

Rother District Council

A Local Housing and Homelessness Strategy

2014 - 2019



Some of our public consultation responses:

“Using and improving empty and poorly maintained properties is important for the appearance and image of a town”

“I myself spend out so much on heating costs, as I am disabled; I struggle to pay my rent...”

“I feel some landlords need to make improvements and have more pride in care and conditions”



“A lot of people cannot afford to stay in the village – local communities are dying, local shops, post offices & village halls are closing. The youth of the village are moving away to more affordable locations, the village as we know it will become a ghost town”



“I believe (home ownership schemes) would help Bexhill encourage more young people to come & so help the local economy to thrive”

Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2014-19

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Foreword – Cllr Mrs Hughes

I am pleased to introduce our new Housing and Homelessness Strategy, which sets our priorities for affordable housing, homelessness and housing services until 2019. This document has been developed in consultation with our key partners and following consultation with the public. The production of this new strategy starts the process of delivering the agreed priorities and objectives set out in the attached Action Plan.

Our ambition is to contribute to a wider vision for the district –housing priorities which will help to deliver economic development and regeneration goals; tackling homelessness and meeting the district’s housing need; helping more people access home ownership; and improving the health and wellbeing of communities.

This Strategy represents our commitment to providing excellent housing services and I thank the many residents who responded to our consultation and helped shape the document and its action plan. I hope you find the document informative and that through delivering the actions set out, we will help many people now and into the future.

Cllr Joy Hughes

Portfolio Holder for housing

Introduction

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy sets out what the Council will be doing to tackle housing and homelessness issues over the next 5 years

The provision of housing which meets the needs of local people is at the heart of achieving social and economic well-being. Access to suitable and affordable housing¹ helps to shape communities and contributes to a thriving local economy.

Unaffordable housing leads to reduced spending power, which affects the local economy; whilst the provision of new housing can boost the economy by creating jobs and developing the skills of local people.

Unsuitable housing can affect an individual's health, their ability to live independently, and to cope financially.

Poor quality housing and homes left empty and dilapidated can impact on local communities, creating an environment which enables anti-social behaviour, crime, and the fear of crime.

With these points in mind, we have set out a number of areas for action under 3 strategic themes:

Housing and our economy – recognising the contribution housing can have to the wider economy and ensuring we capitalise on opportunities to develop affordable homes which supports job creation

Housing and our residents – working with residents to meet their housing needs and aspirations, including supporting home ownership ambitions

Housing and our community – listening to concerns which have been raised around anti-social behaviour, empty homes and lack of affordable warmth and planning to deliver actions to tackle these

We believe this thematic approach supports our housing ambitions and corporate priorities.

The Council's corporate priorities are:



