



Affordable Housing Delivery Plan

April 2013

1. Housing Need

The current economic and financial climate has contributed to significant growth in the need and demand for affordable housing across the district. Increasing numbers of applicants are registered and subsequently bidding for vacant properties. This picture shows no sign of abating. Anecdotally many in need will not register as the lack of supply is well known, turning to the private sector for solutions, masking the true extent of need and demand. Increased pressure for smaller properties is particularly pressing as a result of the implications of the “bedroom tax”, which should not be underestimated in forcing increased immediate demand for property types which are already in particularly short supply.

In February 2013 elements of the SHMA were updated - the findings are presented in the report “Indicators of Need for Affordable Housing in Waveney”.¹ This report sets the district wide context and has since been complemented by a series of reports which give a more detailed picture of need and demand for affordable housing in Bungay, Beccles, Halesworth, Reydon/Southwold, and Lowestoft/Kessingland. These reports – which are attached as appendices to this report - underline the level of need and highlight the quantum of the task.

The need across the district is predominantly for smaller properties (one and two bedroom), partially due to the lack of such properties in the existing affordable housing stock, and partially due to changing patterns of family life. Welfare reform is also likely to increase the demand for smaller properties in the immediate future. However we recognise that from the perspective of creating balanced, mixed and sustainable communities and in the future to avoid a dramatic shift to provide larger homes balance in new provision is needed. A typical guide for rented housing would be:

- 1 bedroom houses or flats (2 person) 30%
- 2 bedroom houses (4 person) 50%
- 3 bedroom houses (5 person) 15%
- 4 bedroom houses (6 person) 5%

However this will be kept under review and must be agreed on a scheme by scheme basis.

2. Supply of New Affordable housing.

A significant change in appetite from Housing Associations in delivering new affordable housing has been experienced nationally. This is due to tightening of public expenditure reducing grant rates in part, but more significantly a hardening of bank attitudes to covenant compliance and the management of associated risk leading to greater investment caution.

¹ Available at https://www.waveney.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?fileID=3458

This has been particularly acute in Waveney and Suffolk Coastal due to the previous market dominance of a single provider. The key strategic action has been to attract sustainable Housing Association investment through attracting new partners into the district and supporting them to invest in Waveney and Coastal rather than other districts in Suffolk and Norfolk. In addition, models to stretch provision have been developed including support for developer led shared equity and Council House building to provide extra supply on top of that from Housing Associations.

However the risk shift from development programme pipelines, has led to far less investment in working up a supply chain of development opportunities by partners in the site investigation, design and planning phases of projects prior to, and necessary for, funding to be attracted. On “none S106” opportunities the pipelines is therefore very thin. Associations are looking for “oven ready” opportunities and invest where they are available, rather than in a particular district which again has the effect of increasing the pressure.

Opportunities require significant subsidy in addition to grant available from the Homes and Communities Agency and can be summarised as:

- S106 developer led projects to deliver 35% policy compliant Affordable Housing schemes, subject to viability.
- Rural Exception Sites, where Waveney has had a poor experience of delivery and little appetite from parish Councils. This is, however, now being more actively promoted with applications to be made shortly in both Halesworth and Holton. This is supported by reduced land values at circa £150,000 per acre.
- Public sector land gifted to Housing Associations will in practice only be available from Waveney. The “land terrier project” has therefore been perused over a number of years to identify and ensure best use of underutilised public assets.
- Regeneration sites acquired on the open market in areas where values and demand from the private sector are depressed. Again land values are low typically between £10,000 and £20,000 a plot. However greater levels of grant funding are required limiting provision. Some partners are also not keen to be developing in such inner Lowestoft areas, seeking higher value homes generating higher rents.
- Housing Associations are tentatively exploring Market Sale housing to generate profits to replace grant funding, but little hope should be placed in this increasing supply in the foreseeable future unless in partnership with the private sector.

3. Funding issues

The current funding cycle saw grant rates halving, with the deficit met by increased rent (the “Affordable Rent Tenure”). Most Housing Associations are planning for a “nil Grant Regime” from April 2015. Housing Associations are in general very financially robust with extremely low valuation levels in their accounts, giving substantial equity reserves and generating substantial annual surpluses. The vast majority of their existing stock is let at Social rents giving scope for income to rise substantially. They have not faced the kind of reductions in operating costs common in the public sector. In short many commentators believe that the

ending of wholesale grant programmes should not affect delivery in the long term, but that there will be a short term blip as they acclimatise to the new regime and the banks continue to rebuild their asset bases before lending is freed up again.

