Version 7

HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019-24

INSERT PICTURE

Table of Contents

Foreword by Cllr Mrs Joy Hughes 4
Introduction 5
Strategy Design and Consultation 6
PART 1: THE STRATEGY 8
The Local Picture 9
- Population 9
- Housing Tenure 9
- Indices of Multiple Deprivation 10
- Fuel Poverty 10
- Homelessness 10
- Rough Sleeping 11
- Housing Quality 11
- Health 12

Policy Context 14
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 14
- Housing White Paper 2018: fixing our Housing Market 14
- The Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 15
- Social Housing Green Paper 2018: a 'new deal' for social housing 16
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 16
- The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 17

Local Policy Context 18
Challenges 20
- Reduced Housing Supply across Tenures 20
- Housing Affordability and Access to Private Rented Housing 21
- Private Rented Sector Condition 21
- Welfare Reforms and Social Care Cuts 21
- Homelessness 22
- Temporary Accommodation Use 23
- Rough Sleeping 23

Partnerships and Initiatives 25
Achievements 27
Priorities 30
Resources 31
Monitoring and Updates 32
Conclusion 33
PART 2: THE IMPROVEMENT DELIVERY PLAN 34
Improvement Delivery Plan 35

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Foreword by Cllr Mrs Joy Hughes

I am very pleased to introduce our new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, setting our priorities for affordable housing, homelessness and housing services until 2024.

Housing is a key issue for the District and across the country as access to housing becomes ever more difficult, resulting in increasing numbers of people experiencing homelessness and, in some cases, having to resort to sleeping on the streets. We do not believe that homelessness or rough sleeping is acceptable and are working hard with partners to find solutions and to support people into suitable accommodation.

We recognise that there are many households unable to access the housing market and are working to ensure a range of housing options are available from supported housing options, affordable renting through to home ownership.

Housing delivery is key and this strategy sets out 'Housing Development – focusing on increasing the supply of housing' as its top priority. The delivery of increased numbers of all types of homes, in particular affordable homes, is not without its challenges and, along with our partners we have had to consider some ambitious ideas in order to accelerate the delivery of more housing in the future. We are also committed to dealing with the more urgent issue of access to local temporary accommodation, where homelessness prevention measures have failed, including through the purchase of suitable property.

Although empty homes are not present in particularly high numbers in the district, those that have been empty for a long period may provide an opportunity to bring much needed housing back into use; many see this as part of the solution to increasing housing supply and we will be putting in measures designed to encourage empty home owners to bring these properties up to standard and back into use.

We are also prioritising the development of initiatives to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping; working with partners to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping. Where these measures fail, we will bring forward measures to support people out of homelessness and off the streets, into suitable housing. Often the provision of a 'roof' however is not enough. We must recognise that there are complex reasons that some people find themselves homeless or sleeping on the streets; these can include for example mental health issues and challenges with substance misuse. What is clear is that many homeless households and rough sleepers struggle to effectively access a range of services and the more complex a person's needs are, the more support they are likely to need to move out of homelessness and rebuild their lives. A multi-agency approach is vital and we are committed to working with partners to put appropriate measures in place.

As a council, we are determined to tackle these issues and we will continue to do so in order to provide suitable housing for our residents and improve the quality of life for some of the most vulnerable in our community. This strategy represents our commitment to providing excellent housing services and I thank the many residents and partners who responded to our consultation and helped shape the document and its improvement delivery plan.

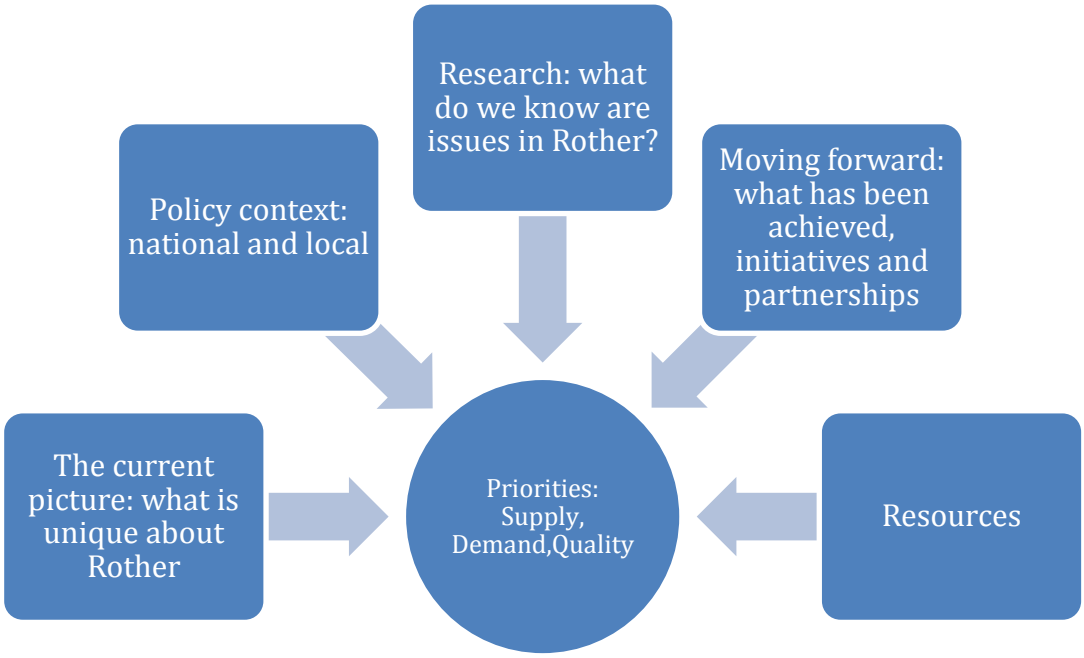
Cllr Mrs Joy Hughes

Cabinet - Portfolio Holder / Spokesperson - Housing, Welfare and Equalities (Including Older People)

Introduction

As a housing authority which does not own or manage its own housing stock, we deliver homes and housing services with the support of a range of partner organisations. We recognise that more can be achieved when we work together towards one common objective: improving the quality of life for our residents.

This document is set out in two parts. Part 1 sets out the current picture in Rother, including the issues and challenges particular to our district. It explains how and why we decided upon the priorities set out in this document.



We have set out priorities in three key areas:

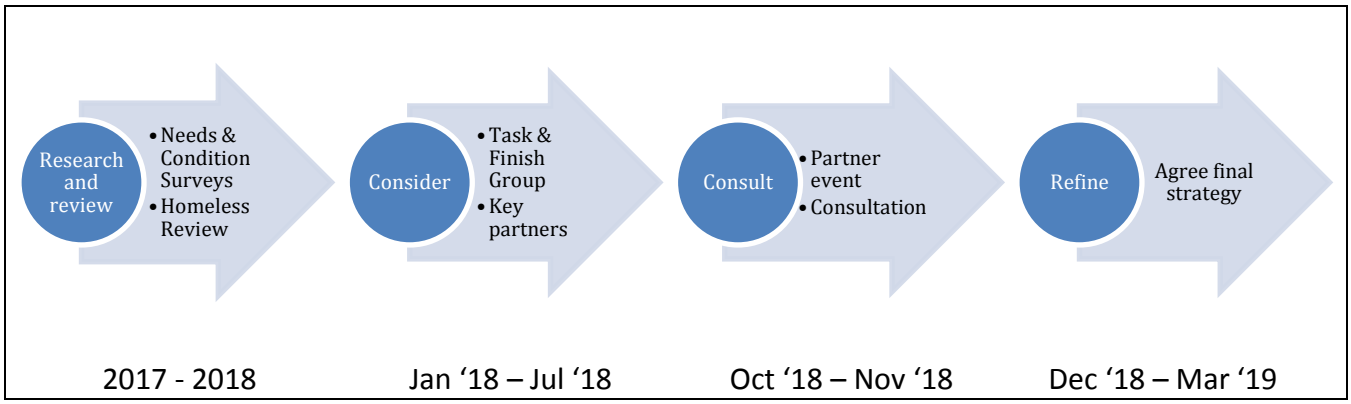
- HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - all types of housing development, with a focus on increasing the supply of affordable housing
- HOUSING NEEDS - focusing on reducing homelessness and rough sleeping
- HOUSING QUALITY - focusing on improving standards in existing housing and ensuring housing is suitable to meet the needs of our residents

Part 2 of this document sets out an improvement delivery plan for the district; a comprehensive set of measureable actions for everyone involved in designing, developing, managing and maintaining Rother's housing: Registered Providers (Housing Associations),

private developers, private landlords, Health, Criminal Justice and Social Care agencies , support providers and the voluntary sector.

Strategy Design and Consultation

The Council recognises that housing issues are causing concerns for residents and impacting service delivery for us and our partners. In order to develop a robust strategy capable of dealing with these issues, a thorough process including extensive research (both practical and desktop), conversations with key partners, and stakeholders as well as public consultation was followed. The process, including its timeline, is set out below.



