

HOUSING FACT SHEET – Draft April 2019

Maps of the Wealden District



Housing Market – Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015

Background

Wealden is a relatively large local authority area with a relatively low density population overall. The District is a desirable location to live in and has a set of towns where most people live. It has a high quality environment, local employment and access to jobs outside the District.

The housing market is primarily focussed on a set of larger settlements. These are influenced in turn by relationships with larger towns which sit just beyond the local authority boundaries. These relationships include those between Forest Row and East Grinstead, Crowborough and Tunbridge Wells, Hailsham and Eastbourne and, to a lesser extent, Uckfield and Haywards Heath. These relationships reflect local commuting patterns, with workers in these larger external towns seeking housing opportunities nearby. There is also some relationship in terms of localised house prices.

There is also a regional overlay to the housing market, with settlements to the north being closer in travel time to London as well as the Gatwick/Crawley area and the M25 corridor.

The overall effect is that the north of the District has a housing market that includes inner south east characteristics, while the south includes characteristics of its nearby south coast. This results in higher prices being found to the north on a per square foot basis or for similar types of properties. There is, of course, some variation within local areas.

Wealden's Housing Market

The research highlighted that the Wealden District Council Housing Market Area (HMA) encompasses a wider area beyond the district, to include:

- Wealden

- Eastbourne

- Tunbridge Wells

- Rother

- Lewes and

- Mid Sussex.

Commuting

Wealden has a strong relationship with Eastbourne, Lewes, Tunbridge Wells, Mid-Sussex and Rother. Approximately 43% of those moving to the District came from these locations, based on average annual flows for 2010 – 2013. For net migration loss the message is somewhat different, with only one of the top ten net out-migration destinations from Wealden being a neighbouring area (Rother). This suggests that moves from the District most commonly go beyond the locality. However, the most significant loss of people is to Rother (neighbouring Wealden), with an average annual loss of 40 people from 2010 – 2013.

Population

The 2011 Census found that Wealden had a population of 148,915 people across 62,676 households. The Office of National Statistics estimated that in 2018 the population in Wealden had increased to 158,941. Trend based population projections estimate that the population in Wealden will continue to grow reaching 190,657 by 2041. There will be a growth in all age bands between 2016 and 2041 with a 7% increase in those under 17 years, a 6% in those aged 18-64 years and a 63% increase in those aged 65+ (with the 65+ band there will be a 127% increase in those aged 85+). If the projections are correct those aged 65+ will make up 34.6% of Wealden's population by 2041.

Nicola to update

Housing Tenure

	All	Owned - all	Shared ownership	Social rented	Private rented	Living rent free
England and Wales	23,366,044	14,853,678 Outright = 7,206,954 With mortgage or loan = 7,646,724	178,236	4,118,461	3,900,178	315,491
South East	3,555,463	2,404,517 Outright = 1,156,081 With mortgage or loan = 1,248,436	39,280	487,473	578,592	45,601
East Sussex	231,905	160,557 Outright = 87,976 With mortgage or loan = 72,581	1,495	25,600	41,180	3,073
Eastbourne	45,012	27,788 Outright = 15,071 With mortgage or loan = 12,717	295	5,953	10,494	482
Hastings	41,159	22,706 Outright = 11,071	193	5,988	11,863	409

		With mortgage or loan = 11,635				
Lewes	42,181	30,648 Outright = 16,797 With mortgage or loan = 13,851	285	4,609	6,108	531
Rother	40,877	30,060 Outright = 18,554 With mortgage or loan = 11,506	219	4,242	5,742	614
Wealden	62,676	49,355 Outright = 26,483 With mortgage or loan = 22,872	503	4,808	6,973	1,037

Source: 2011 Census

Wealden District Council's Housing Stock

Wealden is the largest district in East Sussex and covers 323 square miles. The Council continues to own and manage its own housing stock. As at April 2019 Wealden owned 3008 rented properties across the 5 main towns in the District and in 30 of the 37 parishes. This is made up of 16% retirement living housing, 33% flats, 8% bungalows and 43% houses. In addition, the service manages 24 Housing Association properties in Crowborough, 205 leasehold flats sold under the Right to Buy, 73 retirement leasehold properties and two Right to Buy shared ownership properties.

Property prices

The table below shows the average property price by type in Wealden and compares it to the national, South East and East Sussex averages. These prices are taken from the ESIF (East Sussex in Figures) for Quarter 4 2018 and shows the increase in property prices since Q4 2008.

