

Chapter 6

Housing

Corporate Aims

1. We will make Eastbourne a safe place to live, work and visit.
2. We will protect and improve health and reduce inequalities within Eastbourne.
3. We will encourage a fair and socially inclusive society.
4. We will protect and enhance the Borough's environment sympathetically developing it for future generations.

Corporate Objectives

- S2: Reduce and prevent domestic burglary.
- S5: Reduce and prevent the fear of crime.
- H2: Protect public health through intervention, education and responsible action.
- EV2: Help everyone to have a decent home.
- EV5: Combat and alleviate the effects of poverty.
- F2: Reduce waste and develop and promote recycling and energy conservation.
- F4: Provide effective sustainable management and protection of the built environment.

Policy Objectives

1. To provide a supply of housing which will meet the requirements of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011 for the Plan period and estimated housing needs.
2. To pursue a range of options for providing homes within the existing built-up area.
3. To make the most efficient use of land for housing.
4. To ensure that the housing needs of all sections of the community are met.
5. To ensure continued provision of affordable housing to meet the needs of households who cannot afford a market solution.
6. To seek quality, sustainable residential environments, which are safe and secure and provide good quality, well designed accommodation.

Introduction

- 6.1 This chapter has been prepared taking into account the Council's then approved Housing Strategy for the period 1999-2002. Where relevant, relationships between planning policy and Housing Strategy objectives are identified.
- 6.2 Eastbourne's population is projected to grow to approximately 95,800 persons by 2011²⁶, a 4.6% increase on the 91,600 persons estimated for mid 1999. This increase will be entirely due to net in-migration as the resident population is naturally declining with the number of deaths exceeding the number of births. (For further information see Background Paper No. 2: Demography).
- 6.3 Within this population are many different housing needs and aspirations. A detailed Housing Needs Survey has been undertaken and the executive summary is published as Background Paper No. 3. The Housing Needs Survey shows that of the 4700 existing households planning to move by 2005, nearly 70% would prefer a house or a bungalow with two or three bedrooms. Owner occupation is the preferred tenure of 65% of those planning to move, but 26% aspire to rent from the Council or a Registered Social Landlord. In addition 1720 new households plan to move into their own independent housing by 2005. Of these, 1070 are single people and 650 are couples. Over 70% of these will be seeking flats, with a small majority requiring one bedroom accommodation. The demand for bedsitting rooms and rooms in shared housing is low, but still exists for a small sector of potential households. Over 40% of newly forming households would prefer to buy their own homes, although the majority are unlikely to be able to afford to do so.
- 6.4 In assessing housing requirements it is not generally possible to exclude in-migration as mechanisms are not available to ensure that homes are only occupied by local residents. Indeed Central Government expects all local authorities to play their part in contributing to the supply of housing land. However it is recognised that this external interest affects house prices in the Borough and that there are many local people who are unable to afford owner occupation. Restricting the supply of housing land to reduce the amount of in-migration would only exacerbate the problems faced by many local people in affording their own homes.

²⁶ Source East Sussex County Council.

- 6.5 That owner occupation is not an affordable housing solution is confirmed by the following figures. Over 50% of local households have a gross annual income of less than £15,000 compared to a national average of just over 40%. In addition nearly 70% of households currently renting privately have a gross annual income of less than £15,000 indicating that they cannot afford to enter owner occupation. Whilst house prices in the town are higher than in many other areas of the country, figures produced by the Halifax Bank, for instance, indicate that the annual rate of house price inflation in the region is at 20.4%, higher than the UK average of 14.5%, with an average price of a semi-detached property in Eastbourne at £89,027 during January to March 2000. Although this percentage was taken at a time of rapid rises in house prices, the difference between the Eastbourne and the national average is indicative of a widening gap in the cost of living between the South East and the national average.
- 6.6 Inability to afford a home necessitates a significant demand for affordable housing²⁷, yet this demand continues to be significantly in excess of the supply available. At 1 April 2003, 2,707 households were on the Borough Housing Register waiting for a home, whilst projections within the Housing Needs Survey estimate a need for an additional 2789 affordable housing units between 2000-2006.

Provision of Housing

- 6.7 The housing requirement for Eastbourne is established in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan, 1991-2011. The Structure Plan requirement is as follows:

1991-2006:	7,100 dwelling units
2006-2011:	<u>1,800</u>
TOTAL:	<u>8,900</u>

- 6.8 In identifying future housing sites the Council must have regard to Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing, and in particular to the Government's commitment to promoting a more sustainable pattern of development which centres upon development within the existing built-up area on previously developed land rather than the use of "greenfield" land wherever possible. In allocating land for housing planning authorities are to follow a search sequence, starting with the re-use of previously developed land and buildings within the urban areas defined by the housing capacity study, then urban extensions, and finally new development around nodes in good public transport corridors.
- 6.9 In order to assess the potential for new residential development within the existing built-up area the Council has undertaken a Housing Capacity Survey. This shows that the additional homes required to 2011 can be accommodated without need to release further "greenfield" land beyond that already committed²⁸ in the Borough Plan 1998. (Further details of the Housing Capacity Survey are set-out in Background Paper No. 4). The emphasis on so called "brownfield" development within the existing built-up area requires imaginative and creative solutions so that the Borough does not become over developed, but remains an interesting and attractive place to live. In particular it is considered to be appropriate to identify predominantly residential areas where residential schemes will usually be supported as they are more sustainable. This Plan has an important role to play in encouraging potential housing opportunities identified within the Housing Capacity Survey to come forward. Some larger sites identified within the survey are allocated for housing development; whilst the general 'enabling' policies for in-filling, redevelopment and conversions will assist other sites to come forward.
- 6.10 As a result of the policies and proposals of this Plan it is anticipated, based upon figures for 1 April 2003, that the Structure Plan housing requirement of 8,900 dwellings will be fulfilled