A 1 year bid round is widely anticipated in June / July 2013 to take up large amounts of slippage caused by the reluctance of Associations to invest in working up pipeline schemes. It will be aimed at schemes which can achieve planning by the end of the calendar year and presents a real opportunity.

Self-funding for the HRA has allowed Council House building to become a reality once more with the funding for up to 15 homes per year assuming free land. This is to be targeted on additional provision rather than competing with Housing Associations, and on or near existing estates. The first Scheme is being brought forward in Southwold.

The use of commuted sums to deliver additional schemes funded by the council is actively being perused as with the most recent example at Till Rd, Lowestoft where a further 7 homes are being funded in this way.

Summary

It would be realistic to work towards supply on the following basis taking into account all of the above factors:

- The delivery of 10/15 new homes per year in each of the 4 market towns (circa 40/50 in total from all sources), with delivery in Southwold/Reydon every two years.
- The delivery of 50/60 new homes per year in Lowestoft/Kessingland (from all sources as an absolute minimum).
- A Rural Exception site per annum @ circa 8 homes
- Total provision of an absolute minimum of circa 100 affordable homes per annum, not an ambitious target given the much greater levels of need.
- However this will require partnership working with Housing Associations to “sell” Waveney, seeking new models of delivery, working up a supply chain of opportunities and a flexible approach by the council.

Indicators of Need and Demand for Affordable Housing Need in Bungay

1. Numbers on Housing Register

We took a snapshot from the Housing Register on 2nd April 2013. There are 347 live applicants who are either living in Bungay or have a local connection to Bungay. The table below gives a breakdown of the size of properties that these 347 applicants require and their relative housing need.

	Bedrooms required ¹	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	
	Banding							
Assessed as High/Medium need	A	3	4	1	1	0	9	188
	B	12	17	14	4	2	49	
	C	75	37	17	1	0	130	
Other Need / Demand	D	11	5	1	0	0	17	159
	E	68	51	22	0	1	142	
	TOTAL	169	114	55	6	3	347	

Bedrooms required	% of all applicants ²	% of applicants in high/medium need
1	49	48
2	33	31
3	16	17
4	2	3
5	1	1

Comments

- Highest current demand and highest need is for 1 and 2 bedroom properties (82 % of all applicants; 79% of applicants with high/medium priority)
- 69 of the 347 applicants (almost 20%) are existing social housing tenants who are requesting a transfer. This is relatively high

2. Existing general needs rented social housing stock in Bungay as at 31 March 2013

Size of property ³	Numbers	As a % of total general needs social housing stock in Bungay
1 bed	31	10
2 bed	138	44
3 bed	129	41
4 bed	15	5
5 bed	0	0
TOTALS	313	

¹ Allocation of social housing is made on the basis of bedrooms actually required i.e. applicants cannot bid for a property that has more bedrooms than they need

² Figures are rounded up

³ Includes flats; bungalows; houses

There are a further 47 social housing properties in Bungay – these are sheltered properties (21 x bedsits; 26 x 1 bedroom properties). To be eligible for one of these properties applicants must be over 60 and have a support need. The analysis of applicants on the housing register did not include an enquiry about how many applicants would meet these criteria (and indeed would be willing to accept a bedsit property and/or pay a support charge).

Comments

- Just over 50% of the existing general needs social housing stock is 1 or 2 bedroom – this does not match need and demand for 1 and 2 bedroom properties which is approx. 80% of applicants
- Most significantly, 48% of applicants who have been assessed as having a high/medium priority, need a 1 bedroom property whereas 1 bedroom properties make up just 10% of the existing general needs stock
- 3 households including 2 in high/medium need require 5 bedroom properties - there are no 5 bedroom properties within the existing stock

3. Availability and demand for the existing social housing properties in Bungay

All rented properties owned by WDC or RSLs are advertised through Homechoice. 70 properties became available over the 26 month period – 1/1/11 to 31/3/13. This equates to an annual turnover of 10% which is not unusual.

