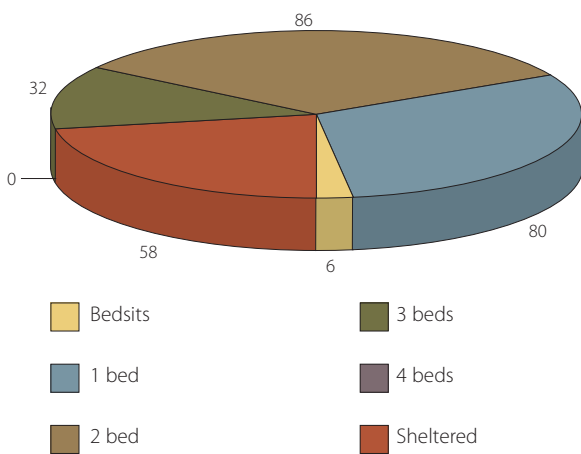
The number of households on the Joint Housing Register as at 31st March 2007 is 2763. This can be broken down as follows:-

Households on the Joint Housing Register



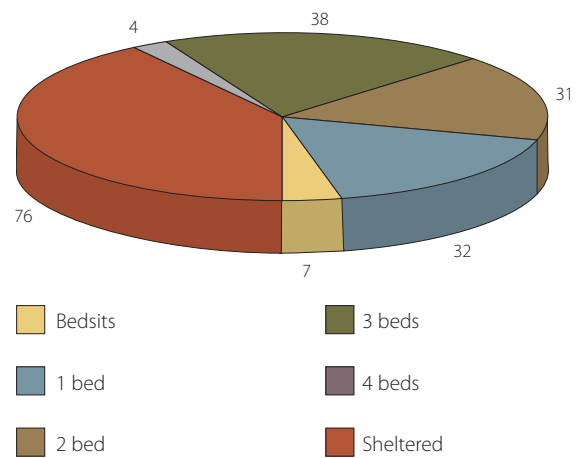
The total number of applicants housed through the JHR in 2006/7 was 262.

Total number of applicants housed through the Joint Housing Register



- Number of tenants housed through the Joint Transfer Register – 188
- Homes Mobility – 3
- Mutual Exchanges – 75 (tenants arranging a home swap)

Total number of tenants housed through the Joint Transfer Register



Breakdown in bed-size of the affordable housing in the district

Type of house	Number
1 bed	931
2 bed	1686
3 bed	1974
4 bed	133
5 bed	1
Supported	123
Sheltered	759
Total	5607

Drum Housing Association is currently still managing the Joint Transfer Register and the number of households on the Joint Transfer Register as at 31st March 2007 is 640. A breakdown of the Joint Transfer Register is available at individual parish level. There is a significant number of households seeking to move from smaller accommodation to larger accommodation.

In terms of housing need there are a large number of single people seeking affordable housing. The breakdown of the existing stock is showing that there is a smaller proportion of one bedroom units than family accommodation. On new development we will be seeking a whole range of affordable homes to meet a range of housing needs. It will not be acceptable for the developer to offer only one bedroom units because the waiting list (JHR) takes no account of those needing to transfer to larger accommodation.

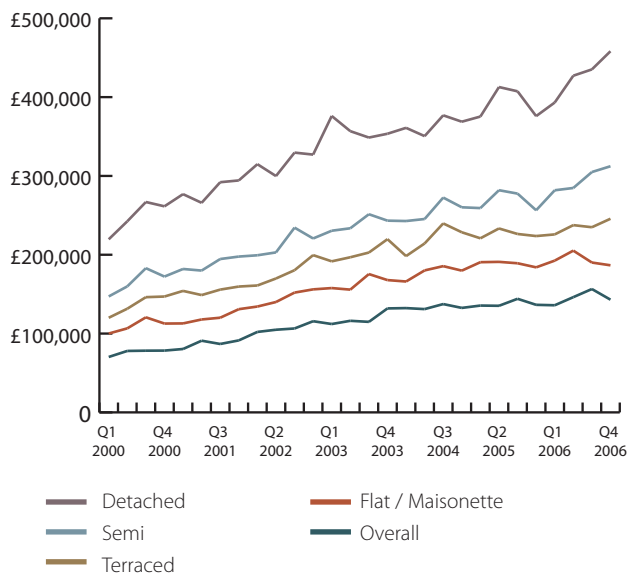


Single people would only be offered one bedroom units because the demand for family accommodation is so high. We are not in a position to under occupy units even if this may be the preferred choice of the applicant. We have to make best use of the stock available. We will consider units being under occupied if someone is downsizing and freeing up larger accommodation or if there is a particular local circumstance.

There is some concern about the number of one bedroom units being developed. However, there is a significant demand for one bedroom units; mainly due to people's changing circumstances – family break-up where children stay with parents at weekends. We cannot offer two and three bedroom houses for them to be fully occupied only on occasions.

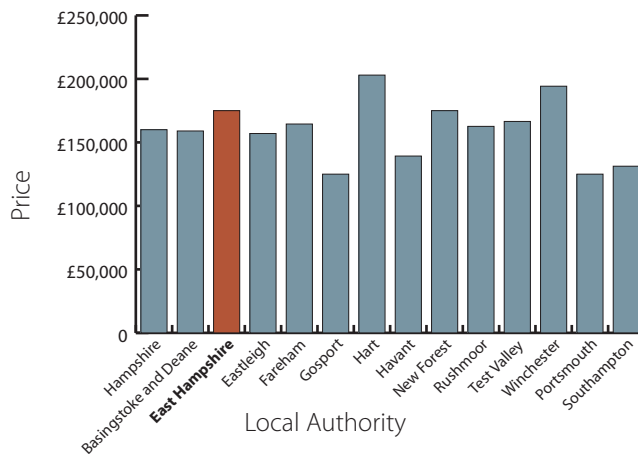
House prices obviously have a major impact on affordability and people's ability to access the housing market. The issues of demand, supply and affordability are being addressed by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Average house price in East Hampshire - January 2000 to December 2006



Property	January 2000	December 2006	Change
Detached	£219,570	£458,210	+109%
Semi	£120,047	£245,664	+105%
Terraced	£100,032	£186,605	+87%
Flat/ Maisonette	£70,307	£142,990	+103%
Overall	£147,074	£312,285	+112%

Lower Quartile Access Price - December 2006*



*Q4 Provisional Figures, Land Registry

Evidence from the CLG shows that the lower quartile house price* for quarter four in 2006 for East Hampshire is £175,000. To compare this to income levels; the ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile income for the same year is 9.75. The 30 percentile income level for the East Hampshire District is £14,942.

(* price is provisional as at Sept 07. Data source: ASHE Survey (ONS) 2006)

Unemployment and average annual earnings - 2006

Area	% Unemployed*	Average Annual Earnings **
East Hampshire	2.9%	£28,099
Hampshire	3.2%	£25,606
South East	4.3%	£27,412
England	5.2%	£25,008

* Model-based unemployment July 2005 - June 2006, ONS Annual Population Survey

** Average annual earnings for residents of East Hampshire, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2006

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

PPS3 states that the planning system should amongst other things provide "a mix of housing, both market and affordable, particularly in terms of tenure and price, to support a wide variety of households in all areas, both urban and rural".

To achieve this, the Council is required to produce an evidence base of housing need and demand. In particular it recommends that local authorities should undertake a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). These results will be used to inform the type and mix of all housing provided within the District.

The Council has been working with four other Hampshire authorities to deliver a SHMA. The four authorities are Basingstoke & Deane, Test Valley, Winchester and New Forest. The SHMA will look at the housing requirements for Central Hampshire and New Forest. The purpose of a SHMA is to:

- Enable local authorities to think spatially about the nature and influence of the housing markets in respect to their local area and to inform regional spatial strategies and regional housing strategies
- To provide evidence to inform policies aimed at providing the right mix of housing across the whole housing market – both market and affordable housing
- To provide evidence to inform policies about the level of affordable housing required, including the need for different sizes of affordable homes.

The emerging evidence from the Housing Market Assessment for East Hampshire is:

- There is a significant backlog of unmet housing need for affordable housing.
- The housing market for the area is less coherent than other markets in the area. There are a number of more localised markets than elsewhere.
- Economic growth in East Hampshire is above the South East average and has expanded significantly in the last 15 years. There is high employment.

- There is a growth in the age groups of 45-64, 65-74 and 75+. This will have a significant impact in 15 years time as it indicates there will be more older people and less people that are economically active.
- There is a decline in the age groups of 25-44 and 0-15. This is again a concern in terms of the number of economically active and the impact it may have in terms of school numbers etc.
- High house prices and affordability issues mean that there is selected migration with people moving to cheaper areas and then commuting in to work. Alternatively those on higher incomes live in the District and then commute out to work.
- The main demand is for affordable homes to rent but there are also a significant number of households interested in intermediate housing.