Putting Customers First

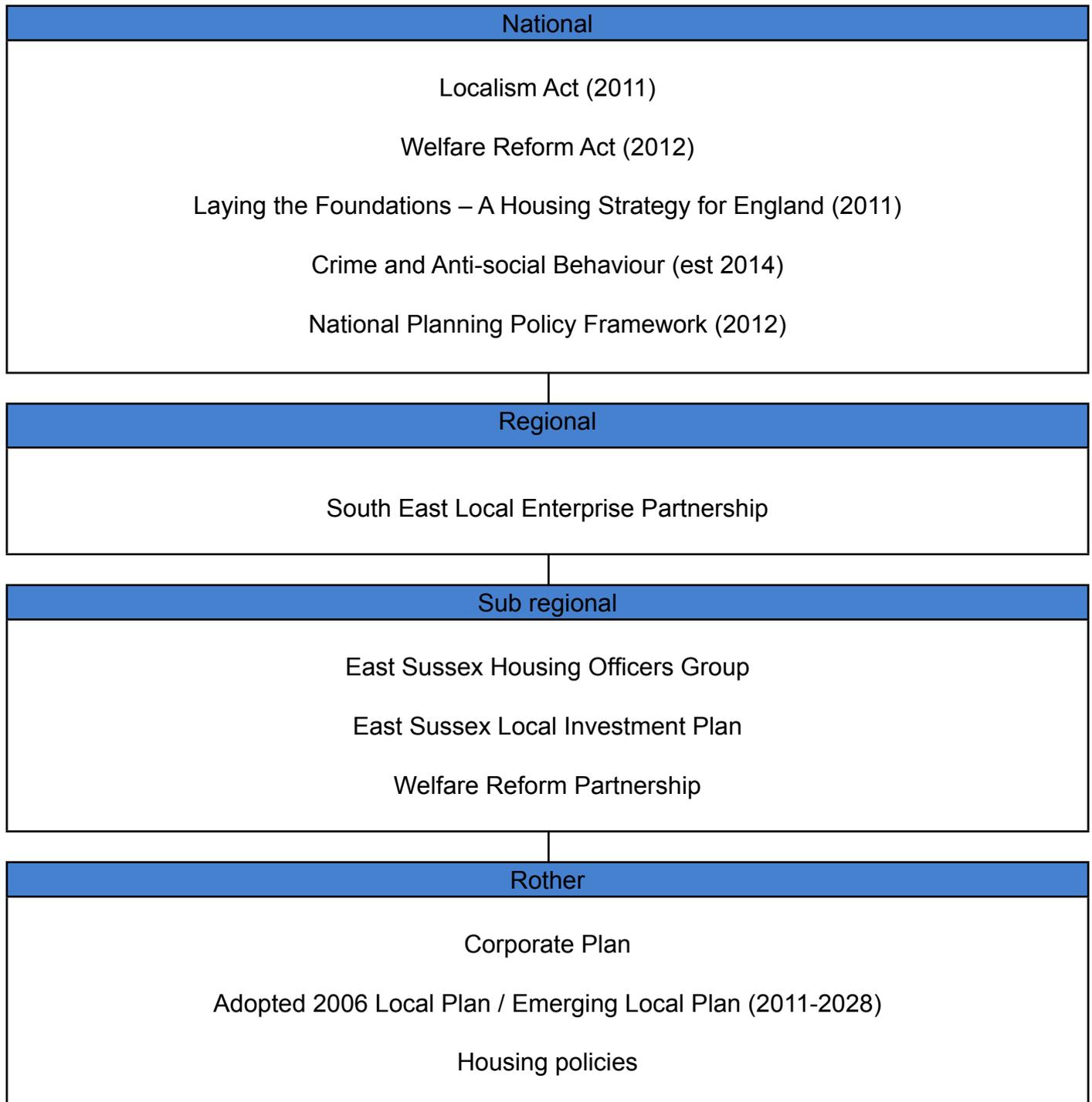
Delivering Value for Money

Building Stronger, Safer Communities

Working in Partnership

Strategic Context

Key policies and strategies which affect housing have undergone significant change as a result of new legislation and welfare reform. The regional tier of government has been removed and therefore the strategic context has changed, with an emphasis on local level delivery. In developing our strategy we have been mindful of relevant legislation, strategy, policies and initiatives at national and local level; these are set out below and more detail is provided in [Appendix A](#).



Evidence Base: Reviews and consultation

During 2013 we undertook housing and homelessness reviews. The purpose of the housing review document is to present evidence which supports a revised housing strategy for Rother. This document considers a range of evidence and data, as well as current local, regional and national priorities, resources available and what has been achieved through the delivery of our previous strategy. This supporting evidence has not been included in this document but is available to view on request.

There are two reasons for carrying out a homelessness review. Firstly, it aims to establish the extent of homelessness in the district whilst assessing the likely extent of homelessness in the future, through looking at the many factors which effect homelessness. Secondly, the homelessness review aims to identify what work is currently being done within the district to tackle homelessness. This includes looking at what we and other organisations are doing, including what resources are available to prevent and tackle homelessness, as well as identifying gaps and looking at ways to address them.

It is also important to understand local views on how we should be delivering our services and what the issues are for our residents. Based on the outcomes from the reviews, we developed a set of proposed priorities and used these as a basis for a public consultation.

