

Draft East Sussex Housing Partnership Strategy – Feedback from Public Engagement

Summary Overview:

- Significant support for increasing the supply of affordable housing, particularly 1 and 2 bed units. Greater transparency over how affordable housing is defined and ensuring affordable housing commitments are delivered.
- Concerns about the lack of infrastructure to support housing development, particularly in health, water, education and transport.
- Concerns about building on greenfield land and the impact on the local landscape and countryside.
- Strong support for efforts to bring empty properties back into use, including re-purposing vacant commercial buildings.
- Strong support for new developments including green spaces.
- Strong support for homelessness prevention, particularly ensuring people can keep their existing homes.
- Significant response highlighting the need for stronger links between homelessness, mental health and substance dependency services.
- Concerns about capacity within local authorities to deliver additional compliance and standards duties.
- Ensuring a consistent approach to standards across social and privately rented homes.
- Comments about housing pressures and links to wider government policy and immigration.

Priority and Summary of Feedback	Comments	Action
Homelessness Prevention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support for preventing homelessness, especially for local people, care leavers, and veterans. • Concerns about councils placing people from other areas into East Sussex without proper support or funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support should focus on supporting people to keep their existing accommodation whenever possible, including financial measures to address rent arrears and prevent tenancy breakdowns. • There needs to be a more joined up approach between housing and children's services to supporting people who have been found to be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health and housing teams have developed a homelessness prevention programme which aims to support people to keep their existing accommodation. • The Homelessness, Health and Support Group are working on a joint action plan with children's services, which includes supporting families who have

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many feel homelessness is linked to income insecurity, benefit cuts, and lack of affordable housing. • Links to substance misuse and mental health issues. 	<p>intentionally homeless. There also needs to be better links between children's services and private rented sector teams to improve access to housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the range of accommodation options for young people leaving care, including supported options as people transition to living independently. • Noted issues of 'hidden homelessness' masking the scale of the problem. • There needs to be a focus on improving access to employment and training. • Links between rough sleeping and the broader street community and instances of anti-social behaviour. • Consider hostel models for people who are rough sleeping. • Temporary accommodation requires more regular inspection. • Responses on the potential impact of the Renters Rights Bill on the availability of housing in the private sector. • Concerns that advice for tenants to remain in their properties until eviction proceedings are complete 	<p>been found intentionally homeless and a new care leavers protocol.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The housing partnership is supporting the launch of the Connect to Work programme, building on existing partnership work with the Employment and Skills services. • Partnership working with local community safety teams to improve co-ordination across support and enforcement teams. • The Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Programme is developing new models of outreach and temporary accommodation for people rough sleeping. • The East Sussex authorities are working with colleagues across Sussex to begin preparing for the new requirements of the Renters Rights Bill. This includes plans for a landlord engagement event in November. • The strategy includes a focus on developing a community centred approach to homelessness prevention.
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	<p>may miss opportunities to prevent homelessness and damage relationships with landlords.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns were raised about the impact of out of area temporary accommodation placements. In particular, the need to ensure people placed out of area remain engaged with support. Need to work more closely with mental health and substance dependency services to improve homelessness prevention. A focus on dedicated support to people already living in temporary accommodation to move on as quickly as possible. A number of responses noted concerns about overcrowding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The housing authorities are developing a joint temporary accommodation policy.
<p>Housing, Health and Care Integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration is welcomed but seen as difficult to achieve in practice. Poor communication between agencies is a recurring issue. Discharge from hospital into unsuitable housing is a concern. Need for more accessible housing for disabled and older people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There needs to be more support for people with disabilities living in flats. There are overlaps between new fire safety regulations and disabilities legislation. There should be better advice for managing agents and landlords / tenants. Comments that Disabled Facilities Grants should not be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategy will build on existing good practice for multi-disciplinary working, including the rough sleeper and Changing Futures programme teams. Work is underway to develop a new hospital discharge protocol for people in housing need, which will include links to services to prevent rough sleeping.