A key priority will be to use the results of the Housing Market Assessment to feed into our planning policies.

Gypsies and travellers

The Government has also issued guidance that planning authorities must be mindful of the needs of gypsies and travellers and travelling show people. In particular local authorities are required (Housing Act 2004) to undertake a needs assessment of this client group.

In 2006 consultants were appointed to carry out this work across all Hampshire authorities. There are many difficulties inherent in producing a robust and defensible Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Assessment as follows:

- The often hidden elements of the community
- The small size of the Gypsy and Traveller population in relation to the overall population
- The lack of data of ethnicity reflecting Gypsy and Travellers as a separate ethnic group
- The mobile nature of the community
- The lack of historic data on the needs of the community.

A total of 145 site-based interviews were completed including 64 on unauthorised sites across Hampshire, 22 interviews were completed with households living in bricks and mortar accommodation. The survey response was 65.9% on authorised sites and 79% on unauthorised encampments and developments. Based on the survey results the consultants recommended the following:

- The provision of four well-managed transit sites to accommodate 41 households per year. There is a need for one transit site covering the north of Hampshire (Basingstoke), one in the south (Winchester) and one in the west (Test Valley/Eastleigh/New Forest).
- A network of Emergency Stopping Places to deal with peak flows of travellers during the summer months.
- A Hampshire wide policy to deal with unauthorised camping.
- The need for an additional 44 permanent pitches across Hampshire – 16 within the south (Havant, Portsmouth, Gosport, Fareham, East Hampshire and Winchester), 18 in the west (Southampton, Test Valley, Eastleigh and New Forest) and 10 in the north (Basingstoke, Hart and Rushmoor).

Using planning policies to maximise the supply of affordable housing

The Government is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing. The policies and priorities relating to this are set out in the South East Plan and in the Regional Housing Strategy. The Council secures most of its affordable housing through the planning system and negotiating a percentage of affordable housing on larger development sites. The key policy that we have to consider is Planning Policy Statement 3 or PPS3.

Planning policies for housing are set out in the East Hampshire District Council Local Plan: Second Review. They reflect the fundamental importance of access to a decent home and a choice of housing to the quality of life for the people of the district. They also reflect the importance of housing in supporting the local economy.

The Local Plan was adopted in 2006. It allocates identified sites for residential development and sets out policies against which proposals for housing will be assessed. These include policies for a mix of housing types and tenures; densities of

residential development; houses in multiple occupation; affordable housing; accommodation for Gypsies and proposals for the provision of sites for Travelling Show People.

The Council's current policy for Affordable Housing is set out clearly in a Supplementary Planning Guidance that forms part of the adopted Local Plan. Currently the policy is for 35% of affordable housing to be provided on sites of 0.5 hectare or 15 units in the larger settlements and 0.15 hectare or 5 units in the smaller settlements. Affordable housing negotiated through the planning process is provided by our preferred partnership of Housing Associations. The Council's policies for Affordable Housing will change to reflect the results of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and financial viability testing.

The adopted Local Plan is to be replaced by the Local Development Framework. This is a series of development plan documents. The first development plan document will be the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy will set out the spatial vision, objectives and strategy for the district and will include the broad locations for housing development. It will also include policies on affordable housing. The first stage of consultation on Issues and Options for the Core Strategy will take place in Spring 2008. The document is programmed for adoption in May 2010.

The next development plan document is Development Allocations. This will look at allocating housing sites. The consultation on Issues and Options is programmed for September 2008. It is intended to adopt it in September 2011.

Other housing policies will be replaced by policies in forthcoming development plan documents. Until they are replaced, the Council will continue to use the relevant policies in the adopted Local Plan.

Preferred Partnership

The Council has a preferred partnership of Housing Associations that it has selected to work on PPS3 sites where there is a proportion of affordable housing negotiated on market housing sites. Our preferred partnership has been selected not just for their development expertise but also on the basis of the quality of their housing management. We want to work with housing associations that provide high quality services to their tenants and who are accessible and local. Poor quality housing management can lead to communities in decline. Our partners are also committed to helping the Council achieve its wider strategic priority of Building Successful Communities and have contributed to various initiatives including its community project work, tackling financial exclusion and homelessness prevention.

Our Preferred Partnership consists of the following organisations:

- A2 Winchester Housing Group
- Drum Housing Association
- Kingfisher Housing Association
- Petersfield Housing Association
- Swaythling Housing Society
- Warden Housing Association



Established in 2003, the Partnership has just been renewed running from 2007-11, this will coincide with the period over which the next funding round covers.

The partnership meets regularly to discuss housing development in the district. It also looks at wider strategic issues such as sharing best practice, homelessness, private sector housing initiatives, social justice and funding opportunities.

What have we delivered?

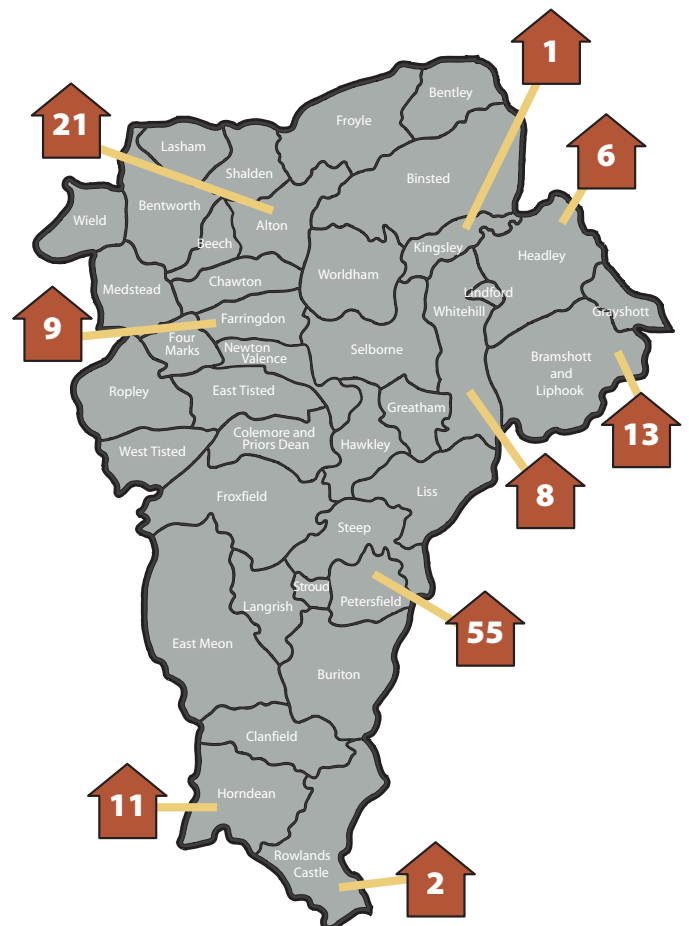
The Housing Development team works in partnership to deliver affordable housing throughout East Hampshire. The properties delivered vary in tenure from general needs rented, intermediate rent and low cost home ownership schemes. Our aim is to ensure that we are delivering affordable housing that matches the needs of local people within the district. A challenging target of delivering 130 new affordable homes was set for 2006/07. The number of completions totalled 134 exceeding our target by 4 units.

Affordable Housing Completions for 2006 – 2007

Tenure	Number
General Needs Rented	77
New Build Homebuy	38
Key Worker	12
Intermediate Rented	5
Open Market Homebuy	2
Total	134

A diverse range of housing development projects have been completed in 2006/7 including new homes that have been built on allocated sites through the Local Plan, previously developed land and three new energy efficient houses in Whitehill using ‘Sunergy’ solar thermal heating.

Location of Affordable Homes delivered in 2006/07



Future Development 2007/8

We are predicting delivery of a further 143 affordable homes for 2007/08 (as at July 2007). Our target has been set for 135. Included in this target we also hope to deliver at least one rural exception site in the forthcoming year.

Tenure	Number
General Needs Rent	87
Shared Ownership	48
Shared Equity	8
Total	143

There are a number of larger sites identified in the Local Plan that will be delivering significant numbers of affordable housing over the next few years as follows:

- Winchester Road, Four Marks
- Chase Road, Lindford
- Chandos Lodge, Alton

In addition work will be undertaken on development opportunities that come forward during the life of the Strategy. This may include the former Gales Brewery site and the Whitehill/Bordon Opportunity.

Whitehill/Bordon Opportunity

The MoD is proposing a number of changes to Defence training. Under the current proposals the electro-mechanical engineering and tank driver training undertaken will be moved to South Wales. The current timetable is that the Army is due to leave Bordon in 2012/13. Only a small presence will be kept leaving around 232 hectares of the MoD Training Estate available for other uses. This will be the largest regeneration opportunity that the District has ever had to deal with. The new development is likely to provide another 4-5,500 homes as well as new jobs, shops, community and leisure facilities. The Green Town Vision was approved by Council in April 2006. It sets out why development in the town must be sustainable, protect the high quality environment and set the highest standards for eco-friendly buildings. An Executive Group will manage the regeneration process and a master planning exercise will be undertaken. We will be looking for a mixed community to be developed with excellent design of homes.