²⁷ For a definition of affordable housing see Appendix B: Glossary.

²⁸ Committed housing development includes both land with planning approval and land that was allocated in the adopted Borough Plan of January 1998.

in the following ways:

	<u>Relevant Policy</u>	<u>Net dwelling units</u>
Completions 1 April 1991-31 March 2003		5658
Housing allocations	HO4, TC13	1170 (1)
Housing commitments on large sites	HO5	1173
Other housing commitments with planning permission		187
Subtotal		8188
Estimated future new build/conversions/ changes of use/redevelopment	HO6, HO7, HO9, HO10, HO11	750 (2)
TOTAL:		8938

- Note:** 1) The contribution from Town Centre housing allocations has not been included in this figure. This is estimated to be in the region of an additional 50 units, but it is difficult to identify target minima for small sites where high density flatted development is likely to occur.
- 2) This level of estimated future windfalls has consistently been achieved, based on past completion rates.

The Borough Council will monitor housing commitments and completions on an annual basis, and will bring forward an early alteration to this Plan where monitoring indicates either a significant under-achievement or an over-achievement on the requirement.

- 6.11 Currently a significant proportion of housing development within the Borough is on land which was previously developed because the major commitment at Sovereign Harbour is on old mineral workings²⁹. It is unreasonable to assume that this figure can be sustained over the period of this Plan as there are some "greenfield" allocations in the Eastbourne Park area which are to be retained (see paragraph 6.15 below). Nevertheless it is reasonable to identify a land recycling figure akin to the suggested national guidance figure of 60% of additional homes to be provided on recycled land or through conversions.

Policy HO1: Residential Development Within the Existing Built-up Area

Planning permission will not be granted for residential development outside of the existing built-up area, other than for those sites identified on the Proposals Map.

Policy HO2: Predominantly Residential Areas

In order to ensure that at least 60% of homes are built on previously developed land or through conversions and changes of use planning permission will be granted for residential schemes in the areas identified on the Proposals Map as predominantly residential areas. Within the predominantly residential areas schemes for new homes will be achieved through the following ways:

²⁹ 96% of homes on large sites with planning approval at 1 April 2000 were on previously developed land.

- a) development of sites identified in Policies HO4 and HO5 of this Plan;
- b) infill development (development of gaps within an otherwise built-up frontage (see Policy HO6);
- c) redevelopment of other sites and buildings clearly demonstrated to be redundant for continued commercial and/or business use. (See Policies HO7, HO8 and BI1);
- d) conversion of existing residential and non-residential properties clearly demonstrated to be redundant for continued commercial and/or business use to provide additional dwelling units (see Policies HO9 and HO10);
- e) development of “windfall” sites (sites which have not been identified in this Plan) which comply with the policy objectives of this Plan.

All subject to detailed residential, visual and environmental amenity considerations set-out in Policies HO20, UHT4, and NE28.

Outside of the predominantly residential areas residential schemes will be judged against the specific policies and proposals set-out in this Plan.

- 6.12 In seeking to promote residential development within the existing built-up area it is important to maintain existing dwelling stock numbers and resist the loss of residential commitments (i.e. sites to which the Council is committed by virtue of an extant planning permission) to other uses, as diminution of these would require replacement dwellings which it may not be possible to provide in such sustainable locations. Proposals for the change of use of converted flats to single private dwellings will also be considered in the context of this policy and are unlikely to be granted planning approval as they would result in the loss of more reasonably priced, smaller accommodation which is much needed in the Borough.
- 6.13 The Council has a strong commitment to maintaining and improving the quality of residential accommodation across the Borough. In particular a Registration Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation with Special Control Provisions has been introduced and was approved by the then Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. The Scheme applies to bedsit accommodation and aims to ensure that living conditions for tenants meet required standards, that the property is well managed and that Houses in Multiple Occupation do not adversely affect the amenity or character of the area. Self-contained flats although not part of the Registration Scheme would still be required to meet the Council's minimum standards with regard to safety, amenities, and management. It is, therefore, accepted that, as an exception to policy, schemes which would result in a significant improvement in the quality of residential accommodation, for instance through self-containment of a House in Multiple Occupation, should be permitted although they would result in a net loss of existing dwelling units.

Policy HO3: Retaining Residential Use

Planning permission will not be granted for developments:

- a) which would involve a net loss in the number of existing dwelling units;
- b) which would result in the net loss of the number of residential units previously committed.

Subject to compliance with other policies and proposals of this Plan.