We also looked at pattern of bidding. The number of bids gives us an indicator of demand for this size of property although this will of course be influenced by the location, charge, amenities and perceived condition of each individual property. It is also useful to consider the banding of successful applicant i.e. was it let to someone in Banding A – C (high/medium need) or if the highest bidder was an applicant in low need. The table below sets out the findings –

Type /size of property	Number of this type of property that became available in last 26 months	Highest number of bids on any property	Percentage of properties that were allocated to someone in high/medium need
1 bed bungalow	4	19	75%
1 bed flat	9	110	100%
2 bed bungalow	5	17	100%
2 bed flat	16	47	100%
2 bed house	8	66	100%
3 bed house	12	56	100%
4 bed house	4	88	100%
Sheltered	12	12	58%
Total	70		

4. Issues to take into account when considering need for affordable housing in Bungay

- The Housing Register is only an indicator of need – it has some limitations. Nevertheless it is a useful source of information.
- The Housing Register is likely to give an **under** estimation of need. We know that some people will not apply to the Housing Register for various reasons.
- The Housing Register gives an indicator of current need and demand – it does not give us an indication of emerging need.
- The focus of the Housing Register is housing for rent. It does not give us an indication of how many people in housing need may be interested in/able to afford low cost home ownership
- This analysis was too general to draw any conclusion about the need for supported or specialist housing
- From April 2013 tenants of working age in social housing will have their benefit cut if they are deemed to have a spare bedroom. We anticipate that- generally - there will be an increase transfer requests (for smaller properties) but as we do not know how this will impact on need and demand for housing in Bungay specifically.

5. Conclusions / Recommendations

- There is evidence of housing need in Bungay
- This need will not be met by the existing social housing stock
- The greatest need is for 1 and 2 bedroom properties
- In developing any new affordable housing scheme, consideration needs to be given to the balance between meeting the greatest housing need and creating balanced communities.
- Alongside developing new affordable housing , consideration should be given to
 - the future use / possibility of remodelling the existing sheltered schemes in Bungay
 - reviewing the eligibility criteria/ advertising of 1 bedroom bungalows to maximise the use of this size of property/achieve 100% allocations to those in high or medium need.

Indicators of Need and Demand for Affordable Housing in Beccles

1. Numbers on Housing Register

We took a snapshot from the Housing Register on 2nd April 2013. There are 232 applicants who are either living in Beccles or have a local connection to Beccles.

	Bedrooms required ⁴	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	
	Banding							
Assessed as High/Medium need	A	2	7	0	0	0	9	88
	B	12	9	1	2	1	25	
	C	32	18	3	1	0	54	
Other Need/Demand	D	6	2	0	0	0	8	144
	E	60	58	16	1	1	136	
	TOTAL	112	94	20	4	2	232	

Bedrooms required	Percentage % of all applicants	Percentage % of applicants in high/medium need
1	48	52
2	40.5	39
3	8.5	4.5
4	2	3.5
5	1	1

Comments

- Highest demand and highest need is for 1 and 2 bedroom properties
- Currently only 5 out of all 232 applicants (2%) are transfer request i.e. already social housing tenants. This is relatively low.

2. Existing general needs rented social housing stock in Beccles as at 31 March 2013

Size of property ⁵	Numbers	As a % of total general needs social housing stock in Beccles
1 bed	118	19
2 bed	216	35
3 bed	241	39
4 bed	42	7
5 bed	0	0
TOTAL	617	

⁴ Allocation of social housing is made on the basis of bedrooms actually required i.e. applicants cannot bid for a property that has more bedrooms than they need

⁵ Includes flats; bungalows; houses

There are a further 39 social housing properties for rent in Beccles – these are sheltered properties (26 x 1 bedroom properties; 13 x 2 bedroom properties). To be eligible for one of these properties applicants must be over 60 and have a support need. The analysis of applicants on the housing register did not include an enquiry about how many applicants would meet these criteria and / or wanted to live in sheltered accommodation.

Comments

- Just 54% of the existing general needs social housing stock is 1 or 2 bedroom – this does not match need and demand for 1 and 2 bedroom units which is approx. 90% of applicants
- The greatest “mismatch” is on 1 bedroom properties – approx. 50% of applicants need 1 bedroom properties; just 19% of the existing general needs social housing rented are 1 bedroom properties.
- 2 households including 1 in high/medium need require 5 bedroom properties - there are no 5 bedroom properties within existing stock.

3. Availability and demand for the existing social housing properties in Beccles

All rented properties owned by WDC or RSLs are advertised through Homechoice. 127 properties became available over the 26 month period – 1/1/11 to 31/3/13. This equates to an annual turnover of 9.5% which is not remarkable.

