

Appendix 5

Specific Groups



Eastbourne and Wealden Housing Market Assessments

Specific Groups

Working Paper 5

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Eastbourne and Wealden

Specific Groups

A Working Paper

by

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.01 The purpose of this working paper is to examine the housing implications of specific groups within the housing markets of Eastbourne and north Wealden.
- 1.02 Certain groups within the housing market have needs and requirements that may be different to the population as a whole and these might need to be considered in developing housing and planning policies in the future.
- 1.03 Our approach to examining the characteristics of specific groups within the housing market is to consider those groups that have a relatively high incidence within the population as a whole within Eastbourne and Wealden. Our analysis and the recent Housing Need Surveys carried out in Eastbourne and Wealden suggest that these include:
- Older people (both market areas)
 - Disabled people (both market areas)
 - Rural communities (Wealden)
- 1.04 However, this paper also considers other specific groups, although relatively small in the population as a whole, whose needs are worth considering since they are often very different to those in the population as a whole or may have relatively significant implications for the housing market. These include:
- Black and Minority Ethnic people
 - Migrant workers (particularly recent EU migration from the A8 Accession Countries)
 - Students
- 1.05 This working paper identifies the incidence of each group within the population in Eastbourne and Wealden and then considers their particular needs in relation to housing. This analysis will need to be tested and discussed with stakeholders within both areas who may be able to add new insights into the available data.
- 1.06 In Eastbourne and Wealden the needs of specific groups can be broadly divided into two categories:
- Households who require specially adapted/purpose built housing (particularly older people and disabled people and to some extent students and possibly migrant workers)
 - Households who are limited in their ability to access the housing market or require accommodation which is beyond their means (particularly BME households on lower incomes, households in rural communities and migrants workers).
- 1.07 However, the implications for policy are likely to be different for different groups within the housing market and there will also be differences in the extent to which these needs can be addressed.

2 OLDER PEOPLE

- 2.01 Figure 2.1 demonstrates that in 2001, 21% of the population in Wealden were aged 65 years or older, significantly higher than in the South East as a whole (16%) although lower than Eastbourne (25%).
- 2.02 Future demographic change is likely to continue this trend as the population ages in line with nationwide trends. Trend-based forecasts expect the 65 and over age group to increase in number by 43% between 2003-2021 in Wealden and by 33% in Eastbourne. The significance of this is made apparent when total population change across all age groups is considered, which is expected to be a 12% increase in Wealden, and 21% in Eastbourne¹.

Figure 2.1: Residents who are Over Retirement Age (65+)

	Total Population	Retirement Age Population	%
Eastbourne	89,670	21,800	25%
Wealden	140,020	39,800	21%
East Sussex	492,320	121,900	23%
South East	8,000,650	1,509,500	16%

Source: Census 2001

- 2.03 In North and South Wealden, the largest component of population growth over the next 20 years will be in the 75 + age group. There will also be a decline in the proportion of the population aged 45 or younger. Furthermore, as evidenced earlier in this report, household growth will be driven by one person households within Wealden and a significant proportion of the single person households will be elderly.
- 2.04 Working paper 4 suggested that household growth will be driven by one person households within Eastbourne and Wealden. However, a significant proportion of the single person households will be elderly (see working paper 1).

Housing Implications

- 2.05 Although the analysis here has focused on people in the population over the age of 65 it is important to note that there can be no formal definition of when people are deemed old.
- 2.06 In terms of individual circumstances and public policy, significant changes arise when people retire from work, become incapacitated in some way, and linked to this lose the ability to live independently. Entitlement to benefits kicks in at particular ages, but in reality there are different stages of old age. Consider the difference in personal circumstances of those who may be of the same age but:
- remain in good health and have a high level of independence
 - experience acute health problems and whose health may suddenly decline
 - have chronic health problems and poor quality of life