Here are some of our key findings from both reviews and the consultation exercise:

Population

- Whilst having a large population of retired and elderly residents, evidence shows an increase in younger age groups and family aged households in excess of national average increases, leading to an increasing requirement for family sized affordable housing
- Black and minority ethnic groups form a lower than average percentage of the population in Rother and across the County (6% in Rother compared to 19.5% nationally).
- Increases in household groups including single person (39%) (not including over 65s), co-habiting couples (37%) and single parents (26%) provides challenges in terms of providing suitable housing options into the future
- Rother has pockets of employment deprivation and a fairly low skilled working age population. It has a low employment rate and people who work in the district have low median earnings, making housing affordability difficult for many local residents (Source: East Sussex Local Economic Assessment. ESCC, June 2011).

Housing Market

- Housing tenure in Rother is showing signs of change with owner occupation (with mortgage) reducing (28% from 32% in 2001), whilst privately rented housing is increasing (13% from 8% in 2001), a sign of the issues around access to residential mortgages.
- A total of 396¹ newbuild affordable homes have been delivered in the Rother district during the last 10 years.
- Affordability is still a major stumbling block for many Rother residents who wish to access home ownership. The economic downturn, together with welfare reform is expected to reduce household income and increase the need for affordable housing.

¹ Source: RDC database and National Affordable Housing Programme

Housing Needs and Homelessness

- The Council's Housing Register has reduced due to policy changes which restrict those who can join. It is now beginning to reflect our local housing need. The volume of accepted applications, although reduced, is still demonstrating a growing need for affordable housing throughout the district.
- Homelessness amongst single people, families with dependent children and lone parents is increasing.
- Private landlord eviction and fleeing from domestic violence remain the most common reasons for homelessness.
- Welfare benefit changes provide challenges as some households will experience significant income reduction

Consultation

A comprehensive consultation exercise, which included residents and organisations we work with, was undertaken and the responses from this have been considered and used to shape this strategy. Key points from the consultation show that the top three concerns are:

- Empty homes
- Homelessness
- Lack of affordable housing

However, many also voiced concerns about lack of options for low income working households, conditions in private rented sector housing and community neighbourhood issues such as anti-social behaviour.

Details of the review can be found at: <http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/10008/Housing-Research>

Results of our public consultation can be found at: <http://www.rother.gov.uk/HousingConsultations>

Priorities and Delivery

We have used the outcomes of the reviews and consultation exercise to shape our strategy under three 'themes'.

Housing and our Economy:

Maximising and shaping affordable housing supply by

- Having in place the planning policies to support the provision of affordable housing;
- Supporting partners to build more high quality, affordable housing for local people on lower incomes;
- Working with partners to deliver well planned homes that support new jobs planned for the district;
- Working in partnership to deliver specialist accommodation that meets the requirements of those with support needs or who require adaptations

What we will do:

1. We will continue to be part of a co-ordinated countywide approach to the delivery of affordable housing, in partnership with registered providers and the Homes and Communities Agency (See target ref [HE2.1](#))
2. We will have planning policies in place that seek to maximise the provision of further affordable housing in new housing schemes, targeted at local needs, also having regard to achieving sustainable developments. (See target ref [HE1.1](#))
3. We will work in partnership with regeneration and other agencies to plan for the development of affordable housing on larger schemes in the district, for example, North East Bexhill, to ensure we are meeting housing need and the needs of local employers and potential employers (See target ref [HE3](#))
4. We will work with ESCC, our registered provider partners and the Homes and Communities Agency to ensure we understand the housing needs of our vulnerable residents and that we put in place plans to meet those needs (See target ref [HE4.1](#))
5. We will work with our registered provider partners (housing associations) on new investment and funding models to ensure affordable housing delivery is maintained. (See target ref [HE2.1](#))

Housing and our Residents:

Working with residents to meet their housing needs we aim to

- Increase home ownership through provision of advice and access to mortgage schemes, self-build and shared ownership schemes;
- Help local people to access education, training and employment as a route to better quality housing, raising aspirations and creating more sustainable communities;
- Reduce the numbers of households becoming homeless;
- Ensure rough sleeping does not become an issue in the district

What we will do:

