



Rural Area Working Party 14 March 2012

Rural Profiling Project

1. Background

- 1.1 The Rural Area Working Party in April 2010 considered a report on the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas and made a recommendation to Cabinet to consider whether there are means within available resources towards adopting a more systematic approach to providing rural housing needs surveys on a three yearly cycle as part of the budget and service planning process for 2011/2012.
- 1.2 Cabinet subsequently approved the sum of £10,000 annually for housing needs survey work.
- 1.3 Since April 2010, the 'landscape' for delivering affordable housing has changed significantly. Whilst it remains desirable for all parishes to have up to date housing needs surveys, to enable more affordable housing to be developed in the rural areas, there are three major factors that have impacted on the scope of the work and how we progress this work.
 - (a) The Localism Act provides for greater flexibilities locally so that Councils can adapt and meet local needs, and the housing reforms give Registered Providers greater discretion over how they manage their housing in the best interests of their local community. The Localism Act reforms mean more decisions about housing are taken locally.
 - (b) Following the Comprehensive Spending Review the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) implemented changes to the way new affordable housing would be funded. These changes and the wider housing reforms which form part of the Localism Act have been covered separately in Report C286 reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2012. Crucially the HCA has changed the way funds for new schemes are bid for. Registered Providers were required to set out their proposals for a four year programme of new homes they could build identifying the number of homes they were able to complete by March 2015. Previously Registered Providers were able to bid for funds **as schemes progressed** at the appropriate time. As a consequence of this change there is very limited scope to add new schemes to the current agreed four year programme. Hence if further surveys were carried out and housing need identified there would be very limited opportunity to meet that need until after March 2015 at the earliest.

(c) Suffolk County Council have begun to introduce 'Flexicare', a policy aimed at keeping people independent and living in their own home for as long as possible. The County Council through working with its partners in Districts and Boroughs, housing, the NHS, independent sector providers, Registered Providers and people who use services and their families, will continue to develop new and innovative housing solutions and community services to meet older people's changing needs and expectations. Flexicare presents opportunities to revisit needs and aspirations in rural areas to inform the type of housing and other services we develop in the future.

1.4 These factors have from a housing perspective facilitated greater emphasis on making the best use of existing homes and how we meet housing aspirations of older people in our rural communities.

2. Housing Needs Surveys

2.1 Local Housing Needs Surveys which have been carried out by Suffolk Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) provide detail about people's housing needs and provide evidence to support the development of new affordable homes primarily on exception sites.

2.2 These surveys focus on the need for affordable housing but do not provide full information relating to housing aspirations for older people across all tenures, nor do they look at the profile of existing homes and the fit with current housing need. The current format of the surveys, often, for example, identify the need for family houses but would not take into account the impact of the changing housing needs of older people who may need to move into more suitable accommodation and if that need was addressed, would provide additional family homes in the village. This is a complex matter and not just a case of building smaller homes for older people, for example we need to understand their aspirations and what would encourage them to move from their current home.

2.3 In the longer term expanding the housing needs surveys to take a broader view would inform decisions regarding future development helping to meet housing aspirations. It will also ensure any investment in new homes is appropriate and targeted

2.4 In light of the factors identified in section 1 it is important to now review how we carry out local housing needs surveys and how we can ensure that they provide the broader information regarding the profile of the village, to help shape future housing supply and ensure appropriate support services are developed too.

3. Rural Profiling Project

3.1 It is therefore proposed that we carry out a pilot project to develop a different approach to local housing needs surveys which is built around understanding the **profile** of the village including housing need, and how we can ensure future housing developments are shaped to address those needs.

3.2 A draft project brief is attached as Appendix A and this sets out in detail the scope for the pilot including the background information, methodology, outcomes and timetable.

4. Recommendation

Officers recommend that the Working Party **RECOMMENDS** to Cabinet that it approves the draft project brief and gives agreement for a pilot scheme to be implemented which will be funded from the £10,000 agreed for carrying out housing needs survey work.