¹ Sub Regional Housing Needs Study, DCA, 2005

- are able to draw on their savings to fund later life
 - are reliant on public funding to support them
- 2.07 What is certain is that the number of older people in Eastbourne and Wealden's population is increasing and that the numbers surviving to old age (75+) is also increasing. Whilst higher numbers of women live to an older age at present, in future cohorts men are likely redress the balance.
- 2.08 Older households have high levels of owner occupation and so there will be increasing numbers of older home owners in the future. Some research suggests that older people tend to own lower value homes (with obvious implications for their choices and their ability to draw on housing assets).²
- 2.09 The overwhelming majority of older households will prefer to remain in their present home but this may, in some cases, be because of the lack of attractive alternatives. Sometimes the only alternatives available to older people are sheltered housing or care homes.³ At present, many do not consider moving home.
- 2.10 Many older people will wish to retain their independence in their existing home by arranging adaptations for example. Some may emigrate, though this is limited at present. Those who do decide to move home tend to do so in earlier old age (e.g. following retirement) or in later old age when they need extra care and independent living is a struggle.
- 2.11 However, whether they move early or late in old age, moving will involve much more than the choice of a house. The issues involved extend beyond physical design and include social relationships, access to shopping and services and awareness of future needs. Some older people may move because their house is in disrepair or is unmanageable.
- 2.12 Moving home is a major 'life' decision, entailing important financial and personal decisions. On the financial side key issues include consideration of whether to use the value in the property to support an existing lifestyle, provide for care costs, or to assist the next generation to study or to enter the housing market. On the personal side, moving home raises issues about proximity to family and friends, formal and informal caring networks etc. Attitudes to these issues are in part culturally determined so people from differing backgrounds may be inclined to place different priorities on different aspects of their decisions.
- 2.13 Most of those in the 45-65 age group are likely to be adequately housed in the immediate term in the sub-region. However, growth in the 75+ age group presents policy challenges. Policy makers will need to consider the housing, health and care needs of elderly people in the round, recognising that the majority of elderly people are owner occupiers. Decision makers need to consider the implications for policy of increasing reliance on equity release to pay for care, planning for efficient delivery of services, and considering the requirements of older people in the design of new neighbourhoods.

² Appleton, N (2002) Planning for the Majority: The Needs and Aspirations of Older People in General Housing *Joseph Rowntree Foundation*

³ *ibid*

- 2.14 These issues are almost certain to grow over time as people live longer and as pension provision becomes less certain. Governments are increasingly likely to look to encourage people to use housing equity to pay for their various needs.
- 2.15 Older households need options within mainstream housing to take account of a variety of ages and circumstances. Those that do move house will do so early or late in old age with implications for the type of dwelling or services they will demand. The design of dwellings and neighbourhoods will be important, particularly with regard to access, mobility, services and activities on offer. Some older households (particularly BME elders) may wish to move closer to or remain near family and so it is important that there is a wide choice of housing available.

3 DISABLED PEOPLE

- 3.01 The numbers of disabled people in Wealden (16,000 people, 19% of the working age population) are relatively high, comparable to the proportions in Eastbourne (21%) and East Sussex (20%) though higher than the South East as a whole (at 16% of the working age population).⁴ However, a significant proportion of people who have a disability remain economically active - 71% in Wealden, compared to 78% of the working age population as a whole.
- 3.02 Disability is also strongly linked to age. Of all households with a disability in Wealden, over 50% are 60 years or older, with 43% 75+ years in Wealden. This has obvious implications for the future housing market, given that these age groups (particularly 75+ in Wealden) are expected to grow at a faster rate than the rest of the population. Although there are currently relatively high economic activity rates amongst the population who are over retirement age in Eastbourne and Wealden compared to the South East as a whole (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Economic Activity Rates in the Population as a Whole

	Eastbourne	Wealden	East Sussex	South East
Economic activity rate - working age (%)	80.7	78.3	79.8	82.3
Economic activity rate - over retirement age (%)	13.5	15.9	14.1	12.5

Source: Annual Population Survey 2005 – Mar 2006

- 3.03 Data available centrally does not illustrate the extent to which disability affects the housing requirements of these people. However, levels of economic activity amongst Wealden's disabled population who are working age would imply that many are able to meet their own housing needs within the open market, if it is assumed that economic activity is a proxy for income. A significant proportion of people who have a disability remain economically active. 68% of working age people in Eastbourne have a disability are economically active and 71% in Wealden. This compares to 80% of the working age population as a whole in Eastbourne that are economically active and 78% in Wealden. However, people who are both DDA and work-limiting disabled have a lower rate of economic activity in Eastbourne than elsewhere.
- 3.04 Furthermore, people with a limiting long term illness in Wealden do not appear to live in dwellings that are different from the population as a whole in terms of tenure. By far the majority of Wealden's residents (89%) who have a limiting long term illness live in homes that are either owner occupied or rented privately. Only 11% of those with a limiting long term illness in Wealden live in the social rented sector. Whilst this is a slightly higher proportion than in the population of all household, this pattern contrasts with England as a whole, where a larger proportion of those with limiting long term illnesses live in the social rented sector (29%).
- 3.05 However, the barriers faced by disabled people and their families when trying to access suitable accommodation in the private market generally fall into the following categories:

