

Housing an Ageing Population: *Using the Planning System to Help Deliver Housing for Older People*

The Central Bedfordshire story...
... so far

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About Central Bedfordshire

Population: 269,100

Households: 104,400

73% owner occupied

Over half the population is rural

Generally fairly affluent

Major centres of population:

Leighton Linlade: 40,070

Dunstable: 37,880

Houghton Regis: 18,110

Flitwick: 13,180

Sandy: 12,210

Local Plan 2015-2035 identifies growth of 39,350 dwellings

Central Bedfordshire Council's approach

- Approach to the whole market – not just those needing public support.
- Addressing the entire continuum from general needs housing to care and nursing homes.
- Keen to use Council assets where appropriate and to maximum effect.
- Keen to engage with the market and to develop partnerships.

Achievements so far...

- Programme of replacement care and nursing homes
- Programme of new and replacement extra care and sheltered housing

But...

- Little progress in the delivery of new homes suitable for older people
- Progress in specialist housing mainly concentrated at the affordable end of the market

Our response

We wanted to get a clearer understanding of the needs and aspirations of older people and use this to:

- Guide the Council's priorities
- Understand how to make best use of the Council's assets and resources
- Influence others

Research

Used national research:

- [Future of an Ageing Population](#)
- [HAPPI 1](#), [HAPPI 2](#) & [HAPPI 3](#)
- [Designing with Downsizers](#)

Commissioned our own independent research in Central Bedfordshire of a representative sample of older people

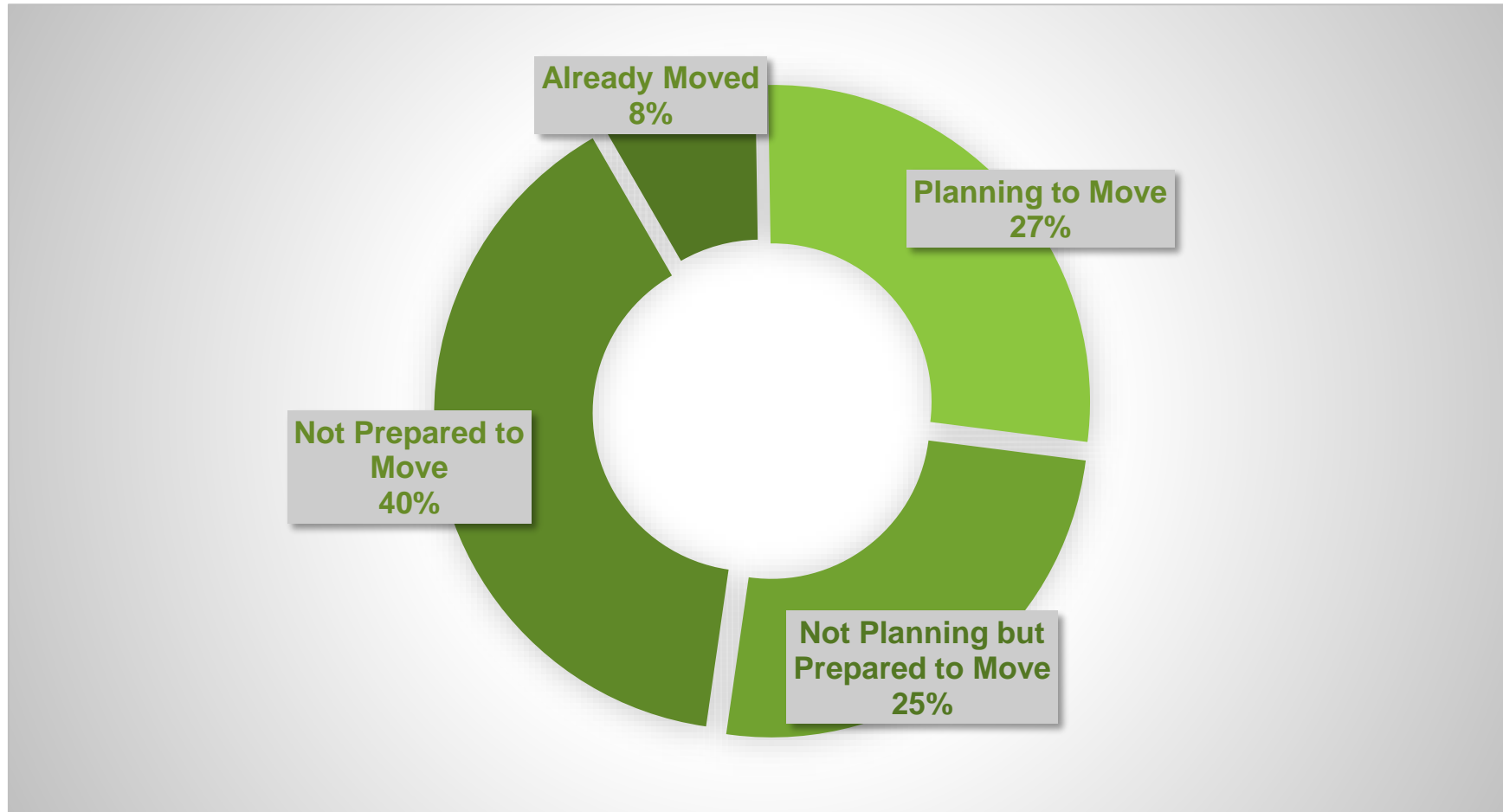
- 600 short interviews
- 80 in-depth interviews
- Stakeholder focus groups

