

Enabling Affordable Housing Report

Hart District Council

2009

What Hart is doing to enable the delivery of affordable housing alongside new build developments delivered via Section 106 agreements.

Further Information

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Hindi

यदि आपको सूचना किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये तो कृपया हमसे कहे

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਓ।

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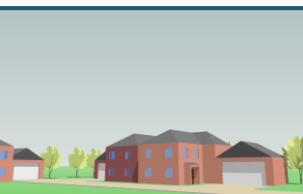
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Nepali

यदि नेपालमा अथवा अरु भाषामा आफ्नो जानकारी चाहिएमा कृपया यहाँ 01252 774420 मा सम्पर्क गर्नुहोस्

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Introduction

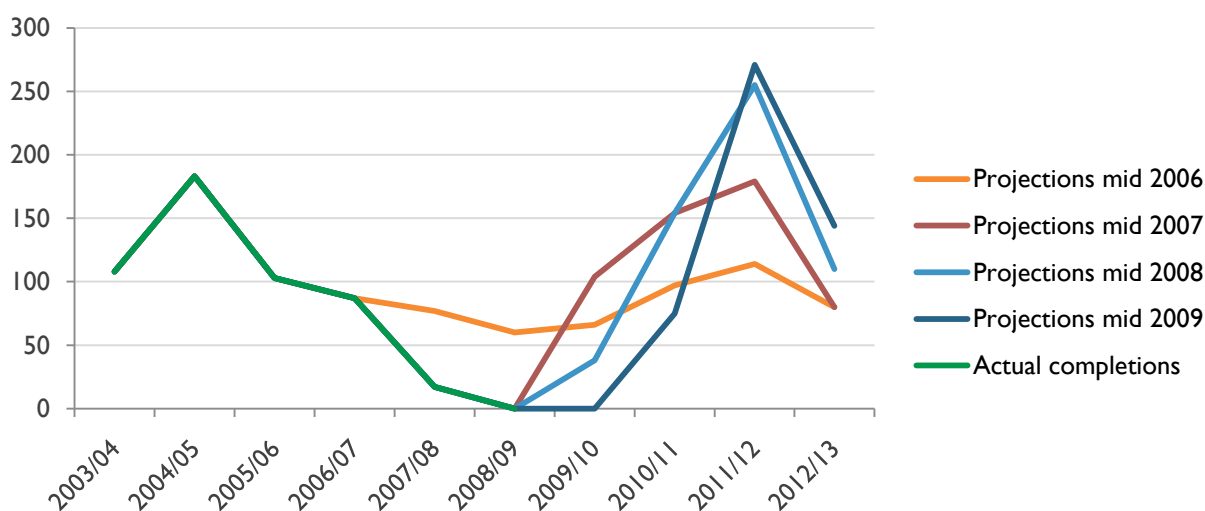
Affordable housing in Hart can be seen to be delivered through two main channels:

- **Housing development and contributions via Section 106 Agreements**
- **Enabling affordable housing through partnership working**

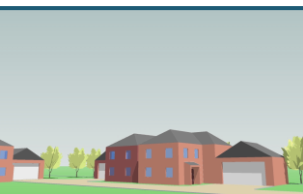
Over the past few years, much of the affordable housing in Hart has been delivered on sites through section 106 agreements (s106) to enable the council to meet its affordable housing target of an average of 80 affordable homes a year over any three year period. This delivery via s106 requires joint working on planning policy, a well maintained strong evidence base for the need for affordable housing and a strategic plan in order to create prosperous and sustainable communities that meet the needs of the local area. This strategic work creates a solid foundation for the local affordable housing planning policy which requires a proportion of affordable housing within new build developments.

Projecting the future delivery of housing can be difficult and fact that many variables can influence the potential outcome means that predictions are likely to change over time as new information comes to light. In mid 2006 the projected delivery of affordable housing indicated that sufficient sites were progressing that would ensure targets to continue to be met in this way, until issues such as the Special Protection Area (SPA) and the failure of major sites to secure planning permission had a dramatic impact on all housing delivery. Projections in 2007/08 indicated a recovery in delivery as planning permissions began to be granted, however the economic climate has meant that expected applications and even those with permission to build have been delayed, prolonging non-delivery further. This has resulted in a crumpling effect on the projection chart with the expected delivery not coming through gradually but likely to be simultaneous, as sites progress their applications after the SPA and economic situations improve.