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	<p>used when a household is under-occupying a property.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication between services needs to be improved to stop people falling between the gaps and work in a more preventative role. Shared hubs and multi-disciplinary teams are a good way of achieving this. • Need to increase capacity for services which prevent rough sleeping within health and care. • Concern regarding a lack of staffing capacity for teams to provide intensive support to people with additional needs. • Concerns about the long-term funding model for supported housing, including the potential additional cost pressures of new regulations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring housing is part of the core offer within community-based models of health and care (including Integrated Community Teams and Mental Health Neighbourhood Teams) will support access to services. • A pan-Sussex group has been formed to support preparations for the new supported housing regulations. This will include developing plans to address gaps in provision as well as a partnership approach to standards and compliance.
<p>Improving Housing Management and Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social housing often lacks basic amenities like flooring and white goods. • Concerns about anti-social behaviour in social housing areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns that social housing does not include white goods and floor coverings. • Suggestions that social rents should be graded based on the number of working aged people living in a household. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reformed decent homes standard may include additional requirements for floor coverings and kitchen and bathroom fittings. Several local providers already support tenants on low incomes to access support furnishing their homes.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant response in terms of addressing anti-social behaviour. • Need to strengthen tenant voice and engagement. • Need to improve engagement with larger social housing providers on local issues. • Concerns were raised at a lack of capacity within local authorities' standards and compliance teams to implement new legislative requirements. • Concerns about the wait time for social housing and ensuring a transparent bidding / allocations process. • Comments regarding the need for a quicker response to repairs and maintenance issues in social housing. • Tensions between existing fire safety regulations and equalities legislation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upcoming legislative changes will introduce new requirements for local authorities in relation to standards and compliance and will seek to ensure consistency across social and privately rented homes. • A recent partnership consultation response on the Reformed Decent Homes Standard for Social and Privately Rented Homes highlighted the need for better alignment across legislation and improved guidance for landlords. • The partnership shared learning and practice from regulatory judgements to drive improvements in practice. • The partnership is strengthening links to the Safer East Sussex Team to continue to develop our approach to anti-social behaviour. • The partnership have adopted a tenant voice charter, based on good practice from the National Housing Federation, and will continue to promote this.
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<p>Housing Supply – Development and Enablement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong opposition to building on greenfield sites and countryside. • Many say new homes are unaffordable and not suited to local needs. • Infrastructure (schools, doctors, roads) is not keeping up with development. • Developers often fail to deliver promised affordable housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very significant response highlighting that infrastructure improvements need to keep pace with new developments. Concerns were raised about the impact of new housing on public services, including doctors, dentists and roads. • Strong support for increasing the supply of affordable housing. In particular, developing units for young people and housing for people to downsize as they get older. There needs to be great transparency about how affordable housing is defined. • Support for community-led housing schemes. • Several responses highlighted that brownfield land should be prioritised for development. • Housing development needs to be complemented by increasing employment opportunities and infrastructure. • Significant response on the need for new developments to include green spaces, which people highlighted as important for wellbeing. • Concerns were raised about the impact of second home ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will not be possible to meet our housing needs through brownfield land and bringing empty properties back into use, therefore our strategy will need to include the use of greenfield sites too. Strengthening links between housing and planning will help balance the need to protect local countryside. • The final draft strategy will highlight that housing development as an enabler for infrastructure improvements. • Social and affordable rents are defined by a national formula. • Ensuring links to Local Plan making to include green spaces within developments. • Explore good practice examples from other areas in addressing the growth of second home ownership and Airbnb. • Strengthening links to the Local Plan-making process to ensure the right mix of commercial and residential units. • Partnership work is underway with the SPACES programme to support local authorities to develop housing directly, including accessing funding
