

Hart District Council

Rural Housing Strategy



November 2006

Further Information

If you would like this information in another language or format please telephone
01252 774420

French

Si vous souhaitez des informations dans une autre langue ou sous un autre format, veuillez nous le demander.

German

Informationen können auch in anderen Sprachen oder Formaten angefordert werden.

Spanish

Póngase en contacto con nosotros si desea recibir información en otro idioma o formato.

Bengali

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

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।

Cantonese

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

Mandarin

如欲索取以另一語文印制或另一格式制作的资料，请与我们联系。

Polish

Jezeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym j lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać

Portuguese

Se deseja obter informação noutra idioma ou formato, diga-nos.

Contents

	Page	
Background		4
Objectives	4	
Actions Identified	4	
Introduction	6	
Rural Housing Enablers	6	
Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing	6	
Rural Affordable Housing Developments	7	
Sustainable Communities	7	
Resources	9	
Priorities for Action	10	
Review and Monitoring	10	
Contacts	10	
 Appendices:		
Appendix 1 – Action Plan	11	
Appendix 2 – Results of the Rural Housing Needs Surveys	14	
Appendix 3 – Rural Exception Sites – First Alterations to the Hart District Local Plan	15	
Appendix 4 – Stakeholders	15	
Appendix 5 – HARAHA membership	15	

1. Background

Hart District is a predominantly rural area and its countryside plays an important role in the local quality of life. This strategy forms a plan of how Hart and its partners will meet the need for affordable housing in rural areas.

The strategy has been developed in consultation with a number of stakeholders and it includes amendments to reflect the comments received through this. A full list of stakeholders consulted can be found in Appendix 4.

The aim of the strategy is,

“To identify housing needs in the rural areas of the district and to work with partners to ensure those needs are met”

Objectives

1. To identify the specific needs of rural parishes and work with stakeholders to identify how to meet those needs
2. To secure resources to develop rural housing, particularly through the HARAH partnership
3. To direct and prioritise investment in affordable housing provision in rural areas
4. To achieve a mix of a minimum of 75% affordable rented units and 25% shared equity within affordable housing provision in rural areas
5. To develop effective partnerships between stakeholders, including parish councils and local communities
6. To guide the work of the Rural Housing Enabler
7. To learn from rural affordable housing developments

Actions Identified:

1. To identify the specific needs of rural parishes and work with stakeholders to identify how to meet those needs

Action i: To use the housing register and housing needs surveys to identify Parishes with a housing need

Action ii: To develop homes to lifetime homes standard on schemes where specialised housing or housing for older people is identified

Action iii: To carry out publicity to encourage people in housing need to register on Hart District Council’s housing register

2. To secure resources to develop rural housing, particularly through the HARAH partnership

Action iv: To investigate and take up opportunities to secure funding for rural affordable housing

3. To direct and prioritise investment in affordable housing provision in rural areas

Action v: Investigate the opportunities to work across boundaries to develop sites with neighbouring authorities

4. To achieve a mix of a minimum of 75% affordable rented units and 25% shared equity within affordable housing provision in rural areas

Action vi: To develop rural sites that comprise of 75% rented affordable housing and 25% shared ownership or shared equity

5. To develop effective partnerships between the stakeholders, including parish councils and local communities

Action vii: To develop a standard S106 agreement for Rural Exception sites and standard nominations procedure

Action viii: To publish a development newsletter for Parishes within the District on a 6 monthly basis

6. To guide the work of the Rural Housing Enabler

Action ix: To enable the development of 30 new affordable rural homes per 3 years

Action x: To continue funding the Rural Housing Enabler and HARAH programme.

7. To learn from rural affordable housing developed

Action xi: To carry out satisfaction surveys with all completed rural housing

Action xii: To review this action plan annually

2. Introduction

Developing affordable rural housing can be a long process and involves many different people including the Parish Council, District Council, local community, the Rural Housing Enabler and usually a Housing Association. Each has a very important role to play in the process.

3. Rural Housing Enablers

Hart part funds the work of a Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) to help bring forward sites suitable for rural affordable housing. One of the RHE's main roles is to act as an "honest broker" to help communities bring forward schemes that will form sustainable and affordable housing development in the future.

The Rural Housing Enabler's main roles:

- To raise awareness of the need for affordable housing
- To help bring about the provision of affordable housing
- To influence regional and local strategies that impact on affordable housing
- To provide information to DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) to help influence national policy issues on affordable housing rural housing
- To work with Councils to help them to provide housing advice and information to rural residents

The Rural Housing Enabler for Hart carried out 10 rural needs surveys in 2006. The results are detailed in Appendix 2.

4. Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing (HARAH)

Hart became part of a partnership with the Housing Corporation, Hyde Housing Association and 6 other semi-rural Councils in Hampshire in July 2005. (See Appendix 5 for list of members). The alliance is a pilot scheme set up to compete more effectively for limited funding for rural affordable housing in Hampshire.

Hyde made applications for funding for a number of schemes to be included within the HARAH partnership and from the Housing Corporation allocations for 2006-8. Following these 17 rural schemes received funding with 4 in reserve. This amounted to £7.7 million in total. HARAH schemes received 20% of the total funding allocation in the South East region and the HARAH partnership has been promoted as a model of good practice.

5. Rural Affordable Housing Developments:

Affordable rural housing is usually developed on rural exception sites. These are sites that are adjoining existing settlements and would not normally be available for development.

Definition of rural exception sites:

Exceptionally, small-scale housing developments on sites in or adjoining villages, on sites that would not otherwise be permitted for housing may be permitted, to meet the needs of local people unable to afford to rent or purchase property on the open market, provided that certain criteria are met. These are set out in Appendix 3

Planning permission is only given if the housing provided is affordable housing needed in the area.

Definition of affordable housing:

“Housing provided, with subsidy, both for rent and low cost market housing, for people who are unable to resolve their housing requirements in the general housing market, because of the relationship between local housing costs and incomes” David Couttie Associates – Hart DC Housing Needs Survey 2005

Most affordable housing provided in rural villages is for rent and is provided for people with a connection to the village on an on-going basis, also called perpetuity. This is written into a legal agreement called a Section 106 when the planning consent is granted.

6. Sustainable Communities

Hart’s rural communities are made up of many different but equally important groups. Each group plays an important role in the community and each has its own housing need. This strategy considers the housing needs of the following groups and each group will be taken into account when developing affordable rural housing sites:

6.1 Keyworkers

Approximately 2,818 existing households were key workers using the broadest definition of the term to include teachers, NHS staff and workers providing essential services in Hart’s 2003 Housing Needs Survey. The Government’s definition of key workers has now been extended to include forces personnel.

It is vital that key workers employed in village schools and services are able to live in the area and contribute to the community. If we do not provide housing for keyworkers’ Hart may lose valuable local services.

6.2 Black, Minority and Ethnic Group (BME)

Hart has quite a small Black and Minority Ethnic group population at present, which is 5.9% of the population of the whole District. We have limited information about many BME households who live in the rural parts of the District. The Council wants to ensure that BME residents in rural areas are not isolated, which could exacerbate their housing problems.

This also includes the Gypsy and Traveller population. There is little research on the experiences of Gypsies and Travellers in rural areas. Many do not travel regularly but live in caravans and on authorised sites.

The largest ethnic group in the Hart District is the gypsy community. Hart is part of a Hampshire wide study of Gypsy and Traveller Housing Needs.

The results from this are due out very soon, and will be used to help inform housing development in all parts of Hampshire where appropriate.

6.3 Older people

There are reported to be more older people in rural areas than in urban areas and numbers are growing. Generally, there may be small numbers of older people in need of help and support in rural areas, but often they are also very hard to reach because they are in small towns, villages and hamlets. Some older people, particularly pensioners may have low incomes and many prefer to use local shops so access to services can be very important.

Account will be taken of the needs of the older population within Hart's rural communities and steps taken to ensure that this group of the community does not feel isolated.

A number of people who took part in the recent rural housing needs surveys said they would be interested in moving to smaller properties in the communities they have lived in for many years. This is possibly because they would be more affordable and easy to manage.

6.4 Younger People

Young people generally make up a smaller proportion of the population in rural rather than in urban areas. One of the main issues for younger people in rural areas is that they cannot afford to buy a home and there are usually few properties available for rent privately, which makes it hard for them to establish their own home.

Also, youth homelessness is often more hidden in rural areas. Many young people rely on friends to house them temporarily as there are few if any hostels and types of temporary accommodation.

Account will also be taken of the emerging needs of younger households wishing to remain within the village they were brought up in.

6.5 Specialised Housing

In some circumstances a person may require a specially designed property and/or adaptations in order to enable them to live in their home.

Purpose built housing and Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) have been used in the past on rural exception schemes to help a local person continue to live in their home village. This is something Hart is keen to contribute to wherever possible to help the quality of life for people with specialised housing needs in rural areas.

