

Housing

Introduction

6.1 It is an important function of the Local Plan to provide an adequate and continuous supply of land for housing within the context of the County Structure Plan, whilst ensuring that the required new development has the least harmful impact on the environment and respects the character of existing development. On this basis, this chapter contains policies for controlling the amount, type and location of new housing development in the District.

6.2 There are an estimated 138,000 people living in the District, with around half living in the five main towns. The population shows a relatively uniform age structure with the largest proportion of people in the 30-44 age group, although the southern part of the District is characterised by a higher proportion of elderly persons. There are some 59,200 dwellings in the District, an increase of 7,400 since 1986, with around 83% owner occupied, 7% local authority and some 6% rented privately.

6.3 There is an existing housing commitment over the Plan period for some 1,640 dwellings in the District and it is estimated that a further 1,230 dwellings could be built on unidentified or 'windfall' sites. This could result in the population growing to around 140,000 by 2004.

6.4 A more detailed breakdown of population and housing characteristics is given in Appendix 1. Further information on the towns is given in the relevant chapters.

STRATEGY

6.5 The Plan's strategy, as set out in Chapter 2, seeks to give priority to protecting and enhancing the quality of the environment by maintaining the existing settlement pattern and ensuring that new development respects and harmonises with the character of existing development and the surrounding landscape.

6.6 In terms of housing, the Council's strategy seeks to ensure that future housing requirements are met for all sections of the community, including those in local housing need. In achieving this aim, careful consideration will be given to the availability of local services and community facilities whilst creating a safe and attractive residential environment, maintaining the existing character and amenity of towns and villages, and protecting the countryside.

6.7 As part of this strategy, the objectives of the Plan with regard to housing are:-

(1) to ensure that an adequate and continuous supply of housing land is available in relation to County Structure Plan policies;

(2) to assist in the provision of affordable housing for those in a local housing need;

(3) to protect and enhance the character and amenity of the towns and villages;

(4) to promote a high standard of amenities, design and layout in new housing developments;

(5) to encourage a mix of housing types on new developments;

(6) to encourage the retention and improvement of the existing housing stock.

(7) to encourage the provision of special needs housing including housing for the disabled.

6.8 In formulating the strategy for housing, the Council has had regard to Government guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing, and to the policies in the County Structure Plan. As outlined in Chapter 2, the approved County Structure Plan provides for a level of new housebuilding for the period 1986-2001 which takes account of the natural change in population and local housing need, is related to the supply of jobs and is consistent with a reduced level of net in-migration. The housing policies in the Deposit Draft Replacement County Structure Plan 1996 imply reductions in the average house building rate, net in-migration and the level of population growth compared to recent years.

HOUSING PROVISION

6.9 As outlined in Chapter 2, the County Structure Plan requires provision to be made in Wealden District for 8,500 dwellings for the period 1986-2001. The Deposit Draft of the Replacement County Structure Plan proposes the provision of 6,600 dwellings in Wealden for the period 1991-2006. Whilst this level of housing provision will be subject to careful examination during the latter stages of the Structure Plan Review, the Council considers it appropriate to accommodate a proportion of the growth within the Local Plan's timescale to 2004. On this basis, there is a pro-rata requirement for the provision of a further

1,320 dwellings in Wealden for the period 2001 to 2004.

6.10 However, there is already a substantial commitment to new housing on land with planning permission and allocated in the Council's existing Plans, including major housing and associated development at Stone Cross. When this is added to the estimated number of dwellings likely to be built on unidentified sites (as discussed below), it is evident that the resulting housing supply figure exceeds the County Structure Plan requirement. Therefore, as illustrated in the table below, in numerical terms no new major allocations of housing land are required to be made in the Local Plan.