Details of the strategy development process can be found in this section of the Strategy.

Housing Needs and Stock Condition Surveys

Local authorities have an obligation under the Housing Act 2004 to keep housing conditions in their area under review for all tenures, including private sector housing. The Council undertook a stock condition survey during 2017, in parallel with a resident's survey to establish housing need and aspiration across the district. The results were published in the Rother Strategic Housing Report 2018.

Homelessness Review

A review of homelessness and homelessness services in the Rother District was published in 2018. The review helped us to understand the levels of homelessness, reasons for homelessness and the type of services we need to provide to enable us to support and assist households in the district.

*Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2012 (**SHMA**)*

The housing policies included in the Local Plan are evidenced by a number of back ground papers, to include the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). This research confirms an objective assessment of the need for market and affordable housing in Rother over the next 15 years. The most recent SHMA report undertaken in 2013 identified a need for 6,180 net additional dwellings to meet the demographic trend-based assessment. Of this total need, 1,647 affordable homes were identified over the plan period. The SHMA is due to be updated again during 2019.

Housing Task & Finish Group

This Strategy is the result of extensive research carried out over the last two years into housing needs, homelessness and stock condition. A Housing Task & Finish group was set up

to consider all the findings, with additional information provided by key partners, including housing developers, registered housing providers, the voluntary sector and colleagues from Health services. This helped us to form a set of priorities which we used as a basis for consultation. We worked closely with our key partners in developing this further; seeking views on whether we had the right priorities and how we could deliver on them.

Consultation

Following agreement of the Task & Finish Group's recommendations, a consultation exercise was carried out. This included an on-line consultation and a partner's consultation event including partners from Health, Housing, Social Care, support services and voluntary sectors. All respondents agreed with the three priority themes for the strategy, with attendees at the housing and homelessness conference saying the top priority should be increasing supply of housing (58%); second priority should be reducing demand (tackling homelessness and rough sleeping) (29%) with housing quality being agreed as third priority (13%).

PART 1: THE STRATEGY

The Local Picture

This section of the strategy sets out 'the local picture' in order to provide some context. Understanding the profile of our district and some of the things that make it unique enables us to design initiatives which react to the particular demands in Rother.

Population

According to mid-year estimates (2017) Rother's population has increased to 94,997 from 90,588 since 2011 (Census). Almost half (44,317) live in the main urban town of Bexhill, 4,745 live in Rye, 7,125 live in Battle, with the remaining 38,810 living in the rural villages and hamlets spread throughout the district. The chart below shows we have a higher than average older population, particularly those aged 65+. In fact, 9.24% of Rother's population is aged 80+, almost double the national average (4.96%). The rural spread and age of our population has implications we must consider in terms of the types of housing needed and support services required.

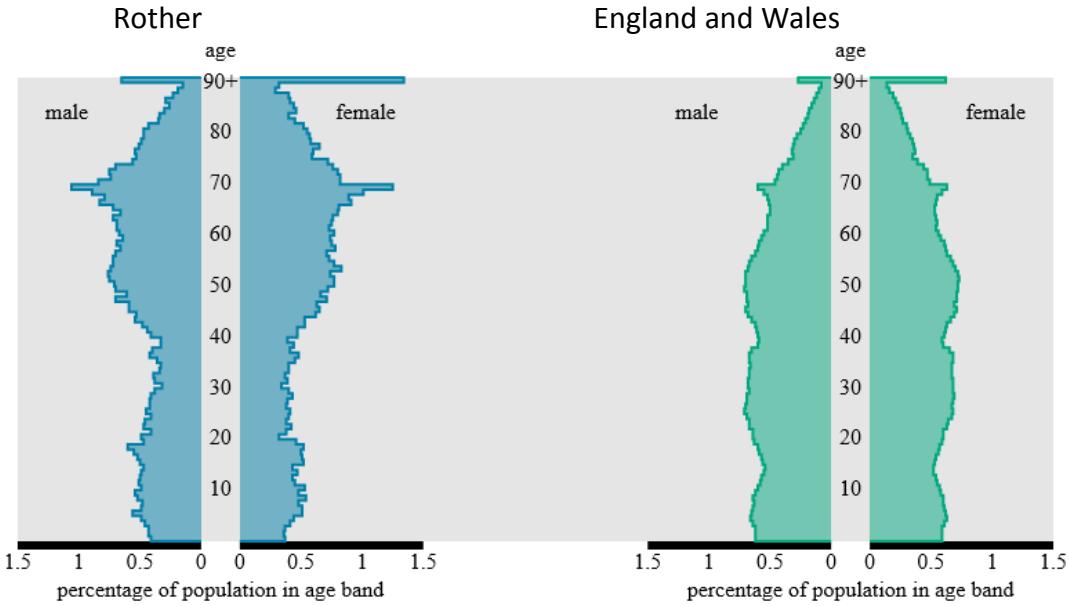


Chart 1: Rother: age of population (Mid-year estimates 2017 Source: ONS)

Housing Tenure

Housing tenure nationally is 63.3% owner occupied; 16.7% private rented; 17.6% social rented. This compares to Rother at 73.5% owner occupied; 14% private rented; and 10.4% social rented. Noticeably the size of the social rented sector in Rother is significantly less than that nationally, which indicates a potential imbalance in housing tenures locally, placing greater pressures on the private rented sector to accommodate our housing need than nationally. At 14% of the total housing stock, although lower than the national average, private rented housing represents a significant portion of the market in Rother, particularly in Bexhill and other smaller urban areas of the district. We are aware that the private rented sector has grown in the last decade and is now likely to be in excess of 14% of the total housing stock in Rother. At the time of the 2001 census there were 4,393 households in the private rented sector in Rother and the 2011 Census confirmed significant growth, indicating that this had risen to 6,356. Access to suitable private rented housing is integral to Rother's approach to preventing homelessness, as access to the social rented sector is so limited.

Indices of Multiple Deprivation

Deprivation is measured in a variety of different ways. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) are widely used to analyse patterns of relative deprivation for small areas and to identify local need. They provide a snapshot of conditions in an area, looking at a range of factors including income, employment, education, health, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime. Whilst most of the district is not particularly affected by deprivation, some areas are in the top 10% and 20% most deprived areas in the country. These include Sidley and Bexhill Central and parts of Eastern Rother and Rye.

Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty refers to a household unable to afford an adequate standard of warmth and pay for other energy bills to maintain their health and wellbeing.

Using the 'Low Income High Costs' definition of fuel poverty adopted by the government in 2013 and excluding social housing stock, overall the results show that 7.7% of households in Rother are in fuel poverty.

Overall there is a slightly higher incidence of fuel poverty in rural than in urban areas, with the highest incidence found in Ticehurst rural.

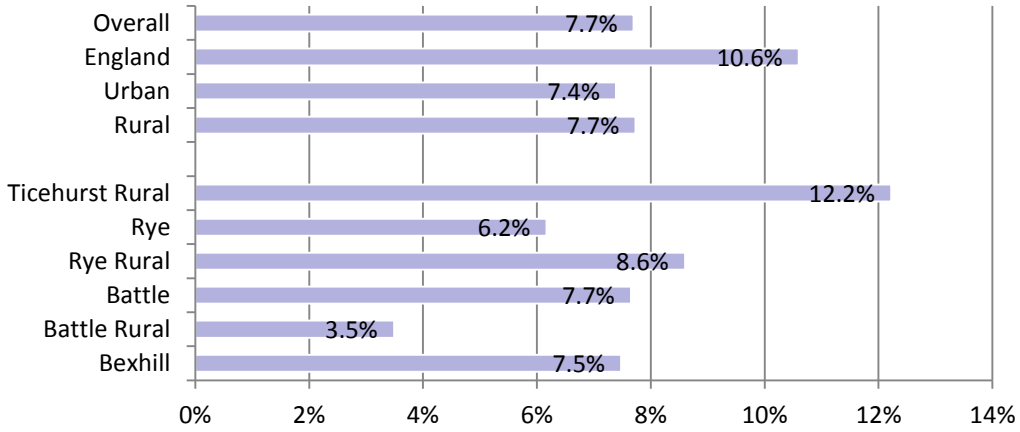


Chart 2: Incidence of fuel poverty by location (SHRP 2017)

Homelessness

Chart 3 (below) shows the number of homeless applications made (decisions made) compared to the number of applications accepted (those being eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need) since 2013/14. Applications have increased during this period, reaching a peak of 199 in 2016/17. During the same period accepted applications have been increasing more rapidly, from a 36% acceptance rate during 2013/14 to a 65% acceptance rate during 2017/18. The rise in overall numbers presenting as homeless could be due in part to the reduced accessibility of private rented accommodation, which is commonly used to prevent homelessness.