Rural Profiling Project Draft Project Brief

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to consider the need to undertake a broader profiling of rural areas to;

- support market development and strategic commissioning that meets the accommodation and support/care needs and aspirations of older people in rural areas within the borough.
- facilitate local neighbourhood planning and identifying capital investment opportunities within a context of reduced funding
- improve our understanding of local communities to enable them to achieve agreed outcomes which benefit the community as a whole.

2. Context

2.1 Profile of St Eds

The Borough has two main towns, Bury St Edmunds in the centre and Haverhill to the south. Its forty four¹ villages plus small settlements ensure the predominantly rural character is retained.

The rural population of St Edmundsbury is 41.5 percent (Circa 50,000). This compares with nationally 20 percent of the population live in rural areas.

2.2 Challenges

St Edmundsbury Core Strategy identifies a number of key challenges for the borough including its predominantly rural character and ageing population which are summarised as:

Rural areas with low provision of services, affordable housing, few local employment opportunities and poor public transport

14 of the wards in the borough rank in the worst 10% nationally in terms of access to housing and services. New housing will need to be directed to appropriate and sustainable rural settlements to bring with it new services, employment and infrastructure to improve quality of life, safeguard existing services and increase the sustainability of rural settlements.

To support the delivery of affordable housing, the Council has reviewed its

¹ In the Core Strategy CS4 identifies 5 villages as key service centres, 13 as local service centres, 26 infill villages, with other smaller settlements being classified as countryside.

Affordable Housing Policy and undertaken an Economic Viability Assessment. The aim of this is to maximise affordable housing delivery in locations of need.

An ageing population

Population projections suggest that by 2031 over a quarter of St Edmundsbury residents will be aged 65 or over. This presents challenges in the provision of and access to appropriate housing and local services

2.3 National Policy

Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England sets out 'A New Deal for Older Peoples Housing' the key points of which are:

- prioritising of protection of vulnerable people with a less than 1% reduction of funding to Supporting People nationally
- commitment to ensuring that housing and planning policies reflect older people's circumstances and lifestyles and the promise (Chapter 6 paragraph 34) to facilitate guidance for the delivery of high quality housing for older people
- acknowledgement of the importance of good housing (and how it can reduce NHS and Social Care costs) for older people The Housing Strategy refers to how older people moving to a "smaller, more accessible and manageable home can free up much-needed local family housing"

3. Need

3.1 Current Age Profile of the Borough

The current age profile of the borough is similar to the county profile

	Population by broad age bands (2009)				
	0 -15	16-29	30 - 44	45 -59	60+
St Edmundsbury	19,324 (19%)	15,634 (15%)	21,357 (21%)	23,772 (23%)	23,381 (23%)
Suffolk County	129,961 (18%)	111,197 (16%)	135,497 (19%)	165,799 (23%)	164,826 (23%)

Source Suffolk Observatory

Although compared to the national profile, has a higher than average number of 65+ residents and a lower than average number of under 16 residents.

3.2 Projection regarding the Age Profile of the Borough

Increases in the number of older people in St Edmundsbury are large as the table below illustrates.

	Age Group	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	% Change, 2010-2030
St Edmundsbury	65-69	6,000	7,400	6,400	6,800	8,000	33
	70-74	5,000	5,800	7,100	6,200	6,700	34
	75-79	3,600	4,600	5,400	6,700	5,900	64
	80-84	2,800	3,100	4,000	4,700	6,000	114
	85-89	1,800	2,000	2,400	3,200	3,800	111
	90 and over	900	1,200	1,500	2,000	2,800	211
	65 and over	20,100	24,100	26,800	29,600	33,200	65

Source: Institute of Public Care, based on ONS population figures

Along with an increase in the total number of older people, older people will make up an increasingly larger proportion of the population of St Edmundsbury