Projections of affordable housing delivery 2006-2009



(For the evidence base behind this chart please contact housing services)



As a result, it has been even more important to try to achieve delivery through our enabling function, the second route to providing affordable housing. By working in partnership with housing associations, Homes and Communities Agency, Rural housing enablers, landowners, other local authorities in the Blackwater Valley and Hampshire and corporate colleagues, we have set up cross-boundary initiatives, brought forward rural sites for development, supported bids for external funding and developed good working relationships which should continue to deliver affordable housing in the future. The results of these efforts to respond to the reduction in s106 delivery can be seen in the 'progress to date on delivery via enabling schemes' section of this paper.

However, we have yet to identify a way of making best use of Council resources, either capital set aside for affordable housing or land in the Council's ownership that could contribute towards an increase in the supply of affordable housing in the district and meet the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan and Community Strategy. We have an annual unmet housing need of 419 households and there are currently 1,400 applicants on the housing register. A paper to make best use of Council resources will be put forward in December 2009.

The enabling role requires working in partnership both within the council and with partner organisations in order to deliver affordable housing, often through schemes other than new build developments. Whilst the enabling role historically in Hart generates a smaller proportion of delivery compared to new build policy, it is especially important in the current climate. This document explains the background to enabling affordable housing in Hart, details the progress made so far, and sets out our plan for the future.

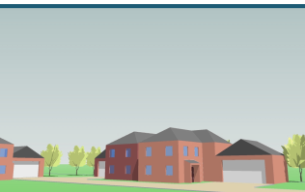
Background

Hart, as the statutory housing authority for the area, has a duty to carry out its strategic housing role. This role consists of five key elements:

- Assess and plan for the current and future housing needs of the population across all tenures
- Make best use of the existing housing stock
- Plan and facilitate new supply
- Plan and commission housing support services which link homes and housing support services
- Work in partnership to secure effective housing and neighbourhood management on an on-going basis (CLG, 2008)

Links to corporate aims

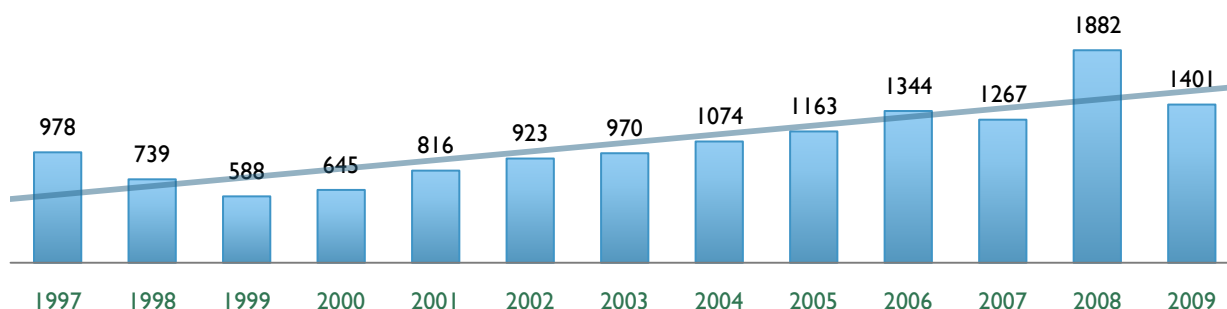
- One of the key priorities for Hart District Council, set out in the Hart Corporate Plan 2007-2011, is to ensure an adequate supply and choice of affordable housing to meet the needs of local people.
- The Hart Housing Strategy 2008-2011 sets out the strategic priority to increase the supply of affordable housing



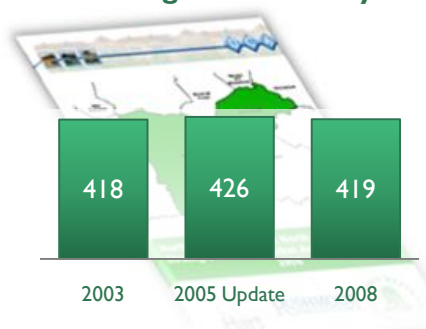
Need for affordable housing

The need for affordable housing has been measured by Hart for a number of years, both through its role in maintaining a housing register for the district and through commissioning Housing Needs Surveys. This has shown the need for affordable housing far outstrips the supply within the district.