The reason for the rise in the number homelessness acceptances could indicate a higher number of vulnerable single people presenting with multiple and complex health needs alongside more families with children experiencing housing difficulty. It should be noted that

changes to homelessness legislation and case law have also contributed to higher rates of homelessness acceptances in recent years.

Year	Homelessness Decisions	Homelessness Accepted	Percentage accepted
2017/18	187	122	65.24%
2016/17	199	110	55.28%
2015/16	178	94	52.81%
2014/15	112	58	51.79%
2013/14	111	40	36.04%

Chart 3: Homelessness application and decision activity by year (P1E)

Rough Sleeping

In July and August 2018 a joint piece of work was carried out between Sussex Police and Rother District Council to identify and verify individuals rough sleeping in Rother. Verification in this case means they had been sighted rough sleeping, locations identified, and their name and personal details were confirmed. Complaints and reports from residents, visitors, police reports, Street Link referrals and other sources were checked and verification or otherwise made.

As a result of this work, we are aware of 12 verified rough sleepers in Rother. Of these 12:

- 6 (50%) had a Rother connection;
- 4 (33%) had a Hastings connection and
- 2 (16%) were from another area

In the same time period Seaview[1] undertook a rough sleeper count in Hastings and verified 3 additional people with a Rother connection rough sleeping in Hastings. Thus making 15 adults with Rother local connection or currently in Rother verified as rough sleeping. A further exercise in Bexhill between September 2018 and December 2018 verified a total of 19 different individuals rough sleeping over the four month period.

Nationally 14% of the total number of rough sleepers identified were women. The South East of England reported the largest number of women sleeping rough and we are aware that currently 25% of Rother rough sleepers are women.

Housing Quality

The overall proportion of dwellings with a Category 1 hazard in the district is 18.5%, which represents a total of around 7,210 dwellings. This compares with 13.2% of dwellings across England. The most prominent Category 1 hazards identified are excess cold (8.1%) and falls on stairs (6.7%), as illustrated in Chart 4 (below).

[1] Seaview are a voluntary sector initiative supporting vulnerable people.

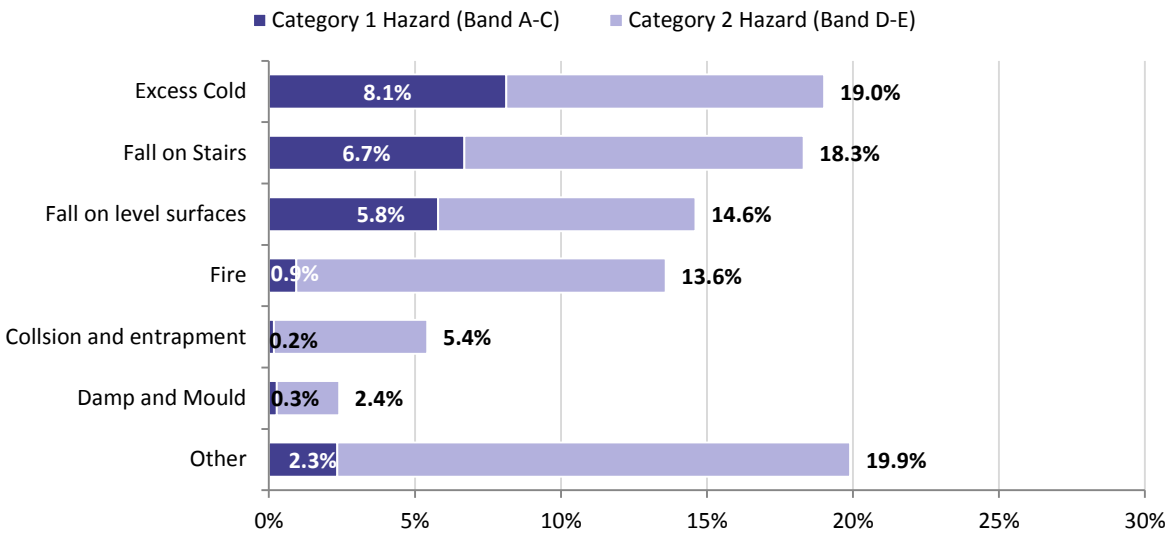


Chart 4: Reasons for failure by Category 1 and Category 2 hazards (SHRP 2017)

Health

Rother has significantly higher levels of people with long term health problems or a disability than seen nationally. See chart 5 below.

Type	People with long-term health problem or disability	Day-to-day activities limited a little	Day-to-day activities limited a lot	People without long-term health problem or disability
England and Wales	17.9	9.4	8.5	82.1
South East	15.7	8.8	6.9	84.3
Rother	23.4	12.8	10.7	76.6

Chart 5: Percentage of Residents with limiting long-term illness (Census 2011)

A breakdown of the above data by ward areas shows the highest levels of long-term illness and disability are in Bexhill Wards (Chart 6 below).

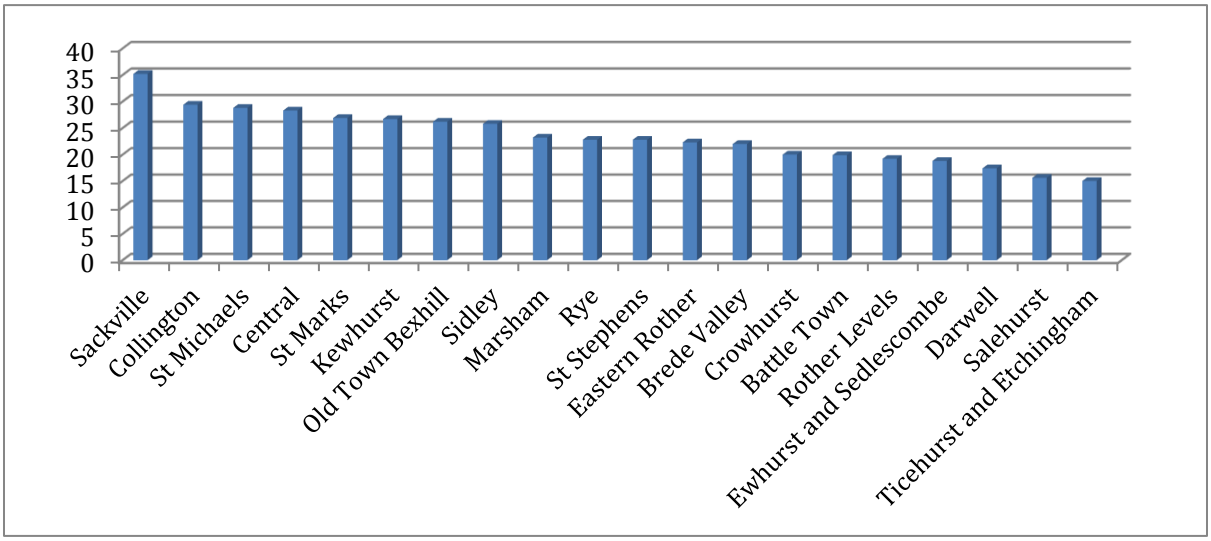


Chart 6:Percentage of Residents with limiting long-term illness broken down by Rother ward (Census 2011)

High numbers of households with long term health problems and disabilities will add pressure to existing services, and housing provision; careful planning is required to ensure the needs of all types of households are met on new build housing development.

Policy Context

A number of national housing related policies and legislation have come into place since our previous Strategy, all of which provide some context for this strategy. Government policy is currently focused on homelessness, housing delivery, rough sleeping and housing standards. Recent legislative and policy developments include:

- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Housing White Paper 2017: fixing our broken housing market
- The Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018
- Social Housing Green Paper 2018: a 'new deal' for social housing
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Homelessness Reduction Bill was first presented to Parliament by way of Private Members Bill, based on a report commissioned by the charity Crisis. The aim of the Act is to reform existing local authority housing duties to enable quicker assistance to potentially homeless households and reduce homelessness.

The Act has changed the meaning of 'threatened with homelessness' as a means to achieve this, enabling more people to access support and assistance at an earlier stage. The Act sets out a number of additional duties on local housing authorities and their partners, including a 'Duty to refer'– This requires public authorities to notify a local housing authority of service users they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The Government recognised there would be resourcing implications for local authorities associated with the new Act. They allocated some £72m of new burdens funding for local government in order to support the Act. For Rother this translates into a grant of £128,000 to cover the three years, 2017/18 to 2019/20. This is to meet all costs arising from the new duties, including any additional staffing, ICT and operating costs.

It is becoming clear there is significant impact from delivering these new duties. In particular, access to emergency B&B and temporary accommodation – duties to place more clients (some with very complex needs) in accommodation to which we have limited access, and lack of move on accommodation has resulted in more families being placed further outside of the district and spending longer periods of time in this type of accommodation before appropriate suitable accommodation can be found.

Housing White Paper 2018: fixing our Housing Market

The proposals set out in this paper cover four areas:

<u>Planning for the right homes in the right place</u>

This sets out the Government's intention to tackle the housing crisis through Planning Policy and Local Authority changes

Building homes faster

This sets out the Government's intention to tackling larger developers, and some of the reasons for delays, including utility company delays and land banking.

