

Somewhere To Live

169 The scale, distribution and types of new homes that are to be provided in Bracknell Forest in the period to 2026 are amongst the most significant issues that the Local Development Framework must address. A well-integrated mix of housing of different types and tenures contributes to the creation of mixed and inclusive sustainable communities.

170 Policies in the Core Strategy can help to deliver the Sustainable Communities Plan **Priority 4: Providing decent and affordable housing** through the establishment of a land use framework for the level and mix of housing to be provided in the Borough.

Overall Housing Provision

171 Since designation as a New Town, Bracknell Forest has seen periods of high growth with significant releases of land both in and around Bracknell, Binfield, Sandhurst and Crowthorne. Over recent years, housing completion rates have dropped, although this is not due to a lack of planned sites, with figures at March 2006 showing the highest level of outstanding commitments for housing since 1991. The recent lower delivery rates have been due to delays in the implementation of two major housing sites and in the regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre.

172 The Council has, and will continue to work closely with the Government Office on a Housing Delivery Action Plan and with partners on delivery of housing on the major outstanding housing sites.

173 The submission South East Plan identifies that 10,780 new dwellings should be built in the Borough between 2006 and 2026 – an annual average of 539 dwellings per annum. In addition, there is an additional 359 dwelling shortfall carried over from the period up to 2006 to be made up in the period up to 2017, making a total of 11,139 dwellings to be provided.

174 Details of future housing supply in the Borough are set out in a Housing Background Paper and illustrated in summary in Appendix 5 on a housing trajectory and in the text below. The trajectory

illustrates that there will be a significant increase in the level of completions over the next ten years as local plan sites from the first Borough wide Local Plan are brought forward and work begins on the regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre. The provision of new homes in the Borough will be met as follows:

175 For the period 2006-2017 (ten years from the adoption of the Core Strategy) provision will include:

- i About 950 units from the redevelopment of Bracknell Town Centre
- ii About 2,100 units from the adopted Local Plan sites with planning permission at Peacock Farm and Staff College
- iii About 1,100 units from other sites with outstanding planning permission as at 31st March 2006
- iv About 1,650 units from previously developed land within settlements
- v About 440 units on small windfall sites on previously developed sites (sites of less than 10 net units)

176 **Amen Corner** – it is anticipated that about 150 units will be delivered from a greenfield urban extension for about 725 dwellings at Amen Corner (Policy CS4) during this first ten-year period. However, delivery on this site could be flexible with a greater number of completions being capable of being delivered in the period 2006-2017 should this be required either through increase in the Borough's allocations through the South East Plan process, or through under delivery from other sources.

177 For the period 2017-2026 provision will include:

- vi The remainder from the Amen Corner urban extension
- vii Large and small sites on previously developed land within settlements
- viii About 2,200 homes from a greenfield urban extension at land north of Whitegrove and Quelm Park (Policy CS5)



178 In line with national guidance, the delivery of new homes will be phased in order to manage the release of housing sites. Phasing will ensure that infrastructure and community needs arising out of new development are delivered in a planned manner. Sites will be identified and phased in subsequent Development Plan Documents to ensure delivery meets the allocation.

179 Delivery of the housing figures set out in the following policy has been tested through the Sustainability Appraisal process, been subject to regional and local consultation and has been the basis for the preparation of a bespoke Special Protection Area avoidance and mitigation strategy for housing development in the Borough. For these reasons, in the event that the housing allocation for the Borough is significantly altered through the regional planning process, a fundamental review of the Core Strategy and/or other Local Development Documents will be triggered as appropriate.

Policy CS15: Overall Housing Provision

180 Over the period 2006 to 2026 the Council will make provision for the phased delivery of 11,139 net dwellings in the following broad phases:

April 2006 to March 2012 – an average of 572 dpa
April 2012 to March 2017 - an average of 572 dpa
April 2017 to March 2022 – an average of 539 dpa
April 2022 to March 2026 – an average of 539 dpa

181 Deliverable and developable sites will be allocated and phased in subsequent Development Plan Documents to meet this provision in accordance with the sequential order in CS2.