Number of applicants on the housing register for Hart April 1997 to March 2009



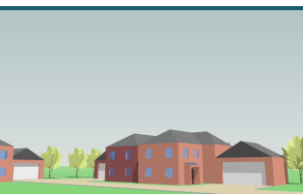
Housing Needs Surveys



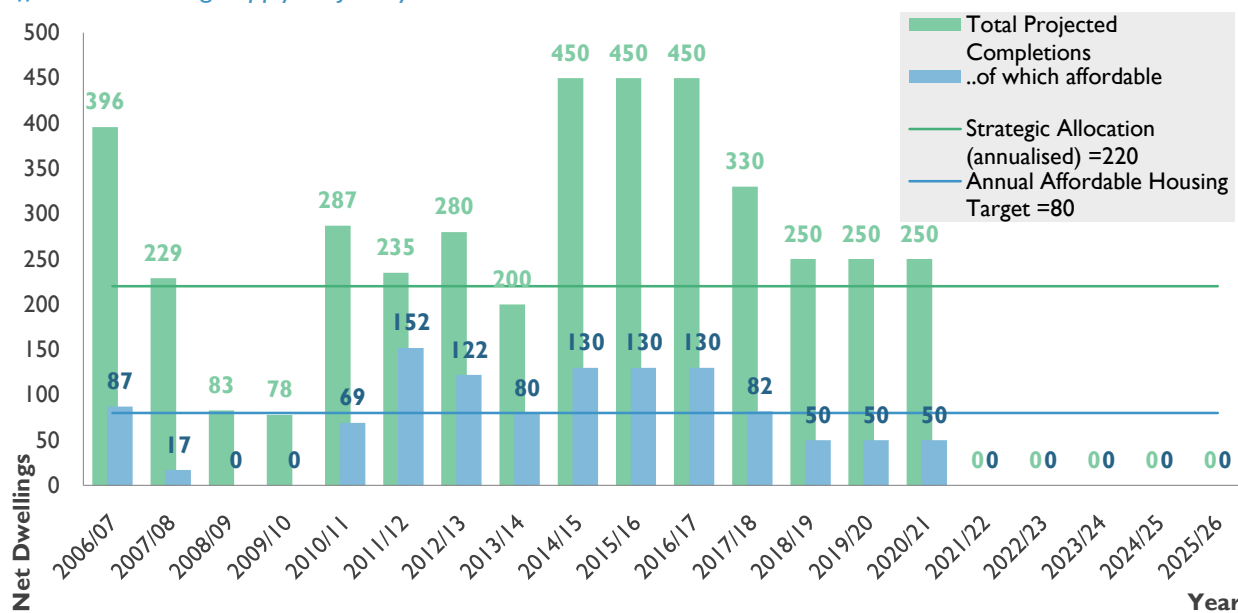
Housing Needs Surveys apply Communities and Local Government’s Needs Assessment Model to calculate an annual unmet housing need. There is a need to recognise that we, like most local authorities across the south east, will never be able to meet this unmet need fully, the South East plan for total housing delivery is 220 annually, and due to this Hart has set a target of an average of 80 affordable housing per year over a three year period.

Supply of affordable housing

The vast majority of affordable housing units delivered in Hart have been, and will continue to be, through s106 agreements on new build developments. The chart below shows the trajectory for the delivery of new build affordable housing based on these developments, it shows the short term drop in supply in 2008/09 and 2009/10 which will recover in 2011/12 as sites such as Hitches Lane and Campbell Close begin to deliver. It is hoped that the projects set out below will help to deliver units on top of this projected delivery.