Diversifying the market

This sets out the Government's intention to encourage community involvement, smaller developments and innovative delivery particularly by encouraging smaller developers.

Helping people now

This includes amendments to national planning policy to encourage more shared ownership (part rent, part buy). A number of other proposals include extending Right to Buy discounts and doubling the size of the Rough Sleeping Fund.

Affordable housing delivery has in recent years tended to focus on increasing home ownership opportunities, through support for shared ownership (part buy, part rent), starter homes initiatives, right to buy for housing association tenants and custom build.

Growing pressure for affordable rented homes has been recognised and funding is increasingly being made available for affordable rented housing, with opportunities being made available to local authorities to resume house-building programmes. In addition, Rother's Housing Needs Survey also demonstrated some need for shared ownership properties and the need for increased levels of affordable rented and shared ownership accommodation is clear, with many households unable to afford private sector rents or unable to purchase their own homes.

Additionally, the government have supported Community Led Housing (CLH) initiatives with funding available from tax raised through second home purchases. This has enabled the development of a number of organisations whose aim is to support the start-up of community groups whose objectives include the development of affordable housing to meet needs within their own communities. One of these groups is set up in Sussex – The Sussex Community Housing Hub; the Council have provided some of it Community Led Housing Fund to support this organisation, along with other housing authorities in Sussex.

The Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018

The Rough Sleeping Strategy is a wide ranging document which lays out the government's plans to help people who are sleeping rough now and to put in place the structures to halve rough sleeping numbers by 2022 end rough sleeping for good by 2027. In the Strategy, the Government set out their 2027 vision:

'Our vision is that by 2027 all parts of central and local government, in partnership with business, the public and wider society are working together to ensure that no-one has to experience rough sleeping again.'

The Strategy is based around three core pillars: Prevention, Intervention and Recovery. Prevention puts the focus on providing timely support before someone becomes homeless, for example ensuring that no-one leaves prison without suitable accommodation in place.

The second pillar, Intervention, sets out how people will be helped who are already in crisis, ensuring they receive swift, targeted support to get them off the streets. Recovery sets out how people will be supported to find a new home quickly and rebuild their lives via a new rapid rehousing approach.

For local housing authorities comes a requirement to include a strategy for dealing with rough sleeping in their area. We have included this within our Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy. Details of our approach to tackling rough sleeping can be found in the Priorities section on page 28.

Social Housing Green Paper 2018: a 'new deal' for social housing

Published in August 2018, the paper aims to rebalance the relationship between social landlords and residents, tackle stigma and ensure social housing can act as a stable base and support social mobility. It is, in the main, aimed at social housing providers.

The green paper sets out 5 core themes:

Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities

The aim is to break down inequalities in social housing and ensure tenants feel at home in their community rather than seeing it as just a place to live. A particular focus is on design and quality of homes and their surrounding area.

Expanding supply and supporting home ownership

This is in line with the government's commitment to deliver 300,000 homes per year by the mid-2020s, processes are being put in place to support the building of more social housing. This includes building on the new borrowing capacity granted to local authorities, by considering granting flexibilities around how money raised by right to buy can be used. The government is also working with a number of housing associations to put in place funding certainty over a longer period. This has resulted in strategic partnerships between two providers currently working within Rother – Optivo and Orbit Housing Association.

Effective resolution of complaints

The paper sets out how the current complaints process can be reformed so that it is quicker and easier; especially important when dealing with safety concerns.

Empowering residents and strengthening the regulator

A proposal to review the regulatory framework in place for housing associations to ensure that good quality and safe social homes with the right services are delivered.

Ensuring homes are safe and decent

The paper outlines progress which has been made on improving standards of decency, after the Grenfell tragedy. Proposals are set out on how the Decent Homes Standard should be reviewed to ensure it delivers the right standards for social housing residents.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF is the overarching planning document detailing the governments planning policies for England. Planning law requires that all local authorities must determine planning applications for housing and other development in accordance with their Local Plans. The NPPF provides a framework for producing these Plans, which local authorities must have regard to. The NPPF was recently updated in July 2018.

The main aim of the NPPF and planning system is to achieve sustainable development and this can be summarised as '….meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. To achieve this NPPF requires that plans are prepared on the basis of three principal objectives to include economic, social and environmental objectives.

The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018

The Government recently passed legislation to allow Council to apply a higher long term empty premium to council tax charges for empty properties. The rationale for the change is to encourage empty homes back into use. The current premium of 50% did have some success nationally of reducing the long term empty properties and the Government now wish to take this further.

Local Policy Context

A number of local policies, strategies, and plans have been taken into account through the development of this strategy, in particular:

- Corporate Plan
- Local Plan
- Neighbourhood Plans

A noticeable increase in rough sleeping, particularly in Bexhill has already led to a review of the Council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP). This, together with the documents above are summarised below.

Corporate Plan

The Council's vision, set out in its Corporate Plan, is:

Rother district will be recognised for its high quality of life, as a place where there is a strong emphasis on community and neighbourhoods. This will be achieved by continuing to support and further encourage the development of vibrant, strong, safe and inclusive communities.

- We want to see greater economic prosperity through the emergence of an educated and skilled workforce in well paid employment.
- We want to see individuals and groups and local communities able to take on more responsibilities.
- We want Rother to be a place that is able to attract and retain young people.
- We want to encourage a local identity that welcomes all people.
- We want to tackle deprivation.
- We want to retain confidence in public safety.
- We want our residents to be housed in homes that are warm and have modern facilities.
- We want our residents to have the opportunity of being pro-active in sport as well as cultural activities leading to a greater community spirit and a healthy lifestyle for everyone.
- We want to see our outstanding countryside and coastline carefully managed, conserved and promoted for their contribution to our quality of life.
- We want to see a range of transport options which meet the needs of people living, visiting and working in the district.

The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy is aligned with the Council's Corporate vision, in particular with regard to ensuring its residents are housed in decent homes; more broadly, the Strategy contributes to a number of other Corporate priorities in relation to tackling inequalities, isolation and deprivation; greater economic prosperity and creating a place with greater vibrancy with a more youthful demographic profile.

Local Plan

Local Plans provide the basis for delivering the spatial planning strategy of the district and guide future development and change.

The Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) Plans forms the next key stage of the Local Plan, which allocates sites for particular uses to include suitable housing sites. Additionally, the DaSA introduces more detailed policies for the effective management of development in

relation to key issues. The latest proposed submission of the DaSA Local Plan and supporting documents will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination during 2019, with the view to becoming adopted by August 2019.

For Rother, the Local Plan requires 5,700 homes to be built by 2028. This equates to some 335 homes per year, however, due to underdevelopment this figure is now 449 per year.

The main emerging planning policy proposed in the DaSA relevant to the delivery of affordable housing in the district concerns Policy DHG1: Affordable Housing. In summary this policy requires between 30% to 40% (dependent on area) onsite affordable housing provision on applicable housing sites, or mixed used developments. The DaSA also introduces new and improved policies relating to space and accessible and adaptable homes.

Additionally Policy DHG2: Rural Exception Sites provides scope for planning permission of small scale rural housing schemes, in exceptional circumstances outside of or adjoining the development boundary where there is a demonstrated need and where such schemes are supported.

Neighbourhood Plans

The Localism Act (2011) introduced several new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development, including the provision to prepare a 'Neighbourhood Plan' for their area. A neighbourhood plan can set out policies for the location of houses, shops, and offices, or set design standards for new development. Preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan is optional to a Parish or Town Council and the plans must be in general conformity with the councils Local Planning policies.

Like Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans are statutory plans and once adopted, will form part of the statutory Development Plan used for determining planning applications within the respective designated Neighbourhood Areas. So far in Rother, there are two adopted Neighbourhood Plans to include Robertsbridge and Sedlescombe, with a further 9 in preparation.

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

The SWEP is initiated whenever there are forecast ‘feels like’ temperatures of 0 degrees or below or other types of extreme weather. The Council informs services including the outreach service of the SWEP having been activated. Under SWEP anyone thought to be rough sleeping in the Rother area is accommodated in B&B or a temporary night shelter until temperatures or any severe weather improves.

Challenges

This Strategy aims to take forward measures which will improve housing provision and services for residents in Rother. This section of the Strategy sets out the challenges we know are issues for Rother, which we have considered throughout the research and consultation process and in developing this strategy and its delivery plan.

Reduced Housing Supply across Tenures

Over several years and successive governments there has been a policy move away from social housing provision towards forms of home ownership. In the main, Local Authorities are no longer developing council housing and 'Right to Buy' has been reducing the availability of existing affordable housing since the 1980s. Government grants for affordable housing tend to be aimed at the delivery of shared ownership and other forms of home ownership such as Starter Homes, which has resulted in the reduced supply of affordable rented accommodation locally.

