



One of the first houses built in Berkeley's 'Highwood' development

Six affordable houses in 300-home scheme

BY JOSHUA POWLING
joshua.powling@press.co.uk
01403 751230 | jg.joshua@powling.com

Just six affordable homes will be provided out of a total of 300 new homes within a Horsham development.

Berkeley Homes, which already has outline permission to build more than 1,000 homes west of Horsham, has submitted a detailed proposal for its latest phase of housing.

Of the 300 planned houses and flats east of the A24 just six would be classed as 'affordable' and would be three-bedroom shared ownership properties, which equates to just two per cent of the total.

Horsham District Council's current target on large-scale developments is 40 per cent, and is 35 per cent in its emerging strategy.

Berkeley already has full permission for a number of homes in the northern part of the site, some of which have already been completed and occupied.

The latest phase relates to a strip of land south of the River Arun next to the railway line.

But according to the council cuts to Government grants towards affordable housing since 2011 had changed the social housing development landscape 'dramatically'.



HDC said it would deliver 78 to 236 affordable units off-site in the district

In total the Berkeley site is set to provide 60 affordable rented extra care units, as well as the six shared ownership houses, and 35 affordable rented units that have already been built and occupied.

However through the entire scheme it has received £5.53m in affordable housing contributions, with £795,250 going towards bridging the funding gap on the 35-home rented homes off Windrum Close.

The remaining £4.73m is due to deliver between 79 and 236 affordable units elsewhere in the Horsham district.

A spokesperson for HDC added: 'The grant required

for the delivery of affordable rented homes is likely to vary from £20,000 to £60,000 per unit depending on individual schemes.'

'On this basis we expect to see between 181 and 338 affordable homes delivered through this scheme both off and on site.'

'These homes will be suited to meeting local housing needs. There is also the potential for additional units in future if the review mechanism continues to generate additional sums through this scheme.'

Roger Smith of the Campaign to Protect Rural England Sussex Horsham district branch, pointed out that Ber-

keley Homes' approved plans for 594 homes west of Southwater included just 30 per cent affordable housing, again below the council's target.

He argued for an 'urgent need' for alternative sources of finances for affordable homes that were not dependent on the sale of private homes.

Dr Smith added: 'Unfortunately, as was made apparent by Mr Salter, the planning inspector tasked with examining the HDPF [Horsham District Planning Framework, the presumption for local plans is that affordable homes will be funded entirely by developers through the sale of new private homes.'

'Consequently, housing targets are grossly inflated; and even though huge tracts of irreplaceable farmland are allocated for development the need for truly affordable homes, including rented accommodation, is not being met.'

Several Horsham district councillors raised concerns at a recent planning meeting that they were unable to directly scrutinise the complete figures behind viability appraisals, which are used by developers to justify how many affordable homes they are able to provide in housing schemes.