An exception to this Policy will be made where it can be demonstrated that a scheme would result in a significant improvement in the quality of residential accommodation provided.

- 6.14 As part of this Council's commitment to making optimum use of the existing built-up area for housing a co-ordinated approach to bringing empty homes back into use has been adopted including a “Living Over the Shop” Project for the Town. (See the Town Centre Chapter for further details). An empty homes strategy has been produced to further facilitate this approach.

Housing Allocations and Commitments

6.15 To avoid uncertainty and ensure that additional housing sites come forward it is appropriate to identify specific sites for housing. The following sequential approach was adopted to identify residential sites:

- a) Exploring opportunities for the re-use of previously developed land and buildings within the Borough. The Housing Capacity Survey identified potential for almost 920 residential units to be developed within the Borough during the Plan period. Principally the Survey concentrated upon opportunities for residential intensification within the urban fabric, but as Eastbourne is already relatively intensively developed many of the opportunities were small scale. These opportunities were used to inform the allowance for development on “windfall” sites. However some larger sites were identified and have been included within the allocated sites set-out in Policy H04 below. These include some sites where intensification would involve redevelopment, but a comprehensive assessment of redevelopment opportunities was not made during the Survey. However it is reasonable to assume that redevelopment sites will continue to come forward during the life-time of the Plan. However the opportunities available within the Borough for residential development were considered to be insufficient to accommodate the Structure Plan housing requirement so the next stage was to identify:
 - b) Planned urban extensions. There are specific circumstances within Eastbourne that limit opportunities for urban extension to two specific areas within the Borough, due to the Downland AONB on the western side and juxtaposition with the already developed areas of Wealden District to the north. The two areas are:
 - The area known as Eastbourne Park;
 - The area known as the East Langney and Mountney Levels.

Both areas were appraised against the following criteria:

- Location and accessibility;
- Capacity of existing and potential infrastructure;
- Ability to build communities;
- The physical and environmental constraints on the development of land.

On the basis of this appraisal Eastbourne Park performed significantly better than the East Langney/Mountney Levels on all counts. Eastbourne Park lies within the heart of the Borough and is a relatively sustainable development option as it is close to existing services and facilities, including public transport corridors. Indeed development within the Park should help to sustain and improve the social and community infrastructure of neighbouring areas. However it is recognised that it would be development within an area at risk of flooding, but as similar considerations also apply to East Langney/Mountney, it was considered that development of Eastbourne Park was preferable due to a flood compensatory storage scheme being in place. All developments within the Park would be required to contribute to such a scheme (see Policy US4).

6.16 Both PPG3 and the County Structure Plan seek the Borough Council to implement a policy for the phased release of residential land with the presumption that previously developed sites should be developed before greenfields. However there are specific local circumstances within Eastbourne that suggest such a policy to be unnecessary and inappropriate. At the present time a significant proportion of residential completions are occurring on previously developed sites and Sovereign Harbour, in particular, (see para. 6.11) without recourse to policy intervention and in view of the scale of outstanding commitments this is likely to continue for some time. In addition the planned urban extensions in Eastbourne Park require significant infrastructure investment which are likely to militate against early implementation of proposals. Although these proposals are likely to be naturally phased toward the end of the Plan period the Council would not wish to rule out

their earlier implementation if residential development would bring forward much needed employment land or if monitoring indicated that there were short-term housing supply difficulties.

- 6.17 Consideration has also been given to whether it would be possible to re-allocate employment land for residential purposes, but it has been concluded that this would significantly undermine the employment objectives of this Plan and that housing requirements for the Borough can be realised without need for re-allocation.

Policy HO4: Housing Allocations				
<p>The following sites are allocated for residential development. The policies of this Plan will be applied when planning permission is sought, including:</p> <p>a) the residential, visual and environmental amenity considerations set-out in Policies HO20, UHT4 and NE28;</p> <p>b) affordable housing requirement (Policy HO13);</p> <p>c) infrastructure requirements (Policy IR2), including outdoor playing space contributions (Policy LCF4), education contributions (Policy LCF17) and contributions to libraries (Policy LCF23);</p> <p>d) net residential densities (Policy HO11).</p>				
Site	Area (Ha)	Indicative Number Of Units @ 30-50 Dwellings Net Per Hectare	Target Minima	Indicative Affordable Housing Requirement
Part Langney Shopping Centre Car Park	0.28	8-14	14	
Roselands Depot	0.93	28-47	40	Minimum of 30%
Adj. Langney Shopping Centre, Kingfisher Drive	0.24	7-12	12	
Lottbridge Drove/Seaside	0.96	29-48	40	Minimum of 30% (min. of 12 units)
Land between St Philip's Avenue and Astaire Avenue	0.46	6-8	6	
TAVR Centre, Seaside	1.5	45-75	60	30% (18 units)
Land off Fletching Road	4.37	131-218	150	Minimum of 30% (min. of 45 units)
Land off Bridgemere Road	2.49	75-125	100	Minimum of 30% (min. of 30 units)
N.E. St Anthony's Hill	3.26	98-163	140	30% (42 units)
Vicinity of Tutts Barn Lane	6.1	185-305	250	30% (75 units)
King's Drive/Cross Levels Way	3.25	98-163	140	30% (42 units)
Hide Hollow Farm	0.97	29-48	38	30% (11 units)
Oak Tree Cottages	0.73	22-36	30	30% (9 units)
Wartling Road	3.0	90-150	150	Minimum of 30%
		TOTAL:	1170	