A significant portion of affordable housing delivery is dependent on the delivery of private housing schemes. Although housing delivery for all tenures is increasing, it does not meet the expected Local Plan targets. Chart 2 below shows housing delivery compared to the Local Plan target, broken down by private and affordable housing. The trends in housing delivery in Rother are similar to national trends, showing the ebb and flow of the housing market through economic boom and crash.

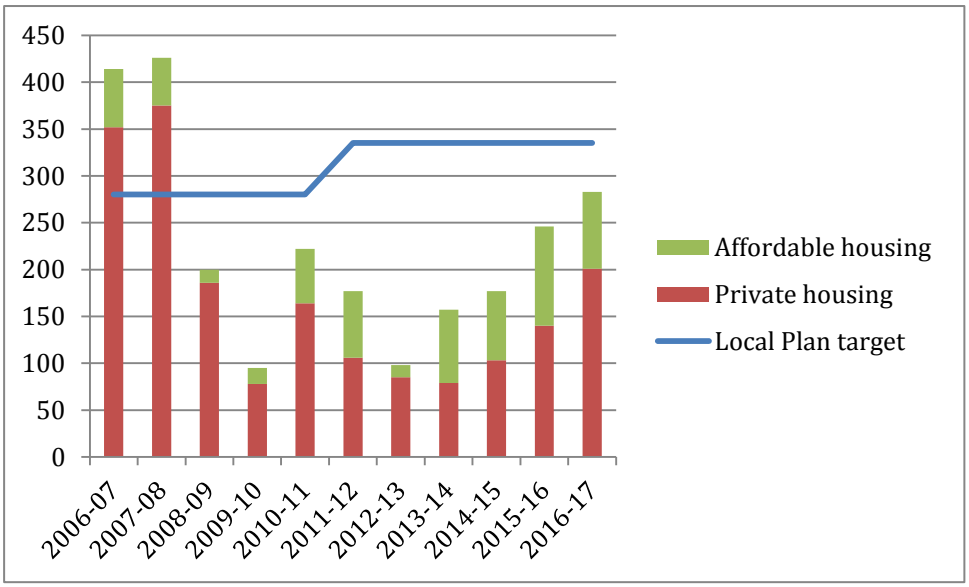


Chart 7: Housing delivery, compared to Local Plan target 2006/07 – 2016/17

Local challenges to housing delivery include land supply and delivery issues, as well as, in some instances, costly infrastructure leading to stalled sites. Compounding these issues is the lack of large scale development opportunities in the district, as over 82% is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with significant environmental constraints.

In terms of meeting particular housing needs, a lack of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is apparent locally; this type of housing traditionally suits single households. Access to well managed HMO accommodation is vital to meet the growing numbers of single young people

affected by changes to housing benefit rules – single room rates being the available housing benefit for single people under the age of 35 (with some exceptions for the most vulnerable). Other apparent local issues include the lack of opportunity for first time buyers to access suitable affordable home ownership options.

Due to the nature of the district, some areas are impacted by second and holiday homes, reducing supply even further and driving up the cost of housing resulting in less housing stock being available for local people. The rise of platforms such as Air B&B are an emerging factor compounding this trend as, increasingly, second homes are taken out of the private rented sector and rented out to holiday makers.

Housing Affordability and Access to Private Rented Housing

Changes to the funding of new build affordable housing requires Registered Providers (Housing Associations) to move away from providing 'social rented' homes (60% market rent) to 'affordable rented' homes (up to 80% market rent) which has had an impact for those on low incomes being able to afford social housing.

Private rented housing is also under pressure. Although as a sector it is growing, it is still unaffordable to many as the supply is not keeping up with demand and local housing allowance (LHA) rates have been subject to a freeze since April 2016. The policy of actively excluding households claiming benefits from being able to rent privately is increasingly common place in the private rented sector. This policy of excluding many benefit dependent households from the private rented sector is due, in part, to an increase in younger working people renting later into their lives. This group are, in turn, increasingly excluded from home ownership as lending criteria has become more restrictive since the economic crash of 2008.

Dwindling access to private rented homes for low income households and reduced access to home ownership for younger professionals creates a perfect storm of challenges for Councils trying to prevent homelessness. Access to private rented and low cost ownership homes is key to preventing homelessness, in light of increasing competition for tenancies in the private rented sector, reducing social housing stock, low social housing delivery rates and a low turnover of vacant social housing tenancies.

Private Rented Sector Condition

The 'high demand, low supply' challenges in the private rented sector creates an environment where some landlords have no incentive to provide good quality accommodation and many tenants feel unable to complain about issues in their home including damp, disrepair and excess cold.

Welfare Reforms and Social Care Cuts

Some of the recent changes to welfare benefits have had the effect of reducing the incomes of many households on low incomes, making access to housing more difficult. In particular the introduction of Universal Credit to the Rother area in 2016 has compounded a range of earlier reforms to benefits in 2012 and 2016.These include:

- A freeze on Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates

- A freeze on Benefit rates
- Single room rate for under 35s
- The Benefit Cap from £26,000 a year to £20,000 a year
- Reduced Working Tax Credits
- Reduced Employment and Support Allowance

The reduced incomes experienced by low income households has widened the gap between household incomes and market rents, restricting further the accessibility of the private rented sector. There has been a growing trend in recent years of younger single people under thirty-five relying on shared accommodation as their only affordable housing option as they are not able to claim the one bedroom LHA rate. There are particular challenges in meeting the growing demand for shared houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) due to planning restrictions on their development in central Bexhill.

In parallel to Welfare Reform we have experienced significant budget reductions to Local Government both in Rother and services delivered by East Sussex County Council. In particular, the recent decision to reduce the budgets of the Home Works floating support service, which delivers housing related support to people in their homes, has been significant. In addition, the reduced budgets for supported accommodation have also had a detrimental effect. The reductions to budgets seen have reduced the number of households in difficulty able to access the support they need to prevent their homelessness or access new housing solutions. Commissioning partners need to bring forward solutions that meet the growing demand for housing related support services and accommodation-based support units at a time when funding for such services is being reduced.

Homelessness

Across the South East there is a significant and growing shortfall in the availability of genuinely affordable accommodation for those who are least able to afford it. The key challenges facing those trying to access accommodation are:

- Increased competition for private rented accommodation resulting in higher rents and greater reluctance from landlords to take on higher risk tenants
- Reduced vacancies and higher rents in Social Housing
- Lower levels of new Social Housing supply, particularly at affordable rents
- Lower levels of welfare benefit support

-Low Income Households

The main reason for homelessness seen by the Council is the loss of an assured short hold tenancy in the private rented sector, accounting for between 40% and 50% of total homelessness applications in 2017. This situation highlights the challenges faced by households struggling to afford accommodation in the private sector as incomes fail to keep pace with rising average rents.

It is also important to note an emerging trend in homelessness applications from those whose parents or other family members are unable to accommodate them. In 2016 homelessness presentations for this reason accounted for 18% of the total number, rising to 27% of the total in 2017.

-Younger people

With these two main reasons for homelessness in mind, it is perhaps unsurprising that the two main groups approaching the Council as homeless, relative to the proportion seen in the general population, are younger households aged 16 to 24 and 25 to 44. These groups are more likely to be in less secure housing situations, living with family and friends or renting in the private sector. It is also relevant to note that all the older age groups are under-represented in the homelessness data – relative to their distribution in the general population - especially those over 60.

-Single-parent households

It is also striking to note that 57% of all homelessness acceptances are from households comprised of a single mother with children. The Council is committed to designing housing solutions which deliver security and stability to young families and aim to bring forward a range of initiatives designed to enable low income single-parent families, in particular mothers, to better access employment, improve their incomes and afford accommodation which meets their needs and in which they can thrive.

Temporary Accommodation Use

Increasingly, households have to be placed in B&B accommodation outside the District. This practice compounds the negative impact of homelessness on the health and wellbeing of adults and children as households are placed further away from their families, support networks, schools and places of work.

The targeted and measured investment of resources into homelessness prevention interventions can increase the number of households which can be prevented from becoming homeless and reduce these negative impacts on them. The investment of resources into activity which improves the rate of homelessness prevention also avoids greater costs to the Council associated with B&B provision.

Rough Sleeping

There has been a significant increase in rough sleeping in Bexhill, from four on any one night in 2017 to 8 in 2018. Bexhill verified a total of 19 individuals rough sleeping between September and December 2018.

The needs of rough sleepers are multiple and complex. The challenges faced by services attempting to support individuals relate to a range of factors not directly related to an absence of housing. While the Council has brought forward a number of new initiatives in recent years to better meet the growing demand from rough sleepers in the district, more needs to be done to tackle the issue and improve the rough sleeper accommodation pathway. The Council is committed to working with its partners to find holistic solutions which provide specialist and bespoke support solutions to individual rough sleepers from across sectors. The gaps in current service provision locally include:

- A shortfall in the resources required to provide the levels of support necessary to effectively engage with individuals.
- Community-based settings which are accessible to rough sleepers and through which essential health, housing and social care interventions can be delivered.

