

Observers data

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Chapter 28. Observers data

28.1 Introduction

In the first iteration of the Cambridge sub-regional housing market assessment, the five districts within Cambridgeshire have contributed equally to the funding required and the two Suffolk authorities, having recently commissioned housing needs and requirements research, have participated at “observer” level, as set out in paragraph 28.4 below.

For this reason, St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath have been included wherever possible in secondary data collection, but have not participated in the MRUK resident survey. They have also not benefited from purchasing CACI data on incomes, which has limited the comparative analysis we could carry out on affordability.

For completeness, we are including excerpts here of their respective studies with brief introductory comments, to enable a sub regional view of housing need and demand within this project structure.

In the fullness of time we hope that these two authorities will be able to buy into the sub-regional SHMA to a greater and greater extent, to help create a more complete picture of housing market areas, and to enable further comparison across sub-regional boundaries, especially with colleagues in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex which abut the Suffolk boundaries.

28.2 St Edmundsbury Housing Requirements Study 2005

In October 2005, St Edmundsbury published the outcomes of its Housing Requirements Study, carried out by Opinion Research Services (ORS).

ORS was commissioned to identify existing and future housing needs across the area in the context of overall housing requirements. They interviewed 1,496 households and conducted an interview of local estate agents. Information from this household survey was complemented by secondary data sources to correspond with the date of the primary data and based on a reference point of March 2005. The secondary data included price band reports on property sales published by the Land Registry, HIP submissions from the local authority and Housing Corporation publications for RSL CORE logs and other statistical returns. The analysis combined primary and secondary data sources and considered the different components of housing requirements and supply.

The study followed the guidance which was current in 2005, from the government. The study identified:

- Households currently in housing need
- Future housing requirements of established and newly forming households
- Inward migrants from within the UK and abroad
- Likely supply of housing from the existing stock
- Net requirement for additional housing.

This is summarised in the Fig 1.

The outputs considered household affordability in terms of the ability to afford appropriate market housing, the ability to afford more than social rented housing without being able to

afford appropriate market housing, and the inability to afford any more than the appropriate social rent. Therefore the requirements for market housing, intermediate housing and social housing were summarised as “comprehensively covered”.

Fig 1: St Edmundsbury Basic Needs Assessment Model

Stage	Element	Number of Households	Source	
BACKLOG NEED	1	Backlog need existing households	3,079	Figure 18
		<i>minus</i>		
	2	Cases where in-situ solution most appropriate, moves to institutional housing and out-migrants	2,311	Figure 25
		<i>minus</i>		
	3	Households able to afford to rent or buy in market	370	Figure 25
		<i>plus</i>		
	4	Backlog of non-households	155	Figure 29
	<i>equals</i>			
5	Total Backlog Need $(1 - 2) \times 3 + 4$	553	Arithmetic	
	<i>times</i>			
6	Quota to progressively reduce backlog	10%	Assumption	
	<i>equals</i>			
7	Annual need to reduce backlog 5×6	55	Arithmetic	
NEWLY ARISING NEED	8	New household formation (gross)	$103 + 133 = 236$	Figure 44
		<i>Times</i>		
	9	Proportion unable to buy or rent in market		
		<i>plus</i>		
	10	Ex-institutional population moving into community	-	-
		<i>Plus</i>		
11	Existing households falling into priority need	192	Figure 28	
	<i>plus</i>			
12	In-migrant households unable to afford market housing	$354 + 156 = 510$	Figure 35	
	<i>equals</i>			
13	Newly Arising Need $(8 \times 9) + 10 + 11 + 12$	938	Arithmetic	
SUPPLY	14	Supply of affordable housing	$1,391 + 2,153 = 3,544$ $3,544 \div 5 = 709$	Figure 52
		<i>minus</i>		
	15	Increased vacancies & units taken out of management	-	-
		<i>plus</i>		
16	Committed units of new affordable supply	-	-	
	<i>equals</i>			
17	Total Affordable Supply $14 - 15 + 16$	709	Arithmetic	
NET		<i>equals</i>		
	18	NET SHORTFALL (SURPLUS) affordable units per year $7 + 13 - 17$	284	Arithmetic

