

# Housing Report

## Puttenham Neighbourhood Plan



Puttenham Parish Council

December 2019

## **Introduction**

Puttenham is a rural parish located in Guildford, Surrey. The parish is characterised by a sparse development pattern, although the village of Puttenham has a relatively dense development pattern. The parish is not suitable for large scale development, however, the parish has a strong community and is a desirable place to live and so it is important that full consideration is given to providing for the housing needs of all sections of the community who are often priced out of property in villages such as Puttenham.

The 2014 Parish Survey recognised resident's concerns over new development, however also identified a small need for affordable housing to meet local needs and so the parish council will give consideration to the various options through the neighbourhood plan.

### Aim

This Report has been prepared to inform the Puttenham Neighbourhood Plan and will look at the parish's existing housing stock and give consideration as to whether further housing (including affordable housing) is needed in the parish.

The report will be considered alongside the various other evidence documents (notably the Environment Report, Built Environment and Residential Design Guide, Site Assessment Report) when preparing the draft neighbourhood plan.

## **Policy Framework**

### National Planning Policy

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF requires plan makers to positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area.

Paragraph 50 requires plan makers to:

- plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community;
- identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand;

Paragraph 79 states that, to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and that new isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided.

The parish of Puttenham is located in the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and paragraph 172 recognises that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in such areas which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.

The parish is also entirely within the green belt which is protected by national and local planning policy with paragraph 143-145 making it clear that inappropriate development (which includes new housing development) is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances and that substantial weight should be given to harm to the green belt. However, paragraph 1459 clarifies that the provision of affordable housing to meet community needs is considered to be an exception to this policy.

Paragraph 63 of the NPPF states that provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer).

Paragraph 64 states that where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area, or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups.

### Local Planning Policy

#### **Guildford Borough Local Plan (2019)**

Policy P2 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan states an intention to prevent inappropriate development in the Green Belt and identifies Puttenham as suitable for limited small-scale infilling within the identified settlement boundary.

Policy H1 (Homes for All) requires new residential development to deliver a wide choice of homes to meet a range of accommodation needs and that new development should provide a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes appropriate to the site size, characteristics and location. The policy also requires 15% of all new residential development to meet Building Regulations M4 (2) category 2 accessible and adaptable dwellings including a percentage of M4 (3)(b) category 3 standard

wheelchair user dwellings will help to address the accommodation needs of people with disabilities and older people.

Policy H2 (Affordable Housing) of the Local Plan seeks to increase provision of affordable homes by requiring 40% affordable homes to be provided on site on developments of five units or more or in excess of 0.17 ha regardless of the number of homes. Policy H2 also aims to provide an appropriate tenure split of at least 70% Affordable rented, with the remainder being other forms of affordable housing.

Policy H3 (Rural Exception Sites) states that small affordable housing developments, including pitches for travellers, will be permitted to meet identified local affordable housing needs provided that: (a) the site adjoins or is closely related to, and in safe and reasonable walking distance of a defined or a non-defined rural settlement, and (b) the number, size and tenure of homes would be appropriate to meet, or to contribute to meeting, the identified affordable housing needs of the local community, and (c) the affordable homes are all secured in perpetuity.

The supporting text of the policy acknowledges that a small number of market homes may be allowed on a rural exception sites where the development would otherwise be unviable and where there are no alternative sites available to provide the identified local affordable housing needs. It clarifies that the inclusion of market housing must serve to benefit the rural affordable housing stock and not inflate the “threshold land value” and so is effectively the minimum land value likely to trigger an owner to sell the land.

### **Guildford Borough Housing Strategy 2015-2020**

The recently published Guildford Housing Strategy sets out the Council’s ambition to increase the provision of affordable housing.

It also states that the Council will work with housing providers to deliver new affordable homes across the borough, promote the provision of a range of affordable housing types and tenures of which at least 70 per cent are for rent, ensure that the mix of new affordable homes is appropriate for the proposed locality taking account of the existing supply and local need (including specialist housing).