⁴ Data from the Annual Population Survey (2006)

- **Market barriers** which relate to shortages of the right type, size and adaptability of houses in the right location. Location is particularly important in relation to access to amenities, care and support networks and employment – including for those who may not require a specially adapted house.⁵
 - **Financial barriers** relate to relatively low income relative to values for suitable properties in a location that provides the essential care, social and economic support.
 - **Practical and attitudinal barriers**, overcoming financial barriers may not be enough to address the needs of disabled people for suitable housing. For example, schemes which offer financial support may also need to offer additional support in delivery.
- 3.06 Those with a disability that limits their day-to-day activities may require adaptations to their current or future property and therefore have specific housing requirements.
- 3.07 The Housing Needs Survey suggests 10% of all homes in Wealden are adapted to meet the need of a disabled person⁶. Given the number of disabled people within the population and the likelihood that this will rise as the population of Wealden ages then a shortfall in suitable accommodation for this group may develop in the future. Additionally, according to the Housing Need Survey, 16% of households in rural areas in Wealden contained a member with a disability or a long-term limiting illness but only a small proportion (8% of these households) confirmed that their property had been adapted to meet the needs of a disabled resident or visitor. Nationally, the majority of disabled people are able to live in their homes without needing adaptations (Survey of English Housing 2004). Within Wealden, the HNS suggested that adaptations required by rural households were generally small scale.
- 3.08 Given the number of disabled people within the population and the likelihood that this will rise as the population of Eastbourne and Wealden ages, this implies that there is a shortfall in suitable accommodation for this group. The Disability Rights Commission has stated that “the crisis we face is not just about affordability. It is, crucially, also about the chronic dearth of housing which is accessible to disabled people and designed to meet and adapt to the needs of the occupants over their lifetime”.

⁵ Scope in ‘Affordability and Supply of Housing’ ODPM 2005-2006

⁶ DCA Housing Needs Survey 2005

4 RURAL COMMUNITIES

- 4.01 Around half of Wealden's population live in rural areas, as defined as settlements with a population of 3,000 people or less according to the 2001 Census. However, living in rural areas alone is not a sign of specific housing needs. Across the south east, the majority of people living in rural areas have chosen to live there because of the perceived quality of life offered. Most are not employed in employment that requires them to live in rural areas, although in Wealden, land based industries such as farming are more significant than in other areas of the South East, employing 3% of the workforce.
- 4.02 In examining the housing needs of rural communities it needs to be borne in mind that the majority of people have chosen to live in rural areas - it does not necessarily imply that public services (and resources) should follow. However, the proportion of people who do need to live in rural areas because of their work for example may require specific assistance in relation to housing. Others may have a strong local connection (eg family) which often gives rise to demands for assistance in the housing market so that they can continue to live locally.
- 4.03 Rural areas within Wealden display the following housing market characteristics:
- **Higher property prices than comparable urban areas.** Working Paper 3 illustrates the variation in house prices across Eastbourne and Wealden and clearly shows that the rural hinterlands around settlements in north Wealden have the highest average house prices. This gives rise to low levels of affordability for newly forming households. However, higher incomes within Wealden (even at the lower quartile level) appears to imply that north Wealden is relatively more affordable than Eastbourne (due to lower incomes in Eastbourne). It is likely however, that those on the lowest incomes in rural areas of north Wealden are forced to move elsewhere if they want to buy a house.
 - The Wealden Housing Need Survey showed that those seeking alternative accommodation were generally looking within the same parish or neighbouring parish. Those requiring homes were mostly between the ages of 20-29 years looking to move as a result of forming a new relationship or as a result of their current accommodation being too small. However, the mean annual gross income of those households was around £22,300, yet the average property price in Wealden was around £266,000 giving an affordability ratio of almost 12 – clearly beyond the means of those households. A similar problem arises for households requiring larger properties but unable to afford to trade up locally.
 - Furthermore, 14% of those surveyed suggested that a member of their family had moved away from the parish in the last five years because they could not afford a home locally. This is a pattern that is evident in rural areas across the South East.
 - **Properties generally larger than in comparable urban areas.** Rural properties tend to be larger than those found within urban areas. This is evidenced in Working Paper 4 which demonstrates that the stock in north Wealden has a high proportion of detached houses (accounting for over half of all of the housing stock), many with 4 or more bedrooms. This is reinforced by the Housing Needs Surveys which suggested that 72% of properties in rural areas of Wealden had two bedrooms or more.
 - **High levels of owner occupation and limited social rented stock.** The 2004 Wealden Housing Needs Survey found owner occupation within rural areas in