	Age Group	2010		2020		2030	
		Total	% of Population	Total	% of Population	Total	% of Population
St Edmundsbury	65-69	6,000	5.7	6,400	5.7	8,000	6.6
	70-74	5,000	4.8	7,100	6.3	6,700	5.5
	75-79	3,600	3.4	5,400	4.8	5,900	4.9
	80-84	2,800	2.7	4,000	3.5	6,000	5.0
	85-89	1,800	1.7	2,400	2.1	3,800	3.1
	90 and over	900	0.9	1,500	1.3	2,800	2.3
	65 and over	20,100	19.3	26,800	23.8	33,200	27.4
	Total Pop'	104,400		112,700		121,000	

Source: Institute of Public Care, based on ONS population figures

Not only do we see an increase in the total number of older people between 2010 and 2030; an increase of 65% in the borough; we also see the number of older people as a proportion of the total population increase markedly. Over 65s make up 19% of the population in the borough in 2010, but by 2030 they will be 27%.

3.3 Potential Implications of An Increasing Aging Population

Ageing is a process, and is different for everyone. You do not become 'old' as soon as you are 65. Some people suffer from dementia when they are relatively young. Some people do not require any form of support or home modifications until they are in their eighties or nineties. But despite this variety, we can make some reasonable assumptions as to the needs of an ageing population, using data provided by the Projecting Older People Information System (POPPI), which is run by the Institute of Public Care. Below are three useful indicators of the health of older people, projected to 2030.

3.3.1 Dementia

People aged 65 and over predicted to have dementia.

	2011		2020		2030	
	Number	% of 65+	Number	% of 65+	Number	% of 65+
St Edmundsbury	1,468	7.06%	1,976	7.37%	2,927	8.82%

3.3.2 Falls

People aged 65 and over and predicted to have a fall at least once in a 12 month period.

	2011		2020		2030	
	Number	% of 65+	Number	% of 65+	Number	% of 65+
St Edmundsbury	5,583	26.84%	7,215	26.92%	9,404	28.32%

3.3.3 Mobility

People aged 65 and over and predicted to be unable to manage at least one mobility activity. Activities include: going out of doors and walking down the road; getting up and down stairs; getting around the house on the level; getting to the toilet; getting in and out of bed.

	2011		2020		2030	
	Number	% of 65+	Number	% of 65+	Number	% of 65+
St Edmundsbury	3,847	18.50%	5,051	18.85%	6,895	20.77%

4. Responding to Need

4.1 Planning Policy

There is a clear policy justification for meeting the needs of an ageing population through housing mix requirements and design standards.

PPS1 requires 'quality inclusive design not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development'.

PPS3 states that 'authorities should plan for a mix of housing on the basis of the different types of households that are likely to require housing over the plan period... [with] particular regard to... the current and future demographic trends and profiles and... in particular, older and disabled people.'

The Draft NPPF says that authorities should 'plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as families with children, the elderly and people with disabilities)'.

Policy CS2 of the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy says that sustainable principles will be achieved by

'incorporating the principles of sustainable design and construction in accordance with recognised appropriate national standards to cover health and wellbeing-ensuring that the development enhances the quality of life of future occupants and users.

Where appropriate, site specific and area targets, along with detail of viability, to meet national standards and codes, will be set out in the Development Management document, Area Action Plans and the Rural Site Allocations document.'

4.2 Flexicare

Suffolk County Council's have introduced Flexicare a policy aimed at keeping people independent and living in their own home for as long as possible.

Suffolk County Council's partnership with all district and borough councils across Suffolk recognises the importance of housing and community support to develop solutions for older people to retain their independence and continue to live in appropriate housing within their community. This is especially true in rural areas where cost efficient large scale solutions such as Extra Care/Very Sheltered housing schemes are deemed uneconomic within current and future public sector budget

Whilst Flexicare focused initially on strategic planning and asset management it has recognised that training and support to develop skills and knowledge within communities is essential for older people to thrive and maintain their wellbeing.