The Strategy sets out the Council’s approach to rural exception sites which are ordinarily provided by Registered Providers. In addition to that included in policy H3 of the Local Plan (see above), the Strategy recognises that rural exception sites are generally between 10 and 16 units.

## Puttenham

Puttenham has approximately 237 households broken down to the following:

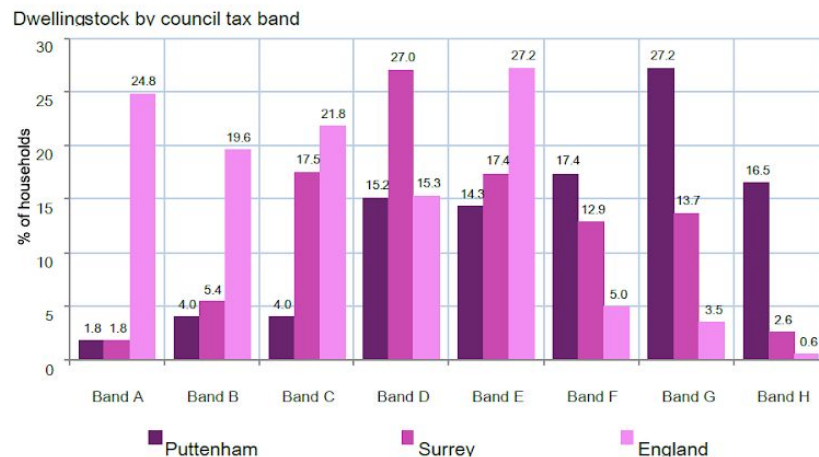
Detached	110 (Puttenham - 44.7%)
Semi-detached	67 (Puttenham - 27.2%)
Terraced	53 (Puttenham - 21.5%)
Flats (purpose built)	7 (Puttenham - 2.8%)
Flats (other)	0 (0%)
Caravan or other temporary accommodation	0 (0%)

Puttenham has approximately 35 affordable homes, 28 of which are owned by Guildford Borough Council

Housing that is owner occupied	155 (Puttenham - 64.6%)
Housing that is social rented	35 (Puttenham – 14.6%)
Housing that is private rented	43 (Puttenham – 17.9%)
Other rented accommodation	7 (Puttenham - 2.9%)

Guildford borough has some of the highest house prices and rental levels in the south east where there has been significant growth in recent years. This results in significant housing affordability pressures with lower quartile and median property values now more than 11 times the respective earnings making market housing relatively unaffordable for many.

This trend is apparent in Puttenham also which, as shown above, has a predominance of detached dwellings and a shortage of small entry level homes. An assessment of house prices in the parish was undertaken and can be found on pages 5 and 6 of the Parish Survey and shows high prices which are unaffordable to many. This is also demonstrated in the table below which shows how Puttenham compares to Surrey and national averages with regard to the proportion of houses in council tax bands A to H and clearly shows the parish to have a higher proportion of dwellings in bands F, G and H which are more likely to be larger, detached houses unaffordable to many.



The parish has very few private sector rented dwellings. As of November 2014, only 3 properties were available to rent or had recently been let. The average price of a 2-bed home was just under £1,180 per calendar month.

Puttenham compares very favourably with both Surrey and England as a whole in terms of the number of households overcrowded or lacking central heating, it is just above average with the rest of the country in terms of the number of households estimated to be in fuel poverty.

## **Affordable Housing**

Affordable housing is defined as is social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. In Guildford, eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes, local house prices and housing need in accordance with the borough council's allocations policy.

**Social rented housing** is normally owned by local authorities and private registered providers for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime but may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.

**Affordable rented housing** is let by registered providers, local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (Guildford Borough Council's affordable rent is set at 70%).

**Intermediate housing** is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low-cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

## **Affordable Housing Need**

Local Planning Authorities are required to identify future market and affordable housing need in their housing market areas. This includes the scale and mix of housing required over the plan period.

National Planning Practice Guidance encourages parish councils to identify local needs for their areas. It further states that whilst existing local data is an important starting point, any assessment at the local level should be proportionate.

Guildford borough has some of the highest house prices and rental levels in the south east where there has been significant growth in recent years. This results in significant housing affordability pressures with lower quartile and median property values now more than 11 times the respective earnings making market housing relatively unaffordable for many.