	Detached In £'s	Semi Detached In £'s	Terrace House in £'s	Flat/mais onette in £'s	All dwelling in £'s in Q4 2018	All Dwelling s in £'s Q4 2008
Wealden	523,469	305,950	279,115	203,058	377,858	143,662
England and Wales	402,541	252,120	236,579	292,226	293,642	183,001
South East	573,840	365,137	305,407	230,625	380,438	156,676
East Sussex	459,161	306,807	269,006	191,355	317,192	149,595

Housing Costs for Council properties

Property Size	Social Rent	Affordable Rent
Bedsits	£76.01	N/A
1 bed	£80.56	£124.38
2 beds	£92.96	£182.68
3 beds	£104.75	£182.96
4 beds	£115.40	£192.12
5 beds	£132.58	N/A
6+ beds	£151.06	N/A
All properties	£91.48	£149.44

Source: Wealden's Housing Management System, as at 1st April 2019. Please note where N/A is used we do not currently have these types of property at that type of rent.

Please note that traditionally all council rents were social rents, however any new properties built or acquired with Government grants must be set at affordable rents which are up to 80% of the cost of private rents for the same type of property in the same location.

From 2016 and until 2020 council rents will be cut by 1% per annum in line with Government requirements.

The table below shows the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. These are set by the Rent Service and are based on the lowest 30th percentile of properties available for rent in the broad rental market by size. The amount of Local Housing Allowance used in the calculation of Housing Benefit depends on the accommodation needs of the household, not the size of property.

Local Housing Allowance Rates – these rates are now frozen until 2020

BRMA		1 Bed Shared	1 Bed Self Contained	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
Crawley & Reigate	Weekly	£81.94	£156.05	£191.38	£222.54	£309.67
	Monthly	£355.07	£676.22	£829.31	£964.34	£1341.90
Eastbourne	Weekly	£67.00	£120.03	£151.50	£182.45	£235.34
	Monthly	£290.33	£520.13	£656.50	£790.62	£1019.81
High Weald	Weekly	£77.39	£135.36	£176.56	£223.19	£336.82
	Monthly	£335.36	£586.56	£765.09	£967.16	£1459.55
Sussex East	Weekly	£69.77	£92.05	£120.29	£159.95	£195.62
	Monthly	£302.34	£398.88	£521.26	£693.12	£847.69

To find which Broad Market Rental Area (BRMA) a property is within, use the Rent Service postcode search on <https://lha-direct.therentservice.gov.uk/Secure/Default.aspx>

New Homes

Below lists the total number of new homes that have been built in the District per annum since 2004/05 (includes both private and affordable housing and are gross figures).

Year	Number of new homes (gross)
2018/19	831
2017/18	554
2016/17	575
2015/16	533
2014/15	608
2013/14	640
2012/13	679
2011/12	631
2010/11	756

New Affordable Homes

The table below shows the number of new affordable properties built by year and tenure. It also shows the number of properties that have been acquired through the Homebuy scheme operated by Moat on behalf of the Government in this part of the country.

In 2011/12 a new rented model was introduced which allows Housing Associations to charge up to 80% of the market value for their properties. Since this time all new build rented affordable housing built with Government subsidy, will have rents of up to 80% of market rent.

It is worth noting here that the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified the need for 322 affordable dwellings per annum.

Year of completion	Number of social Rented units	Number of Affordable Rent	Number of shared ownership units	Total new properties built	Homebuy units - shared ownership via Moat and Government loans	Total No of homes
2004/05	29	0	0	29	11	40
2005/06	4	0	6	10	13	23
2006/07	28	0	34	62	2	64

2007/08	12	0	1	13	13	26
2008/09	38	0	12	50	14	64
2009/10	63 (2 gypsy and traveller pitches	0	15	78	10	88
2010/11	180	0	35	215	13	228
2011/12	161	13	33	207	22	224
2012/13	37	71	19	127	36	163
2013/14	30	121	50	201	6	207
2014/15	0	179	14	193	3 to end of Sept 14	196
2015/16	0	147	25	172	No longer recorded due to the rage of different products available direct with developers	172
2016/17	0	55	14	69	Information no longer collected	69
2017/18	0	107	40	147	Information no longer collected	147
2018/19	0	74	56	130	Information no longer collected	130

The Council began building new council homes in 2013/14 after a 30 year break. The table below shows a breakdown of the properties we have either built or acquired since that time. All of these properties have affordable rents.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Council new Build	16	48	0	0	12	17
Council acquired new build properties	0	0	0	20	0	11
Council Street purchase	0	0	6	2	0	0

The table above which shows the number of new council homes built in recent years and should be contrasted with the table below on Right to Buy sales.