Key Research Areas

- Propensity to move
- Drivers for those considering a move
- Preferred tenure type
- Preferred housing types
- Downsizing

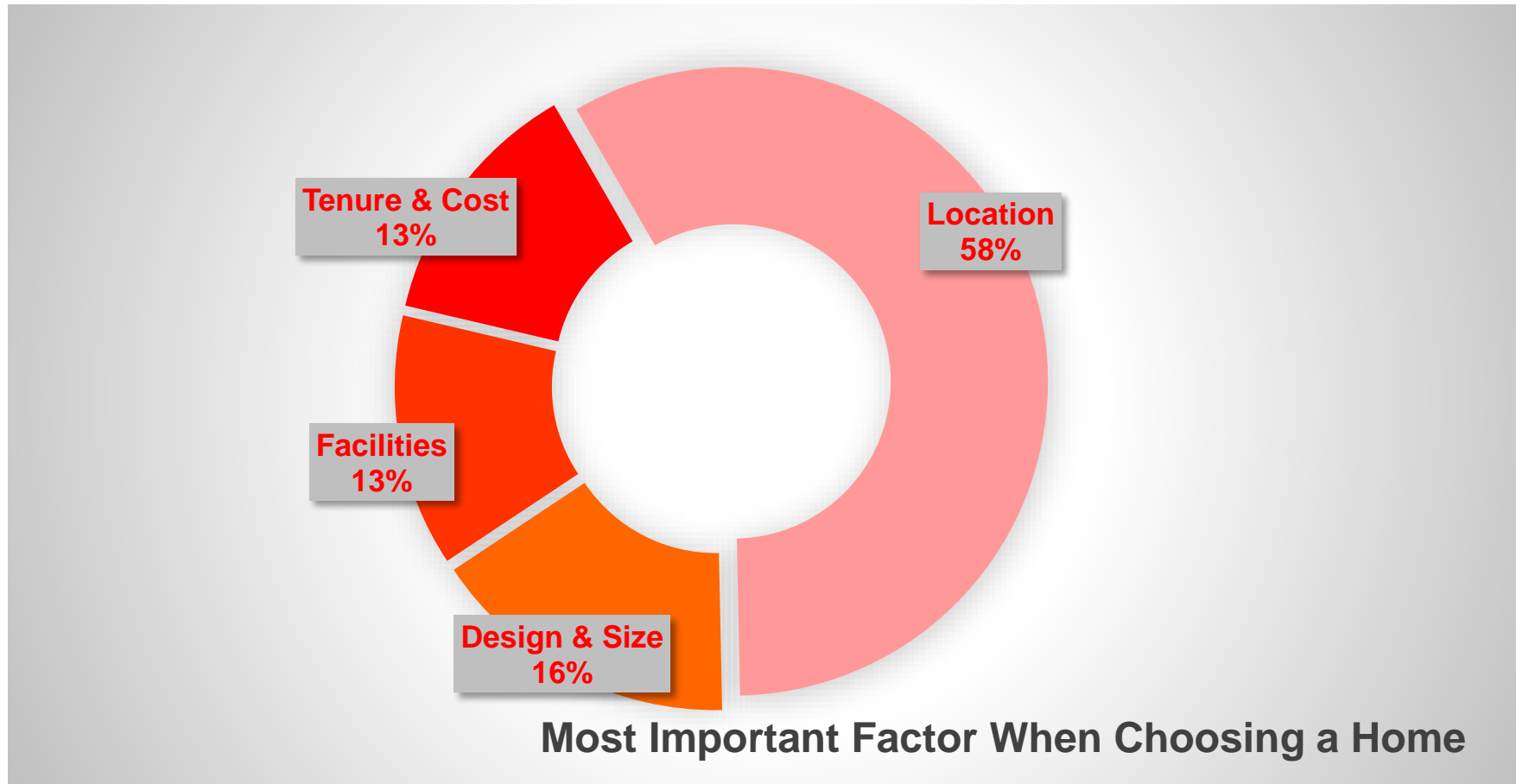
Full report published online at: goo.gl/P37QJ8