### Guildford Borough Council SHMA

Guildford Borough Council published the West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) in 2015 for its housing market area which includes Waverley and Woking to inform its Local Plan. An Addendum has been published and both of these up to date pieces of evidence will inform the Puttenham Neighbourhood Plan.

The SHMA (2015) and Addendum (2017) identify the affordable housing need for the market area and take into account demographic need (including household projections, population forecasts, census data etc) and economic growth. The assessment also takes into account the following:

- new and existing households (i.e. those currently living in unsuitable housing)
- the proportion of newly-forming households who cannot afford to buy or rent market housing without financial support
- existing households who fall into housing need
- overcrowded households
- those risk of becoming homeless as they cannot afford to pay their rent.

Some key points can be drawn from the SHMA and Addendum, most importantly, that Guildford currently has an overall housing need of 654 dwellings per annum factoring into account an affordable housing need of 517 affordable dwellings per annum.

The SHMA and Addendum also recognise that lower quartile house prices are 11.5 times earnings in the Borough, which whilst below other HMA authorities (and at a level which has seen comparatively less growth over the past 10 years) remains relatively high compared to other parts of the region and country, and points to affordability pressures within the local market.

Furthermore, and crucially, the SHMA (2015) acknowledges that it is unlikely that it would be feasible to deliver sufficient overall housing provision to meet the affordable need in full and that many households with a need live in the Private Rented Sector and supplement their income with Local Housing Allowance.

These points all demonstrate the high level of affordable housing need in the Borough, the difficulties Borough residents face in accessing the housing market and the inability of the Borough Council to plan for this housing need given the development constraints the borough faces.



The SHMA also considers the type and mix of housing needed in the housing market area over the plan period (up to 2033). For Guildford, it is apparent that there is a need for a mix of housing sizes and for affordable housing, the following is specifically required:

- 1-bed - 40%
- 2-bed - 30%
- 3-bed - 25%
- 4-bed - 5%

With regard to the mix of affordable housing needed, the SHMA identifies the following for Guildford:

- Intermediate – 29%
- Social/Affordable Rent – 71%

The SHMA also identifies that the percentage of older persons in the housing market area is expected to grow over the plan period. This therefore creates a need to provide the right type of accommodation to meet this need including the type and mix of housing as well as the provision of specialist housing. The SHMA calculates the need for specialist housing for older persons in Guildford to be 1,061 (56 per annum).

The above information has informed the housing policies of the Guildford Local Plan.

#### Guildford Borough Housing Register

As January 2019, there are currently 16 no. on the Guildford Borough Housing Register with Puttenham post codes which can be broken down as follows:

4 no. in existing social housing however on the transfer list to move (all eligible for 1 bed properties)

12 no. currently on the housing list waiting for social housing (7 no. eligible for 1 bed properties; 2 no. eligible for 2 bed properties; 3 no. eligible for 3 bed properties)

#### Puttenham Parish Survey

Puttenham Parish Council published its Housing and Community Needs Survey in November 2014 as part of the Rural Housing Enabler for Surrey project with support from Guildford Borough Council. All parish residents were surveyed with the intention being to identify local housing needs and where a need exists, to liaise between the community, the local authority and other appropriate experts (such as Housing Associations) and landowners to facilitate the development of affordable housing to meet the needs of rural communities.

In terms of the type of housing needed, the Survey identified a clear need for homes catering for those struggling to access the housing market (affordable homes, starter homes, small family homes) as well as some need for retirement properties.

Responses from the Parish Survey identified that 4 households were seeking affordable housing primarily through renting from the local authority or housing association (although there was also a small need for shared ownership).

The majority of this need was for smaller dwellings (1 and 2 bed dwellings) due to the high price and shortage of entry level housing and shortage of private rented properties. However, it is acknowledged that a need also exists for larger family sized affordable accommodation too.