We also looked at pattern of bidding. The number of bids gives us an indicator of demand for this size of property although this will of course be influenced by the location, charge, amenities and perceived condition of each individual property. It is also useful to consider the banding of successful applicant i.e. was it let to someone in Banding A – C (high/medium need) or if the highest bidder was an applicant in low need. The table below sets out the findings –

Type /size of property	Number of this type of property that became available in last 26 months	Highest number of bids on any property	Percentage of properties that were allocated to someone in high/medium need
1 bed bungalow	9	33	66%
1 bed flat	28	110	100%
2 bed bungalow	25	32	92%
2 bed flat	1	13	100%
2 bed house	22	138	100%
3 bed bungalow	2	28	50%
3 bed house	28	66	100%
4 bed house	3	84	100%
sheltered	9	84	100%
Total	127		

4. Issues to take into account when considering need for affordable housing in Beccles

- The Housing Register is only an indicator of need and demand – it has some limitations. Nevertheless it is a useful source of information.
- The Housing Register is likely to give an **under** estimation of need. We know that some people will not apply to the Housing Register for various reasons.
- The Housing Register gives an indicator of current need and demand – it does not given us an indication of emerging need.
- The focus of the Housing Register is housing for rent. It does not give us an indication of how many people in housing need may be interested in/able to afford low cost home ownership
- This analysis was too general to draw any conclusion about the need for supported or specialist housing
- From April 2013 tenants of working age in social housing will have their benefit cut if they are deemed to have a spare bedroom. We anticipate that- generally - there will be an increase transfer requests (for smaller properties) but as we do not know how this will impact on need and demand for housing in Beccles specifically.

5. Conclusions / Recommendations

- There is evidence of housing need in Beccles
- This need will not be met by the existing social housing stock
- The greatest need is for 1 and 2 bedroom properties
- In developing any new affordable housing scheme, consideration needs to be given to the balance between meeting the greatest housing need and creating balanced communities.
- Alongside developing new affordable housing , consideration should be given to
 - reviewing the eligibility criteria/ advertising of bungalows to maximise the use of this size of property/achieve 100% allocations to those in high or medium need.

Indicators of Need and Demand for Affordable Housing in Halesworth and surrounding parishes

Section 1 – Halesworth and Holton

1. Information from the Housing Register

We took a snapshot from the Housing Register on 3rd March 2013. There were 111 applicants living in Halesworth and Holton

	Bedrooms required ¹	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	
	Banding						
High/Medium need	A	2	4	1	0	7	40
	B	3	2	0	1	6	
	C	19	7	1	0	27	
Low Need	D	2	0	0	1	3	71
	E	33	29	6	0	68	
	TOTAL	59	42	8	2	111	

Bedrooms required	Percentage % of all applicants	Percentage % of applicants in high/medium need
1	53	60
2	38	32.2
3	7	5
4	2	2.5

Comments

- Highest demand and highest need is for 1 bedroom properties
- Currently only 11 out of all 111 applicants are transfer request i.e. already social housing tenants.

2. Existing general needs² social housing stock in Halesworth and Holton as at March 2013

Size of property ³	Halesworth		Holton	
	Numbers	As a % of total g.n social housing stock for both Halesworth and Holton	Numbers	As a % of total g.n. social housing stock for both Halesworth and Holton
1 bed	90	25	0	0
2 bed	114	31	31	8.5
3 bed	87	24	38	10
4 bed	5	1	1	0.5
TOTALS	296		70	

¹ Allocation of social housing is made on the basis of bedrooms actually required i.e. applicants cannot bid for a property that has more bedrooms than they need

² there are a further 21 properties in Halesworth – these are sheltered properties (4 x bedsits; 17 x 1 bedroom properties)

³ Includes flats; bungalows; houses

Comments

- Existing stock proportions do not “match” current existing need
- The greatest “shortfall” is on 1 bed properties
- 3 bed properties across both parishes account for 34% of the stock; only 7% of all applicants require 3 bedroom accommodation.