Implementation

182 This policy will be implemented through:

- Subsequent policies and guidance in further Local Development Documents;

- The preparation and review of a Housing Delivery Action Plan (in accordance with Policy H2 of the Submission South East Plan);
- The determination and monitoring of planning applications and appeals.

Housing Needs of the Community

183 The overall housing provision identified in Policy CS15 requires the future provision of a range of housing in order to meet the future housing needs and aspirations of the Bracknell Forest community.

184 National and regional guidance¹¹ seeks to ensure that a mix of different housing types is achieved across the plan area to meet the needs of the community. Household needs within Bracknell Forest are varied and include singles, couples, families, young and the elderly. There are also various households with special needs including those with physical disabilities, learning difficulties, mental health problems and sensory disabilities. Other household needs include various vulnerable groups requiring supported accommodation, black or minority ethnic groups, and travelling populations. Household sizes to address these needs range from 1-bed to 4/5-bed properties, and the types and style of accommodation will include a diverse mix of flats, houses, bungalows and park homes. There will also need to be a mix of tenures including market housing units for sale, low cost market housing, and affordable rented and shared ownership housing units for those households in some form of housing need (see Policy CS17 on Affordable Housing).

185 A Housing Market Assessment for Berkshire, prepared during 2006, defined the housing market area relevant to Bracknell Forest. It highlighted characteristics of current housing supply and demand, clarified potential future trends and considered options to intervene to redress any imbalances in the housing market. The mechanisms for delivering future housing supply and meeting particular housing needs were also considered. The outcome of the Housing Market Assessment will inform the



review of the Housing Strategy and the more detailed policies for each of the different elements of housing need identified below. These will be prepared in subsequent Local Development Documents. The Housing Needs Study Update 2004 highlighted a significant housing need in the Borough, particularly for affordable housing, which is substantiated with evidence from the Council's Housing Register – this has also influenced the outcome of the Housing Market Assessment.

Policy CS16: Housing Needs of the Community

186 Development will be permitted which contributes to meeting the identified housing needs of all sectors of the community through the provision on suitable development sites of one or more of the following;

- i. a range of housing types, sizes and tenure; and
- ii. some dwellings for those with special needs; and
- iii. some dwellings designed to meet mobility needs and accessibility principles in line with best practice; and
- iv. affordable housing.

Implementation

187 This policy will be implemented through:

- Subsequent policies and guidance in further Local Development Documents;
- Partnership working with developers, other local authorities, Registered Social Landlords and the Strategic Housing Partnership;
- The determination and monitoring of planning applications and appeals.

Affordable Housing

188 Bracknell Forest is an area of high house prices compared to incomes, and the Council recognises that many local people have difficulty in gaining access to suitable accommodation which is on the

open market, particularly first-time buyers. The majority of new housing completions are for private sale, but levels of housing need within the Borough continue to exceed the supply of affordable housing. The provision of affordable housing will therefore be sought in accordance with local assessments and evidence of housing need.

189 National and regional guidance¹² sets the broad framework for issues relating to affordable housing. The Bracknell Forest Borough Housing Strategy 2005–2008 refers to the acute affordability issues affecting households in the Borough. The Housing Needs Study Update 2004 states that the annual shortfall of new affordable homes is more than the total number of all houses typically built in a year, and the greatest shortfall was for 1 and 2-bed accommodation. It would be unrealistic to expect to address all of the affordable housing need in the Borough since this would be greater than the annual total housing allocation, however it is reasonable to seek a substantial increase in affordable housing supply by maximising provision on qualifying sites.

190 The affordable housing supply has been affected by the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire legislation which reduces the available stock of housing to future households in housing need. There is a net reduction in affordable housing stock every year since the number of units sold or acquired is more than the number of new units being completed.

191 The Council's Housing Register is the main source of primary data which justifies seeking new affordable housing and comprises a range of households in housing need i.e. those which are homeless, living in unsatisfactory accommodation or who need to move on medical or welfare grounds. The affordable accommodation required is a range of unit sizes and types from various applicants including existing council tenants, those living with family, private tenants and lodgers. There is also a Shared Ownership Register for those households seeking shared ownership accommodation as an alternative to affordable rented accommodation.