## **New Development in Puttenham**

### Market Housing

The parish council has decided against identifying any sites for market housing based on the following information:

- The parish is not considered to be a sustainable location for significant new development (primarily due to its environmental and transport constraints).
- National and local planning policy which restrict new development in the green belt (policy P2 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF - see policy framework section).
- The findings of the Parish Survey which found that almost 60% of residents did not want to see any further development in the parish

### Affordable Housing

When asked "*if further housing development is permitted what form should it take?*", the most respondents (40%) stated a preference for small scale development of 10 or less.

When asked "*if further housing is needed, what type of housing do you think it should be?*", 37% of respondents stated a preference for Affordable Housing.

The Guildford Borough Housing Register and the findings of the Puttenham Parish Survey (2014) provide up to date and robust evidence of a local affordable housing need in the parish. Whilst the findings vary in terms of overall numbers (most likely due to GBC Housing Register data being the most up to date and as this would be the typical means for those in affordable housing need to identify themselves), a need has clearly been identified. Furthermore, the Guildford Borough SHMA (and Addendum) also highlight the pressing need for affordable housing within the wider Borough.

It is therefore recommended that an appropriate number of affordable homes are planned for through the neighbourhood plan based on this recent local evidence.

The most appropriate means of doing this is through the provision of affordable homes and/or rural exception site/s.

### Rural Exception Sites

Rural exception sites are small sites providing a small number of affordable homes to meet local housing need. Planning permission can be granted on these sites, outside existing village settlement boundaries, as an exception to planning policy, if they provide rural affordable housing to meet an identified local need.

Given Puttenham is washed over by Green Belt and the emerging Local Plan does not allocate a housing target for the village, it is unlikely that this need could be met through other means.

Only households with an agreed local connection defined by a Section 106 Agreement would be eligible for affordable housing on a Rural Exception Site and any dwellings must remain low-cost in perpetuity.

### Housing Associations

The Puttenham & Wanborough Housing Society exists to provide low cost housing for rent in the villages of Puttenham and Wanborough. It currently owns 15 properties of which 9 are located in Puttenham. These comprise 2 one bedroomed single storey barn conversions located behind the Camping Barn; 6 2 bedroom terraced houses on The Street and a detached 2 bedroom cottage at the western end of the village.

The Society has recently advertised for letting a 2 bedroom end terraced cottage on The Street and received 9 completed applications forms for consideration. In granting a new tenancy the Society's Policy and Procedure's document requires its Management Committee to consider all applicant's using three criteria:

- a connection with Puttenham or Wanborough
- housing need
- financial need

The Society has always received a number of applications when a house becomes available for letting and the level of interest received in the current letting reinforces the Society's view that there is a good demand for affordable rented accommodation in the village. It therefore welcomes the opportunity for sites to be identified through the neighbourhood plan for more affordable homes in the village and for the Society to be involved in their future provision and management; possibly in partnership with its current maintenance partner Green Oak Housing Association and subject to an appropriate contractual arrangement being agreed

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Affordable housing on a suitable site can help to maintain a mixed balance of households as well as supporting local facilities and services such as the school and village pub.

Puttenham currently has small number of affordable homes (approximately 35) and up to date evidence suggests that the parish has an affordable housing need of up to 16 affordable homes, with a particular need for smaller dwellings (1 and 2 bed dwellings).

Furthermore, at the borough level, Guildford has a significant housing need of 654 dwellings per annum (including an affordable housing need of 517 affordable dwellings per annum), coupled with some of the highest house prices and rental levels in the south east and significant housing affordability pressures with lower quartile and median property values now more than 11 times the respective earnings making market housing relatively unaffordable for many. This trend is apparent in Puttenham also which, as shown above, has a predominance of detached dwellings and a shortage of small entry level homes.

It is not considered appropriate to identify market housing through the neighbourhood plan, however, given this context, it is recommended that consideration is given to appropriate sites for affordable housing and / or rural exception site/s through the neighbourhood plan, meeting the needs of parish residents for, primarily, smaller 1 and 2 bed affordable houses.

## **Acknowledgements**

This Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared on behalf of Puttenham Parish Council. The Parish Council would like to thank the following volunteers who have dedicated a great deal of time and effort into this project:

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- Guy Thompson
- Verity Cassar

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