Propensity to Move



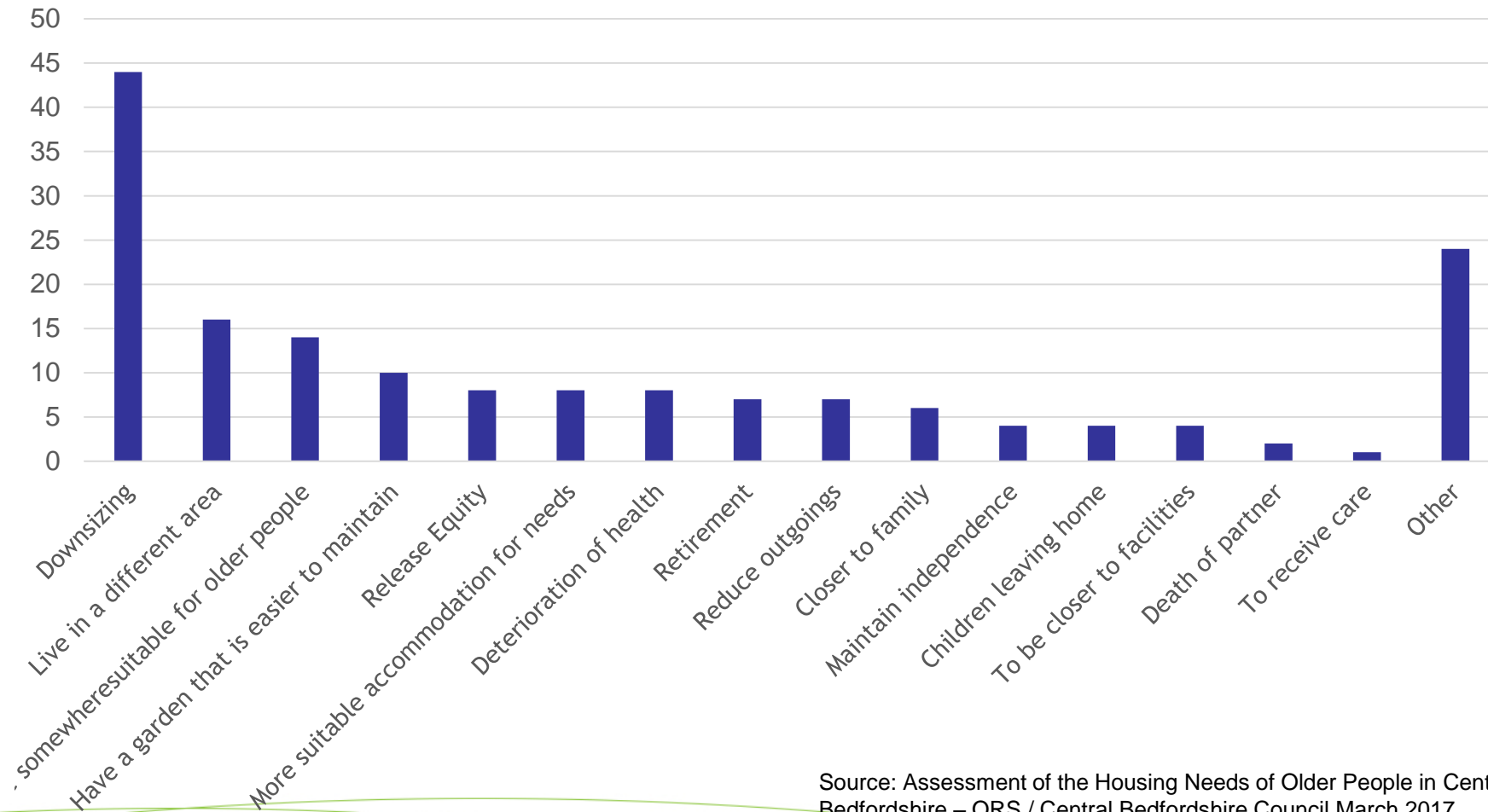
Source: Assessment of the Housing Needs of Older People in Central Bedfordshire – ORS / Central Bedfordshire Council March 2017