The table below shows the number of Council properties lost through the Right to Buy

	Number of Council houses sold	Number of Council flats sold	Total number of council properties sold
2013/14	15	7	22
2014/15	10	4	14
2015/16	10	11	21
2016/17	13	6	19
2017/18	13	8	21
2018/19	11	4	15

Demand for Affordable Housing

Numbers on the Housing Register as at 31 March 2019:

As at March 2019 there were 671 households registered on the Council's Housing Register.

Of these 671:

- 368 required a 1 bedroom property
- 184 required a 2 bedroom property
- 87 required a 3 bedroom property
- 26 required a property with more than 3 bedrooms

26 require a bedsit or un stated number of bedrooms

Breakdown of the 671 applications by Band:

- Band A = 87
- Band B = 112
- Band C = 268
- Band D = 204

This compares with the total 404 social homes, which became available to those on the Housing Register between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2019. Of which 229 were Council properties and 175 Private Registered Providers (Housing Associations).

Of the 404 properties let:

- 49 were retirement living properties
- 11 were bedsit properties
- 130 were 1 bedroom properties
- 169 were 2 bedroom properties
- 42 were 3 bedroom properties

- 3 were 4 bedroom properties

The 404 properties were let to people in the following bands:

- 84 were in Band A
- 91 were in Band B
- 143 were in Band C
- 16 were in Band D
- The remainder were un-banded

Stock Condition – Council Properties

100% of our homes (other than those in retirement living courts awaiting refurbishment) meet the Decent Homes Standard which we maintain through an active programme of property inspections and works.

In 2018/19 we completed the following works:

- Repointing Works to over 36 properties
- Replacement Roofs to 16 properties and improved the guttering/soffits and fascia's to 41 properties
- Improved Fire Safety to the roof void of 8 retirement living courts to prevent the spread of fire
- Resurfaced 81 footpaths
- Fencing repairs and replacements to over 138 properties
- Replaced 5 dangerous boundary walls
- Replaced windows and doors to 64 properties

We are continuing to work with resident groups to further improve our service and ensure we prioritise our works according to need and their expectations having consideration to available budgets.

We will be undertaking a full stock condition survey in 2019/20 to inform future programs of work.

Energy Efficiency

In 2018-19 the Council have:

- Further insulation works to 32 properties top up all insulation levels to 270mm and install cavity wall insulation to council homes.
- Replaced 188 gas boilers.
- Installed new gas central heating systems to 13 properties.
- Upgraded 3 electrical heating systems.

Work across both Council and private housing:

Partnership working with statutory and voluntary groups through the Affordable Warmth Steering Group and the Fuel Poverty Network to disseminate information and advice.

- Partnership and networking with the other District and Boroughs in East Sussex and East Sussex County Council as part of the ESEP (East Sussex Energy Partnership). This partnership has delivered the warmer Homes Healthy People project for 6 years across the County.
- Pop Up fuel bill checking events offering advice and bill checking.
- Affiliate partner of the West Sussex County Council Your Energy Sussex (YES) scheme to help residents to create warmer, healthier homes and reduce carbon emissions.
- Further successful big switch events securing a total saving of over £371,000 to 145 residents on their fuel bills.
- Undertaken talks and presentations to community groups.
- Continued to raise awareness through articles in a variety of publications.
- Won Gold Winner for Community Focus (People) award at the Public Sector Transformation award for our work on helping people switch energy supplier through the Big Switch campaign.

Disabled Adaptations

The Council continues to fund adaptations to properties to both council and private homes (including Housing Association properties) via the Disabled Facilities Grants Procedure. Work carried out includes major adaptation works such as conversion of bathrooms into shower rooms as well as minor adaptations, such as handrails, were undertaken for council tenants.

In 2018-19 there the following major adaptations were carried to:

- 50 Council tenants
- 54 Owner Occupiers
- 9 private tenants

- 19 Housing Association tenants

Additionally 120 minor adaptations were carried out for council tenants

Income levels in Wealden

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2018 reported that the median gross weekly income for all employees working in Wealden was £383.00, which is lower than the England figure of £406.00, the South East median figure of £478.00 and the East Sussex figure of £391.00. It is ranked third in East Sussex out of the five authority areas, behind only Lewes.

However, the median weekly income of Wealden residents is higher than employee based figures at £449.00. This figure is higher than the East Sussex average of £421.00 but lower than and the England figure of £466 and the South East figure of £495.00. It is the second highest in East Sussex behind Lewes residents at £460.00.

The median weekly income of Wealden residents is higher than that of Wealden employees due to high levels of commuting out of the District.

