

At the time of the 2001 Census Hungerford had a population of 5,559, an increase of about 10% over the 1991 figure. The number of children under 16 was below the national average but, contrary to popular belief, the number of over 60's was only slightly above the national average.

The town has a good mix of housing types though prices are high and many are concerned that local young people cannot afford to buy in the town. The lack of reasonably priced housing in the town is one of the main reasons why a high proportion of people who work in Hungerford travel from elsewhere, contributing to traffic and parking problems.

In 2001 Hungerford had 2,455 households. The rate of house building in the town accelerated and reached 50 per year during 2002 and 2003 compared with only 6 per year in the previous four years. In the twelve months to 31st March 2005 a further 55 houses were completed or under construction at the year end, including 24 flats at the Orangery. Residents are keen that the town should remain compact and that new developments should not be allowed to spoil the surrounding

countryside. Concerns are frequently expressed about over development of infill sites and unsympathetic design of new houses.

Hungerford needs to ensure that new housing development does not damage the character of the town or encroach unnecessarily on the countryside. Best possible use must be made of available and under utilised sites within the town. New developments should meet the needs of all sectors of the community - the recent imbalance in favour of luxury apartments and executive homes needs to be addressed. Ownership schemes are needed to enable local people, especially the young, to buy homes in the town.



Policies

Ensure that new housing does not encroach unnecessarily on the countryside.

Encourage the development of new housing within the existing built up area.

Ensure that new developments meet the needs of all sectors of the community.

Key Actions

- Seek to ensure that new housing meets the needs of the community - single person housing, two and three bedroom family homes, affordable housing and sheltered accommodation for the elderly.
- Seek agreements which give priority to local people in allocation of new social housing.
- Investigate ownership schemes which make house purchase more attainable, especially for key workers and local young people.
- Support Sovereign Housing in its plans to redevelop existing sites such as Fairfields and Northview Heights to provide modern social housing. Support plans to build sheltered accommodation for the elderly on sites with level access to the High Street.
- Until Housing Site Allocations are adopted as part of West Berkshire Council's new Local Development Framework, expected to be in November 2008, restrict all new development to brownfield and windfall sites within the existing settlement boundary of Hungerford.
- As part of the new WBC Framework restrict any development outside the settlement boundary to brownfield sites or a small number of greenfield sites, selected to ensure that the town remains compact.
- Prohibit the building of new housing along the A4 or A338.
- Oppose infill developments, for example in gardens, where density or design is not in keeping with the neighbouring properties or which cause access or traffic problems. Otherwise, support infill developments within the settlement boundary.
- Provide land for housing by relocating industry from areas such as Smitham Bridge Road and the railway station area, to Charnham Park.
- Ensure that new developments are of a high design quality, in keeping with the surrounding landscape.