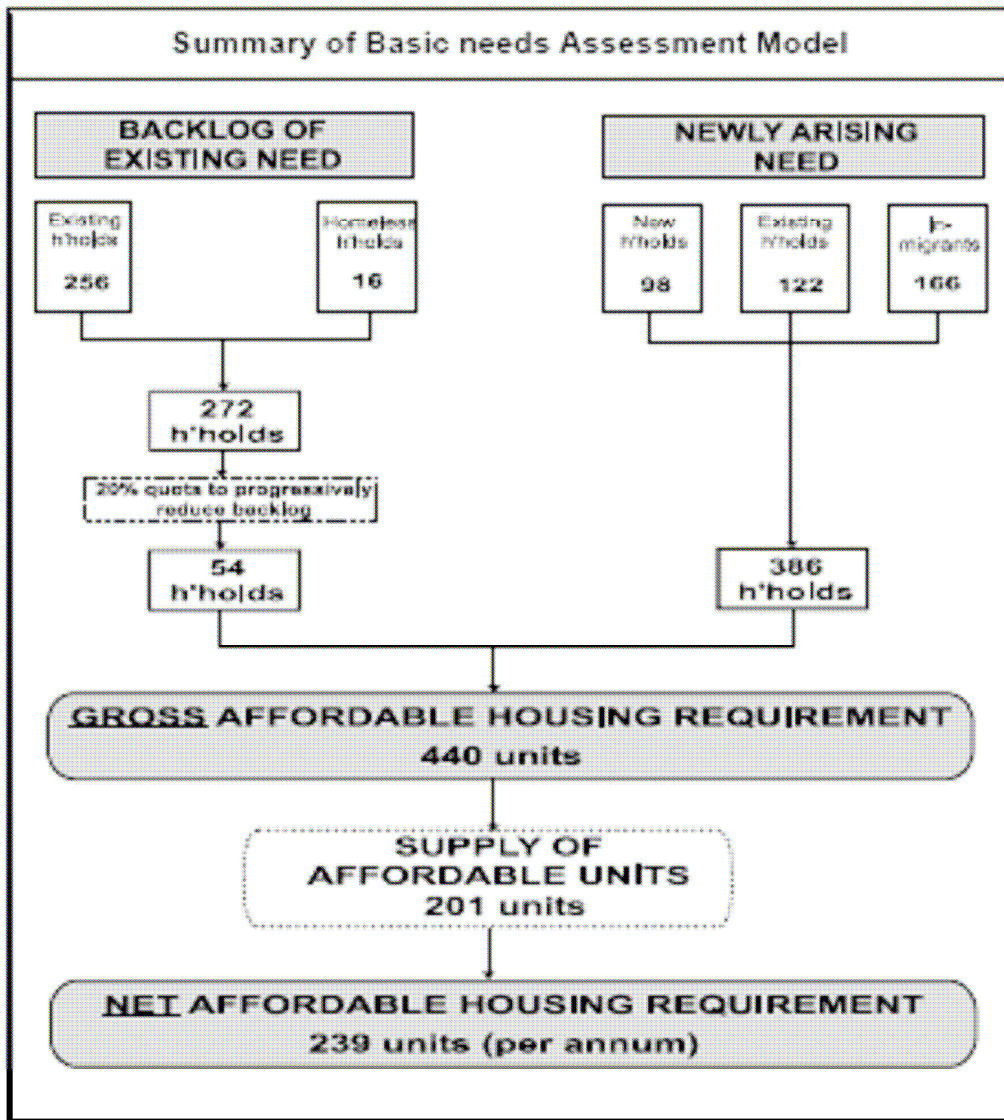
Figure 77: Basic Needs Assessment Model
Source: DRS Housing Market Model, St Edmundsbury Housing Requirements Study 2005

28.3 Forest Heath Housing Needs Assessment 2005

In October 2005 Forest Heath District Council published its 2005 Housing Needs Assessment, completed by Fordham Research. Primary data was obtained via a postal survey. 1,210 surveys were returned representing 5.3% of the district population (excluding the USAF households living on base).

Part of the study included an estimate for the need for affordable housing, which followed the "Basic needs Assessment Model" suggested in the Government Guidance "Local Housing Needs: A Guide to Good Practice" (ODPM 2000). Figure 2 sets out a summary of the outcomes.

Fig 2: Forest Heath Basic Needs Assessment Model



Source: Forest Heath Housing Needs Assessment – 2005

28.4 What is “observer status”?

Local authorities who are unable to participate fully in the sub regional HMA work, commencing in 2006/7, are invited to adopt “observer status” in return for an agreed contribution. The two observers as at 2006 are co-incidentally the 2 Suffolk districts, who have recently commissioned assessments of housing need and the housing market.

The benefits of “observer status” are:

- Purchase of secondary information to compare with other districts in the sub region, bringing in Suffolk County's data for the 2 Suffolk districts.
- Where possible, the Research Team will use the Observers primary data and compare it to the results of the other five participants' data, providing a broader context for their recent primary research results.
- The option to participate more fully in later years and as the opportunity arises.
- Being "in" at the start of building a foundation of information, which will be built on year by year. Not participating early on will definitely hamper the opportunity to fully participate later, as much of the data will build up as time progresses.
- Benefiting from sharing cross-boundary data to provide further context and understanding of local housing markets, including the effects of larger settlements and sites on every authority in the sub region, linking to creating lettings policies for growth funded schemes and for new communities.
- Benefiting from the County Research Team gathering information on the private rented / lettings market.