Achieving High Quality Housing/Good Design

The Council supports the statement in PPS3 that "Good design is fundamental to the development of high quality new housing, which contributes to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities". The Council believe that all new housing, whether market or affordable, should meet high design standards. With higher densities coming forward in order to meet best use of land good design is more important than ever. The Council has undertaken research into completed developments and parking in particular can be a major cause of neighbour disputes. Poor housing design is not acceptable to the Council as in the worst cases it results in communities suffering a range of problems and leads to communities in decline.

The Council's Rural Housing Issues

The Council was one of the first in the Country to introduce a policy to deliver rural housing back in 1989. Since then we have enabled the delivery of 283 homes on 26 rural exception sites. This is an excellent record. However, in the early years the Council was using sites in its ownership and therefore controlled the land. In addition a number of sites were redevelopments of existing poor quality housing schemes. The problem faced by the Council is that in the last few years there has been a lack of schemes coming forward.

Over 30% of the Council's population live in rural communities with a population of less than 3,000. Some villages have had several schemes to meet the housing need – this includes Ropley and East Meon. Some villages have had no housing at all despite there being a significant housing need. The lack of new schemes, together with the fact that some villages have little or no existing affordable housing stock, can make the problems of accessing affordable housing more marked than in the market towns.

During 2006/7 of the 134 new affordable homes only 25 properties (19%) were developed in settlements of less than 3,000. None of these units were developed on rural exception sites. This is better than in 2005/6 when there were no properties at all developed in rural settlements. Policies to negotiate a percentage of affordable housing on larger sites have been very successful in the larger settlements but have had very little impact in rural communities, despite lower thresholds for negotiation.

In rural settlements housing need is more acute as

- there is less existing affordable housing stock
- owner occupation tends to be higher and
- house prices can be more than 10% higher than in the market towns.

Parish	Percentage of Affordable Housing	Percentage Owner Occupation	Average House Prices*
Alton	19.25%	73.46%	£205,397
Chawton	6.79%	77.27%	£231,728
Petersfield	14.17%	75.80%	£192,408
Steep	7.10%	59.29%	£214,500
Whitehill/Bordon	27.87%	69.7%	£165,953
Greatham	9.87%	79.26%	No data

* Property prices based on average prices for a terraced property at Quarter 4 in 2006.

The Council's own evidence of the specific housing challenges in rural areas is borne out by one of the Government's own published documents (July 2007 Impact Assessment for Homes for the Future: more affordable, more sustainable). It states "almost a fifth of England's population lives in rural settlements. Many rural areas face a significant shortage of affordable housing. While there are regional differences, in Great Britain more than 50% of local authorities with the highest housing price to income ratio are in rural areas. Moreover, only 12% of the homes in rural areas are social housing for rent, compared with 21% in urban areas. Despite higher average incomes than urban households, almost 32% of rural households have incomes of less than 60% of the English Median".

Planning Policy Statement 3 published in November 2006 states that planning authorities should adopt "a positive and pro-active approach which is informed by evidence, with clear targets for the delivery of rural affordable housing. Where viable and practical, Local Planning Authorities should consider allocating and releasing sites solely for affordable housing, including using a rural exception site policy. This enables small sites to be used, specifically for affordable housing in small rural communities that would not normally be used for housing because, for example, they are subject to policies of restraint".



We will be reviewing our rural housing policies as part of the LDF process. One issue to consider is broadening the definition of sustainability in rural areas to consider the wider social aspects of the community. In particular we will look at the role affordable housing has to play in preventing the further decline of local facilities.

What are we doing for rural housing?

The Council is striving to drive forward the rural housing agenda. In 2005 East Hampshire District Council, along with five other rural local authorities in Hampshire formed the HARAH partnership (Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing) with the Rural Housing Enablers from Community Action Hampshire and the Housing Corporation. Working with Hyde Housing Association as the preferred provider of affordable housing the partnership aims to increase the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas.

We continue to work closely with the Rural Housing Enablers to raise awareness of the need for affordable housing so to ensure that if demand is identified we can look to progress a rural exception site that is suitable yet sensitive to the village in which it is to be developed.

We are looking to commission a number of Housing Needs Surveys for villages in East Hampshire where identified need is the greatest but affordable housing supply is limited. Some of the villages we are focusing on are:

- Bentley
- Bentworth
- Chawton
- East Tisted
- Froyle
- Greatham
- Medstead
- Rowlands Castle
- West Tisted
- Wield

The HARAH partnership is recognised as good practice by the Housing Corporation who cited it in their “future investment approaches” document in September 2006. They have also been supportive in terms of providing funding. £7.7 million in funding for the period 2006-2008 for 21 sites in the 6 Hampshire authorities; this was 20% of the rural programme for the whole of the South East of England.

Whilst HARAH is viewed as “best practice” the partnership is all too aware of “the blockages” in delivering rural housing. Those blockages may include lack of suitable sites, planning issues, lack of local political support and finding a willing landowner. For this reason HARAH is part of the Rural Excellence Programme co-ordinated by the Improvement and Development Agency. A group of mentors for other authorities and organisations are working with HARAH. The aim is to build capacity and improve delivery of rural affordable housing.

Case study

In September 2007 we carried out a tour of rural exception sites for Parish Councillors. The aim of the tour was to show examples of where affordable housing had been delivered and how this has benefited the local community.

Housing demand far outweighs supply and with increasing house prices affording a home is beyond the reach of many. These issues also exist in rural areas and are often even more prevalent as affordable housing stock is very limited.

By engaging with Parish Councillors we hope to continue delivery in rural areas which meets local need and adds value to the village in which it is located. One Parish Councillor commented about the tour, 'what a thoroughly enjoyable, and more importantly, constructive day. It far exceeded my expectations and I learnt a lot!'



Bringing sites forward and ensuring delivery

It is anticipated that bringing sites forward for development will normally be secured through negotiation and voluntary agreement between land owners and interested parties.

However, it is conceivable that there may be circumstances where negotiations are unsuccessful and/or complex land assembly issues arise, yet site acquisition is necessary to meet a pressing local need. If the circumstances are sufficiently compelling, the District Council is prepared to consider the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs), to facilitate land assembly or to bring forward rural exception sites.

Our planning policies for rural housing in villages outside the settlement boundary have focused on “rural exception sites”. Officers have worked with our Rural Housing Enablers and the local Parish Council to bring sites forward. It is very much community led. However, where we have worked with parishes and identified suitable sites only for the sites not to come forward or where parishes refuse to work with the Council then we need to seek a way forward. The Council has a role as a community leader and as a “place shaper” to make sure the housing needs of a community are met. Where this is not happening the Council may consider, in exceptional circumstances, the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) to bring sites forward. Their policies will be contained within our Supplementary Planning Document for Affordable Housing.

Modern Methods of Construction

The Council has supported Housing Associations working in the District to use Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) to speed up the development process. A number of Housing Associations are using timber frame units or super insulated panels to improve delivery times but also deliver a product that is energy efficient. In particular the Council is keen to see if MMC can work on smaller rural schemes and prove cost effective. It is providing grant funding of £20,000 to enable Hyde Housing Association to build 12 units using MMC at a rural housing scheme in Ropley. If this proves successful the long term aim is to standardise property types and use the same method of MMC across the HARAH partnership. This would increase efficiencies and economies of scale and should speed up the process.

Working sub-regionally

East Hampshire has several housing markets and does not fit neatly into one housing market. This means that we are working in partnership with a range of different authorities. We are working sub regionally with the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH). Our southern parishes of Rowlands Castle, Horndean and Clanfield are covered by this sub region. In addition the remainder of our area is within the Central Hampshire area covered by Winchester, Test Valley, New Forest and Basingstoke. We are already working with these authorities on a sub regional Housing Market Assessment and within the rural alliance of HARAH.

By working with Winchester and Havant on the Choice Based Lettings scheme it is hoped this will also be of benefit in terms of the major development area west of Waterlooville. The new development in Waterlooville will result in approximately 2000 new homes of which 40% will be affordable. East Hampshire will be able to "bid" for the affordable homes through the Choice Based Lettings scheme. Residents in the southern parishes feel a natural affinity with Waterlooville and it will be good to give households further housing opportunities.

Chapter 5 Priority 3

Provide a range and choice of housing

Our aim is to:

- provide a range of tenures including affordable homes to rent, low cost home ownership and intermediate rent
- introduce a Choice Based Lettings Schemes
- make the best use of the existing housing stock
- meet the needs of a range of client groups

Providing a range of tenures

The Council is already working with its partners to produce a range and mix of affordable housing. Increasingly the Council is looking to provide a mix of affordable homes for rent, housing for key workers, low cost home ownership and intermediate rented properties on all new developments. Predominantly the need is for affordable homes for rent and typically we would be looking for 70% affordable homes for rent and 30% intermediate tenures. We will decide the type and mix of units of affordable housing on a site by site basis.