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	<p>and AirBnB in reducing the supply of housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authorities should have more focus on ensuring consented developments are delivered and affordable housing requirements are met. • Vacant commercial properties in town centres should be re-purposed to provide housing, including supported housing. • Local authorities should share good practice and capacity for developing affordable homes. • Need to ensure accommodation options for key workers, particularly in the health and care sectors. • Strong support for measures to bring empty homes back into use. • Some responses referred to the creation of a new town within Sussex. • Support for councils developing and delivering housing directly. • Consideration of modular buildings and meanwhile use for sites to ease pressure on homelessness services. • Support for increasing housing density on new developments. • Significant response highlighting the local landscape in East Sussex and 	<p>through the Brownfield Land Release Fund.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Development and Enablement Group has been established to share good practice. • The housing authorities will be developing a joint empty homes strategy. • Since the draft strategy was published, the government has announced further reforms to Right to Buy.
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	<p>the need to protect countryside and natural habitats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New social housing sites should include a mix of housing options, so people can move to more suitable housing as their needs change, without leaving the area. • A number of responses highlighted the challenges of a lack of affordable accommodation options for younger people in rural communities and villages. • Concerns about the impact of Right to Buy on the availability of social housing. 	
<p>Tackling Climate Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed views—some support climate action, others see it as a distraction. • Many want solar panels, insulation, and heat pumps on all new builds. • Concerns about building on floodplains and loss of green spaces. • Some feel climate goals are unrealistic or poorly explained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting active travel and improving cycle lanes. • Concerns about new developments on flood plains. • Strong support for solar panels and upgrading insulation. • Use of planning measures to improve the energy performance of new builds e.g. solar panels, protecting green spaces, heat exchange networks. • Concerns about the use of public money to support what could be perceived as high-risk projects. • Concerns about the impact of rising energy costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting links to a Health in All Policies approach to promoting active travel. • The new East Sussex Retrofit Strategy will include a communications workstream aimed at building trust and understanding of measures to improve energy performance. • There is a history of partnership working in East Sussex to deliver grant funded activity to upgrade homes. Partners will continue to explore future funding opportunities, following the re-commitment to the Warm Homes Plan.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concerns amongst homeowners about the affordability of home upgrades and lack of financial support available.• A number of responses highlighted the need to secure additional grant funding in this part of the sector to achieve the climate change targets.• Improve quality of information to help people plan upgrades, based on different building types.• A number of responses noted broader design adaptations to homes to meet rising temperatures.• Education support for climate change needs to be expanded.• Measures should be in place to minimise waste from the building process, including re-using materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Retrofit Skills Plan includes partnership work with local education providers and will be expanding this to younger age groups.
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<p>Private Rented Sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private landlords are seen as inconsistent—some good, many poor. • Tenants fear eviction if they complain about poor conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback supporting the introduction of rent controls and local price caps. • Concern about landlords exiting the market ahead of the implementation of the new Renters Rights Bill. • Privately rented accommodation needs to be inspected more regularly to ensure it meets the required standard. • Concern re lack of security in the private rented sector. Seeking longer tenancies and improved protections from tenants. • Concern about the affordability of pre-paid meters in temporary accommodation. • Need to increase information and tenancy sustainment support for tenants in the private rented sector. • More support is needed for families on low incomes to access the private rented sector. • Housing benefit rates are not keeping pace with private rents. It needs to be easier for housing benefit payments to be made directly to landlords. • Make it easier for pet owners to rent properties. • Strengthen links to landlords organisations, including the National 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a partnership approach to the implementation of the new Renters Rights Bill. The proposed Bill includes additional measures to protect tenants from eviction and rent increases. The Bill will also expand the duties of local authorities to enforce compliance and standards in the private rented sector. • The Renters Rights Bill will establish a new ombudsman for the private rented sector. • A new county-wide Temporary Accommodation Policy will be developed. • The housing partnership works closely with the financial inclusion team. The local authorities offer financial incentives to support people to access the private rented sector. • Partners are seeking to expand tenancy sustainment support within our homelessness prevention services, including home visiting roles and links to wellbeing services.
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	<p>Residential Landlords Association, to improve access to training and support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing capacity for mediation support to prevent tenancy breakdowns.• Concern from landlords regarding the changes the changes to tenancy and eviction provisions within new legislation.• Keen to see a consistent approach to standards and enforcement across social and privately rented homes.• Tenants need an independent ombudsman to resolve complaints and issues.	
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