

## **Provision of Housing – A Statement of Common Ground**

This agreement is between:

- Brighton & Hove City Council
- Adur District Council
- Arun District Council
- Chichester District Council
- Crawley Borough Council
- Eastbourne Borough Council
- Horsham District Council
- Lewes District Council
- Mid Sussex District Council
- South Downs National Park Authority
- Wealden District Council
- Worthing Borough Council

### **1. Context**

1.1 The Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) place a Duty to Cooperate on local planning authorities (LPAs) and other prescribed bodies to address strategic planning issues relevant to their areas in the preparation of Development Plan Documents and other Local Development Documents.

### **2. Purpose of the Statement of Common Ground**

2.1 The Statement of Common Ground is a factual statement setting out what steps have been taken to comply with the Duty with regard to housing provision, and areas of agreement regarding this key strategic cross-boundary issue affecting the Brighton & Hove sub-region. It provides a basis for further cooperation on strategic issues in the future.

### **3. Housing Market Area**

3.1 Research has shown that housing market areas operate as a layered system of tiers and that it is not possible to precisely define the boundary of a specific housing market area due to the variety of methodologies that can be used<sup>1</sup>. Therefore a number of different permutations can potentially exist as Brighton & Hove's housing market area.

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<sup>1</sup> Geography of Housing Market Areas Final Report, DCLG (2010)

- 3.2 At the local level Brighton & Hove's local housing market area has been defined as encompassing the city together with the districts of Adur and Lewes<sup>2</sup>. The City Council considers that Brighton & Hove is unable to meet its objectively assessed housing need, and this will be tested at the City Plan Examination hearings. This local housing market area was the first considered by the City Council in seeking to locate the unmet need. As Adur and Lewes both face similar constraints and consider that they are also unable to meet their own objectively assessed needs, it was then necessary to consider broader housing market areas.
- 3.3 In the now revoked South East Plan a Sussex Coastal housing market area is illustrated as one area extending from Bognor Regis to Lewes/Seaford and centred on Brighton and Hove<sup>3</sup>. This is not to suggest that Bognor Regis is in the same housing market as Lewes, but that the housing markets in this coastal strip overlap to such a degree that one cannot draw sensible boundaries. Within this broad area a distinct local Brighton Housing Market Area exists, potentially stretching from Newhaven in the east to Southwick in the west<sup>4</sup>.
- 3.4 Two broader overlapping Housing Market Areas centred on Brighton & Hove have been identified more recently, as follows:
- A Housing Market Area based on the administrative areas of Brighton & Hove, Adur, Worthing, Horsham, Mid Sussex, Crawley, Lewes, Wealden and Eastbourne<sup>5</sup>.
  - A broader Coastal Sussex Housing Market Area centred on Brighton & Hove stretching from Seaford in the east along the South Coast to East Wittering, and extending inland into the South Downs National Park to settlements such as Lewes and Midhurst<sup>6</sup>. This Housing Market Area covers the administrative areas of Chichester, Arun, Adur, Worthing, Brighton & Hove and Lewes

#### **4. Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate**

- 4.1 In the absence of government guidance but taking account of evidence arising from inspectors reports into Local Plans, along

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<sup>2</sup> Brighton & Hove Strategic Housing Market Assessment, DTZ (2008),

<sup>3</sup> South East Plan (2009), diagram H1.

<sup>4</sup> Brighton & Hove Strategic Housing Market Assessment, DTZ (2008), paras 2.10 and 2.11.

<sup>5</sup> Coastal West Sussex Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update, GL Hearn (2012), para 2.10

<sup>6</sup> Coastal West Sussex Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update, GL Hearn (2012), para 2.34

with the timescale for producing the City Plan, the City Council took a pragmatic approach to addressing the Duty to Cooperate issue by considering both the broader Housing Market Areas detailed above, which led to some duplication.

- 4.2 A Coastal West Sussex Partnership (CWSP) had previously been set up to strengthen the coastal economy. The CWSP brings together business and the public sector to work across traditional boundaries and form the foundations of future infrastructure and growth. This existing partnership has been used to address Duty to Cooperate issues (see section 5 below) and a member level Coastal West Sussex Strategic Planning Board has been set up. Lead planning members for all the constituent authorities sit on the board, however the Board has no powers and decisions made have to be ratified by the individual authorities.
- 4.3 The Coastal West Sussex Partnership is also in the process of producing a Local Strategic Statement (LSS). The LSS will establish a strategic context and develop a clear set of ambitions for growth across the area to bring about a shared set of long term objectives that all partners are working towards. This will include the requirement to engage with areas north of the South Downs National Park about long term growth requirements. Following a period of consultation a revised draft of the LSS will be considered at a meeting of the Coastal West Sussex Strategic Planning Board on 17th October.
- 4.4 Additionally, the City Council has instigated a series of meetings specifically to address the Duty to Cooperate, to which all Local Planning Authorities that comprise the broader Housing Market Area based on Brighton & Hove, Adur, Worthing, Horsham, Mid Sussex, Crawley, Lewes, Wealden and Eastbourne, detailed above in paragraph 3.4, were invited. These meetings facilitated constructive cooperation with the other authorities, in addition to existing mechanisms of cooperation such as consultation responses. The meetings were held with the purpose of establishing an overall picture of housing need over the sub-region and whether any LPAs had capacity to accommodate unmet demand from areas that were unable to meet their own needs, in particular Brighton & Hove
- 4.5 The authorities agree that a series of planning officer meetings took place specifically to discuss the Duty to Cooperate:

Date	Attendees
June 18 2012	Brighton & Hove; Adur; Crawley; East Sussex; Eastbourne; Horsham; Lewes; Mid Sussex; South

	Downs; Worthing; West Sussex
September 6 2012	Brighton & Hove; Adur; Horsham; Lewes; Mid Sussex; South Downs; Worthing
December 6 2012	Brighton & Hove; Adur; Eastbourne; Horsham; Lewes; Mid Sussex; South Downs; Worthing

4.6 All nine authorities were invited to all three meetings. Wealden indicated that they wished to attend but were not able to due to previous commitments, but did receive any papers. The two County Councils were invited only to the first meeting but were copied in on papers. Any authority who did not attend only did so as they had no availability rather than lack of interest.