- No short-term accommodation that is accessible to rough sleepers
- No longer-term supported housing solutions which are suitable to those experiencing multiple complex needs.

Partnerships and Initiatives

The way local government must function following austerity measures and the drive to become 'self-sufficient' by 2020 have resulted in a change to the way in which initiatives are delivered with much more emphasis on partnership working. Rother have worked hard to ensure these are in place, but recognise the need for further work. A summary of the partnerships and initiatives in place is set out below.

Sussex Rough Sleeping Prevention Project

Rother is one of 13 local authorities delivering this service across East and West Sussex. Workers target intensive levels of support at insecurely housed individuals who are assessed as being at high risk of rough sleeping. The service successfully delivers 100 preventions annually across East Sussex.

Rough Sleeping Initiative and Housing First

Hastings and Eastbourne Borough Councils have been awarded £664,000 of additional funding during 2018/19 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to significantly reduce rough sleeping this winter. Rother Council is a partner to the successful bid and those rough sleepers with a local connection to Rother are eligible to a range of new services, including:

- A new dedicated multi-disciplinary team from across health, social care, mental health, housing and drug and alcohol services
- An East Sussex Rough Sleeping Coordinator
- An 8 bed Assessment Centre in Hastings
- 20 new Housing First units

East Sussex Better Together

The East Sussex Better Together (ESBT) Alliance are a partnership of organisations working together to plan and deliver health and care in Eastbourne, Hailsham, Seaford, Hastings, Rother and surrounding areas. By working together, they aim to deliver sustainable health and social care that better meets the needs of local people, offering high quality care at the right time, in the right place.

Aims are to:

- Improve the health and wellbeing of the local population
- Improve care, quality and experience
- Restore and maintain financial balance within our system

The partnership is focused on outcomes:

- People remain independently at home with less need for formal interventions
- People report enhanced health and wellbeing and quality of life
- Population health is improved and health inequalities are reduced

The partnership shared agenda includes leading on or supporting the following initiatives:

- Redesign of floating support services
- Co-location and 'virtual hubs'
- Home adaptations and equipment
- Development of Extra Care Housing and supported housing solutions

- Rough Sleeping Housing First Initiative
- Supply of bedded care

Health & Wellbeing Hubs

The development of the Health & Wellbeing hubs are part of 'Healthy Hastings and Rother', a scheme that was set up to tackle health inequalities in the area. This is part of the wider East Sussex Better Together (ESBT) programme, which is transforming and integrating health and care to achieve the best possible services for local people.

The hubs are designed to help local people and communities to improve and manage their health and wellbeing by giving them access to information, sign-posting and support in one convenient place. They are the result of extensive partnership work between the CCG's Healthy Hastings and Rother team, the local voluntary and community sector, Hastings Borough Council, Rother District Council and East Sussex County Council.

There are two hubs in Bexhill; one at the Charter Centre in London Road, and another at the Pelham in Sidley.

Safe Space

The Homelessness Unity Group has established a pilot service delivering a safe and accessible space to rough sleepers through which vital services can be delivered, once a week. The Council ensures its Rough Sleeping Housing Officer is present at the weekly Safe Space sessions. The Council is committed to supporting the sustained delivery of the service in the longer-term.

The Rough Sleeping Outreach Service

This service is funded by the Council and delivered by the Seaview Project. The service carries out proactive outreach work, generally between 5am and 7am, to identify rough sleepers and offer appropriate interventions, including reconnections.

The Rough Sleeping Provision Multi Agency Group

The group is made up of partners from Rother District Council, Sussex Police and the Homelessness Unity Group (HUG). The group has been formed in response to the rising number of rough sleepers. Partners are committed to developing a range of new initiatives to improve outcomes for these groups through a combination of support and proportionate enforcement measures.

Rother Local Strategic Partnership (RLSP)

The primary aim of the Rother Local Strategic Partnership (RLSP) is to work with the Rother community and others to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Rother community and the quality of life of residents.

The RLSP is a voluntary framework for local co-operation; its membership includes Rother District Council, Sussex Police, East Sussex County Council, Health (Clinical Commissioning Group – CCG) and representatives from the voluntary, transport, Business and education sectors.

Since 2016, the RLSP have chosen to focus on Housing and supporting vulnerable people in recognition that these are areas that require a partnership approach if issues are to be tackled effectively.

East Sussex Energy Partnership and Fuel Poverty Reduction Programme

Rother District council is a member of the East Sussex Energy Partnership. The local councils in East Sussex formed the Partnership in 2007 to promote home energy efficiency, insulation and renewable measures. The Partnership aims to help to protect individuals and communities in East Sussex from the effects of living in a cold home.

East Sussex Housing Officers Group

The East Sussex Housing Officer Group (ESHOG) is comprised of Heads of Housing from the 5 district and borough councils in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove City Council, alongside key strategic representatives from local Registered Providers, Homes England, the National Housing Federation, the Local Enterprise Partnership and key East Sussex County Council Social Care and Health partners.

The group provides a vehicle for local strategic housing and social care partners to engage positively with wider regional and national housing partners, towards the development of solutions which meet national housing targets and aspirations. Alongside its core functions in coordinating the delivery of housing locally, ESHOG continues to be a key partner in the development of innovative housing and support solutions which include the coordinated commissioning of county-wide support for a range of vulnerable groups including the homeless, older people and care leavers, for example.

Achievements

During the lifetime of the current Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2014-19, significant work has been carried out to alleviate some of the issues described within this strategy.

Temporary Accommodation

Whilst the use of temporary accommodation has increased in line with homelessness, the Council have undertaken robust targeting of homelessness prevention activity and this is impacting temporary accommodation levels. This work has included providing loans to those traditionally seen as ‘intentionally homeless’.

Homelessness

2018 saw additional staffing resource into the council’s Housing Needs team, including additional housing needs officers and a specialist officer whose work is focused on alleviating rough sleeping in the district.

Tackling Rough Sleeping; working with the voluntary sector

Much work has been done in partnership with voluntary sector groups, particularly Homelessness Unity Group (HUG); this includes putting in place processes for identifying rough sleepers in Bexhill with the aim of providing long term housing and support solutions. Additionally, a revised Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) was designed with key partners, including HUG – this protocol sets out a process for ensuring rough sleepers are placed into accommodation during periods of severe weather.

Empty Homes

An on-line system for reporting empty properties to the council is in place. This allows members of the public to inform the council of empty properties that are causing issues within a community in order that we can take targeted action against the owners.

Affordable Housing

Whilst the delivery of affordable housing is not currently meeting ever increasing needs in the District, completion levels have been increasing consistently since 2012/13 (see chart 7, below) and work continues in partnership with our registered provider and development partners. The actions outlined in this Strategy's delivery plan will ensure this on-going increasing trend.

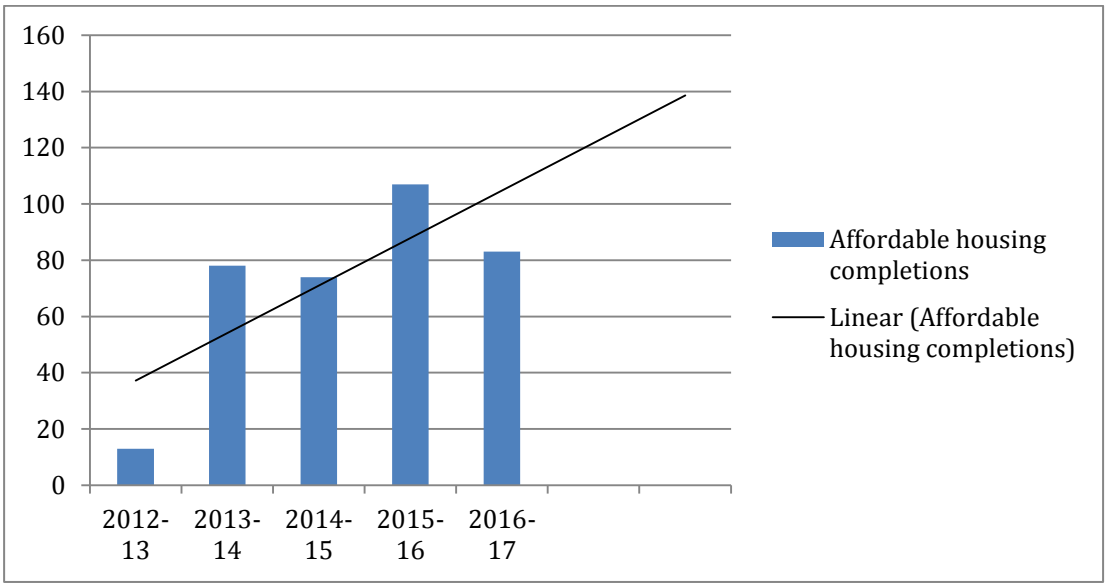


Chart 7: Annual affordable housing delivery

We have been working closely with Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS) and community groups to take forward community led housing initiatives in the district. This work is on-going and we expect to see a number of housing schemes taken forward during the lifetime of this strategy as a result of this work.