- Note:**
- Each of the sites require detailed consideration at the planning application stage and any figures given in the proposal are only preliminary estimates based upon the net densities set-out in Policy HO11. However target minima are an indication of the number of units that should be achieved on site;
 - see Policy TC13 for housing allocations within the Town Centre;
 - for further detail on the derivation of the affordable housing requirement see Policy HO13;
 - planning briefs will be prepared to guide development on many of these sites.

- 6.18 Experience of the past decade has shown the volatility of the housing market and it is recognised that not all sites gaining planning approval will necessarily proceed during the

life-time of the permission. However given the emphasis on development within the existing built-up area the Council will wish to see residential development proceed on these sites in the longer term, and will encourage the re-assessment of residential potential to achieve higher residential densities wherever possible in accordance with Policy HO11 of this Plan. The actual number of units with consent should, therefore, be viewed as target minima.

Policy HO5: Other Housing Commitments³⁰

In the event that planning approval should expire planning permission will be granted for the renewal of planning permission for residential development on the following sites, subject to compliance with the policies of this Plan including:

- a) the residential, visual and environmental amenity considerations set-out in Policies HO20, UHT4 and NE28;
- b) affordable housing requirement (Policy HO13);
- c) infrastructure requirements (Policy IR2) including outdoor playing space contributions (Policy LCF4), education contributions (Policy LCF17) and contributions to libraries (Policy LCF23);
- d) net residential densities (Policy HO11).

Where planning consents are partially implemented and revisions of new schemes are proposed, the policies of this Plan will be applied.

Site	Area (ha)	Target Minima	Indicative Affordable Housing Requirement
21/21a College Road (EB/2000/0261)	0.1	16	30% (5 units)
Devonshire Baths, Carlisle Road (EB/1998/0469)	0.2	89	30% (29 units)
28 Trinity Trees (EB/2000/0323)	0.72	14	
St Joseph's Catholic Centre, Whitley Road (EB/2000/0118)	0.11	12	
Inwood, Lismore Road and 4 Trinity Trees (EB/2000/0661)	0.19	18	30% (5 units)
Parkfield PH, Lindfield Road (EB/1999/0173)	0.22	12	

³⁰ Site information given as at 1 April 2003. Please consult the Council's annual residential monitoring report for more up-to-date information.

Site	Area (ha)	Target Minima	Indicative Affordable Housing Requirement
24 Carew Road (EB/2002/0572)	0.11	14	
Sovereign Harbour, Phase B1 (EB/2000/0549)	6.59	325	See note below
Site 'M' Sovereign Harbour (EB2002/0224)	1.67	136	See note below
Sovereign Harbour, Henley Park (EB/2002/0009)	2.03	104	See note below
Sovereign Harbour, Site S (EB/2001/0194)	2.73	260	See note below
Sovereign Harbour, Site Q (EB/2000/0367)	2.84	160	See note below
Sovereign Harbour, Area L (EB/1999/0585)	2.39	53	See note below
Sovereign Harbour, North Area (EB/1995/0267)	53.68	225	See note below

Note: Outline consent for this site does not require affordable housing to be provided.

Windfall Development

- 6.19 Windfall development in this instance is taken to be any residential development scheme that has not been specifically identified as an allocation or commitment in this Plan: this would include infill developments, re-developments and schemes for the conversion or change of use of premises to residential use. The Housing Capacity Survey has been used to inform the likely number of windfall developments anticipated over the Plan period and it has been concluded that the estimates from windfall development set-out in paragraph 6.10 above are realistic and achievable within an enabling policy context.

Infill Development

- 6.20 The Housing Capacity Survey identified a number of opportunities for infill residential development, including development of larger plots within the urban fabric and the subdivision of private gardens. The Survey also showed that there are a number of low-grade green spaces within the Borough which make no contribution to either local environmental or townscape quality, and which may more appropriately be developed for housing. It is important that any infill development is carefully integrated into the existing townscape, and does not harm the amenities of existing residents. Supplementary Planning Guidance will be prepared which will assist well designed infill development in sensitive locations.

Policy HO6: Infill Development

Within the primarily residential areas planning permission will be granted for infill residential development, where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the development of other adjacent sites would not be unreasonably prejudiced by the proposal, subject to:

- a) a well designed scheme in terms of siting, scale and materials which reflects the local townscape (see Policy UHT1);

- b) no significant harm to residential, visual or environmental amenity, see Policies HO20, UHT4 and NE28;**
c) provision of adequate car parking (see Policy TR11).

Note: Supplementary Planning Guidance will be prepared to assist implementation of this policy.

Redevelopment

- 6.21 Redevelopment of obsolete or underused land or buildings has been one of the principle means of achieving new homes within the existing built-up area. This process will continue to play an important role during the Plan period and is vital to the objective of seeking much greater residential development on previously developed land. However it is important that the character and amenity of existing residential areas does not become undermined by inappropriate developments. In particular there are specific concerns about the effect on Conservation Areas and Areas of High Townscape Value.