Housing Provision to 2004

	Dwellings
Approved Structure Plan Requirement 1986-2001	8,500
+Deposit Draft Structure Plan Requirement 2001-2004 (proportion)	1,320
	9,820
-Housebuilding Completions 1986-97	7,430
Balance	2,390
Housing Land Supply to 2004	
Existing housing commitments (planning permission, allocations)	1,640
+Future development on unidentified sites (estimated)	1,230
Therefore, housing provision exceeds Structure Plan requirement by	480

6.11 The relatively high level of housing land supply is due in part to the incidence of large previously unidentified sites (sometimes known as 'windfall' sites) coming forward, together with the subsequent allowance made for future development on such sites (in the range 0.4ha to 1ha) which Government guidance advises may be made. Similarly, an allowance is made for future development of smaller sites in view of the pressure that exists for infilling, conversion of larger properties, changes of use of buildings and redevelopment of existing sites. It must be recognised that where such development conforms with the relevant policies in the Plan, it cannot realistically be resisted, even when there is no numerical requirement for new housing development. It is assumed that there will be a decline in the rate that

large and small unidentified sites come forward over the Plan period and, in the case of large unidentified sites, that not all permissions will be implemented.

6.12 While new housing allocations are not required, the Council recognises that the large housing provision will need time to be assimilated into the community, both physically and socially, particularly with regard to the provision of local services and community facilities such as health and education. However, a limited number of allocations have been retained from previous Local Plans in Crowborough, Buxted, Lower Dicker and Friday Street, and some limited new allocations are made in Hailsham. The housing allocations and the main committed sites are described in the relevant town or village chapter.

6.13 The housing position over the 2006-2011 period is less clear and is beyond the timescale of this Local Plan. The Deposit Draft of the Replacement Structure Plan includes a County provision figure of 10,400 dwellings. It proposes new land allocations of 3,300 dwellings to be concentrated mainly in the Low Weald with strategic allocations focused upon peripheral expansions of Hailsham, Polegate and Uckfield but also including about 500 dwellings to be dispersed among the other smaller towns and villages. Only when the new Structure Plan has been approved following the Examination in Public in Spring 1998 and the likely publication of modifications, will the amount and strategic location of new housing development in Wealden for the period 2006-2011 be known. This will then form the basis for a future review of the Wealden Local Plan.

HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

6.14 It has already been shown that the Council can meet the County Structure Plan housing provision for Wealden for the period up to 2004. In addition, in line with Government guidance, the Council aims to ensure the availability of a five year supply of housing land in relation to the housing provision in the County Structure Plan in accordance with its Policy S3. At 1st April 1997 the Council was able to demonstrate 7.4 years supply of land in relation to the housing policies in the 1991 County Structure Plan and the Deposit Draft Replacement County Structure Plan 1996.

HG1 The Council will aim to maintain a minimum of a five year supply of available housing land in relation to the housing provision in the approved County Structure Plan.

COUNCIL'S HOUSING STRATEGY

6.15 The Council, like many other Councils across the country, is concerned about the lack of affordable

housing for local people, particularly in the villages. The problem has increased in recent years due to escalating house prices and the decline in the provision of public sector housing which has traditionally been the principal source of new social housing.

6.16 The Council has developed a corporate approach to meeting local housing need which has resulted in the adoption of an 'exceptions' planning policy (discussed further below), the completion of a Parish survey of local housing needs, the establishment of the Anderida First Housing Association as a District-based association, the recent completion of a number of schemes providing housing to rent on assured tenancies for local people, and the identification of further development opportunities across the District.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable Housing on New Development

6.17 Recent Government guidance advises local planning authorities that a community's needs for affordable housing is a material planning consideration which may properly be taken into account in formulating Local Plan policies. Where there is a demonstrable lack of affordable housing to meet local needs, planning authorities may reasonably seek to negotiate with developers for the inclusion of an element of affordable housing in large new developments on allocated land and other suitable housing sites. Planning authorities may include policies in Local Plans indicating their intention to do so. Such policies should give clear guidance on what the authority regards as affordable housing and on the arrangements expected to ensure that it is reserved for those who need it.

