



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Priority

Our priority is to increase the supply of housing that local people can afford to buy or rent.

Concerns

- Inadequate supply of smaller properties.
- Property prices have increased faster than local earnings.
- Many people on lower incomes cannot afford to buy their own property.
- Private sector rented accommodation is expensive and reducing.
- There are 1,600 people on the Council's Housing Waiting List.
- The Council's Homeless Reception Centres are generally full and the length of stay in that accommodation has increased.

What is being done

- Planning requirement for all developments of at least 15 dwellings to include between 20% and 30% for rent or shared ownership.
- Providing opportunities for housing for local people on "exception sites" on the edge of villages.
- Identification of any small plots of Council land that can be developed.
- Financial support to Housing



New housing at Edwardstone

- Associations to provide new housing for rent.
- Partnership with 15 Housing Associations to build social housing in the district. Over 1,000 Housing

Association homes have been built in the last 10 years.

- Grant assistance to landlords to provide suitable accommodation.
- Management and improvement of the Council's 3,700 homes for rent.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE Coming Year

- From 1 April 2004 reduce Council Tax discount on second homes from 50% to 10%, and remove 50% discount on long-term empty homes to encourage greater availability of property.
- Complete review of ownership of Council's housing stock.
- New Housing Needs Survey.

Over the following 3 years

- Adoption of Local Plan, which aims to ensure:
 - All developments of at least 15 dwellings include between 20% and 35% for rent or shared ownership.
 - 1 in 3 houses on sites for 3 or more houses to meet local needs.
 - 20% of housing on new developments to be 1 or 2 bed properties.

Within the 10 year period

- Work with Parish and Town Councils, Housing Associations and others to identify and meet the need for affordable housing.
- Make Council land available to Housing Associations at discounts of up to 100%.
- 700 new homes to be built by Housing Associations across the district over the next 5 years. This will increase the stock of social housing by 14%. Ongoing programme thereafter.
- Provide incentives to Council tenants where properties are under-occupied to transfer to smaller properties.