General Needs Homes

While the Local Plan target is not being achieved, there has been recent growth since 2012/13 showing an upward trend in general needs housing development, as can be seen on chart 7, page 20 of this document.

Priorities

The priorities for this strategy fall into three areas, or 'themes':

Theme 1: Addressing Supply – Housing Development

Support the provision of well designed homes, across all tenures, that are affordable, sustainable and suitable for people's needs; bring into use long term empty homes

This strategy and the previous research we have undertaken clearly show that a lack of adequate housing supply is a major issue within the Rother district. This, together with having low levels of social housing stock and affordable home ownership options - has driven excessive demand for private rented accommodation making it unaffordable and inaccessible to many. This issue requires tackling as the top priority within this strategy.

Theme 2: Addressing Housing Needs – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Work with partners to reduce homelessness by meeting the housing and support needs of those who are homeless or at risk of or homelessness, including rough sleepers

The rise in homelessness, temporary accommodation use and rough sleeping across the district is well documented. This is a key area of work for the Council and its partners, in particular to improve homelessness prevention rates and reduce levels of homelessness, alongside a key local priority to reduce rough sleeping in line with the Governments targets – to halve by 2022 and eliminate by 2027.

Theme 3: Addressing Quality Issues – Poor Quality and Unsuitable Housing

Address fuel poverty issues and improve the quality and suitability of housing in the district

Data on the profile of the district shows we have higher than average levels of older people, people with long term illnesses and disabilities than is typical. We are also aware that excess cold is the top reason for category one hazards in homes across the district. Fuel poverty is an issue for many, particularly in rural areas.

In order to deliver on these objectives, a delivery plan has been agreed. This sets out actions required and includes timeframes and is attached at Part 2.

Resources

The table below sets out the capital grant or loans available to the Council for delivery of our key objectives.

Objective	Funding	Source	Purpose
Addressing supply: Meeting housing need	Social Housing grant	Central Government, administered by Homes England	Ring fenced for the development of affordable housing.
	Private developer/Section 106 contributions/ Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	Developer contributions	Ring fenced for the development of affordable housing. CIL is ring fenced to help with major infrastructure requirements to support housing growth.
	Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)	National Loans Fund	Increase the development of affordable housing (purchasing and developing housing, in some cases using CPO powers)
	Community Housing Fund	Central Government administered by Homes England	Capital funding available to support local community groups to deliver affordable homes to meet the needs of their communities
Addressing demand: Homelessness and rough sleeping	Flexible Homelessness Support Grant	Central Government, administered by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)	Ring fenced for homelessness prevention activity.
	Sussex Rough Sleeping Prevention Project	Central Government, administered by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)	Reducing the flow of new rough sleepers to the street, through more targeted prevention activity aimed at those at imminent risk of rough sleeping. The service is delivered between 13 local authority areas across East and West Sussex.
	Discretionary Housing Benefit	Central Government grant	To help people pay housing costs over and above entitlement where there may be hardship e.g. to help people manage benefit reductions due to welfare reform measures.
Addressing quality: Unsuitable housing	Disabled facilities grant	Central Government administered by ESCC and delivered through district/borough councils	To fund aids and adaptations for people with disabilities.

Monitoring and Updates

Delivery of this strategy will be monitored via a multi-agency monitoring framework approach which will include the following key partners, and an annual update will be available on the Council's website. The key partners included on multi-agency monitoring framework include:

Optivo Housing Association
Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
Sussex Police
East Sussex County Council
East Sussex Fire & Rescue
Rother Voluntary Action
Homes England
Brighton Housing Trust
Department for Welfare & Pensions (DWP)
Homelessness Unity Group

(Logos to be added in final design)

Conclusion

Rother continues to be an attractive, vibrant and desirable place to live and work. However, there are clearly a number of both longstanding and emerging challenges related to lack of adequate housing supply that meets the housing aspirations of all sections of our community. The lack of adequate housing supply across tenures must be addressed if we are to effectively reduce the symptoms of increased levels of housing insecurity, homelessness and rough sleeping, as well an increasing level of households unable to access home ownership. Rother has a unique set of circumstances which set it apart from many other areas and these present us with challenges which have to inform solutions tailored to the different types of need within the district. In terms of the profile of the district, we have much higher than average levels of older people; and there is a clear tenure imbalance. In addition, we are an increasingly polarised district when it comes to levels of income and household assets: despite the fact that Rother includes some of the most affluent wards in the country there are a number of wards which are in the top most deprived in the U.K.

National policy relating to homelessness has changed significantly since our previous strategy was developed; in part to deal with the impact of conditions caused by welfare benefit changes and austerity cuts – compounding a lack of adequate housing supply. The budget reductions experienced by local government services has been most acutely felt across support and care services. It is perhaps an inevitable consequence of the reduction in incomes for benefit dependent households and lower levels of funding for preventative support services that we are seeing a rise in homelessness and rough sleeping. The Government have increased pressure on local housing authorities to intervene and provide support and assistance to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage than previously, including widening the groups to whom we now have a duty to assist. The Council recognises that a fresh approach is required to find effective solutions to these challenges and we are committed to continuing to take forward innovative ways of working, tailored to local circumstances, to ensure all sections of the community can realise their housing aspirations and levels of homelessness can be effectively reduced.

Our Improvement Delivery Plan, set out in part 2, sets out the actions we will take forward, as a local authority or in partnership with others, to tackle the issues described in this strategy. Measureable targets allow us to monitor and report on the success of our plan, and this will be done on an annual basis, through our multi-agency monitoring framework, as described in the previous section.

PART 2: THE IMPROVEMENT DELIVERY PLAN

Improvement Delivery Plan

PRIORITY 1: INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING				
Objective	**Action**	**Outcome and Timeframe**	**Target**	**Lead**
1.1 Increase the development of housing	• Purchase or develop new housing on Council owned surplus land (where feasible) for those in housing need; for market, private rent, affordable rent, low cost market options, including shared ownership • Purchasing, developing and/or facilitating the delivery of 'stalled' sites that are vital to the delivery of affordable housing, using Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO)as a last resort where other options have failed • To acquire in partnership, or develop where appropriate, council owned temporary accommodation provision to meet the varied needs of homeless households in Rother • To support ESCC and registered housing providers in meeting the needs of those requiring supported housing, for example older people, care leavers, people with mental health issues.	Outcome 1: Set up framework enabling purchasing or developing of new homes	December 2019	Head of Service: ATR
		Outcome 2: Bring forward Blackfriars site and other suitable sites for housing.	Delivery of Blackfriars housing development : commence development in 2020	
		Outcome 3: Increase provision of affordable housing through council led development on a year by year basis	46 new affordable homes delivered 2019-20 Target to be reviewed for 2020-21	Head of Service: ATR and S&P
		Outcome 4: Increase in temporary accommodation	30 units of temporary accommodation	Head of Service: H&C

	• Development and Site Allocations document (DaSA) • Local Plan Review (2019-2034) To provide housing as required by the Local Housing Needs Assessment under the NPPF • Provide a monthly report to the Council's Scrutiny and Planning Committees, covering the number of planning approvals, and development compared to the Local Plan target.	within Rother District	to be provided 2019-20. Target to be reviewed annually, based on need.	
		Outcome 5: Increase supported housing options to meet identified needs	TBD	Head of Service: H&C
		Outcome 6: Adoption of DaSA	By August 2019	Head of Service: S&P
		Outcome 7: Local Plan Annual Housing Target	449 per annum	Head of Service: S&P
		Outcome 8: More effective monitoring of delivery against Local Plan targets	Monthly report to Scrutiny and Planning committees - mechanism in place by May 2019	Head of Service: S&P
1.2 Community led housing (CLH)	• Continue working with the Sussex Community Housing Hub (SCHH), Parish and Town Councils and community	Outcome 1: Delivery of CLH housing	• two CLH schemes by the	Head of Service: ATR

	groups in identifying suitable sites, including exception sites, and supporting the delivery of community led housing		end of 2020 • two further schemes by 2020/21 totalling 4 schemes • 45 homes across the 4 year	Head of Service: ATR
		Outcome 2: An increase in the number of groups supported to deliver CLH	At least four groups established in the Rother District as CLH groups by the end of 2021	Head of Service: ATR
1.3 Improve development partnerships	• Strengthen partnerships with registered providers development and planning partners to streamline the delivery of housing.	Outcome 1: Joint protocol between Housing partners, Planning and legal teams	In place by April 2020	Head of Service: ATR
1.4 Increase housing supply by bringing empty homes in the district back into use	• Put in place an action plan which would set out a number of methods for bringing into use empty homes, from contacting owners and offering incentives to increasing council tax on long term empty properties and the use of compulsory purchase orders (CPOs)	Outcome 1: Action plan in place	By April 2020	Head of Service: ESL&CS
		Outcome 2: Delivery of action plan	Action taken against 5 empty properties a year from 2020/21	Head of Service: ESL&CS