3. Other indicators of demand for social housing in Halesworth and Holton

Bids on general needs properties that have been advertised through Homechoice for 14 month period January 2011 to 1st March 2013 -

Halesworth

- 73 properties advertised
- 28 (38%) received over 30 bids
- Highest number of bids on a single property = 153 (for a 1 bedroom property)

Holton

- 14 properties advertised
- 8 (57%) received over 30 bids
- Highest number of bids on a single property = 110

Section 2 – Rumburgh, Wissett, Spixhall, Blyford

4. Information from the Housing register ¹ – applicants currently living in Rumburgh, Wissett, Spixhall, Blyford

	Bedrooms required	1	2	3	4	TOTAL
	Banding					
High/Medium need	A	0	0	0	0	0
	B	0	0	0	0	0
	C	1	1	0	0	2
Low Need	D	1	0	0	0	1
	E	3	2	0	0	5
	TOTAL	5	3	0	0	

Bedrooms required	Percentage % of all applicants	Percentage % of applicants in high/medium need
1	62.5	50
2	37.5%	50
3	0	0
4	0	0

Comments

- All current applicants require 1 or 2 bedroom properties only
- Greatest requirement demand is for 1 bedroom properties.

¹ Snapshot taken on 3/3/13

5. Existing general needs social housing stock in in Rumburgh, Wissett, Spixhall, Blyford as at March 2013

Size of property ¹	Numbers				As a %of total social stock for these 4 parishes
	Rumburgh	Wissett	Spixhall	Blyford	
1 bed	2	0	0	0	7
2 bed	0	2	3	2	25
3 bed	3	5	3	8	68
4 bed	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	5	7	6	10	

Comments

- Existing stock proportions do not “match” current existing need
- 3 bed properties across these 4 parishes account for 34% of the stock; no current applicants from these 4 parishes require 3 bedroom accommodation.

Section 3 – Caveats and other considerations

These factors should be considered as part of the wider discussion about mix of new affordable housing in Halesworth -

- If the site is an exception site there are a number of factors to balance
 - Agreeing the cascade of parishes when assessing local connection
 - Meeting local need per se
 - Meeting greatest need
 - Balance and diversity (size and tenure)
- The Housing Register is only an indicator of need – it has some limitations.
- The Housing Register is likely to give an under estimation of need. We know that some people will not apply to the Housing Register for various reasons - more detailed surveys make pick up
 - hidden need
 - need for specialist housing
 - need and demand for Low Cost Home Ownership
 - emerging need
- A recent planning application has been submitted for 8 Shared Equity homes in Holton
- From April 2013 tenants of working age in social housing will have their benefit cut if they are deemed to have a spare bedroom. We anticipate that- generally - there will be an increase transfer requests (for smaller properties) but as we do not know how this will impact on need and demand for housing in Halesworth specifically.

¹ Includes flats; bungalows; houses

Indicators of Need and Demand for affordable Housing in Lowestoft, Carlton Colville and Kessingland

1. Numbers on Housing Register

We took a snapshot from the Housing Register on 2nd April 2013. There are 622 live applicants who are either living in Lowestoft, Carlton Colville and Kessingland or have a local connection to these areas. The table below gives a breakdown of the size of properties that these 622 applicants require and their relative housing need.

	Bedrooms required ¹	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	
	Banding							
Assessed as High/Medium need	A	6	11	1	0	0	18	220
	B	27	6	4	7	2	46	
	C	109	44	2	1	0	156	
Other Need / Demand	D	13	11	2	0	0	26	402
	E	163	177	39	6	0	374	
	F	1	1	0	0	0	2	
	TOTAL	319	239	48	14	2	622	

Bedrooms required	% of all applicants ²	% of applicants in high/medium need
1	51	64
2	38.5	28
3	8	3
4	2	4
5	0.5	1

Comments

- Highest current demand and highest need is for 1 and 2 bedroom properties. 89% of all applicants/ 92% of applicants in high medium need require either a 1 or 2 bedroom property. The table above highlights that within this group the highest need is for 1 bedroom properties.
- 123 of the 622 applicants (19.7%) are existing social housing tenants who are requesting a transfer. This is relatively high

¹ Allocation of social housing is made on the basis of bedrooms actually required i.e. applicants cannot bid for a property that has more bedrooms than they need

² Figures rounded up

2. Existing general needs rented social housing stock in Lowestoft, Carlton Colville and Kessingland as at 31 March 2013

a. The table below shows total numbers for the 3 areas combined.