1. We will develop our housing advice service to better meet the needs of low income working households, through improved advice about, and access routes into, home ownership (see target ref [HR1](#))
2. We will work with employment agencies, including the DWP to develop joint services, better equipped to advise regarding employment, training and housing options (See target ref [HR2](#))
3. We will offer a comprehensive prevention service, with advice and support for single people as well as families in need (See target ref [HR3.2](#))
4. We will continue to develop our links with the private rented sector through development of our own lettings service (See target ref [HR3.2.1](#))
5. We will help householders facing the threat of repossession by providing access to mortgage debt advice and support such as the mortgage rescue scheme (See target ref [HR3.2.3](#))
6. We will work in partnership with our neighbouring East Sussex Local Authorities and other agencies to help prevent rough sleepers becoming entrenched into a street lifestyle through adopting a local 'No Second Night Out' scheme. (See target ref [HR4.1](#))



Housing and our Community:

Understanding the needs of our communities and working in partnership to bring about improvement and regeneration by:

- Reducing the number of empty homes in the district;
- Reducing the number of poor quality private sector homes in the district;
- Increasing access into the private rented housing sector for those in housing need;
- Reducing anti-social behaviour and street homelessness;
- Reducing fuel poverty (where people have to pay a big part of their income on heating) and cutting carbon emissions

What we will do:

1. Continue with our policy of only allowing a one month Council Tax exemption for empty properties and payment premium for longer term properties, providing a financial incentive for owners to bring properties back into use (See target ref [HC1.1](#))
2. Provide financial assistance to owners in the form of loans to bring properties up to a lettable standard in return for exclusive letting rights. (See target ref [HC2.1](#))
3. Provide support to landlords through our own lettings service in return for access to accommodation for those in housing need. See target ref [HR3.2.1](#))
4. Continue to work with relevant agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour. (See target ref [HC4](#))
5. Continue to work in partnership with county wide colleagues to tackle rough sleeping through the Governments 'no second night out' scheme. (See targets ref [RHR4.1](#); [HC4.4](#); [HC4.5](#))
6. Work with our registered provider partners to develop affordable homes which are cheaper to heat. Plans to develop super insulated energy efficient, affordable homes are already in place as a pilot. (See target ref [HC5](#))



Resources

The Council's housing and homelessness strategy has been revised during a time of economic uncertainty, and in the context of exceptional cuts in public expenditure.

A range of measures have been implemented to reduce overall expenditure, including the restructure of services, re-evaluation of priorities and sharing of some services with neighbouring local authorities.

The table below sets out capital grant available to the Council for delivery of specific projects and services.

Service area	Grant	Source	Purpose
Affordable housing development	Social Housing Grant	Central Government, administered by HCA ²	Ring-fenced for the development of affordable housing
	Private Developer/ Section 106 contributions	Developer contributions	Ring-fenced for the development of affordable housing
Private sector housing	Disabled Facilities Grant	Central Government administered by East Sussex County Council from 2014	To fund aids and adaptations for people with disabilities
Homelessness/ prevention of homelessness	Preventing Homelessness Budget	Central Government administered by DCLG	To support the delivery of homelessness prevention services
	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
	DESS ³	Central Government administered by East Sussex County Council	To help residents facing temporary financial hardship where the need cannot be met any other way and there is a significant risk to a person's health and safety.

² Homes & Communities Agency

³ Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme

Action plan

Key	
PPO	Principal Planning Officer
PO&PM	Programme Office & Policy Manager
EDM	Economic Development Manager
HNM	Housing Needs Manager