PRIORITY 2: ROUGH SLEEPING, HOMELESSNESS AND MEETING HOUSING ASPIRATIONS				
Objective	**Action**	**Outcome and Timeframe**		
2.1 Reduce homelessness by improving the provision of housing related support	• Design and deliver initiatives to improve the provision of employability and tenancy readiness support for people in housing difficulty and promote greater opportunities to sustain and access suitable long-term housing solutions (subject to funding availability). • Work with specialist providers to enable the delivery of accommodation-based support services that meet the needs of vulnerable groups unable to access general needs accommodation. • Work with commissioning and delivery partners to expand the provision of housing related floating support services to assist households to sustain existing accommodation or access new accommodation which meets their housing needs.	Outcome 1: Relevant support services available to those in temporary accommodation	by the Dec 2019	Head of Service: H&C
		Outcome 2: Employability and tenancy readiness initiatives set up and in place for those in temporary accommodation (subject to funding availability)	by April 2020 40 supported into employability tenancy readiness each year from 2020/21	Head of Service: H&C
		Outcome 3: Work with ESCC to recommission appropriate floating housing support service	Recommissioned service in place by April 2020	Head of H&C
2.2 Reduce homelessness through closer joint working, co-ordinated commissioning and	• Establish regular local multi-agency homelessness forum to design, deliver and monitor homelessness prevention measures • Engage with partners through East Sussex Housing	Outcome 1: Local multi-agency forum in place with the objective of delivering and monitoring delivery	by June 2019	Head of Service: H&C

collaborative service delivery.	Officers Group (ESHOG) to reduce costs by preventing duplication of services • Establish eviction protocols and procedures with social landlords and private letting agents operating in Rother • Work with Homeless Unity Group (HUG) , statutory and third sector partners to improve community provision of rough sleeper support services • Work with Social Care and Health partners to develop a whole –system approach to supported housing delivery that meets the range of housing related support needs in across the county. • Work with Children's Services to develop a supported accommodation pathway for vulnerable young people and care leavers.	of the strategy		
		Outcome 2: Rough sleeping support services in place (through Health & wellbeing centres and floating support where possible)	by Dec 2019	Head of Service: H&C
		Outcome 3: Revised countywide accommodation pathway delivered with ESHOG partners	by April 2020	Head of Service: H&C
		Outcome 4: Eviction protocols in place with main social landlords and lettings agents	by April 2021	Head of Service: H&C

2.3 Reduce Homelessness	• Put in place a private sector 'toolkit' of options to improve access to the private rented sector through closer partnership working with private landlords, to include:
	  ○ a social lettings agency (to be managed externally)
	  ○ Guaranteed Rent Scheme
		Outcome 1: Social Lettings agency in place	by Dec 2019
			
			20 people assisted into accommodation through the social lettings agency per year from
				Head of Service: H&C

	○ Loans for rent in advance and deposit • Improve the accessibility of the Housing Needs Service and its integration with related services through greater co-location, home visits and improved referral pathways under Duty to Refer		2019/20	
		Outcome 2: Performance review of new prevention measures completed and recommendations for future initiatives made.	In place by June 2019 1.25 per 1000 households homelessness prevented per year from 2019/20	Head of Service: H&C
		Outcome 3: Home visit procedure in place	by June 2019	Head of Service: H&C
		Outcome 4: Duty to refer protocol in place	by June 2019	Head of Service: H&C
		Outcome 5: Co-location options explored and proposals agreed	by April 2020	Head of Service: H&C
2.4 Reduce rough sleeping through the development of a countywide rough sleeping accommodation	• Work with health and social care partners design and deliver a new multi-agency rough sleeping pathway that maximises investment into outreach service navigators, new assessment units and the provision of housing first to improve housing outcomes to reduce	Outcome 1: Agree proposals for street homelessness hub	by Dec 2019 50 people with multiple complex needs accessing housing needs	Head of Service: H&C

pathway	rough sleeping in Bexhill • Work with the voluntary sector to explore options for creating a street homelessness centre/hub in Bexhill, which improves the accessibility of services to rough sleepers, with outreach available to all areas of Rother • Work across local authority boundaries with housing, health and social care partners to expand the East Sussex Rough Sleeping Initiative, delivering services targeted at those experiencing multiple complex needs who are rough sleeping or at high risk of rough sleeping		and assessments through the hub per year from 2020/21	
		Outcome 2: New rough sleeper pathway delivered with health and social care partners	by April 2020 30 individuals prevented or relieved from rough sleeping during 2020/21 with the target reviewed annually relative to demand.	Head of Service: H&C
2.5 Improve the delivery and accessibility of support and advice services to better meet housing needs.	• Develop a communications plan, including training, to ensure front line officers, partners and Members are aware of the range of support available • Continue to improve the triage of homeless applicants to enable greater levels of self-service and improve service accessibility	Outcome 1: Communications plan in place	by June 2019 Delivery of communications plan	Head of Service: H&C
		Outcome 2: New self-service Housing Needs Service triage system in place June	by September 2019; recommendations in place by April	Head of Service: H&C

	• Put in place interventions that increase household incomes and improve tenancy access through raising the training and employment aspirations of those on low incomes - particularly those of young people and single parent households.	2019	2020	
		Outcome 3: Project plan for 'raising aspirations' initiative agreed and funding agreed by March 2020.	by April 2020; delivery by April 2021 40 people supported into training or employment	Head of Service: H&C
2.6 Support households to meet their housing aspirations – in particular, home ownership	• Put in place new initiatives which support households to access suitable and affordable housing, whether that be affordable rented, sub-market rent, shared ownership or other home ownership options	Outcome 1: Research feasibility of provision of a mortgage scheme to assist households into home ownership Outcome 2: Action plan setting out additional tenure access initiatives	Feasibility report by April 2020; recommendations in place by April 2021, subject to funding Action plan in place by April 2020	Assistant Director, Resources Head of Service: H&C
PRIORITY 3: IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND SUITABILITY OF EXISTING HOUSING AND NEWBUILD HOUSING				
Objective	**Action**	**Outcome and Timeframe**		
3.1 Reducing fuel poverty	• Explore the opportunity of introducing affordable	Outcome 1: Affordable warmth	from April 2019	Head of Service: ATR

	warmth methods of construction on any residential developments taken forward by the Council • Working with registered providers to explore the opportunity for introducing affordable warmth methods of construction on all affordable housing	methods of construction considered for all Council led residential developments		
		Outcome 2: Affordable warmth methods of construction considered for all registered provider developments	by April 2020	Head of Service: ATR
3.2 Improving the quality of housing in the private rented sector	• Put in place an action plan which would target poor rented sector homes for improvement, particularly in wards of higher deprivation.	Outcome 1: Review of existing service provision completed	by December 2019	Head of Service: ESL&CS
		Outcome 2: Delivery of action plan	by April 2020 5 homes a year improved as a result of licensing or statutory notices being served	Head of Service: ESL&CS
3.3 Modern methods of construction	• Explore the opportunity to introduce modern methods of construction on any residential developments taken forward by the Council	Outcome 1: Modern methods of construction used for all council led	from April 2019	Head of Service: ATR

	• Working with registered providers to explore the opportunity to introduce modern methods of construction, for example timber framed kits, for all affordable housing developments	development, where possible		
		Outcome 2: Modern methods of construction used for all registered provider developments (excluding s106 sites), where possible	from April 2020	Head of Service: ATR
3.4 Increase the number of affordable homes built to NDSS and accessible and adaptable standards	• Implementation of new planning policy requirements (Policy DHG4 and Policy DHG3) from the emerging DASA	Outcome 1: All affordable homes to be built to the NDSS & M4 (2) [2] Outcome 2: 5% of affordable housing to be built to M4 (3) Category 3, wheelchair	From April 2019 2 homes built to wheelchair standards per year from April 2020	Head of Service: ATR

[2] *NDSS – The Government introduced the 'Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard' in March 2015, which are nationally recognised space standards

*M4 (2) Category 2 and M4 (3) Category 3 is included in The Building Regulations (2010) Approved Document 'M'. This legislation relates to the accessibility and adaptability of new homes. M4 (3) specifically relates to reasonable provisions being made in the home for wheel chair users.

		accessible delivery[1]		

Key:

Head of Service: ATR	Acquisitions, Transformations & Regeneration
Head of Service: H&C	Housing & Communities
Head of Service: S&P	Strategy & Planning
Head of Service: ESL&CS	Environmental, Health, Licensing & Community Safety