

Summary of responses to the 'Homes Strategy' consultation

6-week consultation period from 26th October – 7th December 2018
(extended for 1 week for 3 parishes in Mid Suffolk)

Number of responses received:

- The online survey consisted 7 questions; none of the respondents answered all 7 questions
- All responses to the survey were received electronically
- Twenty nine respondents (29) in total commented on the BMSDC Homes Strategy
- Although far fewer response were received than had been anticipated, this number is substantially more than the number of responses received by other Suffolk local authorities who have recently consulted on their respective housing strategies.

Q1. Who responded?

- 7 Babergh Parish or Town Councils
- 4 Mid Suffolk Parish or Town Councils
- 1 Suffolk County Council Strategic Commissioner
- 1 preferred not to say
- 16 others unknown.

Q2. How was the Homes Strategy rated overall?

- 48% satisfied / very satisfied
- 28% neutral
- 24% dissatisfied / very dissatisfied.

Q3. How was the Housing Vision and it's nine ambitions rated?

- 52% satisfied / very satisfied
- 28% neutral
- 20% dissatisfied / very dissatisfied.

Q4. Did respondents think the strategy will help us to deliver positive housing outcomes within the districts?

- 44% Yes (11 in total)
- 56% No (14 in total). Of these, 6 answered in the free text boxes for subsequent questions. Some correlation with later comments noting lack of actionable plans to deliver ambitions at this stage contributed to the 'No' decision from PCs.
- 4 respondents did not answer this question.

Refining the analysis of the 'No' responses to Q4

A free text box was not included in this question, so respondents were not able to give further reasoning for their choice at this stage. However, the electronic survey software supports specific responses to be analysed across all questions, so a report was run on the 'No' group to find out if there were any common reasons for this choice.

Half of the 'No' group are Parish or Town Councils, the other half 'unknown' individual households.

Below is a list of main concerns ranked from most mentioned to least mentioned:

- Concerns about growing pressures on infrastructure (4)
- Poor communications between Councils and communities (4)
- Concern that allocations of council owned social housing not being made to local parish residents first (3)
- Desire for more emphasis on green space and increased eco-credentials of new homes (3)
- Lack of addressing loneliness in rural areas (2).

However, many of these 'No' respondents included positive comments about one or more specific aspects of the Housing Strategy in addition to concerns.

This next section provides an overview of the number of responses received to Q5, Q6 and Q7.

Q5. Are there any elements you feel are missing? 20 responses, 9 skipped this question.

Q6. If you could change one element of the draft strategy what would it be and why? 13 responses 16 skipped this question.

Q7. If you wish to please add any further comments about the Homes Strategy. 14 responses, 15 skipped this question.

The following sections show free text issues raised and our response / actions.

Issues	BMSDC Actions
<p>1. Consider inclusion of relevant Key Worker homes policy.</p> <p>The Homes Strategy mentions ageing demographics and associated importance of requirement for additional support and care to realise continuing independent living for the majority of the population. Therefore, it follows more care workers / key workers required.</p> <p>Related housing issues: care workers generally lower paid so raises housing affordability issues; and lack of enough affordable homes for lower paid workers; proximity of affordable key worker homes to population requiring care, exacerbated by our very rural geography.</p> <p>Key Worker Homes policy removed from legislation by central Govt. Specific legislation pathway being checked. TBC.</p>	<p>Change to Homes Strategy Add Key Worker homes reference to final text and include in Action Plans - TBC.</p> <p>Further actions Issues raised with Planning Policy to consider and test viability of a local Key Worker Homes policy for inclusion in emerging Housing Policies associated with development of new Joint Local Plan.</p> <p>There is ongoing dialogue with BMSDC and relevant Suffolk County Council Care and Support Strategic Commissioning groups to address this issue. Actions anticipated mid-2019.</p>
<p>2. Local affordable homes allocations should be prioritised and/or allocated exclusively to local people already living in / or from this parish.</p> <p>Keeping all social housing allocations within the parish is seen by parishes as protecting the integrity and connectivity of local communities.</p> <p>However, the BMSDC Allocations Policy (the processes and household factors taken in to account when allocating social homes) states that homes are allocated to those in greatest need first.</p>	<p>Change to Homes Strategy In Strategies fully explain 'local' applies to those in highest district wide housing need, not restricted to the local parish need. And, social homes are allocated those in greatest housing need, not by geographical need.</p> <p>Further actions After May 2019 Elections include items about social homes allocations policy within training and learning sessions for Ward Councillors. Concerted communications drive to increase level of understanding of social housing allocations policy.</p>

<p>3. Concerns about balancing rural, open green space with increasing numbers of new housing developments.</p>	<p>Change to Homes Strategy Check emphasis and wording relevant to green space. Amend if required.</p> <p>Further actions Share comments with Strategic Planning colleagues for further action if required.</p>
<p>4. Consider environmental implications of new homes more holistically.</p>	<p>Change to Homes Strategy Check for inclusion and amend if required. Use infographics from other publications to illustrate holistic outcomes.</p> <p>Further Actions Additional information shared with all residents in the Feb 2019 'Your Council' publications</p>
<p>5. Lack of detail showing how the strategies will be implemented and appears as if it is an isolated housing strategy – concerns that not a whole council, integrated approach.</p>	<p>Change to Homes Strategy Check wording and include a schematic to ensure BMSDC Strategies and Suffolk-wide strategies show synergy. Action Plans ready for internal use at this time.</p> <p>Further actions Will create schematic for final draft and additional text from Infrastructure / Communities / Economy / etc to demonstrate an integrated, coherent approach. Provide further reassurance to communities via PC events and final JHS that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be supported by us to help themselves with housing issues • Will be heard, and issues taken seriously (e.g. publishing responses to this consultation, responding in a timely way to matters raised) • Can be supported to readjust local housing stock to better meet housing needs (via Housing Enabling / Neighbourhood Plans / Joint Local Plan, Communities Team) • Review these have been achieved through performance reporting.

<p>6. Concerns about funding the ambitions. Councils not making it explicit how much additional funding we are securing and what we are delivering with it.</p>	<p>Change to Homes Strategy Review and amend if required – addition of infographics to the final Strategy detailing new homes delivery, additional funding and benefits to residents. Further actions Additional information already shared with all residents in the Feb 2019 ‘Your Council’ publications.</p>
<p>7. Concerns about lack of detail with regard supporting infrastructure, Infrastructure Development Plan, CIL monies to PCs.</p>	<p>Change to Homes Strategy Amend as required. Include hyperlink to Community Infrastructure Levy webpages. Further actions Inclusion in post-election training sessions for Councillors. Review links from Homes Strategy webpages to CIL webpages.</p>
<p>8. Request for greater support required for parishes developing neighbourhood plans.</p>	<p>Change to Homes Strategy Check and amend if required. Further actions Add Neighbourhood Plans work status infographic to document. Request for additional NP support over and above current resource levels shared with CM for Strategic Planning.</p>
<p>9. Welcome the emphasis on increasing new delivery and improving the current housing stock.</p>	<p>Change to Homes Strategy None. Further actions Share positive messages.</p>
<p>10. Well written, informative, well-constructed which cover all the key issues all local authorities are trying to address.</p>	<p>Change to Homes Strategy None. Further actions Share positive messages.</p>

Additionally, some parishes expressed very specific, technical concerns relating to localised Development Management and Planning Policy / Joint Local Plan development matters. These have been passed to the relevant teams to resolve directly if parishes can be identified from the consultation responses.