HOUSING AND OUR ECONOMY				
Ref	Objectives	Actions	Overall Target	Lead
HE1	Have in place the planning policies to support the provision of affordable housing	Develop technical background papers and supplementary planning guidance supporting and updating existing affordable housing policy.	<i>HE1.1</i> The affordable housing policy is applied to 100% of applicable planning applications	PPO
HE2	Support partners to build more high quality, affordable housing for local people on lower incomes	Continue to be part of a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of affordable housing, in partnership with registered providers and the Homes and Communities Agency.	<i>HE 2.1</i> Delivery of a total of 331 ³ (gross) affordable housing units 2012/13 – 2015/16 (future targets to be confirmed in future updates)	PO&PM
HE3	Work with partners to deliver well planned homes that support new jobs planned for the district	Work in partnership with regeneration and other agencies to plan for the development of affordable housing on larger schemes in the district, to ensure we are meeting housing need and the needs of local employers and potential employers	The link road sites are expected to provide 51,500sqm of employment floorspace in North East Bexhill with the potential to create some 2,000 jobs. It is estimated that up to 75% of staff will be from the local workforce ⁴ . The link road sites are also expected to deliver 2,250 homes of which 30% would be affordable.	EDM/ PO&PM
HE4	Working in partnership to deliver specialist accommodation that meets the requirements of those with support needs or who require adaptations	Work in partnership with ESCC, our registered provider partners and the Homes and Communities Agency to ensure we understand the housing needs of our vulnerable residents and that we put in place plans to meet those needs	<i>HE 4.1</i> Delivery of a total of 158 supported housing units 2012/13 – 15/16 (future targets to be confirmed in future updates)	PO&PM

HOUSING AND OUR RESIDENTS				
Ref	Objectives	Actions	Ref/Target	Lead
HR1	Increase home ownership through provision of advice and access to mortgage schemes, self-build and shared ownership schemes	Develop our housing service to better meet the needs of low income working households, through improved advice about, and access routes into home ownership	<p><i>HR1.1</i> Develop information on home ownership options for publishing on RDC website housing pages by July 2014</p> <p><i>HR1.2</i> Ensure all Housing Needs Officers are trained and up to date on home ownership options by April 2014</p> <p><i>HR1.3</i> Promote homeownership options through 2 events per year</p> <p><i>HR1.4</i> Directly assist 5 households into homeownership per year</p>	HNM
HR2	Help local people to access education, training and employment as a route to better quality housing, raising aspirations and creating more sustainable communities	Work with employment agencies, including the DWP to develop joint services, better equipped to advise regarding employment, training and housing options	<p><i>HR2.1</i> Develop partnerships, joint working procedures and protocols with DWP, Bexhill College and Bexhill High School by December 2014</p> <p><i>HR2.2</i> Assist (tba) households with advice on housing and employment (target to be agreed as part of previous target)</p>	HNM

HR3	Reduce the numbers of households becoming homeless	<p>Offer comprehensive prevention service, with advice (including written advice and information packs) and support for single people as well as families in need</p> <p>Continue to develop our links with the private rented sector through development of our own lettings service</p> <p>Assist householders facing the threat of repossession by providing access to mortgage debt advice and support</p>	<p>HR3.1 Develop a user friendly information pack to include space for a written record of all individual advice given - by March 2014</p> <p>HR3.2 164 total homelessness preventions per year</p> <p>Breakdown:</p> <p>HR3.2.1 40 households per year assisted into private rented sector (direct placements) accommodation through lettings service</p> <p>HR3.2.2 50 households per year assisted into private rented sector accommodation through financial assistance (subject to funding availability)</p> <p>HR3.2.3 4 homelessness preventions as a result of mortgage debt advice</p> <p>HR3.2.4 30 households per year assisted into affordable housing through housing register allocations</p> <p>HR3.2.5 40 households per year assisted through budgeting and benefits advice/liaison, to remain in their own home</p>	HNM
HR4	Ensure rough sleeping does not become an issue in the district	Work in partnership with our neighbouring East Sussex Local Authorities and other agencies to help prevent rough sleepers becoming entrenched into a street lifestyle through adopting a local 'No Second Night Out' scheme.	HR4.1 Retain rough sleeper count at under 10 per year by developing a bid submission for additional funding for project to assist tackling rough sleeping, by June 2014	HNM

HR5	Assist those living in housing which does not meet their needs to remain at home through provision of a disabled facilities grant scheme	<p>Deliver quality and cost effective adaptations to the homes of disabled peoples via mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants.</p> <p>Assist disabled people by providing support to access alternative housing options where adapting the existing property via a DFG is not reasonable or practical.</p> <p>Working with partnership groups to maximise the use of the DFG budget.</p>	<p><i>HR5.1</i> Work to achieve spend of 100% of DFG budget.</p> <p><i>HR5.2</i> Complete a minimum of 75 adaptations.</p>	HNM
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HOUSING AND OUR COMMUNITY