Size of property ¹	Numbers	As a % of total general needs social housing stock in these 3 areas
1 bed	1004	26.5
2 bed	942	25
3 bed	1756	46
4 bed	80	2
5 bed	4	} 0.5
6 beds or more	10	
TOTAL	3796	

b. The table below show the breakdown of stock by area

Lowestoft		Carlton Colville		Kessingland	
Size	Numbers	Size	Numbers	Size	Numbers
1 bed	875	1 bed	31	1 bed	98
2 bed	678	2 bed	155	2 bed	109
3 bed	1494	3 bed	171	3 bed	91
4 bed	71	4 bed	8	4 bed	1
5 bed	4	5 bed	0	5 bed	0
6 beds or more	10	6 beds or more	0	6 beds or more	0
TOTAL	3132	TOTAL	365	TOTAL	299

Note - There are a further 512 social housing properties in Lowestoft. These are sheltered properties and are not included in the table above. The mix is 25 x bedsits; 439 x 1 bed; 44x2bed; 4x3bed. To be eligible for one of these properties applicants must be over 60 and have a support need. The analysis of applicants on the housing register did not include an enquiry about how many applicants would meet these criteria (and indeed would be willing to accept a bedsit property and/or pay a support charge).

Comments

There is a considerable mismatch between the size of properties needed by applicants (predominantly 1 and 2 bedroom properties) and the existing stock – 48% is 3 bedrooms or more

¹ Includes flats; bungalows; houses

3. Availability and demand for the existing social housing properties in Lowestoft, Carlton Colville and Kessingland

All rented properties owned by WDC or RSLs are advertised through Homechoice.

268 general needs properties became available over the 26 month period – 1/1/11 to 31/3/13. This equates to an annual turnover of 3.25% which is low. In addition 23 sheltered properties became available.

We also looked at pattern of bidding. The number of bids gives us an indicator of demand for this size of property although this will of course be influenced by the location, charge, amenities and perceived condition of each individual property. It is also useful to consider the banding of successful applicant i.e. was it let to someone in Banding A – C (high/medium need) or if the highest bidder was an applicant in low need. The table below sets out the findings –

Type /size of property	Number of this type of property that became available in last 26 months	Highest number of bids on any property	Percentage of properties that were allocated to someone in high/ medium need
1 bed and studio	91	345	97%
2 bed	96	207	89%
3 bed	72	102	81%
4 bed	8	107	88%
5 bed	0	0	100%
6 bed	1	4	100%
Total general needs	268		
Sheltered	23	17	48%
Total general needs and sheltered	291		

Comments

- The high numbers of “highest bids” for 1 and 2 bedroom properties in the table above , align with the mismatch between need and availability for these properties

4. Issues to take into account when considering need for affordable housing in Lowestoft, Carlton Colville and Kessingland

- The Housing Register is only an indicator of need – it has some limitations. Nevertheless it is a useful source of information.
- The Housing Register is likely to give an **under** estimation of need. We know that some people will not apply to the Housing Register for various reasons.

- The Housing Register gives an indicator of current need and demand – it does not give us an indication of emerging need.
- The focus of the Housing Register is housing for rent. It does not give us an indication of how many people in housing need may be interested in/able to afford low cost home ownership
- This analysis was too general to draw any conclusion about the need for supported or specialist housing
- From April 2013 tenants of working age in social housing will have their benefit cut if they are deemed to have a spare bedroom. We anticipate that- generally - there will be an increase transfer requests (for smaller properties) but as we do not know how this will impact on need and demand for housing in Lowestoft, Carlton Colville and Kessingland specifically.

5. Conclusions

- There is evidence of housing need in Lowestoft, Carlton Colville and Kessingland.
- Of note is the apparent low turnover of stock in these areas.
- The need will not be met by the existing social housing stock
- The greatest need is for 1 and 2 bedroom properties
- In developing any new affordable housing scheme, consideration needs to be given to the balance between meeting the greatest housing need and creating balanced communities.

Indicators of Need and Demand for Affordable Housing in Southwold and Reydon

1. Numbers on Housing Register

We took a snapshot from the Housing Register on 2nd April 2013. There are 65 live applicants who have stated that they are either living in, or have a local connection to, Southwold or Reydon. The table below gives a breakdown of the size of properties that these 65 applicants require and their relative housing need.