We are working with the Swaythling Housing Society (Homebuy Agent for Hampshire) to publicise all new home ownership opportunities in the District through promoting the website www.homesinhants.co.uk

This website is designed to help people get a foot on the housing ladder as it captures information regarding all Homebuy schemes available across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight area.

The main schemes are as follows:

- Newbuild Homebuy
- Open Market Homebuy
- Intermediate Rent (for Keyworkers)

Newbuild Homebuy is a part buy / part rented scheme which can include the option to buy more shares. Most of these schemes are being developed by local Housing Associations.

Open market Homebuy gives people the opportunity to purchase a home on the open market. The property is secured with a mortgage equating to 75% of the open market value. The remaining 25% is then secured through equity loans provided by the mortgage lender and the Government, on which no interest is paid on the early years.

There also are a number of schemes that are targeted specifically for keyworkers. The Key Worker Living Programme (funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government) was created in 2004 to try and address problems of recruitment and retention of some public sector workers in regions with high cost housing, by providing affordable housing solutions. In 2006/07 a total of 9 keyworkers took advantage of the scheme. The affordable homes provided for these keyworkers were through the Newbuild Homebuy (4) and Open Market Homebuy (5) schemes.

Eligibility criteria for all keyworkers will vary across regions depending on local recruitment and retention priorities. The criteria were extended in September 2006 to include MoD personnel. This gives potential to members of the Armed Forces and their families living in Service housing in Whitehill and Bordon to receive assistance to help them take the first step onto the housing ladder

Case study

Open Market HomeBuy is a scheme devised by the government to enable first time buyers to find a way into the increasingly expensive housing market. The scheme is aimed primarily at Keyworkers and Housing Association tenants, although anyone who is unable to afford a home to accommodate their needs can apply.



Like many residents of East Hampshire, Margie and her family found themselves priced out of the property market. Margie, who is a Keyworker, took advantage of the Open Market HomeBuy scheme. 'I couldn't believe it when we found out we could afford to buy in our area.

It is a dream come true. We love our new house and would definitely recommend the scheme to other people in a similar position'

Choice Based Lettings

Choice Based Lettings (CBL) provides an alternative to traditional systems for the allocation of social rented housing. In contrast to such systems in which properties are allocated by local authorities, CBL schemes involve the advertising of vacant properties and customers are required to bid for them. The introduction of a CBL scheme will help to create a more effective market for social housing in which customers can make informed decisions about their housing requirements based on clear information on all available options. This should result in an increased proportion of tenants being happy with where they are housed, therefore helping the development of more sustainable communities.

East Hampshire District Council, in partnership with Portsmouth City Council, Winchester City Council and Havant Borough Council, submitted a bid to the CLG for funding to provide a sub-regional Choice Based Lettings scheme across all four authorities. The bid was successful and work began in 2006 to working together to introduce a CBL scheme during 2008.

The remit to provide a sub-regional scheme across four areas was ambitious however, great progress has been made and there is now agreement to procure a shared IT system and to aim to share an "Allocations Policy".

One set back occurred when Portsmouth withdrew from the scheme however this has not deterred the other three local authorities who have agreed that they will still continue to work together to introduce a sub-regional scheme by 2009. The CLG is continuing to support the remaining three authorities and the original funding of £100,000 has been transferred over.

The anticipated sub-regional scheme will include all the stock from the three local authority areas but each Council will retain strategic control of the way in which social housing is let.

The general principles of the scheme will be to:

- Meet statutory requirements
- Meet housing need
- Give customers as much information as possible to enable them to make informed choices
- Make best use of existing resources in as fair a way as possible
- Move towards banding rather than pointing
- Allocate housing in as open and transparent way as possible

The move to Choice Based Lettings from the traditional way we currently allocate social housing will be complex but the benefits, particularly to the customer, should be significant.

Making best use of existing housing stock

The Council is working with our Partners to make the best use of the existing housing stock. The various projects including the four bed homes project (see below) and the re-design of sheltered housing is offering customers more choice in their housing options.

Four Bed Homes Project

Overcrowding in the existing housing stock is an issue locally and we have identified a need for larger homes. In 2006 the Council undertook some work with Drum Housing Association to assess the number of households with between 3-8 children who were living in three bed homes but required a 4 bed home. We identified a number of households with a need for larger accommodation. The stock of existing 4 bed homes stood at just over 100 homes which represented fewer than 2% of the total affordable housing stock. 4 bed homes rarely became available for re-letting in the previous 3 year period and this was proving problematic to larger families.

Whilst we are seeking to develop some larger homes on new developments this would take some time to filter through and would not solve the immediate problem. As a result Drum is running a pilot project in Alton to add ground floor extensions to six properties where the household is overcrowded. The Council is using some of its own resources to help fund this project. Works on these properties should be completed by Christmas 2007. It is a cost effective way of providing larger homes whilst ensuring that tenants can stay in their own home. This means less upheaval as many families do not want to move out of a community due to employment and schools.

Case study

Meeting the needs of older persons is a challenge. Most of the sheltered housing in the District is of a high standard and is popular with residents. However, some housing is harder to let if it is small and bed sit type accommodation. Many older persons do not want one bedroom properties if they are downsizing from a larger home. They prefer two bedrooms to give them extra space and flexibility - particularly if they have family/grandchildren who want to stay with them. Drum Housing Association had one scheme in Petersfield that proved hard to let. It was small bed-sit accommodation.

With the support of the Council residents were moved out and the building demolished. A new scheme has been built consisting of 24 x 2bed flats; 12 for rent and 12 for shared ownership. The scheme has proved successful in encouraging existing tenants to downsize thus freeing up larger accommodation for families.



As well as providing a range of tenures the Council aims to provide housing for a number of different client groups including:

- Young people
- Families
- Older persons
- Vulnerable people in need of supported housing
- Physically disabled

Housing for young people

The supported housing scheme at Knighton Corner offers twelve one bedroom flats for single people aged between 16 and 25. The Housing Advisors work very closely with the Support Workers at the scheme to ensure that the most appropriate support is offered and that young people are moved to alternative accommodation when they are ready. The scheme is very effective and it is hoped that at some time in the future it could be replicated in the north of the district.

Over the coming year the Housing Needs team is going to work very closely with staff at Knighton Corner to provide tenancy related training to young people to prepare them to manage a tenancy. We are also aiming to go into local schools and talk to pupils and their parents about housing and homelessness issues and the difficulties in accessing housing in East Hampshire.

Case study

A young girl in her late teens found herself homeless after having to leave the family home following sexual abuse. She had been moving from address to address with different boyfriends and had a history of self harm and some illicit drug use.

The young girl came to us for advice and was currently being prescribed medication for depression. She was assessed by an officer from Housing Needs and one from RKdia and subsequently offered a tenancy. With ongoing support and guidance she gained in confidence and the skills to live independently. She went on to obtain a place at university where she studied for her degree. Several years on she has got her degree and is living independently in her own unsupported tenancy in the district.

Supported Housing

The Council continues to work closely with Hampshire County Council as part of the Hampshire consortium on the "Supporting People" programme. As part of the County Core Group, East Hampshire District Council helps to shape the future of supported housing in Hampshire and we have played a very active part in the strategic reviews that have taken place. The purpose of the reviews is to examine how current provision matches the need and to also ensure that services are relevant and provided in the most appropriate and cost effective way.

Following the completion of the strategic review of homelessness, an under-spend was identified allowing each local authority to submit bids for homelessness services in their district. East Hampshire's District Core Group identified a need for further Floating Support. The scheme will be expanded and will be able to assist a further 21 cases. We are currently working on the second strategic review, which is focusing on long term services for people with a learning or physical disability or enduring mental health problem.

Supporting People Strategic Review – Disabilities Cluster (2006/07)

	Number of services pre Strategic Review	Number of services post Strategic Review	Capacity of services pre Strategic Review	Capacity of services post Strategic Review*	Contract value of services pre Strategic Review	Indicative contract value of services post Strategic Review
People with learning Disabilities	10	7	52	58	£802,664.30	£581,710.28
People with physical disabilities	3	3	4	6	£10,235.44	£10,235.44
Generic disabilities	0	1	0	12	0	£113,442.12
Total	13	11	56	76	£812,899.74	£715,349.64
Savings	£97,550.10 (=12%)					

* post review capacities are indicative and may increase subject to contract negotiations

During December 2006, the Supporting People programme underwent its Audit Commission inspection. As a partner, we took part in the process and met with the inspectors on several occasions to discuss our input into the process and partnership working. The lead inspector also attended our District Core Group and visits were carried out on several of our schemes in the district, including RKdia. Feedback was very positive and the overall inspection resulted in Hampshire Supporting People being awarded an 'Excellent: 3 star' score with excellent prospects for improvement, the first such award in a two tier authority. This is excellent news; however we are all aware that there is still much work to be done.