Ref	Objectives	Actions	Target	Lead
HC1	Reducing the number of empty homes in the district	<p>Continue with our policy of only allowing one months Council Tax exemption for empty properties and payment premium for longer term properties, providing a financial incentive for owners to bring properties back into use</p> <p>Actively encourage residents to report empty properties through the development and publicising of an on-line reporting system</p> <p>Offer advice, information and assistance (where appropriate) to owners of reported properties in order to bring them back into use (this may also include loan assistance (subject to availability of resources) in return for nomination rights)</p>	<i>HC1.1</i> 10 empty homes brought into use in year 1 (future targets tbd)	PO&PM

HC2	Reducing the number of poor quality private sector homes in the district	<p>Provide financial assistance to owners in the form of loans to bring properties up to a lettable standard in return for exclusive letting rights.</p> <p>Respond to complaints about poor living conditions from tenants in the private rented sector and work with landlords to resolve the issues</p> <p>Identify, assess and license HMOs subject to the mandatory HMO licensing scheme.</p>	<p>HC2.1 Bring 4 homes per year into use for those in housing need through the use of financial assistance scheme</p> <p>HC2.2 Improve 59 dwellings per year by removing category 1 or reducing category 2 hazards</p> <p>HC2.3 Assessment of 68 HMO units per year</p> <p>HC2.4 Improvements to 35 HMO units per year</p>	PO&PM /EDM
HC3	Increasing access into the private rented housing sector for those in housing need	<p>Provide support to landlords through our own lettings service in order to increase access to private rented accommodation for those in housing need.</p> <p>Liaise with Private Landlords through organised events throughout the year</p>	<p>HC3.1 Bring 40 homes into use for those in housing needs, through the lettings scheme</p> <p>HC3.2 Host Landlord Forum events twice per year</p>	HNM

HC4	Reducing anti-social behaviour and street homelessness	<p>Continue to work with relevant agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour through the harm based approach structures and processes.</p> <p>Continue to work in partnership with county wide colleagues to tackle rough sleeping through the Governments 'no second night out' scheme.</p>	<p><i>HC4.1</i> Deliver effective interventions to a minimum of 20 residents identifying ASB as a housing related issue per year.</p> <p><i>HC4.2</i> Deliver interventions with partner agencies to reduce the impact of the behaviour of a minimum of 20 ASB offenders who are committing ASB in their neighbourhood per annum.</p> <p><i>HC4.3</i> Deliver two update training sessions on new powers and tools to council staff after Royal Ascent. With 1 refresher session yearly after that.</p> <p><i>HC4.4</i> Retain rough sleeper count at under 10 per year</p> <p><i>HC4.5</i> Deliver 5 interventions with Police, Safer Rother Partnership and other agencies to identify Rough Sleepers per annum.</p>	PO&PM
HC5	Reducing fuel poverty (where people have to pay a big part of their income on heating) and cutting carbon emissions	<p>Work with our registered provider partners to develop affordable homes which are cheaper to heat. Plans to develop super insulated energy efficient, affordable homes are already in place as a pilot.</p> <p>Consider affordable warmth initiatives as opportunities arise and dependant on resource availability.</p>	<p><i>HC5.1</i> Develop 10% of affordable housing at Level 4 (or above) of Code for Sustainable Homes or equivalent eco-standard.</p>	PO&PM

Monitoring arrangements

The strategy will be monitored through annual updates as per the timetable below:

Period	Date due
2014/15 update	May 2015
2015/16 update	May 2016
2016/17 update	May 2017
2017/18 update	May 2018
2018/19 update	May 2019

The updates will provide information on action plan delivery and include information on any service changes that may be required as a result of funding and or legislative/policy changes.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Strategic context: summary

The National Context

Localism Act 2011

The [Localism Act](#) aims to decentralise power to the lowest practicable level whether that is the local authority, parish or neighbourhood. Legislation introduces:

Greater freedom for local authorities to set their own housing register policies

Flexible tenancy arrangements for people entering social housing

Opportunity to meet statutory duty to house people who are homeless in private rented homes

A National Home Swap Scheme to enable social tenants to move more easily

Stronger tools to enable social tenants to hold their landlords to account

The following is a summary of the key housing changes it has introduced.

