

TOPIC PAPER 5: Housing

The way that the whole town develops in the future will be affected by planning decisions. Crawley Borough Council has started work on a new local plan that will help to guide development in Crawley over 15 years from 2014-2029.

This consultation period forms part of the early engagement, and further consultation stages are planned before the document is adopted in 2014. Comments received to earlier consultation periods, including to the Topic Papers in 2009, the Town Centre North Supplementary Planning Document and the Manor Royal Master Plan, will continue to be taken into consideration, alongside the technical evidence base, when formulating the Local Plan Preferred Strategy. The Preferred Strategy will be made available for a further period of consultation later in 2012.

This is your opportunity to shape the way the town develops and the council would appreciate and value any comments you have on this Topic Paper or any of the others that form part of this consultation.

Consultation Questions:

In May 2009, we asked for your views about the principle of providing some 7,500 dwellings per annum over the period 2006-2026. Since that time, there have been significant changes in the planning context, both nationally and regionally. It is now appropriate to reassess how much housing should be built in Crawley in the light of local requirements and having regard to the potential for meeting local needs and demand with available land resources. Through the consultation process, the Council is seeking views on:

- H1. Whether we should be planning to provide enough housing to meet needs and demand as far as possible, having regard to environmental constraints and the shortage of suitable development sites within the boundary of Crawley?

significantly lower than those of the neighbouring authorities of Mid Sussex (855dpa), Horsham (650 dpa) and Reigate and Banstead (500 dpa) but were higher than those of Mole Valley (188 dpa) and Tandridge (125 dpa). However, it is important to recognise that the housing provision levels in the adopted Core Strategy (300 dpa) fall short of the Regional Spatial Strategy requirement (375 dpa), which for the time being continues to form part of the statutory development plan for the Borough.

However, in July 2010, the Coalition Government announced its intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies, including the South East Plan. Legal provisions for this have been included within the Localism Act 2011. The Government now intends to bring the revocation of the regional spatial strategies into effect, once it completes a process of Strategic Environmental Assessment. This is expected to take place in Spring 2012. As a consequence, local authorities must gather their own local evidence base to underpin local planning policies. Local authorities can decide whether to retain the targets which were adopted in the South East Plan or whether other locally derived targets are more justified and appropriate in the light of up to date evidence.

In March 2011, the Government published its "*Plan for Growth*", which emphasised the need to improve housing delivery and stimulate economic growth. This was accompanied by a Statement by the Minister of State for Decentralisation, which advised local planning authorities to "make every effort to identify and meet the housing, business and other development needs of their areas". It also requires authorities to "work together to ensure that needs and opportunities that extend beyond (or cannot be met within) their own boundaries are identified and accommodated in a sustainable way, such as housing market requirements and the strategic infrastructure necessary to support growth". This requirement forms part of the Localism Act 2011, through a 'duty to co-operate' on strategic development matters.

This was followed in June 2011, by a revised Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3 on Housing. This reaffirmed the need for local authorities to maintain housing land supply and to have in place up to date assessments of housing market requirements and demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. The Revised PPS3 also incorporated the revised definition of affordable housing to reflect the Government's new affordable rent product.

In July 2011, the Government published its Draft National Planning Policy Framework, which is intended to supersede the current suite of Planning Policy Statements, Guidance and related circulars. In terms of housing, the draft NPPF requires local planning authorities to:

1. use an evidence base to ensure that they plan for meeting the full requirements for market and affordable housing requirements in their area;
2. maintain a 5 year rolling supply of deliverable housing sites, with at least an additional 20% allowance to maintain choice and flexibility between sites;;
3. identify a supply of developable housing land for a further 6-10 years and ideally 11-15 years.

The Draft NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to require over the plan period.

The changing policy context has a number of implications for taking forward a review of the existing Core Strategy, including:

1. A requirement to reassess the amount of housing to be provided;
2. To roll forward that assessment to extend the time horizon of the Plan;
3. To work with neighbouring authorities to ensure the needs of the wider housing market area are addressed;

4. To ensure that there are sufficient contingencies to maintain choice and flexibility between sites in accordance with Government guidance;
5. To consider how residual land around the North East

In the year April 2010-2011, there were 450 properties allocated through the choice based letting scheme. On average, 39 bids were received for every property which became available, reflecting a high degree of need in the Borough.

It is possible that the level of need will be greater in the future, having regard to a number of factors, including:

- The impact of the Government's welfare reforms, which include reductions in some benefit payments, including limits on under-occupancy of stock;
- The impact of the Government's new affordable housing funding and tenancy model, which could in particular influence the accessibility of future provision; and
- Economic recovery, which may stimulate the sale of properties currently within the private rented sector.

Quantifying Future Housing Requirements

Looking to the future, population projections indicate continued growth in the order of about 22% between 2010 and 2031, reflecting the relatively young age profile of today's population. Over the next 20 years, births are expected to exceed deaths by a factor of about 2:1. This "natural change" combined with trends in people living longer and an increasing proportion of people living alone or in smaller households, means that there will be a significant requirement for additional housing in the future. Migration patterns, undoubtedly linked to the operation of the housing market, employment opportunities and the presence of Gatwick Airport within the Borough, are also key influences on Crawley's population size and profile. If inward migration trends continue, then this will also drive a need for additional housing in the Borough. Equally, rising travel costs for commuters could stimulate demand within Crawley for properties closer to main sources of employment.