Drivers for those planning or prepared to move



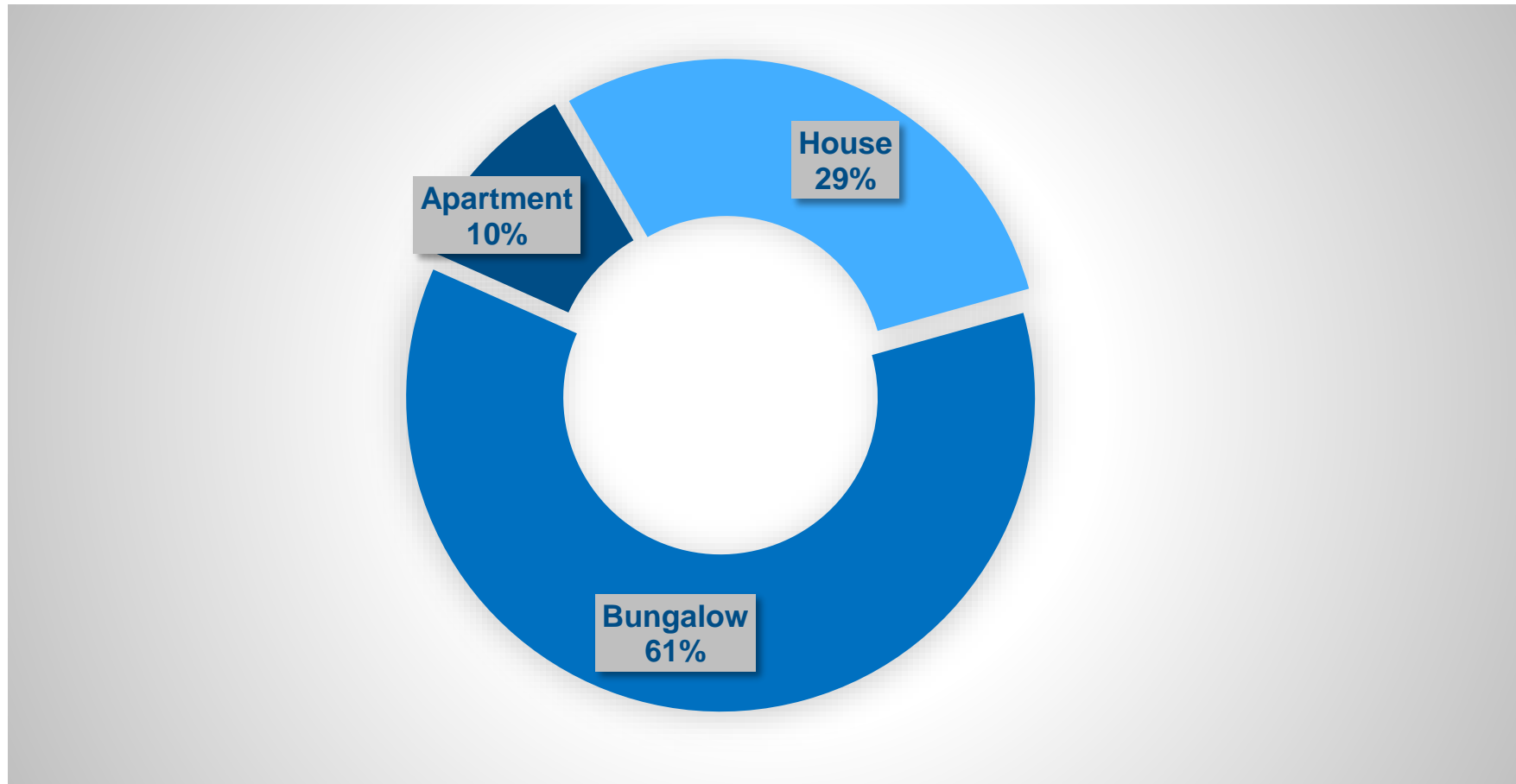
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Reasons for considering moving but those planning to move