6.18 In the light of the evident need for affordable housing in the Parish Surveys, the Council considers it important that large new housing developments in the District should include such provision where appropriate. The Council considers that subsidised housing for rent should be provided in order to cater for those people in urgent need. In line with the Government's guidance, it is considered that the policy should be flexible, with the amount of affordable housing on individual sites depending on the overall scale of the proposed development, the mix of dwellings proposed, and the need for such housing in the area. The policy will apply to housing developments of 25 or more dwellings, or residential sites of 1 hectare or more, irrespective of the number of dwellings. In accordance with Circular 6/98, the Council will undertake further survey work on local housing need and the available supply of land for housing to ascertain whether lower thresholds are appropriate. The Council will normally look towards 30% of the dwellings being in the affordable category

although on appropriate sites a higher proportion would be acceptable. Although the assessment of local housing need will normally relate to a town or parish, the Council will also have regard to wider needs within the District as contained on the housing needs register. The policy would not normally apply to small-scale or infill sites.

6.19 Proposals for the development of affordable housing will be subject to a planning obligation that the housing is only used for the purposes of providing housing accommodation to meet the objectives of a registered social landlord, except where tenants exercise their right to acquire a property under the purchase grant scheme under the Housing Act.

HG2 Within the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, where there is a demonstrable lack of affordable housing to meet local needs, the Council will seek the provision of an element of affordable housing in new, large-scale housing developments.

The amount of affordable housing will depend upon the overall size of the development proposed, the mix of dwelling types proposed and the demonstrable need for affordable housing in the area.

6.20 As the vast majority of housing land in Wealden is already committed through planning permissions and, as stated previously, there is no need for major new allocations of housing land in the District, there will be limited opportunity to implement this policy.

Affordable Housing 'Exceptions' Policy

6.21 In many rural areas of Wealden there are particular difficulties in securing an adequate supply of affordable housing for local needs. Government guidance advises local planning authorities that the existence of arrangements to ensure that new housing would be available for local needs would be a material consideration which the authority should take into account in deciding whether to grant planning permission, particularly when considering the release of small sites which would not otherwise be released for housing. Such sites will be released as 'exceptions' to normal policies for housing development and would be additional to the provision made in the development plan for general housing demand within or adjoining existing villages. The release of such sites will essentially be a matter for local judgement.

6.22 The Council's local housing needs 'exceptions' policy is an integral part of the corporate approach to meeting housing needs in the rural areas, and is recognised as such in the Wealden Housing Strategy. In line with Government guidance, the policy permits small-scale housing development outside the defined development boundaries in order to meet an identified

housing need among those local people who are unable to compete in the normal housing market. To date, several schemes have been successfully implemented and some further development is in the pipeline.

6.23 However, the Council believes that the most appropriate and effective means of addressing local housing need would be through allocating land specifically for affordable housing, and thereby creating a new planning use class. In planning terms, it is very unlikely that sufficient 'exceptions' land will be found to meet all local housing need, as experience shows that most sites will not be acceptable in relation to the environmental, character, services and traffic considerations.

6.24 In all cases put forward under the exceptions policy, the Council will seek to ensure that the scheme can be assimilated into the local area, both physically and socially, and will look for support from the local community.

6.25 The Council's policy has regard to Government guidance on the locational aspects, environmental considerations, assessment of need, definition of 'local', and the provision of cross-subsidy when considering proposals for affordable housing.

6.26 As the policy relates to land outside the development boundaries where development will not normally be permitted, the principal issue is whether a site is suitable in planning terms. The Council attaches particular importance to the location of a site in relation to an existing settlement and local services, the scale of development proposed, the impact on the character of surrounding development, the landscape and countryside, as well as other normal planning criteria.

