

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE
28 SEPTEMBER 2010**

AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report the outcome of public consultation on a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) prepared to amplify existing policy on the provision of affordable housing, to agree the Council's proposed responses to representations and to adopt an amended document.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The SPD, if adopted, will have an important role in advising how Government guidance on affordable housing included in Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) can best be interpreted to meet local requirements and policies.
- 2.2 It will provide detailed guidance in support of the Exeter Local Plan First Review Policy H6 requiring that 25% of dwellings provided on sites capable of accommodating 15 dwellings or over 0.5 ha in extent should be affordable.
- 2.3 Members may recall a paper brought on 5 January 2010 on the subject of a draft Affordable Housing SPD. Members were advised that the absence of an SPD to amplify Local Plan Policy H6 has made the implementation of that policy more difficult. The paper proposed that the draft SPD should be published, alongside a Sustainability Appraisal, for a six week period of consultation with key stakeholders.
- 2.4 Consultation on the draft SPD and the Sustainability Appraisal took place between 27 January 2010 and 11 March 2010. Eleven representations were received. Responses to each of the representation are set out in Appendix D of the Consultation Statement (see 3.1 below). None of the representations have resulted in significant changes being made to the SPD.

3.0 CONTENT

- 3.1 The proposed final version of the SPD and the Consultation Statement accompany this report as Appendices 1 and 2 respectively. The proposed final version of the Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix 3) is available in the Members room.
- 3.2 Below is a summary of the SPD's contents, to which Members attention was drawn in the previous paper of 5 January 2010:

Para No:

- 13 the types of housing development to which affordable housing policy apply should include people receiving an element of care and support but exclude purpose built accommodation for students;
- 19 85% of affordable housing should be for social rent;
- 21 outgoings for low cost home ownership housing should not exceed average market rent for comparable properties. The mortgage element should be assessed on the basis of a 30 year term at standard variable rates and rents should not exceed 2.75% pa of the retained equity;
- 22 rents for intermediate rented housing should be at a level making it eligible for Homes and Communities Agency grant and fall within any relevant Housing Benefit ceiling;
- 24 affordable housing should be allocated through the Devon Home Choice letting system;
- 29 any receipts arising from purchase of affordable housing by occupiers should be used to provide affordable housing in the city;
- 34 off-site provision of affordable housing on sites capable of providing 15 or more dwellings should only be accepted if there is a suitable and available site to accommodate the affordable housing and it is essential for management reasons or will significantly widen choice and encourage better mix elsewhere in the City;
- 39 on larger sites the Council may prepare a Development Brief to guide on a particular mix of affordable housing sizes and types that should be provided. Otherwise the mix of house types should reflect as far as possible the mix on the rest of the development;
- 44 affordable housing should be distributed singly (pepper-potted) or in small groups (clustered) throughout the development;
- 46 affordable housing should be of a high quality and indistinguishable from other housing on the development (tenure blind); and
- 49 claims that affordable housing requirements prevent a development from being viable will not be accepted unless demonstrated through submission of full financial details.

4.0 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- 4.1 The Consultation Statement is a statutory requirement, needed to report on consultation carried out during the preparation of the SPD.
- 4.2 The Sustainability Appraisal has been prepared in order to identify and address any potential negative environmental, economic and social effects of adopting

the SPD as planning policy. The potential effects highlighted by the Sustainability Appraisal are almost invariably very small because of the specific focus of the document. Any social effects are generally positive, as the provision of affordable housing can help to address issues of deprivation and social exclusion. Environmental effects are largely neutral. To a limited degree the policies amplified by the SPD may discourage economic investment in the City, but this is unavoidable if affordable housing is to be provided through planning policy.

5.0 PLANNING MEMBER WORKING GROUP

5.1 The SPD, Consultation Statement and Sustainability Appraisal were presented to Planning Member Working Group (PMWG) on 24 August 2010. PMWG supported the Council's proposed responses to representations made on the draft SPD and the adoption of the SPD.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

6.1 That Executive:

- (i) Agrees that the Council adopt the amended Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document at Appendix 1; and
- (ii) Agrees the proposed Consultation Statement at Appendix 2, including the proposed responses to representations made on the draft SPD.

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:
None