

## Mole Valley Council Acts on Affordable Housing as £1m Property Market Booms

Mole Valley, one of Surrey's most picturesque and well-connected districts, is experiencing a significant shift in its housing market, one that has prompted local authorities to re-evaluate their affordable housing strategy. According to recent data from Rightmove, one in five homes in the district is now valued at more than £1 million, a 12% increase over the past six years.

This trend places Mole Valley ahead of neighbouring high-value areas such as Elmbridge and Waverley, which have seen increases of 11% and 8% respectively. While the data reflects the area's growing desirability with excellent transport links to London, high-quality schools, and an attractive rural setting it also highlights a deepening affordability crisis.

Currently, 662 households are on the district's housing register, awaiting access to suitable and affordable accommodation. For many residents, the rapid rise in property prices means they are no longer able to live in the communities where they have long-standing family and social ties.

Caroline Joseph, Mole Valley District Council's Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, addressed the issue in an interview with BBC Radio Surrey. "We are very aware of the situation," she said. "Mole Valley is beautiful and convenient for London, but that does unfortunately then result in rising house prices. We don't want people having to move out of the area because they can't afford to live here, especially when they have parents and family in the area. That's not helpful to anybody."

In response, the council is set to review and update its affordable housing strategy at an upcoming committee meeting. The revised plan will complement the district's Local Plan, adopted in October, which outlines the development of 6,000 new homes over the next 15 years. The Local Plan explicitly acknowledges that housing affordability is a "significant problem" and commits to delivering a more balanced mix of housing types.

Housing market analyst Henry Pryor offered a stark assessment of the national failure to address this issue. Speaking to BBC Radio Surrey, he said, "I'm deeply, deeply embarrassed by our inability to find a political solution to this in recent decades." Pryor also noted that official property data fails to fully reflect the experience of those who are unable to buy or sell, further obscuring the true scale of the affordability crisis.

Despite these challenges, Mole Valley District Council remains committed to supporting its residents. "We work very, very hard to help people," Joseph said. "We don't want anybody to ever feel like they have no options or that they have to face homelessness."

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As the district navigates its growing reputation as a property hotspot, local leaders are aiming to ensure that prosperity does not come at the cost of inclusivity preserving Mole Valley not just as a place of beauty, but as a place where everyone has the opportunity to call it home.