	Bedrooms required ¹	1	2	3	TOTAL	
	Banding					
Assessed as High/Medium need	A	1	1	0	2	25
	B	1	1	1	3	
	C	11	8	1	20	
Other Need /Demand	D	1	0	0	1	40
	E	14	23	2	39	
	TOTAL	28	33	4	65	

Bedrooms required	% of all applicants	% of applicants in high/medium need
1	43	52
2	51	40
3	6	8

Comments

- Highest current demand and highest need is for 1 and 2 bedroom properties (in total 94 % of all applicants; 92% of applicants with high/medium priority)
- 10 of the 65 applicants (almost 15%) are existing social housing tenants who are requesting a transfer.
- There are currently no applicants requiring 4 or 5 bedroom properties

2. Existing general needs rented social housing stock in Southwold and Reydon as at 31 March 2013

	Southwold	Reydon	Total for both areas	As a % of total general needs social housing stock in Southwold and Reydon
Size of property ²	Numbers	Numbers	Numbers	
1 bed	11	12	23	12
2 bed	23	42	65	33
3 bed	49	46	95	48
4 bed	5	10	15	7
TOTALS	88	110	198	

¹ Allocation of social housing is made on the basis of bedrooms actually required i.e. applicants cannot bid for a property that has more bedrooms than they need

² Includes flats; bungalows; houses

In addition to the general needs stock, there are

- 41 sheltered housing properties in Southwold – 17 x 1 bed; 24 x 2 bed.
- 32 very sheltered housing properties in Reydon – 24 x 1 bed and 8 x 2 bed

To be eligible for sheltered or very sheltered housing applicants must be over 60 and have been assessed as having a support need. The analysis of applicants on the housing register did not include an enquiry about how many applicants would meet these criteria and/or would be willing to pay the relevant support/care charges).

Comments

- Only 45% of the existing general needs social housing stock is 1 or 2 bedroom – this does not match need and demand for 1 and 2 bedroom properties which is over 90% of applicants
- Most significantly, 52% of applicants who have been assessed as having a high/medium priority, need a 1 bedroom property whereas 1 bedroom properties make up just 12% of the existing general needs stock

3. Availability and demand for the existing social housing properties in Southwold and Reydon

All rented properties owned by WDC or RSLs are advertised through Homechoice. 44 properties became available over the 26 month period – 1/1/11 to 31/3/13. This included 4 sheltered properties and 9 special needs bungalows. 27 of the properties that became available were in Reydon and 17 in Southwold. This equates to an annual turnover across the 2 areas of 10% which is not unusual. (Approx. 11% in Reydon and 9% in Southwold).

We also looked at pattern of bidding. The number of bids gives us an indicator of demand for this size of property although this will of course be influenced by the location, charge, amenities and perceived condition of each individual property. It is also useful to consider the banding of successful applicant i.e. was it let to someone in Banding A – C (high/medium need) or if the highest bidder was an applicant in low need. The table below sets out the findings –

Type /size of property	Number of this type of property that became available in last 26 months	Highest number of bids on any property	Percentage of properties that were allocated to someone in high/medium need
1 bed	3	108	100%
2 bed	13	89	77%
3 bed	15	55	73%
Sheltered	4	14	75%

Special needs bungalows	9	38	78%
Total	44		

Comments

- The high number of bids on 1 bedroom properties aligns with the high number of applicants requiring this size of property and the small percentage within the existing stock.

4. Issues to take into account when considering need for affordable housing in Southwold and Reydon

- The Housing Register is only an indicator of need – it has some limitations. Nevertheless it is a useful source of information.
- The Housing Register is likely to give an **under** estimation of need. We know that some people will not apply to the Housing Register for various reasons.
- The Housing Register gives an indicator of current need and demand – it does not give us an indication of emerging need.
- The focus of the Housing Register is housing for rent. It does not give us an indication of how many people in housing need may be interested in/able to afford low cost home ownership
- This analysis was too general to draw any conclusion about the need for any further supported or specialist housing
- From April 2013 tenants of working age in social housing will have their benefit cut if they are deemed to have a spare bedroom. We anticipate that- generally - there will be an increase transfer requests (for smaller properties) but as we do not know how this will impact on need and demand for housing in Southwold and Reydon specifically.
- No new social housing for rent has been developed in Southwold for at least 5 years although 14 shared ownership properties have been delivered.
- A significant percentage of properties in the private rental sector in Southwold are above the Local Housing Allowance. This impacts on the number of properties available to people with low incomes

5. Conclusions / Recommendations

- There is evidence of current housing need in Southwold and Reydon
- This need will not be met by the existing social housing stock
- The greatest need is for 1 and 2 bedroom properties
- In developing any new affordable housing scheme, consideration needs to be given to the balance between meeting the greatest housing need and creating balanced communities.