6.27 With regard to need, the Parish surveys provide an initial indication of the general extent and nature of local housing need, as a basis for further detailed investigation by the Council's housing department or a housing association when a suitable development site has been identified (see Appendix 4). The initial evidence from the survey and schemes that have been implemented suggests that, in the light of income levels among those in need, the appropriate tenure is rental through assured tenancies, i.e. with no right to buy. Shared ownership of usually up to 50% equity may also be appropriate in some cases. With the likely building cost of around £40,000 to £45,000 for a two-bedroom dwelling (1997 figure), the land cost should be low compared to housing market value in order to help ensure that the dwellings can be truly affordable.

6.28 Outright purchase of a property would be inappropriate, partly because the cost of provision is likely to exceed the purchasing power of local people in need, even when initial discounts are offered, but principally due to the difficulty of retaining the

property for meeting local needs on a subsequent change of occupant. This latter consideration is relevant to the policy of preventing 'staircasing' to outright ownership in shared ownership schemes.

6.29 Although the policy would not preclude any developer carrying out a suitable scheme with appropriate covenants on the land or legal agreements, the Council will normally require the involvement of a Housing Association or a Village Trust with an appropriate lettings policy.

6.30 While the policy does not allow general demand housing outside the development boundary to cross-subsidise the funding of affordable housing, it could apply where the private housing is in the development boundary and the affordable housing is outside as an exception to policy.

6.31 The Statutory Instrument identifying exemptions from the purchase grant scheme for housing association tenants (the right to buy) defines the areas where the principle of development may be acceptable under the policy, i.e. only exception sites which fall under an exempt area will be considered under the policy.

HG3 In exceptional circumstances, planning permission may be granted for small scale residential development in rural areas outside development boundaries in order to meet an identified local housing need among those people unable to compete in the normal housing market.

(A) Proposals for such development will only be permitted where the Council is satisfied that the following criteria are met:-

(1) the proposed development is located within or adjacent to an existing village or other settlement and provides good accessibility to local services, e.g. shops and schools;

(2) the proposed development is not intrusive in the countryside and is not harmful to the character of the landscape;

(3) the scale of the proposed development is appropriate in relation to the size of the settlement. Development should be in keeping with the character of adjoining development and the locality, and with local building styles;

(4) the proposed development conforms with the Plan's policies for access, parking, retention of trees, landscaping and impact on neighbouring properties;

(5) there is clear evidence of an unsatisfied local housing need in the parish that cannot be met through normal market mechanisms;

(6) the proposed development is of a size, type and cost, whether for rent or shared ownership, directly appropriate and affordable for those people in proven local housing need identified in (5) above;

(7) the future control of any dwellings can be ensured forever through the imposition of covenants and/or appropriate legal agreements;

(8) the proposal can be shown to be viable and achieve affordable housing.

(B) Applicants for planning permission will be asked to demonstrate how their proposals meet criteria (5)-(8) above, which will then be the subject of assessment by the Local Planning Authority, advised as appropriate by the Local Housing Authority or a Housing Association.

(C) Proposals which include the provision of general demand housing outside the development boundaries to cross-subsidise the funding of low cost housing will not be acceptable.

(D) Proposals for shared ownership housing must be of a form that will not allow 'staircasing' to outright ownership.

(E) For the purposes of this policy, the categories of need are defined as:-

(1) existing residents needing separate affordable accommodation in the area (including young persons, the elderly in inappropriate accommodation, and families in cramped or otherwise unsuitable accommodation);

(2) previous residents who have been obliged to leave the village or parish through lack of affordable accommodation and who now wish to return to such accommodation;

(3) persons whose work provides an important service to the community and who need to live within or close to the local community but need affordable housing;

(4) persons with the genuine offer of employment locally who are unable to take up

such an offer due to the lack of affordable housing.

With preference given in the following order to:-

(a) persons living for at least 12 months or brought up in the village and other people who would meet the criteria for need in (E)(2)-(4), provided that if an insufficient number of such people are available then:

(b) the same considerations outlined in (E)(a) would apply to the Wealden Parish and then

(c) to neighbouring Wealden Parishes and then

(d) to Wealden District and finally

(e) to a suitable applicant nominated by the Council from its Housing Waiting List if, within six weeks of any dwelling becoming available for letting, the vacancy cannot be filled under the provisions of (E)(1)-(4), (a)-(d).

NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Development Boundaries

6.32 Past experience has shown the value of defining the extent to which the Council will allow new housing development around towns and villages. As explained in Chapter 3, the Council has adopted the use of development boundaries to make a clear distinction, in policy terms, between town or village areas where certain forms of development may be appropriate and areas outside development boundaries, which are primarily rural and where the protection and enhancement of the countryside is of paramount importance.

6.33 On this basis, in the light of Policy GD1, planning permissions for new residential development will normally be granted only on land which is located within the development boundaries, provided that the development conforms with the relevant policies and proposals in the Plan.

Residential Character

6.34 In recent years, many settlements in the District have accommodated a significant amount of residential development in the form of infilling and redevelopment, sometimes at a higher density than surrounding development. While this has undoubtedly helped to relieve the pressure on rural land in line with Government and County Structure Plan policies, the Council is concerned that any such 'town cramming' may gradually erode the character and amenity of the

towns and villages, especially when new development involves the loss of trees, hedgerows, gardens and other important open space.

HG4 Within the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, the established character of existing residential areas will be protected.

6.35 Since the overall density of development suitable on a particular site will depend upon a number of factors, including the nature of the site and the character of adjoining development, the need to protect the amenities of adjoining properties and the type of accommodation proposed, the adoption of firm density standards could lead to a regimented and monotonous approach and is therefore not considered appropriate. Normally, however, the density of new residential development will be expected to reflect and complement the character of its surroundings, as set out in Policy HG4.

6.36 On certain sites, particularly close to the centres of towns and the larger villages, an increase over prevailing density levels may be acceptable in the case of small unit accommodation, normally in the form of flats, to meet the needs of smaller households (including sheltered housing for the elderly), but only where there is no detrimental effect on the character of the area.

6.37 In contrast, there are a number of residential areas with an established and distinctive character normally created by large detached houses set in spacious gardens with mature tree cover, hedgerows and other landscaping. Where such areas are within development boundaries, the Council is concerned that pressure for redevelopment and infilling could erode the particular character of these areas. On this basis, specific policies are contained in the relevant town and village chapters to protect the established low density character of certain areas.

Estate Development

6.38 A mix of dwellings throughout the District is important to meet the wide range of housing demand, from first time buyers, single people, families and the elderly as well as creating visual interest and character in new housing development. However, experience has shown that densities in excess of 135 habitable rooms per hectare are not normally appropriate for estate forms of development, having regard to the need to create a satisfactory environment for future occupants, including adequate provision of daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy, garden space, play space and amenity areas.

6.39 In addition to meeting the planning criteria set out in Policy EN27, particular attention should be paid in new estate development to creating smaller individual

housing areas, wherever possible, each with a well defined structure creating a sense of identity within it. This can be achieved by making good use of existing tree and hedgerow belts, open spaces, other natural features, the road network, house layout and design. Particular care will be taken to ensure that satisfactory arrangements are made for off-street parking which do not result in a proliferation of parking on estate roads.

HG5 Within the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, the Council will seek a mix of dwelling types and sizes, on new estate developments.

Wherever possible, estate development should provide for the creation of smaller individual housing areas by making good use of existing tree belts and hedgerows, open spaces, natural features, road network, and dwelling layout and design.

Crime Prevention

6.40 In line with Government advice, the Council is concerned to ensure that the design, layout and landscaping of new housing development makes crime more difficult to commit, increases the risk of detection for potential offenders and provides people with a safer, more secure environment. In considering proposals for large new housing developments, the Council will consult with the Police Authority at an early stage.

HG6 Within large new housing developments, regard should be paid to crime prevention in the design and layout of the housing areas, particularly in terms of street lighting, security of property and surveillance of access roads, footpaths, amenity space, parking areas and landscaping where this is consistent with good layout and design.

Energy Conservation

6.41 Government guidance emphasises the important role that development plan policies may play in conserving energy and reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, particularly in relation to the location of new development. With regard to new housing development, the guidance suggests that full and effective use of land should be made within existing urban areas, that development should be closely related to public transport networks and located so as to minimise car use for journeys to work, school and other local facilities, and with provision made for walking and cycling.

6.42 Within housing developments, factors such as housing type, orientation and general aspect can influence energy conservation and are important considerations in the design and layout of new housing areas. Energy efficiency within dwellings themselves is primarily covered by the Building Regulations. The Council's Energy Plan seeks, among its objectives, to promote high standards of energy efficiency in the Council's housing stock.

HG7 Within housing development, consideration should be given to energy conservation in the design and layout of new housing areas, particularly with regard to the aspect of the development, the housing type proposed and the orientation of the dwellings.

Retention and Improvement of Housing Stock

6.43 The Council considers it important to maintain and where possible improve the existing housing stock. In terms of planning policy, this can be achieved by the Council seeking to resist the loss of residential accommodation, permitting the conversion of large properties to smaller units, and allowing extensions and alterations to existing dwellings.

HG8 The Council will resist the loss of residential accommodation (by change from residential to another use or by redevelopment), unless the following special circumstances apply:-

(1) the residential use is not appropriately located;

(2) the building is unsuitable for residential use in its present form and is not capable of being readily improved or altered in order to make it suitable; or

(3) the retention of the building or use for residential purposes would prevent an important development, redevelopment or other change of wider benefit to the community.

6.44 In appropriate cases, the housing stock can be increased by converting larger properties into smaller unit accommodation, thereby making a valuable contribution to the supply of smaller dwellings. This would only be acceptable subject to normal planning criteria being met, and it would usually be inappropriate for normal family-type accommodation to be converted.

HG9 The Council will, in appropriate cases within the development boundaries as defined on the Proposals Map, permit the conversion of larger houses into smaller dwelling units when this is acceptable in terms of the character and suitability of the premises and site.

6.45 The extension of existing dwellings is often an effective means of improving the housing stock. Small-scale extensions can often be built without the need to seek planning permission from the Council. Where extensions do need permission, the Council would wish to ensure that the scale and design of the extension is generally appropriate in relation to the existing dwelling and surrounding area, and that the amenities of neighbours are not adversely affected.

HG10 Within the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, the extension and alteration of existing dwellings will be permitted where the scale, style, design and materials are appropriate and sympathetic in relation to the existing buildings, and there is no significant adverse effect on the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties.

SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

6.46 Within the community there are those people, mainly the elderly and disabled, who are in special need of care and support, and for whom conventional housing may not be suitable. In such cases, specialist accommodation is required, normally in the form of nursing homes providing direct nursing care, residential care homes providing physical and emotional care and support, sheltered housing providing shared accommodation and supervision, and group homes providing shared accommodation for special needs groups such as the disabled or handicapped.

6.47 Whilst the Council recognises the demand that exists for special needs accommodation, it is also concerned about the impact on the character and amenity of an area from the high density nature of such development, the possible concentration of such uses causing an influx of elderly people into the area, and the ability of local health and social services to provide the care needed.

6.48 Whilst the development of special needs accommodation would be appropriate within development boundaries, normal planning criteria would need to be met in accordance with Policy EN27 particularly with regard to protecting character and amenity. The Council's car parking standards provide for the differing requirements of nursing homes,

residential care homes, sheltered housing and other schemes designed for the retired/elderly. In considering proposals for special needs accommodation, the Council will also have regard to the accessibility of the necessary support services such as health care, as well as other community facilities, shops and public transport. The Council will encourage development to conform with the standards for mobility housing contained in Appendix 5.

HG11 Within the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for special needs housing will be permitted when appropriate community facilities are reasonably accessible.

6.49 The development of special needs accommodation is not generally considered to be appropriate in the countryside in view of the significant visual and environmental impact that can result as well as the relative remoteness from the necessary community facilities. However, in line with countryside policies as set out in Chapter 5, the conversion of large residential properties may be appropriate, particularly where a higher level of care is provided as part of the proposal.

HG12 Outside the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, special needs housing will not be allowed unless it involves the extension of existing accommodation in accordance with Policy DC19, or the conversion of a large residential property in accordance with Policy DC20.

Housing for the Disabled

6.50 In line with the Plan's strategy in Chapter 2, the Council recognises the importance of securing an accessible environment in new housing development for both residents and visitors, including wheelchair users and other people with disabilities or special access requirements. Public sector housebuilding in Wealden accounts for a relatively small proportion of total housing development and the scope for making a significant contribution to meeting the housing needs of the disabled is clearly limited. There is, therefore, an important role to be played by the private sector in the provision of such housing, particularly as the Government's 'Care in the Community' initiative encourages more elderly and disabled people to remain in their own homes.

6.51 Within Wealden, some 22% of households have residents with a limiting long-term illness, health problem or handicap which limits their daily activities or the work they can do (1991 Census). It is estimated that there are around 2,300 wheelchair users in the District. Within the public sector housing stock in

Wealden, there are only 45 dwellings that are specifically designed for the disabled.

6.52 It is the Council's intention that as far as is reasonable through the planning system, new housing will contribute to meeting the needs of people with disabilities and enable them to live as independently as possible in the community. If an increasing proportion of the general housing stock is designed to a standard which makes this possible, it will allow people with disabilities more choice of housing and will make it increasingly unnecessary for people to move or restrict their visits to neighbours if they become less mobile, and will reduce public expenditure on costly adaptations when people become disabled. It is widely accepted that there are two levels of provision for disabled people, namely, general mobility housing and wheelchair housing.

General Mobility Housing

6.53 General Mobility Housing is housing that can be visited by, or adapted for use by, people with mobility problems, including those who may use wheelchairs.

6.54 A summary of design standards for mobility housing, as contained in the Sussex Coast and Countryside Access Guide produced by the Access Officers of the Borough and District Councils in East Sussex, is included in Appendix 5. The Council will encourage developers to build new dwellings to these standards, including conversions and alterations wherever practicable

Wheelchair Housing

6.55 Wheelchair Housing is usually provided in a single storey building or at ground floor level. It is designed and built specifically for use by families who may have one or more members who are wheelchair users. All rooms and facilities in the property are accessible to and can be used by those confined to a wheelchair.

6.56 A summary of design standards for Wheelchair Housing, as contained in the Sussex Coast and Countryside Access Guide referred to above, is included in Appendix 5. The Council will encourage the provision of an element of Wheelchair Housing to be built to these standards within large new housing developments. These dwellings should be evenly distributed throughout the development and should cater for a varying number of occupants. Such sites should normally be located close to shops, services and public transport, and be in an area of level ground.

6.57 In the light of these standards developers are encouraged to consider the needs of disabled people and others with special access requirements at an early stage in the design process, and the Council has nominated an Access Officer who acts as a central point of contact for advice and guidance.

Residential Mobile Homes

6.58 Government guidance advises that residential mobile homes may have a part to play in providing low cost accommodation for small households. However, in considering such developments, the Council will have regard to the impact of development on the landscape and character of the area and require normal provision for access and parking, children's play and amenity space, landscape, and all other relevant planning criteria that normally apply to new housing development. Residential mobile homes in the countryside are covered by Policy DC22.

HG13 In considering proposals for residential mobile home sites, the Council will require development to conform with all relevant housing policies in the Plan.

Implementation

6.59 All the policies in the Housing Chapter will be implemented by the Council primarily through its development control function.

Monitoring

6.60 Key areas to be monitored include:-

- (1) housing completions;
- (2) housing land availability;
- (3) incidence of 'unidentified' sites;
- (4) the mix of dwelling types and sizes;
- (5) housing needs;
- (6) affordable housing completions and commitments;
- (7) population levels.