

Affordable Housing Update 2020-21

Background

In 2016 the government made £4.7bn of capital grant available to deliver housing starts on site for at least:

- 135,000 homes for Help to Buy: Shared Ownership.
- 10,000 homes for Rent to Buy: and
- 8,000 homes for supported and older people's rental accommodation.

Capital funding for new affordable homes in the West Suffolk region is allocated by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) through the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016 to 2021 (SOAHP 2016 to 2021).

West Suffolk Housing Completions

The total number of new homes building completions for 2020/2021 in West Suffolk is net 831. There are an additional 9 homes to add to this number where there has been either a change of use or conversion bringing the overall gross total number of homes to 840.

West Suffolk Affordable Housing Figures

The delivery of affordable homes has been a challenge over the past year but partnership working with registered providers has supported a total of 297 affordable homes to be completed in West Suffolk. This is approximately 35% affordable housing achieved against the guidelines of 30% affordable completions on new developments. In identifying an overall 30% target being achieved Marham Park secured 37% rather than 30%. WS also had many off the shelf units which were market switched to shared ownership brought forward in Red Lodge by Flagship during the year. This number is based on registered providers advising West Suffolk that the homes have been completed and they have been advertised for let. Delivery has been met by Clarion, Flagship, Havebury, Heylo, Legal & General, Orbit, and Sage.

Since 2017 a total of 1,067 affordable homes have been delivered in West Suffolk.

	West Suffolk
2017/18	Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury 236
2018/19	Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury 207
2019/20	West Suffolk 327
2020/21	West Suffolk 297

Locations of Delivery

The areas that the delivery of 297 affordable homes over the past year has been distributed across West Suffolk in Bury St Edmunds 73 homes, Haverhill 103 homes, Newmarket 3 homes, Beck Row 34 homes, and Red Lodge 84 homes.

Tenure Split

Affordable housing is split into social rent/affordable rent and shared ownership. The delivery of the 297 affordable homes over the past year was secured as 53 new social rent, 149 affordable rent and 95 shared ownership.

Affordable Housing 2021 Onwards

The new Affordable Homes Programme from April 2021 has a target to deliver at least 10% of the homes in rural locations. The new Affordable Homes Fund will provide some of the tools for achieving this in rural areas – with a 10% target set for affordable rural housing delivery, equating to around 13,000 homes over the next five years.

West Suffolk Council are working with Community Action Suffolk and Eastern Community Homes to establish the needs of communities and to work in partnership to enable opportunities for rural housing of all tenures. Low levels of rural affordable housing impact on the viability of schools, shops, and pubs. A lack of affordable housing can result in small villages lacking diversity, insufficient economic activity, isolation, and loneliness can increase to make the settlement sustainable.

Affordable Housing Update

Under present rules, West Suffolk can require developers to include 30% of affordable housing on new developments if they are 11 homes or more. All new developments that are 10 homes or less are considered officially to be 'small sites' and exempt from making any contribution to social or affordable homes.

The government had recently proposed to raise the threshold for a 'small site' from 10 homes to 40 or 50 homes. This would have prevented West Suffolk from using planning policy to require a percentage of homes to be affordable or social housing on developments that were 50 homes or smaller. This would have had a dramatic reduction on the number of affordable homes developed in West Suffolk. The government have recently reviewed this option and will no longer be making any changes to the original quotas.

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