Affordable Housing Supply Trajectory: Assessment as at October 2009



(Based on Chart 3 of the December 2008 Hart LDF Annual Monitoring Report 2007/08: Hart housing trajectory against the draft South East Plan. Projections are based on future completions of allocated large sites, future LDF allocations and the Campbell Close development. Does not include; other s106 delivery, rural exception sites and any windfall sites.)* (Hart District Council, 2008)

Measuring delivery of affordable housing

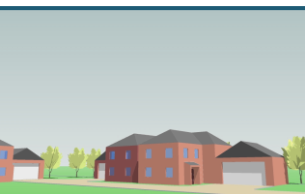
It is important to understand the various ways in which affordable housing delivery is recorded based on the circumstances:

New Build Affordable Housing Delivery – This is the number of newly built affordable units delivered that increase the total stock in the district, Hart’s target is to deliver on average 80 units over a 3 year period through this, based upon the strategic allocation in the South East plan.

NI 155 – This is the figure reported to central government, as the gross increase in affordable units within the district and can include acquisition/conversion of open market housing to affordable housing, the NI155 figure will include new build delivery as part of the gross delivery.

Schemes which can help Hart deliver affordable housing:

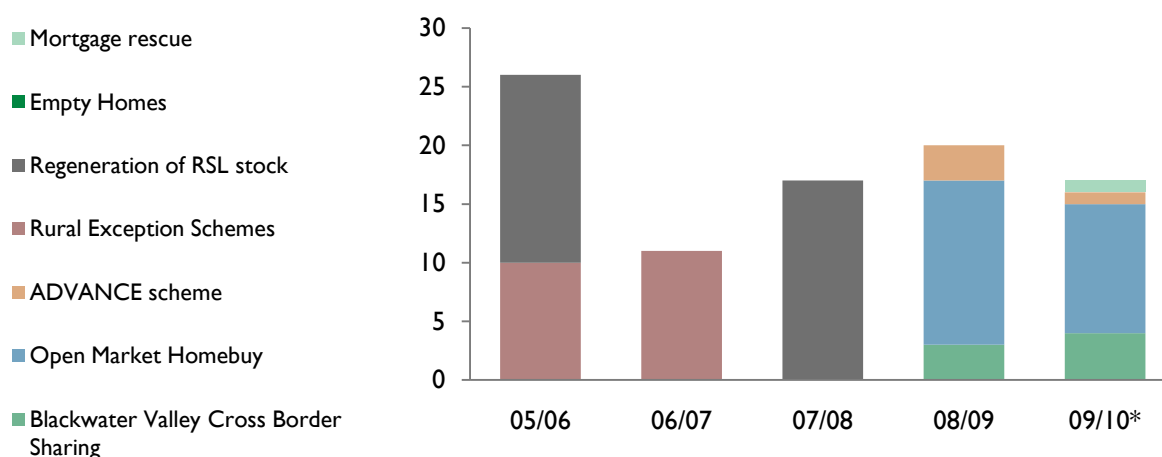
- **Open Market Homebuy** – where those unable to afford outright open market ownership can buy part of a property of their choice and a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) purchases the remainder, this can be in the form of an equity loan or a rental charge on the property.
- **ADVANCE scheme** – A scheme helping those with long term disabilities into shared ownership (for more information see www.advancehousing.org.uk).
- **Rural Exception Schemes** – Sites built outside of the settlement boundary as an exception to planning policy in order to provide 100% affordable housing for those with a local connection to the area.



- **Regeneration of RSL stock** – Schemes brought forward through the RSL to replace existing provision with more suitable accommodation or increase their stock.
- **Empty Homes** – Bringing empty properties back into the available housing stock and letting them as affordable housing.
- **HDC land** – Making best use of Hart’s land resources in order to maximise the provision of affordable housing whilst balancing the need to obtain best value from the council’s assets.
- **Mortgage rescue** – A nationwide scheme which assists eligible households, unable to afford their mortgage payments, to sell their property to an RSL to convert their tenancy into an affordable housing tenancy.
- **Blackwater Valley Cross Border Sharing** – A partnership between Blackwater Valley local authorities where large (over 200) new build developments built allocate a share of nomination rights to the various authorities to enable mobility across the area.

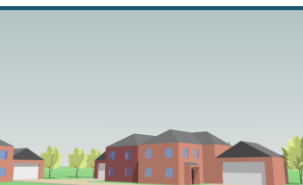
Progress to date on delivery via enabling schemes

This section of the document shows the delivery of affordable housing through enabling schemes over the last 5 years.



