

Observers data – 2009 update

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Chapter 28. Observers data – 2009 update

28.1 Introduction

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

St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath were included wherever possible in secondary data collection, but did not participate in the MRUK resident survey used for the initial SHMA. For completeness, we included excerpts of their respective studies with brief introductory comments, to enable a sub regional view of housing need and demand within the original structure.

In April 2009 both Suffolk partners moved from Observer to Full Participant status. For the second version of the SHMA being produced in 2009 and based on 2007/8 data, these two districts cannot be fully involved as work is needed to align data across the whole sub-region and to find all the relevant data needed to complete Chapter 27, *Identifying housing need*, fully and robustly.

However by early 2010 we aim to have revised all our calculations for all districts, using 2008/9 data and making various other improvements to the methodology. At this stage we plan to release Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury’s housing need figures. This will improve the completeness of the SHMA greatly, creating a more complete picture of our housing market areas.

® In future we also aim to complete 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

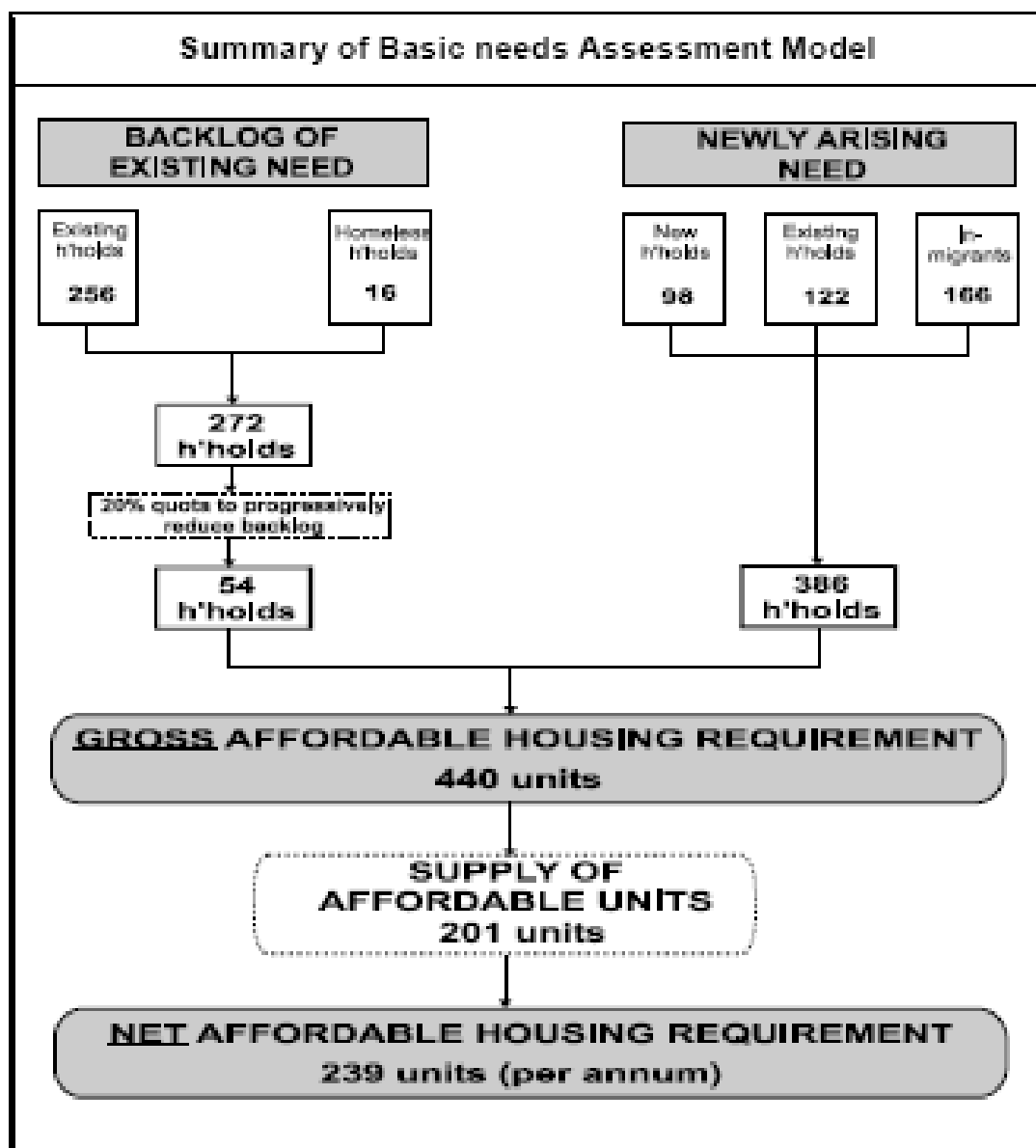
Source: ORS Housing Market Model, St Edmundsbury Housing Requirements Study 2005

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 two Suffolk districts, who had recently commissioned assessments of housing need and the housing market.

The benefits of “observer status” were:

- Purchase of secondary information to compare with other districts in the sub region, bringing in Suffolk County's data for the two Suffolk districts.
- Where possible, the Research Team used Observers primary data and compared it to other participants' data, providing a broader context for their 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 is built on year by year. Not participating early on would definitely hamper the opportunity to fully participate later, as much of the data builds up over time.
- 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.