Wealden to be high – at 88% followed by private renting (4.6%) and social renting (4.7%) and limited shared ownership (0.4%). This is confirmed by analysis in Working Paper 3 which provides evidence on the stock of social rented accommodation within Wealden and shows that a significant proportion of the stock in rural areas has been lost through Right to Buy over recent years.

- **Increasing numbers of ‘second homes’.** Whilst the levels of second home ownership in Eastbourne and Wealden are relatively low (around 1% of all dwellings) this is an increasing trend, evident particularly in coastal and rural areas. At present, second homes in Eastbourne account for a slightly greater proportion of all dwellings than in Wealden (though more significant in both authority areas than in South East as a whole).

Figure 4.1: Number and Proportion of Second Homes

	Eastbourne	Wealden	East Sussex	South East
Number of Holiday/ Second Homes	594	596	2,910	22,730
% of Holiday/ Second Homes as proportion of all Dwellings	1.4%	1.0%	1.3%	0.7%

Census 2001

- 4.04 Additionally, 16% of households in rural areas in Wealden contained a member with a disability or a long-term limiting illness but only a small proportion (8% of these households) confirmed that their property had been adapted to meet the needs of a disabled resident or visitor. Nationally, the majority of disabled people are able to live in their homes without needing adaptations (Survey of English Housing 2004). However, the Survey suggested that within Wealden, adaptations required by rural households were generally small scale such as handrails and bathroom adaptations.

5 OTHER GROUPS

5.01 There are a number of other specific groups that merit attention in this working paper though do not display a high incidence in the population. These include, Black and Minority Ethnic households, migrant workers and students. It is important to consider their needs given that they may be different to those in the population as a whole. Furthermore, whilst small in overall number, migrant workers and students may have a significant impact upon the housing market given their tendency to occupy particular types of accommodation.

Black and Minority Ethnic Households

5.02 Figure 5.1 demonstrates the relatively limited Black and Minority Ethnic population in both Eastbourne and Wealden compared with the South East as a whole. In Eastbourne there is a high proportion of White British households making up 93%, whilst in Wealden this figure is higher at 95%; compared with 91% in the South East.

Figure 5.1: BME Households, Eastbourne and Wealden

	Eastbourne	South Wealden	North Wealden	East Sussex	South-East
Proportion of BME households (%)	7%	4%	5%	5%	8%
% Non-white	3%	1%	1%	2%	4%

Source: Census data 2001

5.03 The data also indicates that a large proportion of BME households in Eastbourne in 2001 were of Eastern European origin - these accounted for 30% of BME households in Eastbourne and 21% in Wealden. Whilst comprehensive data is not available on what has happened since 2001, this would suggest that Eastbourne in particular might have attracted a significant proportion of new migration from the EU Accession Countries, since there was already an existing East European population in the area.

Figure 5.2 BME Households by Tenure

	Eastbourne	South Wealden	North Wealden	East Sussex	South East
Owner Occupied	67%	79%	82%	77%	75%
Social Rented	13%	14%	6%	9%	9%
Private Rented	20%	7%	11%	15%	16%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Census 2001

5.04 Owner occupation is the dominant tenure amongst BME households (in line with the population as a whole). However, a relatively higher proportion of BME households, nationally, are social or private rented sector tenants. There are particularly high levels of private renting amongst BME households within Eastbourne compared to the South East as a whole.