Northern West Sussex Strategic Housing Market Assessment

The Northern West Sussex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was commissioned for Crawley, Horsham and Mid-Sussex. It was completed in May 2009. Whilst an update of this work is necessary in the light of continued economic downturn, the findings provide a strong steer on policy directions. A copy of the Assessment can be viewed on the Council's website at www.crawley.gov.uk.

A key observation is the high inter-dependency between Crawley and Mid-Sussex and Horsham, in terms of the number of people moving between these districts, especially from Crawley. This reflects the dominance of Crawley as an employment centre, and the desire of people to remain within a viable travel to work distance. The SHMA highlights that whilst Crawley's future housing needs and requirements are driven largely by natural population change, that is more births than deaths, in Mid-Sussex and Horsham, net in-migration play a more significant role in determining future population change.

The SHMA concludes that despite current economic conditions, the outlook over the

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suitable housing without financial assistance is assessed. The term “affordable” is taken to mean housing for rent through a registered provider (registered social landlord or housing association) as well as intermediate housing (that is typically shared ownership). The SHMA provides a high and a low estimate of needs. The low estimate is derived from those on a local authority’s waiting list who are classified as being in greatest housing need (reasonable preference), whilst the high estimate includes all of those people on the waiting list. For Crawley, the SHMA concluded that there is a need for between 103 (low estimate) and 250 (high estimate) affordable dwellings each year. If affordable housing were to continue to be sought for 40% of all new dwellings, as in the current adopted Core Strategy, this would suggest a need to build 285-625 new homes each year within Crawley to satisfy these estimates. In the past year, Crawley has delivered about 380 dwellings, which is slightly lower than the average for the past 20 years.

Crawley Locally Generated Housing Needs Assessment

The Crawley Locally Generated Housing Needs Assessment also provides a key piece of evidence for the Core Strategy review; this was undertaken in 2011 and provides the most up to date piece of evidence available to the Council. It considers a range of scenarios about what level of housing would be required depending upon differing assumptions on migration, economic growth, commuting patterns and affordable housing needs. A copy of the report can be v

scale of housing need should the Council seek to prioritise meeting the affordable housing needs as identified in the Northern West Sussex Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment predicted that some 50% of Crawley's new households would be unable to access "market" housing and indeed this figure might increase if account is taken of current benchmarks that affordability becomes an issue if households are having to spend more than 35% of their income on housing costs. On this basis, the level of need to meet affordable housing requirements was identified as being significantly greater than for most of the other scenarios. The modelled scenario suggests that provision would need to be in the order of 510 to 630 dwellings per annum, taking in to account a typical ratio of 40% affordable housing in all new provision. The upper end of this range is consistent with that suggested in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

To summarise, with the exception of the economic scenarios, it is evident that future housing growth in Crawley will need to be at least equivalent to current planned levels and potentially greater. It is noted that the above figures do not include any allowance for contingencies which will need to be added in accordance with current Government policy on housing land supply and providing market choice and flexibility.

Establishing Future Housing Mix

It is important that the Council plans for the population as a whole, rather than just

changes to the arrangements for Council house funding, coming into effect in April 2012. The Council now has direct build status with the Homes and Communities Agency and has recently completed 16 units at Russetts Place.

Special Housing Requirements

The production of the Local Plan will consider the following in more detail:

- Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Sheltered Housing and Other Accommodation for the Elderly
- Care Homes and Other Residential Institutions
- Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- Private rented sector/buy to rent.

Housing Design and Standards

The Local Plan preparation work will also need to address a range of other housing issues, including design, density and sustainability and efficiency. Other topic papers accompanying this consultation address issues associated with design, Building for Life and energy efficiency. The Council also invites views on the approach it should

	<p>accommodation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there could be increased pressure for housing in adjoining districts in meeting Crawley's housing needs; • In terms of affordable housing needs, this level of growth might only support meeting the needs of those in greatest priority need, but not all current and projected needs; • This level of growth is likely to be sufficient to support expected economic growth (without strategic employment allocation) and the number of jobs likely to be created within Crawley over the Plan period, assuming no significant change in commuting patterns and the proportion of Crawley residents working locally; • Likely to be sufficient land supply to accommodate much of this growth, assuming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a continuation of previous windfall rates; - barriers can be overcome to enable delivery of some sites; and - there is an acceptance that some previously protected sites or sites previously considered unsuitable will need to be released for development.
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350-450 dpa

- Upper end of the range could help towards meeting a significant proportion of assessed demographic based requirements for housing growth, excluding any demand arising from in-migration. Although this level of provision would still fall well below that required to address affordable housing needs fully.
- Would be sufficient to support anticipated levels of economic growth including a Strategic Employment Site, and could support policy aspirations to reduce out-commuting and increase the proportion of local residents securing additional jobs;
- Increased infrastructure capacity likely to be needed to facilitate this

- Likely to generate pressure for inward migration from elsewhere;
- Likely to lead to a significant mismatch between the provisio2