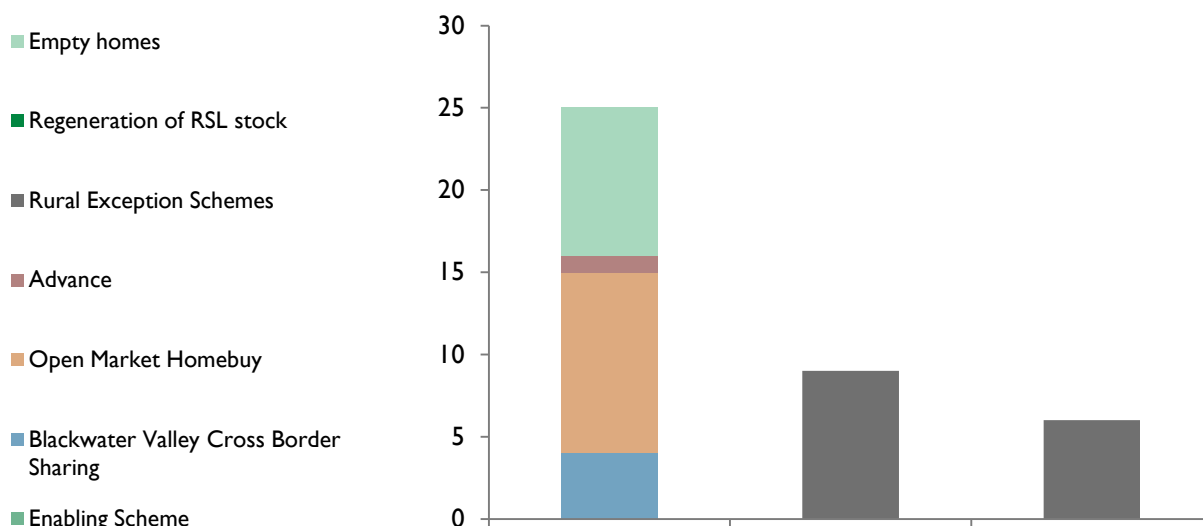
Enabling Scheme	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10*
Blackwater Valley Cross Border Sharing	0	0	0	3	4
Open Market Homebuy	0	0	0	14	11
ADVANCE scheme	0	0	0	3	1
Rural Exception Schemes	10	11	0	0	0
Regeneration of RSL stock	16	0	17	0	0
Empty Homes	0	0	0	0	0
Mortgage rescue	0	0	0	0	1
Total	26	11	17	20	17

* To date (30th September 2009)



Looking forward

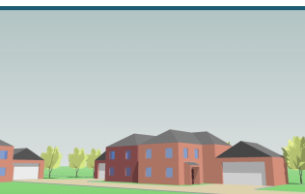
The action plan section below sets out how we intend to continue in delivering affordable housing through options other than s106 new build delivery. A projection of the delivery through these projects is included below, however due to the nature of the projects the forecasts are subject to change depending on the progress.



Enabling Scheme	09/10*	10/11	11/12
Blackwater Valley Cross Border Sharing	4	0	0
Open Market Homebuy	11	0	0
Advance	1	0	0
Rural Exception Schemes	0	9	6
Regeneration of RSL stock	0	0	0
Empty homes	9	0	0
HDC land	0	3	0
Mortgage Rescue	2	1	0
Total	27	13	6

Conclusion

This report has explained the background to enabling affordable housing in Hart, the performance over the past few years and expected delivery. The action plan below sets out how we aim to continue delivering and bring forward more provision.