Best Practice – Supported Housing Panel

In East Hampshire one very positive step forward is the setting up of a Supported Housing Panel. The Panel, which first met in September 2006, meets every month and is chaired by one of our Housing Advisors. It is attended by all providers of supported housing, social services, mental health support workers, occupational therapists, women's refuge workers and supported lodgings co-ordinator. The purpose of the Panel is to match the needs of applicants with the most suitable and appropriate supported housing. The Panel also ensures that clients move in and out of supported housing in a planned way. The Panel also assesses unmet needs and makes recommendations to the District Inclusive Forum about priorities.

As part of the Council's review of the Homelessness Strategy, we will be looking at individual client groups, assessing need and looking at new initiatives to assist in preventing homelessness and ensuring relevant support services are available. One area we are looking at is young people and placing greater emphasis on preventing homelessness. We would like to work in partnership with Drum Housing Association to raise awareness of the difficulties associated with leaving home and to also ensure that vulnerable young people can access relevant support.

Best Practice: Locality Housing Officers

One of the targets in the Local Area Agreement (LAA) is to ensure the accommodation needs of vulnerable adults and young people are better met. There was a target to assist 68 people who have care needs into housing. During 2006/7 Locality Housing Officers were employed by Hampshire Adult Services to work alongside the housing needs team. In East Hampshire a Locality Housing Officer is shared with Havant Borough Council. During 2006/7 100 people were assisted and 9 of those were housed within East Hampshire. Having Hampshire County Council staff working so closely with housing officers has proved very effective. The County has estimated the cost savings as being £1.163M by housing people in the community rather than providing residential care.



Chapter 6 Priority 4

Promoting a healthy private sector

We will promote a healthy private housing sector by:

- tackling disrepair using the housing health and rating system
- inspecting and licensing Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and mobile park homes
- giving Home Safety Grants to vulnerable households whose health and safety is at risk due to poor quality housing
- providing Disabled Facilities Grants to enable people to remain living in their own home
- bringing empty homes back into use

The private sector housing team's role is to help improve and monitor housing conditions in the private sector. This is achieved mainly by working closely with owner-occupiers, private tenants, landlords, mobile home park owners and residents. In addition, the team works very closely with other agencies and services such as; the Home Improvement Agency, Hampshire Fire Authority, Social Services, Registered Social Landlords, CABx, Building Control, Planning Enforcement and Housing Needs Team.

The Housing Act 2004 brought in new legislation that was aimed at tackling poor housing conditions in the private sector and also improving health and safety. The new legislation included:

- The introduction of a new Housing, Health and Rating System that replaced the old unfit standard
- The licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)
- New powers to tackle Empty Homes by introducing Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs)

As well as responding positively to the new legislation the Council continues to give help and support to vulnerable households by way of grants – this includes Disabled Facilities Grants and Home Safety Grants.

Disabled Facilities Grants

- We completed 149 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) in 2006/7 – amounting to just under £600K with a further £200K committed to applications and works approved.

The DFG is made available for a broad range of essential adaptations. For example; stairlifts, level access showers, and ramps are just some of the adaptations carried out to make homes more suitable and safer for disabled people.

The Council is finding that due to the ageing population, people living longer and remaining in their own homes there are increasing pressures on the DFG budget. In addition in November 2006 the Government removed the means test for families of disabled children – this has meant additional demands on our budget.

Increasingly, the maximum grant available of £25,000 is no longer sufficient. A consultation paper released by the Government on the future of DFGs is suggesting a new maximum grant of £50,000 be introduced. This is subject to future legislation. Whilst this initiative is to be welcomed if it is introduced it will further increase financial constraints on the budget. In the meantime the Council does provide a Discretionary Disabled Facilities Loan to "top up" the mandatory DFG if necessary.

Government funding only meets 60% of the budget for DFGs. The remaining 40% has to be met by Council capital funding. In 2006/7 the demand for grants meant that we allocated a further £300,000 of Council money to ensure needs were met. It was felt that it was unacceptable for vulnerable people to wait for urgent works due to lack of Government funding. Obviously we need to seek ways of managing demand in the future. We will be working on the basis of an options appraisal as follows:

- if works are above £10,000 can an alternative option be found?
- is there a suitably adapted property that someone could move to?
- could a new development provide a home that can have adaptations build in?

Our settlement for DFGs from the Government in 2007/8 was disappointing with only £325,135 awarded giving a total (with the Council's 40%) of £541,891. We will continue to lobby Government for funds. A meeting was held with representatives from the Government Office and the CLG in July 2007.

Home Improvement Agency

There has been a Home Improvement Agency operating in the District for a number of years. It used to be called 'Staying Put' and its services were designed to help provide support to enable older people to remain living in their own home. Through Supporting People there is now a new partnership agreement that runs from 2007 to 2010 with the service being provided by "In Touch" part of the Hyde Housing Association group. The service will be provided in East Hampshire but also in Basingstoke, Hart and Rushmoor.

The service is non-profit making and is targeted at older people, those who are disabled, families with disabled children and people recovering from mental illness. People can be home owners or tenants of social or private landlords.

Best Practice

Private Sector Housing Officers from the Council last year attended a fire safety training day at Eastleigh fire station. The training was provided by Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service. It consisted of a half day of practical training and a half day of theory such as planning safe escape routes and electrical safety. After completing the course everyone received a certificate. The fire safety training means that Council officers can now provide fire safety advice as part of the Homecheck scheme.

Home Safety Grants

The Home Safety Grant was introduced by the Council in October 2003. A maximum of £5,000 may be paid towards urgent works necessary to reduce or eliminate serious risk to health and safety for low income households and vulnerable persons. Every applicant is means tested.



- We completed 25 Home Safety Grants in 2006/7

Homecheck

We want people to feel safe and secure. Older people in particular can worry about safety in the home. The Homecheck service is funded by the Council but delivered in partnership with Drum Housing Association. This scheme provides a free inspection to all applicants who are over the age of 60 (not means tested) or a family with children under the age of 5 years of age in receipt of an income related benefit or applicants who are registered disabled.



- We carried out 59 Homechecks in 2006/7

Decent Homes

The Council is confident that Decent Homes standard will be achieved in the social housing sector by 2010. We believe the worst incidents of non-decent homes occurs in the private sector. We will be working with other Hampshire authorities to identify non-decent homes and work to encourage equity release to rectify these conditions. There is a very strong connection between poor quality housing and ill health and the Council has increased staff resources over the last few years to address the problem.

Empty Homes

Whilst there are not huge numbers of empty homes in the District they are still an issue for local communities. Empty homes can fall into disrepair and be a magnet for anti social behaviour. In addition local residents who live next to an empty home fear it will devalue their property. It is estimated that property prices of adjacent homes can be reduced by up to 20%. In addition empty homes are a wasted resource when there is such a housing shortage.

The Government introduced new powers in July 2006 that allowed local authorities to use Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs) as a last resort to bring empty homes back into use. EDMOs are used when property owners have failed to engage with Councils and involve a legal process. East Hampshire District Council was one of the first local authorities in the Country to introduce EDMO's. The new powers have meant that some owners are now engaging with the Council to find solutions whereas our attempts in the past had been unsuccessful.

We **inspected 250 homes** in the District in 2006/7 - 50 of these were classed as long term empty homes which had been empty for over 6 months. 25 of these homes had no planned action to bring them back in to use. We have been carrying out more detailed inspections on these properties and working closely with the owners to get them re-occupied. We may have to take enforcement action in some cases.

Case Study

This property had been empty for over 10 years and had been a real concern for residents and Councillors. The new powers of the Housing Act which came into force in July 2006, has meant we can take enforcement action if necessary. Luckily, we have been able to work closely with the owners of this property; they have been very co-operative and have welcomed our support and assistance. The property has now been sold and there are plans in place to bring it back to use.

'All in all our experience of working with the Council on this has been positive. The objective of getting our property back into use was one that both we and the Council shared... One observation I would pass on to other home owners in our situation is that once the rehabilitation process is started it is surprisingly easy to move forward...'
(Quote from the owner)



Houses in Multiple Occupation

A house in multiple occupation (HMO) is defined as a house which is occupied by persons who do not form a single household. Under the Housing Act 2004 the Council must license all high risk HMOs.

We carried out detailed inspections on **35 Houses in Multiple Occupation** in 2006/7 consisting of over 100 units. These houses are often converted from single-family homes into, self contained flats or houses; staff accommodation with shared facilities is also included in this category. Only two properties were considered to be high risk and needed to be licensed.

Landlords Forum

We have been holding annual landlords forums for the past 3 years.



Other topics of interest such as; assessments for identifying hazardous conditions; housing benefit payments; rent assessments; tenancy deposit schemes were covered. The event provided our best ever turnout and we will continue to work closely with our private landlords.