192 Affordable housing in Bracknell Forest is housing with sale prices or rent levels which are substantially lower than the prevailing market price or rent, in order that it will be accessible to local people in priority housing need whose incomes are insufficient to enable them to afford adequate housing on the open market. Affordable housing in the Borough comprises affordable rented accommodation and intermediate housing – examples of intermediate housing include shared ownership (part rent/part sale), equity loan and intermediate rent.

193 The site size/area threshold above which a proposal will be deemed appropriate to provide affordable housing and the percentage quota applicable to such suitable sites, will have regard to national and regional guidance, the level of affordable housing needs in the Borough and the conclusions of the urban capacity study. The threshold and quota will also be influenced by the outcome of the Housing Market Assessment which will consider the appropriate delivery arrangements to address planned levels of housing provision and increased levels of affordable housing. This will be clarified in a subsequent Development Plan Document.

194 Consideration will be given to the economics of provision, the relevant circumstances of the site and any benefits resulting from the proposal. The affordable housing will be provided on-site, and should be secured by planning obligations or condition to ensure delivery. Retirement and sheltered housing proposals, as with any other residential proposal, will be required to provide affordable housing on suitable sites.

Policy CS17: Affordable Housing

195 Affordable housing in the Borough comprises affordable rented and intermediate housing. The Council will;

- i. require residential developments on suitable sites to provide affordable housing which is accessible to local people in priority housing need;
- ii. state the threshold above which affordable housing sought;
- iii. state the amount of affordable housing to be provided on suitable sites above the threshold.

Implementation

196 This policy will be implemented through:

- Subsequent policies and guidance in further Local Development Documents.;
- Partnership working with developers, other local authorities, Registered Social Landlords and the Strategic Housing Partnership;
- Determination and monitoring of planning applications and appeals for residential development including where appropriate S106 agreements.

Travelling Populations

197 Within Bracknell Forest there is one Local Authority managed Gypsy and Traveller site with 13 pitches and several authorised private sites each with one pitch. There is one Travelling Showmen's site with planning permissions for 17 permanent and 12 seasonally (winter quarters) restricted mobile homes/caravans. The Borough recognises the need to identify and understand more about the needs of travelling populations in the Supporting People Strategy 2005/6-2009/10, which also sets out the benefits of partnership working with other services in the provision of any additional sites or resettlements.

198 The framework for providing accommodation for travelling populations is provided in national and regional guidance¹³. National guidance indicates that the Core Strategy should set out the criteria for the location of sites for travelling populations, and issues of sustainability against which sites should be considered.

199 In response to the Housing Act 2004, Bracknell Forest Borough Council as a member of the Association of Councils of the Thames Valley Region (ACTVaR) – the sub-regional government association for Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire – has commissioned consultants to carry out assessments of the accommodation and support needs of travelling populations in the area. The results of these studies, and the Housing Market Assessment, will be used along with the following policy to inform any need for, and any subsequent locations of, additional sites for travelling populations either through the determination of planning applications and/or the identification of sites in subsequent Local Development Documents.

200 In line with the principles of sustainable development set out elsewhere in this document, and in order to enhance access to health, education and other services, the Council will seek to ensure that sites are located where they have good access by a choice of transport modes to employment, shopping and other destinations.

Policy CS18: Travelling Populations

201 Where the Council is satisfied that there is an identified need for the provision of pitches for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople, new sites will be considered or allocated to meet this need provided that:

- i. there will be no adverse impact on the character of the area or on neighbouring land uses; and
- ii. there will be no adverse impact on the highway network or on highway safety; and
- iii. there will be no adverse impact on areas of acknowledged importance such as areas designated for biodiversity; and
- iv. they are located with good access to local services, including schools, health facilities and other services.

202 The Council will give preference to locations firstly within, and then adjacent to existing settlements.

Implementation

203 This policy will be implemented through:

- Subsequent policies and guidance in further Local Development Documents;
- Determination and monitoring of planning applications and appeals;
- Partnership working with travelling populations, other local authorities and the Supporting People Team.

