

How will windfall conversions meet an identified housing need and will they reduce the ability to deliver family housing in the Council's housing land supply?

1. Introduction

1.1 The Council's updated housing trajectory and schedule of development sites (2012) [Submission Document CS38(C)] illustrates that the Council is reliant on a windfall allowance of 1,185 net dwellings over the plan period. Evidence provided in the Council's 'Windfall Housing Delivery Briefing Note' (2011) [Submission Document CS31] highlights that windfall delivery will be primarily on conversion developments in three neighbourhoods: the Town Centre, Seaside and Meads. Conversion developments include the subdivision of larger properties, conversion of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and the reorganisation of dwelling units within properties. Further research provided in 'Additional Windfall Conversion Evidence (2012)' [Submission Document CS31(B)] provided evidence that there was an adequate future supply of sites for residential conversion in the three neighbourhoods and there was reasonable prospect that these would come forward for development within the plan period.

2. Need for Conversion Developments

2.1 Sites that come forward as windfall conversions will need planning permission, therefore at the planning application stage it will be appropriate to assess that the size of the residential units, standard of accommodation and number of bedrooms provided meets the need of the neighbourhood in which the site is located. All conversion developments would not necessarily result in the development of small one bedroom flats or studio apartments. There are many examples, provided in evidence 'Additional Windfall Conversion Evidence' [Submission Document CS31(B)] that historic residential conversion developments have in several cases resulted in the creation of maisonettes and larger flats up to 3 bedrooms in size, as opposed to smaller one bedroom flats.

Smaller Accommodation

2.2 Conversion developments will inevitably result in the supply of some smaller accommodation, typically 1 bedroom residential units. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2009) [Submission Document CS29] provides justification of a local need for smaller accommodation in the following instances:

- Evidence of all households on Eastbourne's housing waiting list concludes that the highest need is for 1 bed properties across all types of application, and both housing association and Council transfer

applications requiring 1 bed properties are of higher number than those requiring larger properties (para. 1.105);

- Evidence suggests that the majority of households in need in both authority areas (Eastbourne and South Wealden) require 1 bedroom accommodation (para. 1.130). Although this may not match their aspirations for larger accommodation, this provides evidence of the basic need of households which the local authority should meet as a priority;
- In Eastbourne and Wealden, around half of one person households in the Eastbourne and South Wealden Housing Market Area (HMA) live in dwellings with 2 or more bedrooms. A significant proportion of households in the HMA therefore choose and are able to occupy homes that are larger than their household size would suggest they need.

2.3 Smaller residential accommodation is directly linked to higher density residential schemes. Higher density is most appropriate in sustainable locations and neighbourhoods, in which there is access to sustainable modes of transport. The three neighbourhoods with the highest level of historical windfall conversions are also identified in the Core Strategy as being three of the most sustainable neighbourhood in the Borough, therefore can continue to sustain a higher level of housing delivery and more dense residential developments.

2.4 This summary therefore provides justification that the provision of smaller accommodation does help meet a local need. This balanced with the development of larger residential accommodation on other sites where there is scope for a greater variety in size and type of accommodation to deliver a greater amount of family accommodation will provide for the wider needs of the HMA.

3. Ability to Deliver Family Housing

3.1 The Eastbourne and South Wealden SHMA analysed not just only the Eastbourne Housing Market but also Willingdon, Stone Cross, Polegate and Hailsham markets in the south of the neighbouring Wealden District. Paragraph 7 of the SHMA Executive summary recommends looking at the HMA in totality and trying to readdress the balance of dwelling sizes on individual sites across both administrative areas.

3.2 There will be some instances in which residential conversions within Eastbourne will be able to provide larger family accommodation. An example of this was at the development of Granville Crest, 1 Bolsover Road (EB/2006/0857) located in the Meads neighbourhood, where a large single private dwelling was converted to 6 self contained flats/maisonettes of the following bedroom sizes:

- 1 two-bedroom flat;
- 2 three-bedroom flats;
- 1 four-bedroom flat;
- 1 three-bedroom maisonette,
- 1 four-bedroom maisonette.

3.3 The Council's spatial development strategy is not just dependent on conversion developments coming forward for development, and there are

several opportunities on larger sites to provide a mix in the size of residential accommodation. On larger sites, some of which have already been granted planning permission, the SHLAA has anticipated a mix of dwelling sizes to provide the range of housing types and sizes required locally. This is highlighted in the recent planning permissions at Kings Drive Cross Levels Way and recent delivery of units at Wartling Road Coach and Lorry Park. Development opportunities identified in the SHLAA, such as 2-4 Moy Avenue (BR19), Hide Hollow Farm (AN09) and Sovereign Harbour (BA30) will also allow a mix of sizes of residential accommodation to be delivered.

Kings Drive/Cross Levels Way Greenfield Urban Extension has been permitted (119 units) for the following breakdown of residential accommodation:

- 24 one bedroom apartments (including 6 affordable units)
- 21 two bedroom apartments (including 19 affordable units)
- 38 two bedroom houses (including 10 affordable units)
- 36 three bedroom houses (including 11 affordable units)

Wartling Road Coach and Lorry Park is partly completed, and will provide in total the following breakdown in residential accommodation:

- 158 two bedroom apartments (40 affordable)
- 6 three bedroom apartments
- flats above garages
- 28 three bed houses (19 affordable)
- 29 four bed houses (6 affordable)

3.4 It is appreciated that windfall delivery will not provide the certainty regarding the mix of housing sizes and types. However it is more the nature of land availability in Eastbourne rather than the reliance of windfall development that will limit the opportunities for larger residential accommodation. Wherever possible a balance of housing types to meet local needs will be sought. However, as windfall delivery is going to come forward primarily on relatively smaller urban sites, as it would do generally on identified sites in the SHLAA, the opportunities for larger dwellings is generally going to be less likely.

3.5 The Eastbourne and South Wealden SHMA recognises this reality and in paragraph 1.213 states that future housing development may reinforce the pattern of smaller residential units in Eastbourne as most development will be focused on previously developed sites. However development within the towns of Hailsham and Polegate and on Greenfield sites identified over the next 5 years and beyond in the Wealden Core Strategy provide an opportunity to secure a wider choice of housing in the market. Eastbourne Borough Council has worked closely with Wealden District Council in the formulation of our respective Core Strategies and policies, as well as key pieces of the housing evidence base. Both Wealden's and Eastbourne Borough Council's Core Strategies provide the opportunities for a range of housing types, sizes and tenures to be delivered across the whole of the Eastbourne and South Wealden Housing Market Area.