Mobile Park Homes

We have 14 mobile park home sites in the district with over 730 mobile homes. Every site has been licensed by us and we carry out annual inspections to ensure that site license conditions are adhered to by both the owner and the residents. This ensures that the parks provide a safe environment for people to live in.

Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

The HHSRS was introduced in the Housing Act 2004 and replaced the old fitness rating used by local authorities to determine poor quality housing. The HHSRS identifies 29 hazards, of these, some of the most common ones are; damp & mould, falls on the level, excess cold and electrical hazards. All dwellings contain some risk; however, our aim is to ensure that all dwellings provide a safe and healthy environment for occupants and visitors. A dwelling should be free from unnecessary or avoidable hazards. Where hazards are necessary or unavoidable, they should be reduced as far as reasonably practicable.

- We inspected 47 properties for hazardous conditions in 2006/7. This resulted in a total of 10 legal notices being served on the property owners.

Chapter 7 Priority 5

Building sustainable communities

Our aim is to deliver sustainable communities by:

- contributing to the social justice agenda
- improving the energy efficiency of the housing stock and reducing fuel poverty
- community project workers on larger development sites
- providing an accessible housing service, promoting equality and diversity
- listening to our customers and reviewing what we do

Mixed communities - why?

Mixed communities contribute to the promotion of choice and equality, avoiding concentrations of deprivation, help address social exclusion and promote community cohesion. We want to support the development of successful mixed communities by providing for a variety of incomes, tenures and housing types, and varying household make up, age groups, ethnic groups and those with housing and support needs.

Contributing to the Social Justice Agenda

The Council established a Social Justice Board in 2006. The aim of the Board was to bring together the Council's work across all services and take a corporate approach to tackling social exclusion and improving access to services. The Social Justice Board has developed an Action Plan that has been approved by Cabinet. Clearly housing has a role to play in this and has contributed to a number of actions as follows:

- holding a series of roadshows during the summer 2007 aimed at providing housing advice, information about benefits and tackling energy inefficiency
- developing a DVD aimed at older persons and how they can access a range of services provided by the Council and our partners. The DVD is now being widely distributed
- an A-Z of services (not just housing) has been widely distributed so that people can be directed to a range of services
- the debt advice project and tackling financial exclusion
- the mapping exercise to establish communities who are most deprived so that assistance can be targeted.

Improving energy efficiency of the housing stock and reducing fuel poverty

Tackling Climate Change is one of the Council's top priorities. A Climate Change Forum was recently set up. Housing has a key role to play in this agenda by ensuring that the existing housing stock is energy efficient and that new affordable housing has the lowest carbon emissions possible. The Government's Code for Sustainable Homes will ensure new affordable housing meets higher requirements for energy efficiency than those contained within existing building regulations. The aim is that by 2016 all new homes will be carbon zero.

East Hampshire District Council has been working with Drum Housing Association on a number of projects. Drum have been awarded the Gold Award to Sustainable Housing by the Housing Corporation for 2007/8. Drum have already developed a range of innovative schemes in the District. The Council's Cabinet held on 1 August 2007 agreed funding to Drum Housing Association to support a range of housing projects aimed at tackling energy inefficiency and reducing carbon emissions.

The funding to Drum is for the following schemes:

- £48,000 to fund energy efficient measures to 14 properties at REEMA in Petersfield. These measures will include the use of renewable energy from solar electric, solar thermal, ground source heat pumps and combined heat and power.
- £28,000 to fund two carbon neutral properties in Alton using a biomass system
- £7,000 to fund a rain water harvesting scheme in Liss
- £8,755 to fund solar installations in Drum's existing housing stock.



Tackling Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty is where households cannot keep warm and healthy in their own home at a price they can afford – typically spending 10% or more of their income to meet fuel costs. It results from a combination of poor housing conditions (energy inefficient heating or lack of insulation) and low income. Fuel poverty affects mainly poor and vulnerable groups: the elderly, people with disabilities, single parent families with young children and the chronically sick. It is estimated that the yearly cost to the National Health Service of treating cold related illnesses is £1 billion. Taking a household out of fuel poverty needs to focus on improving the energy efficiency of dwellings as well as income maximisation through benefits, money and tariff advice. Local authorities have statutory responsibilities to tackle fuel poverty

- Home Energy Conservation action 1995
- Decent Homes
- Housing, Health and Rating System

Improving Energy Efficiency

We work with partner organisations such as Warm Front and the Solent Energy Efficiency Advice Centre to promote cost effective means of improving the energy efficiency of homes. Our priority is to make sure that people are warm enough in winter and their fuel bills are as low as possible by encouraging people to install measures such as loft and cavity wall insulation and energy efficient boilers.

To promote energy efficiency we;

- held four road shows at local supermarkets throughout the District
- visited luncheon clubs
- arranged a one day event for young children to visit the Sustainability Centre in East Meon
- are working in partnership with British Gas to promote insulation schemes
- arranged flu jab clinic at local surgeries
- are working in partnership and supporting Housing Associations to develop eco friendly homes

Community Project Workers

Our Preferred Partnership supports the role of the Community Project Worker who is employed to work with the residents at newly completed larger development sites in order to help create a sense of community. The project initially covered a three year period running alongside the development of Ramshill, Petersfield and Treloars Heights, Alton. However, based on the success of this role the Partnership will continue to support the role of a Community Project Officer on all future larger housing developments.



Providing an accessible housing service, promoting Equality and Diversity

The Council recognises that individuals and communities may face unlawful and/or unfair discrimination on grounds of their race or ethnicity, disability, gender (including transsexual and transgender people), sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual), age, HIV status, language, background, physical or mental impairment, faith or belief, or physical appearance.

We believe that equality for all is a basic human right and actively oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination.

East Hampshire District Council will shortly have (Autumn 2007) a new Equalities and Diversity Policy. The Policy centres on gender, race and equalities. Each service within the District Council will be required address the issues of equalities and diversity within their business plans, strategies and action plans. Housing is trying to ensure that this work is embedded within new and existing policies to ensure are policies are fair and equitable to everyone living in our community.

Code of Practice for Racial Equality in Housing

The above code came into being on 1st October 2006. The Code is a set of recommendations and guidance on how to avoid unlawful racial discrimination and harassment in housing. It applies to all housing organisations in England, Scotland and Wales including house builders and developers, local housing authorities, housing associations, estate and lettings agencies as well as private landlords and house sellers. The Code is a statutory guidance which will enable the Council to ensure best practice is incorporated into its housing strategy. By following the code's recommendations the Council will confidently be in a position to defend any potential claim of racial discrimination or harassment.

The Code includes the following:

- ensuring all those seeking housing or housing services are treated equally, irrespective of race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins,
- eliminating racial harassment
- reducing persistent inequalities in the type and quality of housing available to people from different racial groups

The Council's Commitment:

- Ensuring quality of access to services for all residents.
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination on grounds of gender, race and disability, age, sexual; orientation, faith and belief for all.
- Promoting good relations and equality opportunity for all sectors of the community.

The Housing Equalities and Diversity Action Plan 2005- 2008

Achievements:

- **Disability Housing Register** – The Council in partnership with Ability Housing Association set up a Disability Housing Register (DHR) with the purpose of ensuring that when all adapted properties became vacant they were matched to the most appropriate person. There has been a degree of success with this initiative and we now have a comprehensive database of all the adapted stock in the district. We are however currently reviewing how the DHR will fit with the introduction of Choice Based Lettings.
- **Disability Awareness Training** – all housing staff attended a day course in 2005/06 to increase their awareness and understanding of the needs of people with disability. Repeat training is offered to new members of staff. A Disability Awareness Day was held in March 2005 working in partnership with the Kingsley Centre, Social services and Housing Associations. The day focused on developing and understanding the links between public sector housing and private sector housing. Closer working procedures have been developed between the private sector housing team, social services and our partner housing associations to ensure efficient and most cost effective delivery of adaptation grants and work.
- **Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) lettings to Housing Associations** - All our partner housing associations monitor the number of lettings to BME groups and these figures are submitted to the Housing Corporation. These annual figures are monitored through the Preferred Partnership Agreement.
- **Staff training** on how to deal with victims of all forms of harassment. All front line housing staff attended a one day training course in 2006. The approach to this training was taken by using drama. This provided a safe platform for staff to actively engage and work with sensitive issues with their learning enhanced through humour and insight from the training team and the active intervention of those who attended.