Source: Assessment of the Housing Needs of Older People in Central Bedfordshire – ORS / Central Bedfordshire Council March 2017

Type of property preferred by those planning or prepared to move



Source: Assessment of the Housing Needs of Older People in Central Bedfordshire – ORS / Central Bedfordshire Council March 2017

Downsizing

Looking at the 'planning to move' group:

- 85% are in homes with 3 or more bedrooms
- 50% are in homes with 4 or more bedrooms
- 60% are looking for 2 bedrooms or less
- They have a strong preferences for bungalows (62%) or houses (33%) over apartments(5%)

If we can meet demand with the right range of products then we can release at least 5,400 houses with 3 or more bedrooms

Other key findings

- Strong desire by owner-occupiers to retain this status...
- ...including a reluctance to consider leasehold purchase
- The majority would prefer mainstream housing but about half would consider specialist housing
- Even in schemes where there is guest space there was a strong preference for two bedrooms over one
- Some respondents reported that they had already looked unsuccessfully for somewhere to downsize to

Summary from the research

- There is a clear untapped market for all types of accommodation for older people
- The biggest shortfall is of mainstream housing
- Many older people have a desire to downsize...
- ...but it has to be the right product:
 - Location
 - Design
 - Price
 - Tenure
- If this is not available people will stay where they are.

Implications for Central Bedfordshire

In the period to 2035:

- Need for 3650 specialist homes (50-75 new housing-with-care and housing-with-support schemes)
- Need for 5400 mainstream housing downsizer homes
- The total (9050) represents 23% of planned housing growth
- Around 75% of these are for owner-occupation
- Delivering these would release an equivalent number of mainly larger family homes

Moving to delivery...

- Use local planning policies to promote suitable developments
- Promote innovation in the housing market
- Council working collaboratively with housebuilders
- Provide more information and support for older people who need it

Local Plan 2015-2035

Have proposed clear policies that:

- Define dwellings suitable for older people
- Require a percentage (c.23%) of any new development (over 10 dwellings) to be suitable for older people
- This increases to 100% for developments within existing settlements (with some caveats)
- Require larger developments (over 100 dwellings) to have suitable housing-with-care and/or housing-with-support schemes where possible

The Story So Far...

- Local Plan adopted but not yet examined by the Planning Inspectorate
- Applications for growth areas are starting to be submitted and consultation responses produced
- Detail of policy needs to be incorporated into policies and strategies based on adopted plan such as Housing Delivery Strategy

What's Next?

- Get involved in master planning for growth areas
- Prepare for policy to be tested:
 - ... by planners
 - ... by developers
 - ... by the Planning Inspectorate
- Monitor delivery
- Review as delivery gets underway