7. Resources

Hyde made applications for funding for a number of schemes to be included within the HARAHA partnership and from the Housing Corporation allocations for 2006-08 - 17 rural schemes received funding with 4 in reserve. This amounted to £7.7 million in total.

HARAHA schemes received 20% of the total rural funding allocation in the South East region and the HARAHA partnership has been promoted as a model of good practice.

Hart successfully received funding for a scheme in South Warnborough, which will build 6 affordable rented properties, and 2 shared ownership, and reserve funding for another scheme in the District

7.1 Capital funding

Hart has agreed to ring fence some capital funding to be used to invest in affordable housing for local people. There are set criteria a scheme is required to meet in order to be considered for funding.

7.2 Grant funding

The Housing Corporation has funding priorities, which are determined by the Regional Housing Board. For several years some funding has been earmarked for villages of 3,000 population or less. More recently, funding has also been made available for market towns that provide services for a rural hinterland.

Hart District Council has joined the Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing (HARAHA) with several other Hampshire authorities to lobby for resources to be allocated to rural areas. Through the partnership a number of schemes are being worked up ready to deliver when funding becomes available. The partnership aims to secure funding for schemes which can be used in a flexible way, to be directed towards deliverable schemes in areas of high housing need.

The HARAHA partnership secured £7.7 million in total through the latest bidding round (2006 – 2008). This amounts to £390,000 for one rural scheme of 6 rented units and one reserve site at £560,000, totalling £950,000 for Hart District.

7.3 Revenue

The Council is committed to continuing to fund the Rural Housing Enabler's specialist expertise on an on-going basis. This amounts to £5k per year. This funding enables the Council to work closely with Parish Councils and local landowners to develop rural schemes. Also, to remain part of the HARAHA partnership benefiting from flexible funding opportunities and a programme of developments to meet affordable rural housing need.

8. Priorities for Action

The priorities to be addressed have been selected in consultation with our stakeholders and have been identified in key documents including the Rural Housing Needs Surveys, Housing Strategy and Parish Plans.

Each action is included in the overall Action Plan for the Rural Housing Strategy attached as Appendix 1.

9. Review and Monitoring

This strategy and action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with the review of the overall Housing Strategy for the District.

10. Contacts

If you have any comments or questions about rural housing in Hart, or you would like to request further copies of the Rural Housing Strategy please contact:

Housing Services, Hart District Council, Harlington Way, Fleet. GU51 4AE

Email: housing@hart.gov.uk

Telephone: 01252 774420

Appendix 1: Rural Housing Strategy Action Plan

	Objective 1- To identify the specific needs of rural parishes and work with stakeholders to identify how to meet those needs				
	Action	Target Date	Lead	Risk if not achieved	Links
i.	To use the housing register and housing needs surveys to identify Parishes with a housing need	June 2007 Every year	Nicola Harpham, Hart District Council	Areas where there is a shortfall in affordable housing will continue to have an unmet need	Homelessness Strategy, Housing Strategy, Parish Plans
ii.	To develop homes to lifetime homes standard on schemes where specialised housing or housing for older people is identified	Every rural site given planning permission from 1 st January 2007	Hyde Housing	Homes built for older people and/or people with a specialised need cannot accommodate the residents when their need for adaptations or alterations arises	Housing Strategy, LDF
iii.	To produce an article to be published in Parish publications and/or notice boards to encourage people in housing need in the Parishes to register on Hart District Council's housing register	Discuss approach and content of article with Parishes by 14 th March 2007. Article to be drafted by 1 st April 2007 Article published by 30 th June 2007	Nicola Harpham, Hart District Council	A number of households in the Parishes in need of affordable housing will miss the opportunity to access affordable housing if they are not registered on the Council's Housing Waiting List	Housing Strategy, Parish Plans
	Objective 2 - To secure resources to develop rural housing, particularly through the HARAH partnership				
iv.	To investigate and take up opportunities to secure funding for rural affordable housing				Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy, LDF