- 5.05 The Housing Needs Survey in Eastbourne and Wealden suggested that between 13% and 24% of BME households had a member with a disability and that generally there was a higher incidence of mental health problems, learning difficulties and limiting long term illness than in the whole population. The 2001 Census also confirms that of all the BME households 15% in Eastbourne and 11% in Wealden contained a member with a disability, compared with 11% in the South East.
- 5.06 National research demonstrates that a relatively high proportion of BME households live in over crowded conditions compared to the population as a whole, despite owner occupation rates being relatively high amongst some groups within these communities (particularly Indian and Pakistani households).⁷ However, BME households are more likely to be on low incomes than other households and a disproportionate number live in overcrowded or poor housing conditions.⁸

Migrant Workers

- 5.07 Since 2001 and the enlargement of the European Union there has been a large increase in the levels of immigration from Eastern Europe (although there is limited data available on the true scale of this). Since the expansion of the European Union in 2004 the number of EU citizens migrating to the UK has increased five-fold. In 2003 the inflow of EU citizens was around 14,000. In 2004 this rose to around 74,000 – 80% of this increase is attributed to migrants from the 10 accession states.^{9 10}
- 5.08 The latest Government figures state that around 447,000 migrants from these states registered for work in the UK between May 2004 and the end of June 2006, of which 265,000 were Polish migrants¹¹. A recent survey by the Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism indicated that these figures may understate the true level of migration.¹²
- 5.09 There is limited information available on the number of recent EU migrants that have come to Eastbourne and Wealden. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these households are not yet seeking assistance through housing advice officers which might suggest that their numbers are low, or that they have been accommodated within the open market.
- 5.10 This development raises questions about the impact these migrants will have on the housing markets of Eastbourne and Wealden. The majority occupy dwellings in the private rented sector – with anecdotal evidence suggesting that they share dwellings intensively. This is likely to place additional demand on low cost private rented dwellings within Eastbourne in particular. There are already relatively high levels of private renting amongst the BME population within Eastbourne.
- 5.11 Over time, this trend may have implications beyond the private rented sector. Whilst some migrants will stay in the UK for a limited period of time they are likely to be replaced by others – either from Poland or the other recent EU accession states or by migrant workers

⁷ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2002) Ethnic Diversity, neighbourhoods and housing

⁸ ODPM (2003) Housing Research Summary – Housing and Black and Minority Ethnic Communities: Review of the Evidence Base

⁹ ONS 2004

¹⁰ The 2004 accession states were Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

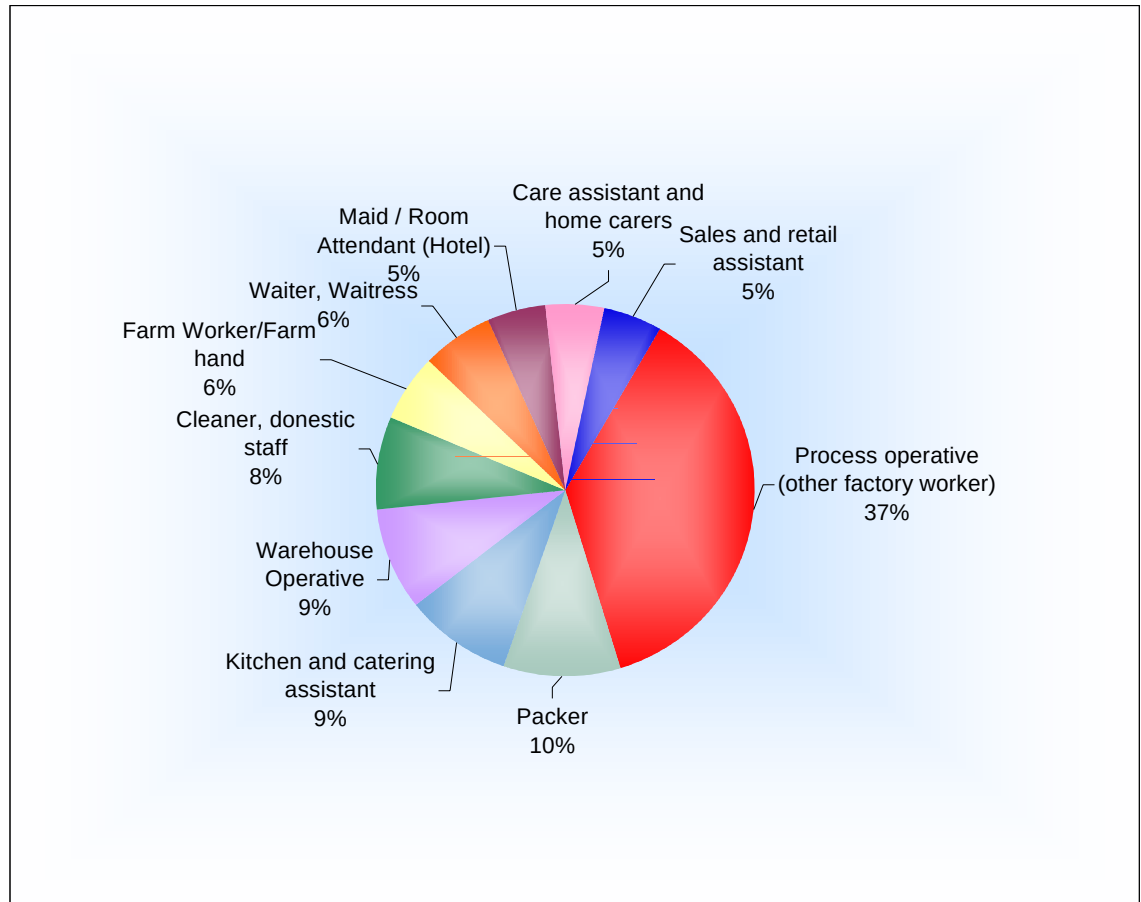
¹¹ Home Office (2006) Accession Monitoring Report – Note that this records the **cumulative** number of people who have register to work. It does not represent net migration.