The Housing Register

Under previous legislation anyone could apply to live in social housing and Councils were required to have “open” housing registers. However, the demand on social housing is such that many people on housing registers are not realistically likely to obtain a social tenancy. The Localism Act gives local authorities greater freedoms to set their own housing register policies assisting authorities to ensure that social homes go to the most vulnerable and most in need.

Security of Tenure

Historically social landlords were generally only able to grant secure tenancies. Sometimes this has meant that people were able to rent a social home at a moment of crisis in their life, and then continue to live there long after any need for it has passed. Social housing providers are now able to introduce a number of flexible tenancy arrangements for people entering social housing. Local authorities are required to have a tenancy strategy in place by April 2013.

Reform of Homelessness Legislation

Local Authorities continue to have a duty to house people who meet eligibility criteria. Under the previous rules, people who became homeless were able to refuse offers of accommodation in the private rented sector in favour of social rented even if this resulted in the household needing temporary accommodation. This meant that in some circumstances people in acute, but short-term housing need acquired a social home for life, although they may not have needed one. The changes now allow Local Authorities to meet their homelessness duty by offering good quality private rented homes.

National Home Swap Scheme

For people living in private sector housing, moving home is a reasonably straightforward process providing financial conditions can be met. However, it is less straightforward for those who live in social housing. The Localism Act introduces a National Home Swap Scheme which should provide social tenants a far greater opportunity to relocate.

Reform of social housing regulation

The Act reforms the way that social housing is regulated. It provides tenants with stronger tools to hold their landlords to account. Social landlords will be expected to support tenant panels – or similar bodies – in order to give tenants the opportunity to carefully scrutinise the services provided. The Act also abolishes the Tenant Services Authority and transfers its remaining functions to the Homes & Communities Agency.

Welfare Reform

The Welfare Reform Act (2012) aims to make work pay. It introduces Universal Credit, a single benefit for people of working age which will replace existing benefits such as Income Support from October 2013. In the longer term, the Government aims to have all welfare benefits capped at the average household earned income. The cap will not reflect variations in income and rental costs across the country. Any money over and above the cap will be reduced from the housing costs element therefore some households may be at risk of falling into arrears because their housing award is insufficient to meet their rent. There have also been significant changes to housing benefit aimed at reducing the housing benefit budget.

National Housing Strategy

[Laying the Foundations](#): a housing strategy for England was published in November 2011. It sets out a series of changes to the housing system, some of which were already underway when the strategy was published. The strategy aims to

- Provide support to deliver new homes
- Support home ownership aspirations
- Support choice and quality for tenants
- Tackle empty homes
- Ensure provision of better quality homes, places and housing support

The way in which new affordable housing development is funded has changed. A new revenue based model has been introduced which allows funding only for housing which will be let at the new 'affordable rent'. Registered Social Housing Providers (RPs) are now able to charge up to 80% of market rent under the 'affordable rent' regime, compared to a more typical 50-60% under the old 'social rent' regime. The additional revenue must be used together with reduced levels of funding to deliver new housing.

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

To make provision about anti-social behaviour, crime and disorder, including provision about recovery of possession of dwelling houses; to make provision amending the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, Schedules 7 and 8 to the Terrorism Act 2000 and the Extradition Act 2003; to make provision about firearms and about forced marriage; to make provision about the police, the Independent Police Complaints Commission and the Serious Fraud Office; to make provision about criminal justice and court fees; and for connected purposes.

Under this Bill which had its second reading in the House of Lords on 29.10.2013 and is due for Committee Stage on 12.11.2013 there will be responsibilities for the Council (and also the Safer Rother Partnership) under the community triggers procedure for complaints that ASB has not been

dealt with and which meets the thresholds, information sharing and case management and multi-agency work to use the new tools and powers e.g. public space protection orders to deal with ASB effectively.