Policy HO7: Redevelopment

Redevelopment of land or premises within the primarily residential areas for housing will be permitted subject to other policies and proposals in this Plan.

Note: In interpreting this Policy particular attention is drawn to the following policies:

- loss of amenity space: UHT9;
- loss of playing fields: LCF2;
- Nature Conservation Policies: NE20, NE21, NE22, NE23, NE26;
- Conservation Areas: UHT15;
- Areas of High Townscape Value: UHT16;
- Listed Buildings: UHT17;
- Archaeological sites: UHT20;
- Residential, visual and environmental amenity considerations: HO20, UHT4 and NE28.

- 6.22 The Housing Capacity Survey identified a number of garage courts across the Borough in a poor state of disrepair. The Council considers that the need for more homes should prevail over the use for storage, and would support and encourage suitable schemes to come forward in such areas provided the development would not exacerbate any on-street parking problems and harm road safety. However it is recognised that such schemes will need to be designed very sensitively so that the amenity of neighbouring residents is not harmed. Supplementary Planning Guidance will be prepared to aid well designed schemes to be developed.

Policy HO8: Redevelopment of Garage Courts

Planning permission will be granted for the redevelopment of garage courts for residential purposes subject to:

- a) a well designed development in terms of siting, scale and materials (see Policy UHT1);**
b) no significant harm to residential, visual or environmental amenity (see Policies HO20, UHT4 and NE28);
c) no adverse effect on road safety;
d) provision of adequate car parking (see TR11).

Note: Supplementary Planning Guidance will be prepared to assist implementation of this Policy.

Conversions and Changes of Use

- 6.23 Flat conversions are a major source of lower priced accommodation in the Borough. However interest in converting properties³¹ peaked during the 1980's and it is not anticipated that these will make a significant numerical contribution to housing supply during the Plan period, although it is important that all opportunities are maximised as part of the effort to concentrate residential development within the existing built-up area. Experience during the 1980's demonstrated that converted properties can produce problems in terms of residential amenity, parking and loss of family housing so it is important that a policy framework is available to consider proposals.
- 6.24 In particular the Council is concerned that flat conversions should be "good neighbours". Relevant considerations include the nature of the existing property as terraced or semi-detached properties can give rise to amenity problems for neighbouring residents unless particular care is taken in ensuring that incompatible uses do not adjoin each other.
- 6.25 There is also concern that proposed conversions should meet with the basic standards administered under Environmental Health (The Council's minimum standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)) and under the Building Regulations, as it is inappropriate to give planning approval to schemes that may create possible problems in the future. Environmental Health in particular will, therefore, be consulted to ensure that accommodation meets with basic standards: an approach which has been commended in planning appeal decisions. Part M of the Building Regulations which requires new residential development to be provided to mobility standards does not apply to conversion schemes and it is appropriate for the Council to seek mobility standard accommodation at ground floor level wherever practical in order to ensure greater choice of accommodation for people with disabilities.

Policy HO9: Conversions and Change of Use

Within the primarily residential areas residential conversions and the change of use of non-residential premises to residential will be permitted subject to the following considerations:

- a) houses with 3 bedrooms, or less, to be retained as single private dwellings;
- b) in the case of non-residential premises it can be clearly demonstrated that the premises are redundant for continued commercial and/or business use;
- c) conversion schemes for terraced and semi-detached properties will be required to demonstrate that the amenity of adjoining residents will not be harmed;
- d) the proposed development is well designed and provides an acceptable standard of accommodation (see Policy UHT1);
- e) compliance with the residential, visual and environmental amenity considerations set-out in Policies HO20, UHT4 and NE27;
- f) wherever feasible ground floor accommodation to be provided to mobility standard;
- g) provision of satisfactory access from the public highway and adequate car parking (see Policy TR11).

Note: Supplementary Planning Guidance will be prepared to assist implementation of this Policy.

- 6.26 The upper floors above shops are often underused and it is appropriate to encourage their conversion or change of use to residential accommodation.

Policy HO10: Residential Use Above Shops

³¹ This term includes sub-division of existing flats

Planning approval will be granted for the conversion and change of use of the upper floors above shops for residential use in the shopping centres identified in Policy SH1, subject to compliance with the residential, visual and environmental amenity considerations set-out in Policies HO20, UHT4 and NE28.

Efficient Use of Residential Land

- 6.27 With relatively few opportunities remaining within Eastbourne for residential development it is important that those schemes which do come forward make a real contribution to the supply of additional homes within the Borough. Low density residential schemes are not considered to make sufficient contribution to this supply. This does not mean “town cramming” as the Council are committed to maintaining recreational and amenity space within the Borough. Neither does it mean that developments will be permitted that are inappropriate to the character of an area. However it does mean that certain sites and locations should be critically examined as to the possible contribution they can make, particularly where the proposal is for new development and redevelopment close to places with good public transport accessibility, such as shopping centres and public transport corridors. It is recognised that an important aspect of achieving higher densities is good design that results in attractive, liveable environments. It will, therefore, be important that all relevant policies in this Plan are fully taken into account to achieve such environments.

Policy HO11: Residential Densities

Within the predominantly residential areas net residential densities of 30-50 dwellings per hectare will be sought, but higher densities will be encouraged at places with good public transport accessibility. In exceptional circumstances residential development at net densities less than 30-50 dwellings per hectare will be permitted where the character of the area would be detrimentally affected by higher density development, but net densities at less than 25 dwellings per hectare will not be permitted.³²

Meeting General Local Housing Needs

- 6.28 Different sections of the Community have very different housing needs and it is important that a range of accommodation is provided so that real housing choices, both in the size, type and tenure, are available. The Council commissioned a Housing Needs Survey to more fully assess housing needs within the Borough and the Summary Report is published as a background paper to this Plan (Background Paper No.3).

Housing Size

- 6.29 Given the trend to smaller households and the need demonstrated in the Housing Needs Survey for smaller, reasonably priced accommodation it is important that planning policy adequately addresses these requirements and seeks to ensure that adequate provision is made within residential proposals for a range of dwelling types, including smaller units. The Council considers that it is a reasonable requirement to seek an element of smaller accommodation within residential estate schemes of 25 or more dwellings. In the larger schemes this requirement could be provided as purpose-built flats and would afford the opportunity for realising higher net residential densities. Policies elsewhere in the Plan, in particular in respect of residential conversions and change of use, should also deliver smaller units. Flatted schemes and high density terraced housing are exempt from the provisions of this Policy because they are important elements in delivering higher density, small scale accommodation.

³² The element of the policy providing for exceptional circumstances does not comply with PPG3, this will be rectified in a future review of the Plan.

Policy HO12: Residential Mix

Residential schemes of 25 or more detached or semi-detached houses will be required to provide an element of smaller units.

Affordable Housing

- 6.30 The Housing Needs Survey has provided a detailed empirical assessment of affordable housing need in the town up to April 2006 and shows that an additional 2,789 affordable units are required to meet existing and future needs, which equates to 465 units per annum. This is a very substantial level of need, especially when viewed against the average of 50 affordable units per annum secured in the Borough through Local Authority and Housing Corporation resources in recent years.
- 6.31 Both PPG3 and Circular 6/98³³ recognise that it is a legitimate concern for planning policy to seek an element of affordable housing on all suitable sites. Given the extremely high level of housing need identified in the Borough it is considered that there is sufficient justification to seek to negotiate affordable housing on all residential sites of 15 units or more, or 0.5 hectares or more.
- 6.32 Policy HO4 sets out the Borough Council's considered view as to indicative targets for affordable housing on sites allocated for residential development, whilst Policy HO5 sets out the indicative targets that will be sought if renewal of existing planning permissions is sought. For 'windfall' sites the Borough Council will seek to negotiate a maximum of 30% of units to be affordable housing. This proportion is considered to represent a fair balance between the need for more affordable homes and the requirements of the development industry. The Borough Council recognise that there are some sites where achievement of these 'targets' will not be possible due, in particular, to specific site conditions and accepts that the full element of affordable housing cannot always be achieved. In such circumstances the Council will expect a full and reasoned justification as to why the affordable housing provision should be reduced. The Council also accepts that there may be instances where other planning objectives for the site should prevail over the need for affordable housing. In such circumstances a reduced affordable housing provision would be acceptable where it can be clearly demonstrated that these planning objectives would be compromised by implementing the affordable housing requirement in full.
- 6.33 Circular 6/98 requires Local Planning Authorities to consider site suitability when negotiating affordable housing and to have regard to the proximity of local services and facilities and access to public transport. Eastbourne is a very compact Borough with most potential residential sites lying within 400 metres of a bus route, and with a range of local services and facilities centred upon the district, local and neighbourhood shopping centres. All potential sites within the Borough are, therefore, considered to be suitable for affordable housing. Given the requirement within PPG3 for creating mixed communities no site within Eastbourne is considered unsuitable for affordable housing on the grounds of tenure incompatibility. The Council is committed corporately to creating mixed, balanced communities and considers these to be successful housing developments.
- 6.34 Although affordable housing is normally defined to include both social rented housing and low-cost market housing, it will normally only be the former that will meet local housing needs for affordable housing. As low-cost home ownership is only applied to newly built housing, which in Eastbourne is always more expensive than second-hand housing, it is not considered to make an effective contribution to meeting local housing needs since the discount available will usually keep the price of the property above those prevailing for comparable properties in the second-hand sector. However the Housing Needs Survey identified a requirement of 150 low-cost homes to 2006 to assist households at the margin of being able to purchase a new home.
- 6.35 In considering planning applications for residential development the Borough Council will expect affordable housing provision to be made on site. Only in exceptional circumstances

³³ Circular 6/98: Planning and Affordable Housing, DETR (April 1998)

will the Borough Council, on the basis of a full and reasoned justification, accept a commuted payment in lieu of on-site provision.

Policy HO13: Affordable Housing

An element of affordable housing will be sought, by negotiation, on all Class C3 housing developments with a capacity of 15 or more dwellings or residential sites of 0.5 hectares or more.

In negotiating the affordable housing provision to be made on site the following considerations will apply:

- a) residential allocations and commitments: indicative affordable housing targets are set-out in Policies HO4 and HO5 of this Plan;**
- b) 'windfall' sites: a maximum of 30% of affordable units will be sought on all sites of 15 or more dwellings or 0.5 hectares or more which are large enough wherever possible to accommodate a reasonable mix and balance of house types and sizes to cater for a range of housing needs;**
- c) in accessing the suitability of such sites for the provision of an element of affordable housing, the Council will take the following into account:**
 - **particular site conditions and the economics of provision;**
 - **evidence of housing need in the Borough. No affordable housing will be sought if the need for such housing should cease;**
 - **whether the provision would be prejudicial to the realisation of other planning objectives that need to be given priority in the development of the site;**
 - **the need to achieve a successful development.**

In exceptional circumstances a commuted payment in lieu of on-site provision of affordable housing may be agreed.

Notes: For the purposes of Policy HO13 affordable housing is defined as "housing that is provided with private or public subsidy, for local people who are unable to meet their housing needs in the local housing market because of the relationship between housing costs and incomes. In Eastbourne, affordable housing will typically be for rent and will be managed by a Registered Social Landlord, but the Council will consider other affordable housing initiatives, including home ownership options, and housing provided by other affordable housing providers". In determining the type and provider of the affordable housing required, the primary consideration of the Council will be its ability to meet the current scale and nature of affordable housing need.

Households defined as being in need of affordable housing are households lacking their own housing or living in housing which is inadequate or unsuitable, who are likely to be able to meet their needs in the housing market without some assistance and will include:

- a) those households who do not have access to the minimum deposit they require to purchase or rent a suitable home, and
- b) those households who by applying prevailing building society income multipliers for lending purposes cannot afford to purchase and maintain open market housing suitable for their needs, or
- c) those households who, by applying a rent threshold level of 25-30% of net income cannot afford to rent open market housing suitable for their needs.

Existing adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance will be amended to reflect Policy HO13.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

- 6.36 In its widest sense the definition of a house in multiple occupation (HMO) includes both self-contained flats in residential conversions and non-self-contained accommodation. The latter is typically a number of bedsits with shared toilet, bathroom and, possibly, kitchen facilities. For the purposes of planning control the following section concentrates upon bed-sit type accommodation (see para. 6.25 for flat conversions and Environmental Health Standards).
- 6.37 Bedsits provide some of the cheapest accommodation available in Eastbourne, providing homes mostly for single people with few housing options. There is a shortage of good quality bedsit units in the town so it is important to continue the Council's existing policy of retaining this accommodation subject to approved HMO minimum standards. However in view of the importance the Council attaches to retaining the stock of tourist accommodation in the town it is not considered appropriate to permit houses in multiple occupation in the tourist accommodation area (See tourist accommodation Policies TO1 and TO2).

Policy HO14: Houses in Multiple Occupation

Planning permission will be granted for the establishment and retention of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) provided they comply with residential, visual and environmental amenity considerations set-out in Policies HO20, UHT4 and NE28.

HMOs will not be permitted in the tourist accommodation area defined in Policy TO1.

Meeting Specific Local Housing Needs

Student Accommodation

- 6.38 Several institutions in the Borough provide student accommodation. For instance the University of Brighton provides dedicated accommodation for some of its students in halls of residence in Meads, and there is hostel accommodation for staff at the District General Hospital. Otherwise students rely upon the private rented sector for accommodation. The Council is concerned that any loss of the dedicated communal accommodation would place additional strains upon the private rented sector and could lead to difficulties for the general population seeking low-cost accommodation.

Policy HO15: Dedicated Student Accommodation

Planning permission will not be granted for the change of use of dedicated student accommodation or nursing staff accommodation, including halls of residence, unless adequate replacement accommodation is provided or there is no longer a proven need within the Borough.

Sheltered Accommodation

- 6.39 Eastbourne continues to have a proportion of retired residents significantly higher than the national average (24.7% of the population were over 65 years of age in 2001³⁴) so there is a

³⁴ Source: 2001 Census (Key Statistics for Local Authorities), Crown Copyright.

continuing need for specialist accommodation especially as the elderly are living to a greater age. Indeed the Housing Needs Survey identified a requirement for 920 units of sheltered accommodation to 2006. Sheltered housing is a Class C3 Use and an element of affordable housing will be negotiated on relevant schemes.

Policy HO16: Sheltered Housing

Planning permission will be granted for sheltered housing schemes subject to the following considerations:

- a) a location in proximity to public transport, shops and community facilities;**
- b) the design in relation to the needs of occupants, for instance the adequacy of access for people with disabilities;**
- c) compliance with the residential, visual and environmental amenity considerations set-out in Policies HO20, UHT4 and NE28;**
- d) inclusion of "Secured by Design" initiatives, see Policy UHT1;**
- e) provision of adequate car parking (see Policy TR11).**

On sheltered housing schemes qualifying under the threshold set-out in Policy HO13 an element of affordable housing will be negotiated.