¹² The survey of 500 Poles in the UK found that 64% had signed the workers register

from Bulgaria and Romania – due to join the EU in 2007. However, the recent survey of 500 Poles (discussed above) revealed that a proportion (around 15%) intended to stay in the UK permanently. Whilst the official data suggests that most migrants to the UK are young (within the 15-44 age groups), those that decide to remain may eventually bring their families over or start families of their own. When asked how long migrants intended to stay in the UK 41 % answered ‘do not know’ and 45 % answered ‘less than three months’. The short term and unstable nature of their residence in a given area means that they often do not qualify for welfare assistance and they become ‘hidden’ in the labour market.

- 5.12 Migration into Eastbourne and Wealden is an important component of housing demand. Overseas migration is not a new phenomenon, it has always been a component of population and household growth. Around 600 international migrants entered Eastbourne in the year 2000-01 and almost 800 entered Wealden. In both authority areas this represented 5-6% of in-migrants. As is the case in the majority of areas in the UK, comprehensive information about both the scale of migration to Eastbourne and Wealden from the new EU states is limited.
- 5.13 It is possible to make some assumptions about the extent to which the recent wave of EU migration has impacted upon Eastbourne and Wealden by considering the characteristics of the existing population and the type of jobs available within the area.
- 5.14 Census data shows that a large component of the BME population in Eastbourne and Wealden comprised people of Eastern European origin in 2001. Although relatively small, the presence of an existing community of Eastern Europeans is likely to have facilitated movement to the area by new migrants from the new European Accession Countries (A8).
- 5.15 Figure 5.3 also illustrates the top 10 occupations nationally for migrants from these Accession Countries. A relatively large proportion of these migrants work within the hotel, catering and hospitality sectors as waiting staff, cleaners, kitchen and catering assistants.

Figure 5.3: Occupations in Which Registered Workers are Employed



Source: Accession Monitoring Report, May 2004 – March 2006

- 5.16 Eastbourne and Wealden has a relatively large number of jobs in the hospitality, catering, agricultural and retail industries which suggests that migrant workers would be attracted to the area to serve the gaps in the local labour market (see Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4: Types of Industries Within Eastbourne and Wealden

	Eastbourne	Wealden	East Sussex	South East
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry	1%	3%	2%	1%
Fishing	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mining & Quarrying	0%	0%	0%	0%
Manufacture	9%	11%	11%	12%
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	0%	1%	1%	1%
Construction	8%	9%	8%	7%
Wholesale and Retail trade, Repair of Motor Vehicle	20%	17%	17%	16%
Hotels and Restaurants	7%	4%	5%	4%
Transport, Storage and Communication	6%	6%	6%	8%
Financial Intermediation	3%	6%	5%	5%
Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	11%	13%	12%	16%
Public Administration & Defence, Social Security	5%	4%	5%	6%
Education	8%	8%	8%	8%
Health and Social Work	16%	13%	14%	10%
Other	6%	6%	6%	5%

Source: Annual Business Inquiry (2006)

- 5.17 Of those migrants who registered with the Government (which will understate the level of true migration), 97 % were working full time and 78 % earned between £4.50 and £5.99 per hour. Given that the majority of these migrants will be earning the minimum wage this has obvious implications for the type of housing that they are able to access.
- 5.18 Most EU migrants are initially ineligible for help under homelessness legislation and for allocation of local authority housing, at least until they have been working in the UK for some period of time¹³. The majority therefore occupy dwellings in the private rented sector – with anecdotal evidence suggesting that they share dwellings intensively with many in pre-arranged tied accommodation. This is likely to place additional demand on low cost private rented dwellings within Eastbourne in particular but also means that these migrants are more susceptible to overcrowding and to living in properties in poor condition.