National Planning Policy Framework

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) - was published in spring 2012 and sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Neighbourhood Development Plans and Community Right to Build enable local people to have more involvement and control over development in their area. Changes to the planning obligations system (section 106 agreements) mean that strategic infrastructure is now funded by a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on developers. At present, affordable housing continues to be developed through section 106 planning agreements. Planning Policy for Travellers Sites came into force at the same time as the NPPF and requires the council to set pitch targets for Gypsies and Travellers and plot targets for travelling Show people.

The Regional Context

South East Local Enterprise Partnership

Local Enterprise Partnerships are partnerships between local authorities and businesses which are designed to play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs. They are a vehicle for delivering Government objectives for economic growth and decentralisation. The South East LEP covers a vast area including Essex, Kent and East Sussex – it is the largest LEP outside of London. It is creating a Growth Strategy which will set out its economic and regeneration aspirations and ambitions.

The Sub Regional Context

East Sussex Local Investment Plan

The East Sussex Local Investment Plan (LIP) (2011-14) set out the County's⁶ priorities for investment in affordable housing. A further document (LIP 2011 update) provided details, specifically for the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and Registered Provider partners, on East Sussex Local Authority priority housing schemes for the Local Investment Plan period. LIP partners have chosen to prioritise schemes in light of existing budget restraints and a revised framework for allocation of HCA funding for affordable housing; this was to ensure that registered provider partners had information about East Sussex priorities and priority schemes prior to developing their bidding packages for HCA funding.

East Sussex Welfare reform project

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 puts into law the biggest overhaul of the benefits system since the 1940s.

Preparing for these changes has been a key priority for East Sussex County Council and the borough and district councils, and they have been working in partnership to deliver a common response to the key challenges facing local residents and voluntary organisations as a result of these changes.

The project includes:

- Providing residents of East Sussex, elected members, professionals, and the private, voluntary and public sectors, with up-to-date, accurate information on the detail of the changes and the impact they will have.
- Ensuring claimants know the facts about how benefits are changing and where to get more information, advice and help.

- Offering information and training opportunities to organisations and front-line staff who work directly with people affected by the changes, to ensure that they can engage with them and support them appropriately.
- Providing additional one-off resources to support statutory and voluntary sector organisations so they can help those most affected by the changes, including those most at risk of homelessness.

The Local Context

The Corporate Strategy

The Council's vision, set out in its [Corporate Strategy](#), is:

- Greater economic prosperity with a skilled workforce gaining greater access to well-paid employment
- Our local communities building greater capacity to identify and resolve their own challenges
- A place of greater vibrancy with more youthful demographic profile, supporting economically active lifestyles
- Greater tolerance and understanding of diversity in our communities
- Inequalities, isolation and deprivation tackled, with an increase in respect and a decrease in crime and anti-social behaviour
- Our residents housed in decent homes
- More leisure and cultural opportunities as a basis for healthy community life
- The outstanding assets of countryside and coastline valued more highly for their contribution to our quality of life

Local Plan (2011-2028)

This was formerly known as the Local Development Framework (LDF) In line with the central government reforms set out in the [Localism Act](#) and the [National Planning Policy Framework](#), the suite of documents formerly known as the Local Development Framework, will now be known as the new 'Local Plan (2011-2028)'. Local Plans provide the basis for delivering the spatial planning strategy of the district and guide future development and change. These are prepared by District Councils except that documents relating to waste and minerals matters continue to be prepared by the County Council.

The individual documents that will comprise, and support, the Local Plan (2011-2028) are set out at www.rother.gov.uk/planning The affordable housing policy, which is a supplementary planning document (SPD) is also available through this link.

Housing and Homelessness Strategy – sub strategies and policies

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy is the Council's Housing Services over-arching Strategy; detailing strategic targets driven by local needs, Central Government and Local and Regional policies as well as feedback from consultation exercises and research outcomes. The Housing Service has a number of sub strategies and policies which focus on specific activities:

Homelessness Policy (include link)

Allocations Policy (include link)

Tenancy Strategy (include link)



ⁱ The national definition of affordable housing can be found with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

“Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as “low cost market” housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes”