

Appendix B - A transcript of Michael Veryard and Tony Peak's presentation on Housing in South Bucks and Chiltern

Housing in South Bucks and Chiltern

This presentation will cover:

- Housing need (Bucks Home Choice and Homelessness)
- Buying and renting
- Planning and Affordable Housing
- What the Councils are doing
- Key issues for the future

Demand for Housing via Bucks Home Choice (June 2013)

Bucks Home Choice is the system used by Chiltern and South Bucks to allocate housing. There is currently high demand for one bedroom properties in both Chiltern and South Bucks. There is less of a demand for two or three bedroom properties.

Supply of Affordable Housing via Bucks Home Choice 2012- 2013

The supply of affordable housing within Chiltern and South Bucks is a lot lower than the demand for affordable housing. It is extremely difficult to accommodate families who need a three or more bedroom property.

Bandings Housed 2012-2013 in South Bucks

The Bucks Home Choice is a static waiting list if not people are dropping down the list as people classed as a higher priority are entering the list above them.

- Of 40 properties two bedroom properties, 10 were released by households overcrowded moving to larger accommodation using the Local Lettings Policy.
- Of 15 three bedroom properties, 10 were let to transfers from two bedroom property which released properties for other applicants

Bandings Housed 2012-2013 in Chiltern

The Bucks Home Choice system categorises all applicants by bands. Those in band D are most in need of accommodation due to factors such as overcrowding. Chiltern have worked hard for family size units to be allocated to those in lower bands. Someone who is 50th on the housing list could take three to four years to be allocated social housing – provided new applicants do not join the list with a higher priority.

Homelessness a Statutory Duty 2012- 2013 (Accepted Cases)

Chiltern and South Bucks recorded a total of 170 cases where homelessness was prevented.

Purchasing a Property

- Current average asking prices in HP9 (Beaconsfield Area)
- 1 bedroom house £150,000, 2 bedroom house £450,000, 3 bedroom house £550,000
- Buying a property in Chiltern or South Bucks would be extremely hard as it is a very expensive area to live in.

Obtaining a Mortgage

- Need a good/perfect Credit Rating
- Any debts including Student Loans considered
- Credit Cards considered
- History of saving
- Deposit required at least 10%
- Rate may be high for FTB
- Job security
- Age taken into consideration

Mortgage Potential

- A modest property value of £250,000 would require a deposit of at least £25,000
- An income of £35,000 would support a maximum mortgage of £140,000
- This would leave a shortfall of £85,000

Private Renting

- The costs of average private rent in HP9 (Beaconsfield area) is a lot higher than the local housing allowance (maximum housing benefits) available to people.

We have established it's difficult to get a social house, buy or private rent a house but the Council have been working to tackle these barriers.

Empty Homes and the Private Sector

- Both South Bucks and Chiltern are working to reduce the number of empty homes in the private sector.
- Rent Deposit Scheme which helps households who do not have the deposit to obtain a tenancy in the private sector.
- New Homes Bonus is paid to local authorities including an increased element for new affordable homes and an element for bringing empty homes back into use.
- Housing Standards work is undertaken to ensure private sector rented property is at an acceptable and safe standard.

Home Improvements 2012 - 2013

- South Bucks funded 63 Disabled Facility Grants at a cost of £395,000 for improvements including ramps, wet rooms, stair lifts etc.

- Chiltern funded 80 Disabled Facility Grants at a cost of £507,000 for similar improvements.

Planning helping to deliver Affordable Housing on site

- In South Bucks new developments are expected to deliver 40% affordable units of which 2/3 should be rented and 1/3 intermediate or shared ownership. Subject to viability.
- In Chiltern new developments of five or more dwellings (net) are expected to deliver up to 40% affordable units of which 2/3rds should be rented and 1/3rd intermediate or shared ownership (subject to viability). Developments of less than five dwellings (net) are expected to make a financial contribution to deliver affordable housing elsewhere.

Planning helping to deliver Affordable Housing off site

- In both South Bucks and Chiltern the planning process may consider accepting a financial contribution in lieu of on-site units (depending on site viability etc.). This is generally known as a Commuted Sum.
- The contribution has been used to provide affordable housing in the following ways:-

How Commuted Sums are used

- Help Registered Providers purchase properties (typically previously owned sold via Right to Buy).
- Help fund an Equity Loan Scheme
- Help fund a Cash Incentive scheme which helps existing tenants purchase a property which releases their current property
- Help tenants under occupying family sized homes move to smaller accommodation and release their current home
- Helped Registered Providers change tenure on new sites to provide a greater proportion of rented accommodation

Summary – What are we doing?

- Making the best use of existing housing across all tenures
- (e.g. Bucks Home Choice, transfers, mutual exchanges, grants, incentives to move, Your-Choice equity loan scheme, grants, private renting, empty homes etc.)
- Getting as much additional affordable housing as possible via the Planning process
- (Provision on site and financial contributions to provide housing off-site)
- Focusing on homelessness prevention whenever possible

Future Issues

- Welfare Reform – More to come (including Universal Credit)

- Registered Providers – Government funding and Affordable Rents – Is gap narrowing between the Social and Private Rented sectors?
- Bucks Home Choice – Policy review (more focus on local connection and housing needs)
- CDC and SBDC – Outcome of Shared Service Review