Students

- 5.19 Student numbers in the UK have increased by 19% in the last five years and are forecast to increase by three percent per annum up to 2010. Non-EU Student numbers have increased by 78%. There is likely to be some implication for Eastbourne since the University of Brighton has a number of teaching facilities and one Hall of Residence within the town.
- 5.20 Around 400 students at the University live in University owned accommodation within Eastbourne. A further 2,000 students live in private rented accommodation within the

¹³ A8 migrants are eligible under the selection scheme and homelessness legislation. If they remain both registered and in work for 12 months continuously with the same employer, the law will treat them on a par with other EU nationals. However, an A8 National who is working but fails to register with the Home Office will be ineligible for housing assistance.

town. The population of students living in Eastbourne and Wealden is not large in comparison to other areas of the UK but their impact has the potential to be significant due to the specialised nature of their housing requirements.

- 5.21 There is likely to be an increased demand for student accommodation in the future if the University expands, particularly if any expansion occurs without corresponding growth in University owned accommodation.
- 5.22 Demand for Higher Education rose at 3.2% per annum until January 2006 where demand was 3.4 % lower than in the previous year. Part of this fall is attributed to fee effects. How actual student numbers will be affected in the longer term is yet to be seen.
- 5.23 However, approximately 90% of universities in England have opted to charge the full £3,000 top-up fee which is likely to affect forecast growth in student numbers. Whether or not price competition will occur between universities is still to be determined. Furthermore, transitional, e Learning and flexible study have emerged as possible delivery methods, which may change the landscape of international demand in the future. These methods may require no permanent student accommodation in the UK.
- 5.24 There may be a number of implications for housing within Eastbourne if student numbers grow (or fall) and these are likely to be similar to the impacts associated with increased numbers of migrant workers.
- 5.25 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are home to one million students nationwide. The April 2006 HMO Licensing will affect approximately 20% of HMOs and has the potential to reduce the supply of this type of accommodation as well as improve the quality of a proportion of it. Evidence from Scotland suggests, that as a result of licensing there, that some poor stock has been removed and that as a result, supply is failing to meet demand.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- 5.26 In Eastbourne and Wealden the needs of specific groups can be broadly divided into two categories:
- Households who require specially adapted/purpose built housing (particularly older people and disabled people and to some extent students and possibly migrant workers)
 - Households who are limited in their ability to access the housing market or require accommodation which is beyond their means (particularly BME households on lower incomes, households in rural communities and migrants workers).
- 5.27 The implications for policy are likely to be different for different groups within the housing market. There will also be differences in the extent to which these needs can be addressed.
- 5.28 The population in Eastbourne and Wealden is ageing and the growth in households in the future is expected to be driven to some extent by the ageing population. This issue is common to both authorities and would merit further investigation by the authorities, perhaps working jointly, in order to investigate different types of provision (market and affordable) that will be attractive to older households in the future. Older households need options within mainstream housing to take account of a variety of ages and circumstances. Those that do move house will do so early or late in old age with implications for the type of dwelling or services they will demand. The design of dwellings and neighbourhoods will be important, particularly with regard to access, mobility, services and activities on

offer. Some older households may wish to move closer to or remain near family and so it is important that there is a wide choice of housing available.