- **Older People** - In September 2005 work began on the re-development of a sheltered scheme in Petersfield called Weston House. The scheme was considered out of date and not appropriate for the needs of older people. Redevelopment of the scheme resulted in 24 new flats being developed – 12 x social housing and 12 x shared ownership. The 2 bedroom flats have proved very popular and are only available to people aged over 55.
- **Design of New Housing** - whilst new housing meets mobility standards there is still a need for some new housing to be to wheelchair standard. This will also help save on the number of future adaptations required through Disabled Facilities Grants. The Council will be looking at this in the future. In addition we will be looking at the design of the new over 55 housing scheme at Brookfield (see above) to see if we should be seeking a proportion of showers and baths in new flats again as a way of meeting the needs of less mobile residents but also to ensure flexible accommodation and reducing the need for flush floor shower adaptations in the future.
- **Extra Care Housing** East Hampshire District Council, along with many other local authorities face the challenge of meeting the needs and expectations of an ageing population. There is evidence of demographic change with the numbers of older people increasing and this increases the range of support needs of those wishing to remain living independently. As a local authority we rely heavily upon accessing conventional sheltered housing and for those where sheltered housing is not suitable, Registered Care Homes.

East Hampshire are working in partnership with the Hampshire Supporting People team looking into demographic trends within the County. We also need to look at tenure trends and best practice within current examples of Extra Care already developed. A study across the County has been commissioned. The Council are involved in this project and are working with Drum Housing Association and Social Services.

- **Young People** – There are now three schemes designated specifically for single people and the majority of the referrals are for young people under the age of 25. Leslie Nation Court and Poppy House are used as short term accommodation for single people who are homeless or potentially homeless and Knighton Corner provides longer term housing with support for 16-25 year olds.
- **Ex Offenders** The Housing Needs Team regularly attends Multi Agency Public Protection Agenda (Mappa) meetings in order to address the housing needs of ex offenders and is currently working on improving links with the probation service. The Supporting People team is considering a Hampshire wide scheme whereby all authorities who are part of the consortium work consistently on this issue. In particular more referrals to the private sector is a priority. Whenever an ex-offender is moved into housing a full risk assessment is undertaken and other organisations notified to ensure that the person is supported in their move.
- **Gypsies and Travellers** - The assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs is a requirement of the Housing Act 2004. In response to this the Local Authorities in Hampshire, including the unitary authorities of Southampton and Portsmouth, Hampshire County Council and the Isle of Wight formally commissioned David Coultie Associates (DCA) to carry out a study of the accommodation needs and aspirations of the Gypsies and Travellers who are housed or living on authorised or unauthorised sites within Hampshire. The work was co-ordinated by the Strategic Housing Officers' Group (SHOG) via a steering group representing the authorities, authorised by the Joint Authorities' Panel on Gypsies and Travellers (JAGTP).

The final draft of the study was approved by SHOG on the 4 June 2007 and now we must work in partnership to address the identified need for permanent and transit provision. Planning and Housing Officers representing South Hampshire will now meet to agree the way forward and will present the findings to SEERA in October 2007.

- **Domestic Violence** – The Council has had an established Domestic Violence Helpline for many years and although we do not receive a huge volume of calls it is felt that it is a service that should continue. The Domestic Abuse and Violence Forum now has in place a comprehensive Action Plan and have a number of new initiatives they are working on. One of those is the introduction of a Sanctuary Scheme which will be piloted over the coming year. The DVAF has been successful in obtaining funding from the Community Safety Partnership and will be employing a part time Co-ordinator later this year. This is seen as a very positive step forward.
- **Choice Based Lettings** – When Choice Based Lettings is introduced there will be a supporting vulnerable people policy that will ensure that if people need assistance to make bids for housing it will be readily available so they are not excluded from housing opportunities.

What next?

- Undertake impact assessment training on the Equalities agenda during 2007/8
- All staff to attend general awareness training during 2007/8
- Housing services will use the Southdowns Disability Forum group as a “sounding board” on various policy issues such as any changes to Disabled Facilities Grants, review of the homeless strategy, proposed changes to the design of sheltered housing or housing for disabled people, Choice Based Lettings and how to provide support to vulnerable people to make “bids”

The purpose of the Action Plan:

- Eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity and accessibility of housing
- Celebrate and value diversity

Listening to our customers and reviewing what we do

Assessing the impact of new housing

For a number of years the Council has tried to assess the impact of new affordable housing on the wider community. A few years ago an Impact Assessment Study was undertaken in the villages to understand the impact new affordable rural housing had on the community. An Assessment Study has now been completed on our two largest developments in recent years. Ramshill and Treloar's.

An extensive survey was carried out last year across all tenures. A report has been written which highlights the resident's views. The findings included positive feedback regarding the work of the Community Development Worker and how this can benefit both the residents and developers alike. As well as this there were some interesting issues that have been raised, these include:

- Parking on developments must be of good design and have higher standards than the 1.5 average spaces provided on Ramshill and Treloars.
- Developers' contributions should be sought for Community Project Officers on all new larger developments. This should be considered further as part of the annual review of the 'Guide to Developers' Contributions' non-statutory planning guidance document.
- The issue of commercial vehicle parking on residential estates should be investigated further to see whether covenants or weight limits would be effective ways of stopping this from happening. The use of weight limits on residential roads in Havant Borough Council would be investigated.



- In future, the provision of car ports rather than garages should be considered on new developments in order to ensure that they are maintained for parking. The possibility of adding an informative note to planning permissions, stressing that permission would not normally be given to enclose car ports, would be investigated.

The findings from the report will help to inform the design of housing schemes in the future.

Listening to new residents of affordable housing

We continue to survey residents of all new housing schemes the year following complete occupation of a site. This enables us to ensure that any issues raised are then discussed with the Housing Association involved. We work with the Housing Association to draw up an action plan which will seek to remedy any issues identified.

During 2007 we will also carry out a full tenant satisfaction survey across all stock held by Housing Associations in the district. This will help to inform us on wider issues of customer satisfaction and the stock rationalisation agenda.

Listening to Our Customers

The Housing service tries hard to put the customer at the heart of what we do. We consult and obtain feedback from our customers in a variety of ways:

- asking residents of new homes what they think (impact assessment studies)
- holding stakeholder events like our Housing Strategy day and Landlords Forum
- through formal partnership groups like the District Inclusive Forum, preferred partnership meetings etc
- customer feedback forms such as those used for housing interviews and works are completed for Disabled Facilities Grants
- regularly visiting individual households, such as those in temporary accommodation, to find out more about their needs and what we can do to help them.

We are aware that we still need to do more and our work towards achieving Charter Mark status should help us achieve this. For example we need to publish service standards so people can know what level of service they can expect from us. We also need to make sure that we feed back to people "outcomes" from any consultations.

Consultation on the Housing Strategy

The feedback from the Housing Strategy Day on 5th June 2007 showed that all those who responded felt that we had identified the right priorities and sub priorities.

The following suggestions were made:

- Increase the number of private rented units available – This is addressed in the strategy through private sector landlord forums and through the appointment of an Accommodation Support Officer
- Designing for Roof Extensions or garden extensions – This is for Housing Associations to address but we have asked for flexible accommodation to meet changing needs wherever possible. The four bed homes project does allow for extensions to three bed homes.
- Gypsy and Traveller Need – Included in the Strategy
- New Build Schemes to include wheelchair accessible properties – addressed in the strategy. We will be having discussions with our housing association partners about this.
- Advice sheets in different languages – we will consider this when reviewing equality and diversity issues.
- Support for People needing assistance to maintain tenancies – this is included in the Strategy.
- Meet the needs of those with complex needs (supported housing) - included in the Strategy.

These comments were fed through to the Building Successful Communities Panel meeting held on 12 July 2007. Members made a number of comments about affordability, concern about the number of one bedroom flats being provided and the reprovision of sheltered accommodation. All the above issues have been covered by the Strategy.

A number of delegates who attended the Strategy day have said they would like to work with officers on a number of key issues like the homelessness strategy, choice based lettings etc.

Chapter 8

Finances / Partnership working

The Council provides a range of revenue and capital funding to support its strategic housing role.

Revenue funding in 2007/08

Home Improvement Agency	£23,000
Floating Support	£7,800
Women's Refuge	£9,800
Energy Efficiency promotion	£8,000
Homecheck service	£8,000
Social Justice	£10,000
Domestic Violence Forum	£3,000
Rural Housing Enablers	£5,000

Capital Funding

The Council has a Right to Buy sharing agreement with Drum Housing Association. Over the last few years this money has been reinvested in Drum to purchase units as temporary accommodation. The funding was made on the basis of invest to save and also to enable the Council to achieve its target of nil families in bed and breakfast. This has been successful and since December 2004 the Council has reduced its budget for temporary accommodation from £139,400 to nil and reduced its breakfast budget from £37,000 in 2003/4 to £17,000 in 2006/7.