Residential Care Homes/Supported Homes

6.40 There is an accepted need for residential care homes (nursing and rest homes) because they provide an important service in caring for the elderly and those with disabilities who find it difficult to look after themselves.

6.41 Supported homes offer shared or self-contained accommodation for special needs groups. The Council is supportive of such housing and its planning policies should reflect this positive attitude. However the tourist accommodation area is not considered a suitable location for such accommodation.

Policy HO17: Supported and Special Needs Housing

Planning permission will be granted for supported housing (including hostels) for special needs groups and residential care homes (rest and nursing homes), by both conversion and new build, subject to the following:

- a) a location in close proximity to public transport, shops, open spaces, entertainment and community facilities;**
- b) the suitability of the property and its design, in relation to the needs of occupants, for instance the adequacy of disabled access;**
- c) 3 bedroom, or less, properties to be retained as single private dwellings;**
- d) compliance with the residential, visual and environmental amenity considerations set-out in Policies HO20, UHT4 and NE28;**
- e) provision of adequate car parking (see Policy TR11).**

Supported housing (including hostels) and residential care homes will not be permitted in the tourist accommodation area defined in Policy TO1.

Disabled Persons Accommodation

- 6.42 Since the adoption of the Borough Plan 1998 Part M of the Building Regulations has been introduced to require all new housing to be built to mobility standard and it is no longer appropriate for planning policy to address this issue. However Part M does not apply to the provision of wheelchair housing, and the Council considers it appropriate to require larger residential schemes to make provision for the needs of those in a wheelchair so that adequate choice and opportunity is available for families which include a wheelchair-bound member. The Housing Needs Survey identified 11% of all households with a person who had walking difficulties, and some 13% of these households contained someone who was a wheelchair user, suggesting about 1,150 households in Eastbourne as a whole. The physical characteristics of the site and the nature of the development together with the viability of the development will be taken as material planning considerations in the implementation of this policy. In instances where the applicant considers this policy to be unreasonable or impractical the Council expects the applicant to submit a detailed report itemising the physical and financial problems including costs and what dispensation is sought.

Policy HO18: Wheelchair Housing

In larger residential developments (of 20 or more housing units) up to 5% of units will be required to be provided as accommodation capable of use by people in wheelchairs, without structural alteration or adaptation. These units should be evenly distributed throughout the development and should cater for a varying number of occupants.

Gypsies and Travelling Showmen

- 6.43 Local Planning Authorities are required to assess the need for gypsy accommodation in their areas, and to consider the need to provide for winter quarters for travelling showmen. The need for such accommodation has been assessed within the context of this Plan and no specific requirement has been demonstrated. Adequate provision for gypsies is made in adjoining local authorities and no expressed requirement has been received. Indeed no planning application for a gypsy site has been received within the past 20 years.
- 6.44 The Council has also considered carefully the requirement to consider the accommodation needs of travelling showmen but has been unable to identify a suitable site within the Borough.
- 6.45 However circulars 1/94³⁵ and 22/91³⁶ require local authorities to consider the needs of gypsies and travelling show people respectively for permanent sites. Within the Borough it is considered that such uses would be inappropriate in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and within the area at risk of flooding, where there may be issues of safety for the occupants.

Policy HO19: Sites for Gypsies and Travelling Show People

Proposals for sites for gypsies and travelling show people will be permitted outside the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (see Policy D1) and the area which may be at risk of flooding (see Policy US4), subject to:

³⁵ DOE Circular 1/94: Gypsy Sites and Planning

³⁶ DOE Circular 22/91: Travelling Show People

- a) **there is no detrimental effect on residential, visual or environmental amenity (see Policies HO20, UHT4 and NE27) or on the commercial well-being of nearby businesses;**
- b) **provision of adequate access arrangements;**
- c) **the site is within a reasonable distance of local services and facilities;**
- d) **any ancillary buildings to be well designed in terms of siting, scale and materials (see Policy UHT1);**
- e) **provision of appropriate landscaping and screening.**

Design and Environmental Standards

- 6.46 It is fundamental to proper planning that proposals should not have an unacceptable impact on surrounding properties, and in residential areas, this requirement is especially pertinent. People choose to live in a particular area partly because of its character and ambience, and they will naturally have expectations that such character will be retained. Within and adjoining conservation areas and areas of high townscape value and in proximity to listed and locally listed buildings particularly high standards of design and respect for character and setting will be required (see Policies UHT15, UHT16, UHT17 and UHT18).

Policy HO20: Residential Amenity

Subject to other policies and proposals of this Plan new development proposals and extensions to existing buildings should respect residential amenity. Proposals will be refused unless they can demonstrate that they do not cause unacceptable:

- a) **loss of outlook;**
- b) **loss of privacy by overlooking from habitable rooms;**
- c) **overshadowing and/or loss of light;**
- d) **noise, general disturbance or odour;**
- e) **loss of character to conservation areas or neighbouring listed buildings.**

- 6.47 The construction of residential schemes has major environmental consequences and it is important that due consideration is given to appropriate mitigation measures at an early stage in the preparation of the scheme. The Natural Environment Chapter has a number of relevant policies that should be addressed in any residential scheme.