- 5.29 The overall number of students and migrant workers within the population in Eastbourne and Wealden is limited at present. However, there is potential for both groups to grow and, assuming that they are accommodated in the private rented sector this would have implications for this tenure. Rapid growth in the numbers of households in these groups could push up demand for cheaper private rented accommodation and could also reduce the available supply of this accommodation for other vulnerable households, including households on housing benefit occupying the private rented sector.
- 5.30 In other areas across the County, students and migrant workers have been accommodated in Houses in Multiple Occupation and there is evidence of migrant workers in particular sharing intensively. Local authorities now have the power to license HMOs and to ensure that these houses meet health and safety standards – to ensure that vulnerable households are protected. DTZ recommend that the authorities, Eastbourne in particular, monitor this situation by talking to key stakeholders such as the University of Brighton, in relation to student numbers and local employment agencies and landlords, in relation to the population of migrant workers and the extent to which their housing requirements are being adequately met. DTZ is aware of a number of initiatives in other authority areas (eg North Devon) to improve the quality of HMOs through a combination of grants, working with landlords, and through licensing and enforcement activities.
- 5.31 In general, other specific groups (including BMEs and households in rural areas) within the housing market face difficulties in accessing housing because of affordability rather than because of their requirement for specific types of accommodation.
- 5.32 Significant development is planned within Wealden over the next 20 years and so there is scope for the authority to address some of the needs of households who need to live within rural areas but cannot afford market housing. The evidence presented in Working Paper 1 demonstrates that there are a series of localised housing markets within north Wealden, associated with the main towns. North Wealden is not a particularly integrated housing market itself. This points to the need for distribution of the authority's housing allocation across the District – since housing provided in Crowborough, for example, is unlikely to meet the demands and needs of households in Forest Row.
- 5.33 Given the variation in house prices there is likely to be scope to secure enhanced provision of affordable housing through new development in the rural areas. It would make sense therefore to consider how far affordable housing can be maximised, within the constraints of site specific viability, and whilst ensuring that development still comes forward. Within this, there is a need to consider affordable housing thresholds. Wealden's current policy is to secure around 30% affordable housing (25% social rent and 5% intermediate) on sites of 10 homes or more in the main towns and on sites of 5 homes or more in the surrounding rural areas.
- 5.34 The majority of sites coming forward for development in north Wealden could be small sites so consideration also needs to be given to reducing the threshold for application of affordable housing policies. These policies should be considered in relation to viability issues. There are a number of options which the authorities could pursue as a means of reducing thresholds, if this is deemed appropriate.

- One option would be to seek commuted sums from small schemes. In some cases it may be preferable for local authorities to receive a commuted sum in lieu of onsite provision of affordable housing; and to use this to buy an existing dwelling – perhaps one formerly sold under the Right to Buy. This may be more cost effective than provision of a new affordable housing unit.
 - An alternative option would be to introduce a sliding scale of affordable housing requirements for smaller sites, seeking smaller contributions or levels of affordable housing from smaller sites and progressively more on larger sites. However, experience in rural authorities elsewhere suggests that sometimes small rural sites can support higher affordable housing obligations than at first thought – largely because there may be fewer additional demands for contributions towards access or strategic infrastructure. Conversely, larger sites may be required to contribute to strategic infrastructure, impacting on their ability to support affordable housing.
 - Existing powers to foster new development on exception sites remain unaltered and should also be reflected in policy.
- 5.35 DTZ recommend that Wealden District Council examine the pattern of sites that come forward for development in the rural areas and consider adopting policies that can be applied in order to secure affordable housing depending on the characteristics of the site and development opportunity. The principle should be to secure affordable housing or affordable housing contributions from all developments of housing in rural areas - though the amount sought and whether it is provided on site or as a commuted sum should depend on site specific and viability considerations.
- 5.36 In terms of the *type* of affordable housing to be provided in the towns and the rural areas in north Wealden a number of points are worth considering:
- The majority of homes in villages are owner occupied since the social housing stock has been eroded by the Right to Buy. In view of this DTZ see no major issues in seeking to ensure that all of the affordable housing in rural areas is provided as social rented housing. The level of housing need within the District would justify this.
 - However funding presents a considerable constraint on the development of social rented housing. In view of this it will be sensible to plan for a proportion of intermediate housing in rural housing. Wealden currently seek 5% intermediate housing, in addition to 25% social rented. Although we have not reviewed the economics of development in the authority, we would expect that higher house prices and land values in the rural areas would support a higher proportion of affordable housing – either social rented or intermediate.
 - The high costs of entering the owner occupied sector in parts of rural Wealden means that there may be more of a market for intermediate housing than in neighbouring Eastbourne. However, checks would need to be made that it is affordable to those with local connections.
 - DTZ recommend that Wealden carry out local assessment of needs (preferably through analysis of households in priority on their housing register) to inform type, and size of affordable housing requirements when particular opportunities arise for development in rural areas.