	Objective 3 - To direct and prioritise investment in affordable housing provision in rural areas				
v.	Investigate the opportunities to work across boundaries to develop sites with neighbouring authorities				Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy, LDF
	Objective 4 - To achieve a mix of a minimum of 75% affordable rented units and 25% shared equity within affordable housing provision in rural areas				
vi.	To develop rural sites that comprise of 75% rented affordable housing and 25% shared ownership or shared equity	Every rural site given planning permission from 1 st January 2007	Hyde Housing	Hart misses the opportunity to develop a majority of affordable rented properties and rural shared ownership properties can be expensive when resold in future years even if the first sale is capped to ensure its affordability	Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy, LDF
	Objective 5 - To develop effective partnerships between stakeholders, including parish councils and local communities				
vii.	To develop a standard S106 agreement for Rural Exception sites and standard nominations procedure	TBA	HARAH	S106 agreements vary considerably from parish to Parish and do not provide a clear and consistent approach to allocating rural schemes	Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy, LDF
viii.	To publish a development newsletter for Parishes within the District on a 6 monthly basis	From 1 st February 2007	Nicola Harpham, Hart District Council	Communication links between Hart District Council and the Parish Councils are not developed to their full potential to the benefit of all	Housing Strategy, LDF
	Objective 6 - To guide the work of the Rural Housing				

	<i>Enabler</i>				
ix.	To continue funding the Rural Housing Enabler	Annual fee due by 1.4 2007	Nigel Preston, Head of Housing	Rural affordable housing will not have the resources and expertise it requires to ensure that need is identified and best met through an appropriate rural exception site.	Housing Strategy, , LDF
x.	To enable the development of 30 new affordable rural homes per 3 year HARA programme	By end of programme July 2008	Hyde Housing	The level of need for affordable rural housing continues to rise and families are unable to find affordable housing to meet their needs	Housing Strategy
	Objective 7 - <i>To learn from rural affordable housing developments</i>				
xi.	To carry out satisfaction surveys with all completed rural housing	Every rural site given planning permission from 1 st April 2007	Nicola Harpham, Hart District Council	Future developments are not informed by what residents feel has worked well on other schemes and will not continue to improve in line with our customers wishes	Housing Strategy
xii.	To review this action plan annually	Review 1 st January every year commencing 2007	Nicola Harpham, Hart District Council	Actions are not updated and monitored and do not reflect current rural housing issues and the views of stakeholders	Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy, LDF

Appendix 2: Results of the Rural Housing Needs Surveys 2006

In mid 2006, Hart asked the Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) to carry out these surveys to provide clear information about the need for affordable housing in the rural areas of the District. This helps the authority to plan strategically how to approach meeting rural need in a more structured way.

The Rural Housing Enabler presented these findings at Hart Housing Forum 2006.

Parish	Year of study	Need
Crondall	2006	A need for 26 units, comprising of 10 rent and 16 shared ownership
Heckfield	2006	A need for 5 units, comprising of 3 rent and 2 shared ownership
Odiham	2006	A need for 45 units, comprising of 21 for rent and 24 shared ownership
Greywell	2006	A need for 7 units, comprising of 5 rent and 2 shared ownership
Winchfield	2006	A need for 7 units, comprising of 4 rent and 3 shared ownership
Rotherwick	2006	A need for 6 units, comprising of 3 rent and 3 shared ownership
Mattingley	2006	A need for 4 units, comprising of 2 rent and 2 shared ownership
Long Sutton	2006	A need for 8 units, comprising of 5 rent and 3 shared ownership
Dogmersfield and Bramshill	2006	A small need identified that could be met elsewhere
Total		108
Hartley Wintney	2002 & 2003	Survey carried out by the Parish Council found a need for affordable housing. Respondents expressed a preference for 7 respondents expressed a preference for rented units, 18 for shared ownership and 16 for either

Appendix 3: Rural Exception Sites –First Alterations to the Hart District Local Plan

“..... with the exception of settlements below 5000 population where the requirements will apply to sites which are 0.2ha or larger that would provide 5 or more dwellings.

The Council will seek to grant planning permission solely for affordable housing on land within or adjoining rural communities that would not otherwise be released for housing, in accordance with the principles of existing policy RUR 22 and the amendments to PPG3. For the purpose of this policy, rural communities are all settlements other than the urban areas of Fleet, Yateley and Blackwater/Hawley. This provision will be made where there is an identified need and it would contribute to the attainment of a mixed and balanced community. Exception sites should be small in scale in relation to the size of settlements. Such sites will not be required to provide fully serviced land at nil cost.

Appendix 4: Stakeholders

- District Councillors
- Parish Councillors
- Hart DC Heads of Service
- Planning Development Control and Policy
- Hart's 3 Preferred developing Housing associations: Hyde, Sentinel, Thames Valley

Appendix 5: HARA membership

Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing (HARA) consists of the 6 predominantly rural local authorities in Hampshire including Test Valley, East Hampshire, Basingstoke and Deane, Winchester, New Forest and Hart. In addition, Hyde Housing Association, Hampshire Rural Housing Enablers and the Housing Corporation.