4.3 Personalisation

Personalisation is the key programme to transform adult social care and to improve choice and control for people who receive care services. People who receive care through the adult care assessment process will receive a weekly amount of funding and will have the opportunity to decide how this is spent to meet their care needs.

This offers the opportunity for innovative new services to be developed which meet individual needs and wellbeing but also places valued established services at risk as they will no longer have guaranteed placements directly from adult care services. This may be especially concerning in rural areas as the number of potential customers for these services may be limited.

4.4 Assumptions Regarding Older People Currently Living In Rural Areas

The majority of older people living in rural areas would prefer to remain there either in their settled home or in a more suitable home in that location in preference to moving to Bury St Edmunds or Haverhill, when their support and care needs warrant additional services.

In both the private rented sector and social housing there is:

- a significant element of under occupation (Havebury suggest that 60% of their housing is under occupied), no evidence for the private rented sector
- issues with fuel poverty in rural areas, especially in older housing
- current housing for some older people is not the most suitable i.e. difficulty managing stairs, steps, issues with larger gardens.

5. Rural profiling Pilot project

5.1 Introduction to pilot

St Edmundsbury working with Suffolk Acre and Parish Council currently carries out housing needs surveys to evidence housing need and to support development of affordable housing. However, this information does not give a complete picture of needs and focuses on presenting housing need. From a strategic housing perspective it is important when planning for new housing development to understand the impact of changing demographics, policy and to have a broader understanding of how current housing fits needs including the aspirations of older people, to ensure that future developments include the right tenure and type.

Evolving the current housing needs survey to take on this broader role needs to involve all the key stakeholders. It is proposed that we pilot a project in the borough concentrating on one key service centre and the surrounding villages to allow us to 'test out' this different approach and evaluate outcomes in order to agree the approach we will take in the future..

It has been suggested that Ixworth may be a good location due to the services it provides. In addition there is a large development planned in Crown lane Ixworth.

The pilot project would need to establish how:

- factors such as the implications of national policy, the impact of demographic trends and changing expectations, and the current housing market for older people will be played out locally.
- how suitable the existing housing market is to meet the needs and expectations of older people now and in the future. What contribution can existing stock make, and how is this assessed.
- an effective housing strategy for older people will look, how does it map future supply and demand, how does it engage with stakeholders including older people, and how is it funded.

5.2 Desirable Outcomes

The primary outcomes of profiling would be to give us the detailed information to allow St Edmundsbury to make robust plans and inform the tenure and type of future which will then help to do the following:

- help older people remain independent for as long as possible
- maintain potential care costs at an affordable level
- respond to the changing expectations of older people
- focus on neighbourhoods and local communities in our planning and delivery
- develop more effective partnership working which involves all key stakeholders whether these are older people themselves or GP commissioners.

5.3 Methodology for taking the pilot forward:

The pilot would be overseen by a steering group consisting of key stakeholders which would include:

- St Edmundsbury representatives from Strategic Housing, Community Services and Planning
- Suffolk County Council representatives from Adult Community Services
- Suffolk ACRE
- Parish Council /Community groups representation

Research that would be required to inform the process:

- focus groups of older people to help develop understanding of aspirations and fit with national /local policies
- survey/questionnaire to supplement focus groups to quantify levels of under occupancy particularly in the private rented sector
- profile of existing housing in location
- profile of numbers of older people currently receiving care/support in their own homes
- Age demographic of the village to assess what future needs could be met
- Others?
- information on a) what else is already planned; b) adapted properties

5.4 Pilot Project Timescales

April

- establish steering group
- agree methodology for the research
- Issue invites for focus groups

May/June

- Run focus groups
- Carry out research
- [RAWP progress report?]

June/July

- Draw conclusions from research and pull together local strategy

September – Report on outcomes to Rural Working Party.