Right to Buy receipts

2005/6	£246,587
2006/7	£892,164

2005/6 funds allocated to:

- £123,294 for 2 properties for intermediate rent
- £30,000 for a housing market assessment
- £20,000 for Choice Based Lettings
- £30,000 for Empty Homes/Empty Dwelling Management Orders

2006/7 funds allocated to:

- £96,000 to fund 6 extensions under the 4 bed homes project
- £275,000 for the purchase of intermediate rented properties
- £139,664 to fund 4 units of housing in Grayscott
- £300,000 for Disabled Facilities Grants
- £92,255 to fund a range of energy efficiency measures in Drum Properties including solar thermal, solar electric and rain water harvesting in existing and new properties.
- £20,000 for social justice work

In 2007/8 the Council received grant funding of £325,136 for its Disabled Facilities Grants programme. The Council then put a further £216,756 of its own capital funding in since Government grant only meets 60% of the costs and the Council has to meet the remaining 40%. In 2006/7 the budget was not sufficient and we had to put additional resources of £300,000 into the budget to meet demand.

The Council also increased the Council Tax on second homes from 50% to 90% in 2004. This has raised additional income that the Council will now look to reinvest.

The funding from 2004/5 will be used for a key worker scheme with Hampshire County Council. The remaining receipts of £44,000 will be used for buying 3 properties off the shelf to be used as intermediate rented properties with nominations from the Council.

The Council has also been successful in negotiating developer's contributions for affordable housing when on site provision is not suitable. Off site contributions are a last resort and will only be sought in particular circumstances. The following contributions have been negotiated and will be coming forward over the next few years.

Site Name	Parish	Amount	Date Received
King George Hospital Site Tower /	Liphook	£1.7 m	Not yet received
London Road	Liphook	£307,717	Not yet received
Hogmoor Road	Bordon	£592,800	Not yet received
Ashdell Road	Alton	£67,355	Not yet received
Longmoor Road	Liphook	£91,490	Not yet received
Darcy House	Chawton	£152,879	Not yet received
Catherington Lane	Horndean	£1,500	1999
Basing Farm	Froxfield	£20,000	2004
Claypits Farm	Froxfield	£83,580	2007
Total		£3,017,321	

These receipts will be reinvested in affordable housing.

Appendix A

Policies etc

Communities England will be a new housing and regeneration quango that will bring together the functions of the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships. Communities England is likely to be fully operational by 2009, subject to Parliamentary approval. Communities England will have more than £4 billion a year of public funding at its disposal based on current budgets. The new agency will maximise the delivery of regeneration and new homes for those who need them most.

The Housing Corporation published its Homelessness Strategy in November 2006. It reflects the Government's plan to involve housing associations more closely in its homelessness prevention agenda. It aims to develop stronger relationships between local authorities and housing associations. The main areas for housing associations to look at in working with local authorities centres on:

- housing associations working with local authorities to tackle and prevent homelessness
- developing a homelessness action plan
- nominations and letting policies
- preventing tenancy breakdowns amongst their tenants
- supporting sustainable move on from short stay and supported housing
- making homelessness prevention a priority
- considering eviction as a last resort
- providing support to vulnerable people and addressing financial exclusion
- reducing void and re-let times
- working with LA's on regional and sub regional Choice Based Letting schemes.

Planning Policy Statement 3: At the end of November 2006, the Government published PPS3, which provides a new national policy framework for planning for housing at the local and regional levels. Local Planning Authority's are required to deliver the right quantity of houses to address need and demand in their areas, and the right quality and mix of housing for their communities. The key components of PPS3 are:

- achieving high quality housing through good design.
- achieving a mix of housing for all types of households eg families, single people, older persons both for market and affordable housing
- Local Authorities should set targets for the amount of affordable housing to be provided that meets current and future housing needs.
- delivering high quality affordable housing in rural communities. Local authorities can consider allocating and releasing sites solely for affordable housing in order to enhance or maintain their sustainability.
- effective and efficient use of land – use of brownfield and densities
- providing homes in suitable locations where there is a range of community facilities and good access to jobs, services etc.
- locating housing where it contributes towards sustainable, mixed and inclusive communities in both urban and rural areas.
- giving local authorities the ability to set lower site size thresholds (than the national minimum of 15) where viable and practicable, including in rural areas.

Lyons report was published in March 2007 and centred around the future of local government. The two central themes were “a place shaping role for local government” and finance. The report does have some relevance to housing in that the report recommends that local authorities should have appropriate influence over housing to fulfil their place shaping role. This includes:

- the role of housing in contributing to community cohesion, education attainment and improved health
- the importance of the strategic housing role in shaping the overall housing market (particularly following stock transfer)
- use of public housing and S106 agreements to deliver affordable housing
- working in partnership with, but also monitoring the role of housing providers.

Hills Report looked at the future roles of social housing in England. The report concludes that while social housing plays a crucial role in the lives of nearly four million households, much more needs to be done. The four key areas was the need to:

- increase the attention given to existing homes and current tenants:
- create a better income mix in areas dominated by social housing
- address worklessness and support the livelihoods of tenants; and
- offer a wider range of choices to tenants and others in housing need, but without removing security of tenure.

Although the Council no longer has its own housing stock, there are implications for housing associations operating in the District. This includes giving tenants more of a say in how their housing is run, more support to help tenants get jobs and helping tenants to move to get nearer to work. The report suggests that new affordable housing only represents a fraction of the existing stock of homes and more emphasis needs to be put on existing tenants and communities. The emphasis is that while new social housing is important to meeting housing need we also need to focus on existing stock as well if we are to help create genuinely mixed communities.

Climate Change

In December 2006 the Government published a range of consultation documents relating to climate change as follows:

- Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change
- Code for Sustainable Homes
- Building a Greener Future: Towards Zero Carbon Development

PPS - The Government believes that climate change is the greatest long-term challenge facing the world today. Addressing climate change is therefore the Government's principle concern for sustainable development. The Government has set a target to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050. The role of planning and housing is seen as crucial to deliver this by:

- influencing energy use and emissions by encouraging action by others
- deliver the Government's ambition of zero-carbon development;
- shape sustainable communities that are resilient to climate change
- bring forward investment in renewable and low-carbon technologies
- give local communities real opportunities to influence, and take, action on climate change

The Government is looking to Local Planning Authorities to set policies on the provision of low carbon and renewable sources of energy for new developments built in their area. The aim is to move towards low-carbon living. The document encourages Council's to engage constructively with developers to secure the delivery of sustainable buildings.

Building a Greener Future sets out the Government's vision of developing new homes built to low and zero carbon standards on a large scale. The goal is to achieve zero carbon new homes by 2016. Whilst the amount of new housing as a percentage of the total housing stock is small the homes we build between now and 2050 will account for a third of the total housing stock.

The aim is to deliver improvements energy performance of new homes (compared with existing Building Regulations) of 25% by 2010, 44% by 2013 and zero carbon emissions by 2016.

Code for Sustainable Homes is intended as a single national standard to guide industry in the design and construction of sustainable homes. Housing Associations will have to comply with the Code if they wish to receive grant funding from the Housing Corporation (it replaces the previous Eco Homes Rating).

The Code does not just measure energy ratings but looks at

- energy/CO2
- water
- materials
- surface water run-off
- waste
- pollution
- health and well-being
- management
- ecology

The Code uses a sustainability rating system from one star (which has an 10% energy saving against current building regulations) to a 6 star rating which represents a zero carbon home.

Design and Quality Standards

The Housing Corporation published a Design and Quality Strategy in April 2007. In addition new Design and Quality standards were issued which replace the old Scheme Development Standards that housing associations had to comply with in order to secure grant funding. The focus is on mixed development and mixed communities. Part of this is to ensure that social housing cannot be distinguished from market housing. It is also aimed at speeding up delivery and improving efficiencies. Good house design is deemed as essential if “we want to create areas that are desirable, healthy, safe and better places for people of all ages to live and flourish”. Good house design can also deliver social, economic and environmental benefits.

Housing Corporation

The Housing Corporation published its first rural housing strategy in 2001. In April 2007 this was updated in the light of reports from the Rural Housing Commission and other bodies. The priorities identified by the Corporation are:

- to use resources, skills and influence to provide rural housing;
- work with a range of partners;
- increase the supply of affordable rural housing
- ensure the effective stewardship of the housing that is already in place; and
- enabling housing needs to be met in mixed and sustainable rural communities



The East Hampshire Housing Strategy is for the next five years covering the period 2007 – 2012. The purpose of the Strategy is to guide the Council in its role as provider and enabler of key housing services. The Strategy also draws together the work of a wide range of organisations including the voluntary, public and private sector.

The Strategy has been developed having regard to the national, regional and local context and aims to provide a co-ordinated approach over the coming years.

The Strategy will guide local action by assessing the current and likely future housing issues and needs, establishing the priority areas for action. An Action Plan details the way the Council intends to progress and monitor the identified targets.

The Council views the development of the Strategy as an evolving process and we are looking to continuously improve our approach. If you have any comments or views relating to this document then please email support.team@easthants.gov.uk

Our Key Priorities are:

- Tackling homelessness
- Increasing the supply of affordable housing
- Providing a range and choice of housing
- Promoting a healthy private housing sector
- Deliver sustainable communities