Average income for all Wealden residents in 2018 (both full and part time workers):

	Median Income	Mean Income
England	£24,298	£30,411
South East	£26,250	£33,025
East Sussex	£21,916	£26,743
Eastbourne	£23,753	£26,058
Hastings	£20,066	£22,453
Lewes	£23,640	£26,751
Rother	£19,891	£26,733
Wealden	£23,348	£28,839

East Sussex in Figures taken from Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2018

Unemployment

Wealden residents continue to experience low levels of unemployment. With unemployment estimates for January to December 2018 reporting 3.2% of Wealden's working age population to be unemployed which is lower than the England estimate of 4.2%, the South East figure of 3.5, but slightly higher than the East Sussex figure of 3.0%.¹ It also shows that 80.9% of Wealden's population are economically active.

Additionally Wealden has a claimant rate (including Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit) of just 1.2.8% as at March 2019 which is much lower than the national figure of 2.6%, the South East figure of 1.7% and East Sussex figure of 2.6%. These figures vary across the age profiles of claimants in Wealden , peaking for those aged 18-24 at 1.6%, with 1.2% of 25 to 49 year olds and 0.9% of 50 to 64 year olds claiming unemployment benefits.

Self-employment in the district is high and the highest in East Sussex at 18.9% and higher than the national, South East and East Sussex figure.

Deprivation

The Indices of Deprivation were last updated in 2015. They show that within East Sussex, Wealden continues to be the least deprived district in East Sussex. The most deprived wards continue to be in Hailsham East and Hailsham South and West, with the worse indices being Health, Deprivation and Disability and Crime or Living Environment.

¹ From East Sussex in Figure - Model-based estimates from Annual Population Survey (APS) data combined with Claimant Count data.

Homelessness

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has changed the way that households in housing need are dealt with. Prior to this piece of legislation households who were homeless or at risk of homelessness could approach the local authority and where their homelessness could not be prevented or relieved they would be assessed for eligibility for housing assistance under homelessness legislation. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 requires all households in housing need now or within 56 days to have an assessment of their situation, support needs and housing requirements. A personalised housing plan (PHP) will be agreed between the local authority and themselves setting out the steps for the Council and the applicant to take to prevent or relieve their homelessness. Applicants will be supported to carry out the actions within their plan, which is monitored and regularly reviewed. This change came into force on 1st April 2018 and in the first year we completed 256 housing plans.

During 2018/19 151 households were prevented from becoming homeless (through help to enable them to stay in their current accommodation) and 145 had their homelessness relieved (through assistance to secure alternative accommodation for example through a deposit or guarantee).

In 2018/19 the average length of stay in bed and breakfast was 5.3 weeks.

Community Safety in Wealden

The Wealden area remains one of the safest places to live and work in the UK. Last year (2018/19) there were 6,041 crimes reported to Sussex Police which equates to 382 crimes per 10,000 population and a fall in reported crime by just under 5% from the previous year; compare this with the next nearest figure, which is the Lewes area, they had 541 reported crimes per 10,000 population.

Reports of burglary and anti-social behaviour in Wealden have also fallen during the last 12 months when compared with the previous 12 months, with falls of 22% and 18% respectively.

Safety on East Sussex's roads remains a priority; sadly far too many road users are killed or seriously injured. In 2018, 565 road users were injured on Wealden's roads, 101 of these people were seriously injured and 10 killed. The statistics reveal that younger drivers are at particular risk as are motorcyclists.

The statistics show that most of the more serious crashes occur relatively close to the driver's / rider's home. One explanation for this is that we all have a tendency to think about other things when driving on familiar roads... habits take over. And when we are not concentrating we put ourselves at higher risk. So the message is concentrate and avoid distraction whenever you are using the roads.

The Safer Wealden Partnership brings together a number of agencies, all working together to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and manage the fear of crime. The partners include: Sussex Police; Wealden District Council; East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service; the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner; East Sussex County Council; the Probation Service; local education; and the NHS.

The Safer Wealden Partnership's priorities for 2019/20 are:

1. Working to ensure local people feel safe and secure and reducing the fear of crime.
2. Taking a dynamic and flexible approach to emerging threats and rising crime types.
3. Working together to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on Wealden's roads and to improve road safety awareness.
4. Developing an engagement strategy relating to the protection of young people from serious crime.

Everyone has a role to play in reducing crime and there are practical steps we can all take to minimise our chances of being a victim of crime. In addition we should always report anything that appears suspicious to the Police. Take a look at the Sussex Police website for tips on crime prevention and on how to report crime, <https://www.sussex.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/> you can also report anti-social driving direct to Sussex Police via Operation Crackdown, visit the website <http://www.operationcrackdown.org.uk/>