Current action plan

last updated: November 2009

Option/Opportunities	Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Comments	
4	Make use of HDC land to provide affordable housing	Carry out site visits to establish the viability of using HDC land for new build affordable housing	Strategy & Development Team	March 2010	Site visits carried out by housing. Comments received from other council departments and RSL partners. Full asset study of sites in Fleet and Church Crookham carried out, following request by Capital Board. RSLs invited to submit offers for sites to be considered by capital board -Dec 2009
5	Agree a policy framework for the investment of Housing Capital Fund to provide affordable housing	A clear policy framework is in place	Strategy & Development Team	March 2010	Policy Framework discussed at capital board. Report to Cabinet December 2009.
7	Make use of Advance scheme to help people with long-term disabilities purchase a shared ownership home to meet their needs.	Investigate how the scheme operates and how it can meet the needs of applicants in Hart	Locality Housing Officer, Adult Services	March 2010	The Advance scheme is an affordable home ownership scheme for people with long-term disabilities. 2 applicants in Hart accessed the scheme in April 2008 and 1 in 2009. There are currently no applicants in pipeline this year who meet the eligibility criteria.
8	Review of the use of sheltered housing with partner Registered Social Landlords (RSL) partners	Review whether existing older persons housing is Fit For Purpose (FFP) with RSL partners – as set out in the Older Persons Housing Strategy (Nov 07)	Head of Housing	March 2010	Ongoing discussions with Sentinel HA about their older persons housing stock and HCC on their extra care agenda. Planning permission for Campbell Close was granted in July 2009. Contractors are due to start on site in January 2010 and complete by Autumn 2011. The next scheme to be redeveloped will be Curtis Court. Planning application being submitted November 2009.
9	Regenerate former Council housing areas and garage sites	Consider opportunities for regeneration that would deliver additional affordable housing	Head of Housing/ Sentinel HA	March 2010	Last phase of Pyestock regeneration still awaiting planning permission, but has been affected by SPA. Sentinel HA has no plans for further regeneration at present.
10	Make use of empty areas above shops	New joint initiative to encourage property owners to bring their properties back into use, with the use for compulsory action if necessary	Residential Environmental Health Manager	March 2011	3yr funding has been secured from the Regional Housing Board (RHB) by a partnership of eight local authorities in Surrey and Hampshire to support the use of Empty Property Management Orders (EDMOs) to bring empty properties back into use. No progress has been made to bring empty flats above shops back to into use.

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11	Bring long-term empty properties back into use	New joint initiative to encourage property owners to bring their properties back into use, with the use for compulsory action if necessary	Residential Environmental Health Manager	March 2011	The RHB funding enabled the partnership to create a website. www.everyhomescounts.info was launched in December 2008 to provide information to owners and potential buyers to help bring empty properties back into use. The website has received xx hits since its launch. Other initiatives include preparing a leaflet to set out options for empty property owners and writing to all owners of properties that have been empty for more than 12 months
12	Consider developing higher density new build schemes in town centre	Explore possibilities for higher density development through the Local Development Framework (LDF)	Planning Policy Manager	March 2009	This is included in the Fleet Town Centre Urban Design Study and will be taken into account in the emerging LDF framework.
13	Change of office use into affordable housing	Explore possibilities through the LDF	Planning Policy Manager	July 2010	Current Local Plan policies identify land for employment in Fleet Town Centre, but there is currently a high level of vacant office accommodation. There may be opportunity to re-evaluate the best use of this land in the emerging LDF.
14	Making use of County Council owned land and properties	Action within the Local Area Agreement for Hampshire	Strategy and Development Manager/LAA	March 2011	Discussions are underway with Chris Jelliffe from HCC and Sentinel Housing Association to refurbish and re-let empty properties, originally built for key workers. Sentinel HA have made an offer that will be considered by HCC in December 2009. HCC have yet to confirm whether they have any land holdings in Hart that they are considering disposing of.
15	Use of non-residential sites to provide affordable housing	Explore possibilities through the LDF	Head of Housing & Head of Planning	July 2010	Planning permission was granted within the town centre for a housing scheme close to the town centre in a previously retail area. One of our RSL partners is currently exploring opportunities to develop affordable housing in secondary retail areas and peripheral town centre areas, outside the employment zones. The land use in the town centre will be reviewed as part of the LDF.
16	Flexibility with payments and contributions from RSLs and developers and planners	Explore possibilities with planning dept	Head of Housing & Head of Planning	Jan 2010	Used in other authorities to encourage development to come forward, but no evidence yet to show that this intervention would enable development. Review with planners in January 2010 as part of LSP action plan.