4.7 These meetings have been well attended by senior officers from all authorities that are considered to be within Brighton & Hove's broader Housing Market Area, and took place with the intention of reaching agreement. Further meetings have also taken place, at both officer and member level, with individual LPAs adjoining Brighton & Hove to discuss more specific issues<sup>7</sup>. The following member level meetings have taken place:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
7 <sup>th</sup> December 2012	Brighton & Hove, Mid Sussex
21 <sup>st</sup> January 2013	Brighton & Hove, Lewes
18 <sup>th</sup> April 2013	Brighton & Hove, Adur, Worthing
17 <sup>th</sup> May 2013	Brighton & Hove, Horsham

4.8 A formal request was made by the City Council to all other LPAs within this broader Housing Market Area that they consider the extent to which they are able to assist in accommodating the unmet demand from Brighton & Hove. This was approved at member level at the City Council's Economic Development Committee on 20 September 2012. Following this request, no LPAs indicated they were able to assist in meeting Brighton & Hove's unmet need at the present time.

4.9 The Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement, produced to demonstrate that the City Plan has been produced in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate, has been circulated to the other local planning authorities and no concerns have been raised. This document details the numerous other cross boundary and joint partnership relationships existing in the Brighton & Hove sub-region which have informed the preparation of the City Plan.

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<sup>7</sup> Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement, Appendix 2.

4.10 The authorities agree that cooperation is an ongoing process and dialogue will therefore continue to address this issue. Where a LPA has an unmet objectively assessed housing need, the LPA should demonstrate why and to what degree it cannot meet the need prior to approaching other appropriate authorities with regard to accommodating the unmet need.

## **5. Housing Requirements for the Coastal West Sussex Sub-Region**

5.1 The Coastal West Sussex Strategic Planning Board was established with the intent of identifying the extent of housing need and looking at options to meet it. To facilitate cross-boundary cooperation in addressing the issue, a joint Housing Duty to Cooperate Study has been produced by the local authorities that comprise the Coastal West Sussex Strategic Planning Board<sup>8</sup>, as well as Lewes District Council.

5.2 The Study pulls together evidence from a range of individual studies produced by each authority to provide a consistent and objective assessment of housing requirements in each authority and across the Coastal Sussex Housing Market Area (see paragraph 3.4 above) addressing the need and demand for market and affordable housing.

5.3 The Study indicates that the Coastal Housing Market Area is unlikely to be able to deliver the full level of required housing development. This is in light of the significant environmental, landscape and infrastructure constraints to development which exist. Strategic infrastructure constraints in the Coastal Housing Market Area are still those which were identified and tested through the development of the South East Plan – particularly capacity issues along the A27, around the Chichester Bypass, Arundel and Worthing, as well as the A259. Equally there are a number of more local routes which are at or near capacity.

5.4 There is agreement between the Coastal West Sussex authorities that the analysis shows that, collectively, the authorities are unable to meet their assessed housing requirements. The analysis suggests that it would be feasible to accommodate a maximum of 75% of assessed development needs in the sub-region based on current evidence<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Arun District Council; Chichester District Council; Worthing Borough Council; Adur District Council; Brighton & Hove City Council and the South Downs National Park Authority.

- 5.5 The most significant likely shortfall against assessed needs is expected to arise in the centre of the sub-region in the City of Brighton and Hove, Lewes District, Adur and Worthing. This is a function of geography with limited development potential in areas between the National Park and the sea, and in some cases very tightly drawn administrative boundaries around the existing urban areas.
- 5.6 This is a similar situation to that which existed during the preparation of the South East Plan. Levels of housing provision proposed for the authorities in the Sussex Coastal Housing Market Area in the South East Plan were at least 27-30% below demographic projections<sup>10</sup>.
- 5.7 The Study recommends that the Strategic Planning Board consults on the findings of the report with the relevant statutory bodies to which the Duty applies. Once this has been undertaken the Board will seek further engagement with other adjoining authorities in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate.
- 5.7 In August 2013 a meeting took place between the West Sussex Councils, Brighton and Hove City Council, Lewes District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a way forward regards housing needs and the provision in the emerging Local Plans under the Duty to Co-operate requirement. It was acknowledged that most LPAs are unable to meet their objectively assessed housing needs in their current local plans because of capacity constraints and for those that can meet their own needs, the constraints of their areas (including infrastructure) as well as economic objectives mean that they are unlikely to meet potential shortfalls from other districts.
- 5.8 The meeting agreed that authorities would work together to identify, if possible, longer term strategic solutions to the identified shortfall of housing across the Local Planning Authority boundaries, including necessary strategic infrastructure and appropriate delivery mechanisms. This work would be undertaken on the understanding that each authority would look within their own local housing market area(s) first for meeting future needs before looking at options outside their market area(s);

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<sup>10</sup> Housing Duty to Cooperate Study, GL Hearn (2013), paras. 3.36 to 3.38

**Local Authority:**

**Signed:**

**Print Name:**

**Date:**