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17	Use of HDC land to provide bungalows that meets the specific needs of under-occupiers	Explore possibilities on a site by site basis and based on need in that area	Strategy & Development Team & Head of Engineering	Dec 2009	By developing accommodation that meets the specific needs of under-occupiers, larger family houses can be made available for Housing register applicants. Some HDC land may provide the opportunity to develop this type of housing.
21	Check unimplemented planning permissions for schemes with potential to provide affordable housing	Explore development opportunities that already have planning approved.	Strategy & Development Team & Development Control	Oct 2009	One potential scheme identified through this process. Sentinel HA is reassessing the scheme in Hook, with developer partner to look at providing a mix of private and affordable housing. Other sites to be investigated by RSL partners.
22	Streamline work involved in bringing affordable housing sites forward	Work in partnership with planners to provide a streamlined approach to delivering affordable housing	Strategy & Development Team & Development Control	Nov 2009	Regular meetings with Heads of Service, Strategy & development team and Development control, to discuss HDC land, rural exception schemes and other sites.
23	Review charging for pre-app discussions on affordable housing schemes	Work in partnership with planners to provide a streamlined approach to delivering affordable housing	Strategy & Development Team & Development Control	Nov 2009	Pre-application advice for affordable housing provided without charge.

Completed actions

	Option/Opportunities	Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Comments
1	Check the Housing Register for applicants requesting transfers and suggest mutual exchanges	Check Housing Register for existing tenants who are seeking transfers.	Nomination Officer	September 2009	Officers have actively contacted applicants and promoted the benefits of mutual exchanges. 15 applicants have moved through mutual exchanges from April to September 2009
2	Use of sub-regional choice based letting (CBL) to advertise properties in neighbouring authorities for applicants on the housing register	Homeselecta launched in 2007 as a cross border CBL scheme with Waverley, Rushmoor and Guildford to advertise sub-regional properties	Housing Needs Manager	Ongoing	10% of voids are put on to Homeselecta for applicants in all 4 LA areas to bid on. 27 applicants used Homeselecta to move to an affordable home in a neighbouring LA. Possibilities to expand the scheme into other LA areas are being investigated.

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3	Establish cross border nominations within the Blackwater Area on new developments of over 200.	Nominations procedures and lettings plans are produced for each new development.	Strategy & Development Team & BWVHOG	Ongoing	Last year, 3 nominations were received from Surrey Heath for shared ownership properties in Camberley. This year, 4 nominations have been received from Rushmoor for affordable rented units at Concept House. The next qualifying site is Hitches Lane in Hart.
6	Explore possible opportunity to lease MOD accommodation in the Hart District	Contact Defence Estates and Annington Homes about surplus of service family accommodation in Hart	Head of Housing	August 2009	Confirmation from Defence Estates that of the 67 unoccupied properties in Hart, 24 have been allocated to service families and 42 are undergoing refurbishment before re-letting. Review position in September 2010.

Options no longer being pursued

	Option/Opportunities	Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Comments
18	Purchasing off the open market	Explore possibilities with RSL partners and possibly widen out to non-partners with experience	Strategy & Development Team	Sept 2010	Over the past two years, partner RSLs have been asked to explore the possibility of purchasing properties off the open market, but this option does not offer best value for money even in the current climate where house prices have decreased slightly. <i>Explore with non-partners with excellent track record in neighbouring authorities.</i>
19	New build properties in Basingstoke offered to RSL, who subsequently corresponded with HDC on the possibility of joint funding to purchase the properties. HDC would have full nomination rights.	Liaison between HDC, Basingstoke & Deane, RSL and Housing Corporation	RSL/Head of Housing		Properties were originally built for the open market. Following communication with the Housing Corporation it was decided that the properties would not meet their standards.

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20	Possible opportunity to lease MOD accommodation in Rushmoor for 5 years	MOD to provide schedule to bring the properties up to Decent Homes Standard. Sentinel to decide whether this is cost effective and apply for any necessary grants. HDC and RBC to liaise over logistics of sharing the properties.	Sentinel, Strategy & Development Team	Immediately with a conclusion by March 08	Meeting at the site took place on 13 December 07 to look at the condition of the properties. Interior of properties in relatively good condition but exterior work will need to be carried out. The main issue will be meeting the comfort standards of Decent Homes. MOD now writing up a repairs schedule.
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Sources

CLG. (2008, September). *Strategic Housing Role*. Retrieved August 2009, from Communities and Local Government: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/strategichousingrole>

Hart District Council. (2008, November). *Annual Monitoring Returns*. Retrieved August 2009, from Hart District Council: http://www.hart.gov.uk/index/environment-and-planning/planning_policy/environment-planning-amr.htm

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