

Council – 20th December 2007

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DPD – SUBMISSION STAGE

Report of the Head of Community Regeneration

Statutory Powers: Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Financial Implications: The Affordable Housing Policies DPD includes important policies for the collection of financial contributions towards the provision of affordable housing. It is also important to aim to produce the document in accordance with the timescale shown in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) timetable to avoid the loss of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant.

Purpose: To set out for Members the content of the South Hams Local Development Framework (LDF) Affordable Housing Policies (Submission Stage) Document and to seek agreement to its publication.

Links to Council Priorities: The Affordable Housing DPD will link to all Council Priorities and Commitments, most particularly to CP1 - Affordable Housing.

Recommendation :

That Members RESOLVE that the LDF Affordable Housing Development Plan Document (Submission Stage) be published.

Introduction

1. The Affordable Housing Development Plan Document (DPD) is another priority document in the South Hams Local Development Framework (LDF) portfolio. It is designed to build on the strategic content of the Core Strategy providing advice through more detailed policies relating to how affordable housing can be delivered to meet the adopted Core Strategy affordable housing target of 50% from all sources (allocated sites, unallocated sites and exception sites). It is also urgently required to replace the policies contained in the current 1996 adopted South Hams Local Plan which is becoming increasingly out of date.

Background

2. General advice on the scope and content of LDF housing policies is contained in PPS12: Local Development Frameworks, and PPS3: Housing. PPS3 advises that local planning authorities should set out policies detailing under what circumstances affordable housing (by direct provision and/or commuted sums) will be required. Any thresholds must be included in an LDF document. PPS3 also advises that local planning authorities in rural areas should include a rural exceptions policy in their LDF.
3. In view of the urgent need to progress affordable housing policies these have been extracted into a document separate from other development control policies. This document is being fast tracked and has now reached Submission Stage.

Consultation Responses

4. The Issues and Options consultation stage took place in October 2004 as part of the Core Strategy and Policies document, and the Preferred Options stage in July and August 2007. This included district wide information days, public exhibitions, presentations, question and answer sessions and targeted focus groups. A summary report responding to all the issues raised in the representations received has been prepared including specific responses to issues and points raised. This has informed the preparation of the Submission Stage document which includes changes made to the document in response to the comments made.
5. The main issues raised were around targets, thresholds and percentages, definitions, deliverability and the evidence base. The main changes are:
 - added clarity for the policies through improved presentation and breaking the policies down,
 - that all housing and mixed use developments should contribute, including sites for a single new dwelling,
 - addition of a range of affordable housing targets for allocated sites, and
 - inclusion of a sliding scale for contributions from unallocated (windfall) sites.

Affordable Housing Policy

6. The LDF Core Strategy was adopted in December 2006. It includes a strategic affordable housing target of 50%. The Affordable Housing DPD further develops this policy by considering how this strategic target will be achieved. Its policies have been restructured to provide five individual policies dealing with the various aspects and delivery options:
 - Affordable Housing Provision,
 - Allocated Sites,
 - Unallocated Sites,
 - Mix, Size, Type and Tenure of Affordable Housing, and
 - Rural Exception Sites.
7. Early work which informed the formulation of the draft Affordable Housing policies included: the draft Local Plan Review (January 2002), the Issues and Options consultation (October 2004), external consultation, internal officer consultation and two Member workshops. In November 2006 the Core Strategy Inspector's Report and long-awaited publication of PPS3: Housing established a new context for and reaffirmed the need for urgent progress with the document.
8. Recently, additional viability work was commissioned from Adams Integra. The results of this research are a key plank of the evidence base to inform and support our affordable housing policy targets for allocated sites and the sliding scale for unallocated sites.
9. The document needs to be a robust, spatial plan with a clear evidence base, sustainability appraisal and evidently effective community involvement in order to secure a "sound" rating at examination. Supporting documentation is available for Members to view from the Forward Planning Office, and will be published alongside the DPD. The policies aim to appropriately reflect the

pressing need for affordable housing across the district and at the same time strike a level that will secure deliverability.

10. Following consultation at Submission Stage the document will be subject to independent Examination by a Planning Inspector. It is anticipated that this will occur in early summer 2008 and it is hoped that the document can be adopted by no later than January 2009.
11. Where supplementary information is needed this should be provided in Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). A draft SPD providing further details on how the affordable housing thresholds and other affordable housing policies will be implemented was considered and approved for publication by Council in September (minute 45/07). Consultation on the SPD has been delayed in order that it can take place alongside the DPD. The SPD will not need to go through an Examination prior to its adoption by the Council.

Strategic Risk Assessment

Opportunities	Issues / Obstacles	Benefits
Securing a sound adopted planning policy context for affordable housing.	Need to conform to the national and regional policy context. Need to demonstrate a robust evidence base, sustainability appraisal and community involvement.	Expeditious processing of planning applications. Certainty for all stakeholders. Enabled delivery of affordable housing. Receipt of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant.
Drawing in financial contributions from all residential development.	The level of contribution required must not be so great as to undermine viability.	Financial resources to help enable affordable housing developments across the district.
Delivering increasing volumes of affordable housing on allocated and unallocated sites.	The level of provision required must not be so great as to undermine viability.	Increasing delivery of affordable homes. Receipt of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant.

Conclusion

12. The Affordable Housing DPD is another key document in the South Hams LDF portfolio and is urgently required. Members are recommended to agree that the submission stage document be published for consultation.

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Council
20 December 2007

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Background Documents:

South Hams Local Plan Review (January 2002)

Adopted LDF Core Strategy (December 2006)

Town and Village – Area Action Plans/Site Specific Allocations – LDF Issues and Options (October 2004)

The Strategy – Core Strategy and Policies – LDF Issues and Options (October 2004)

Approved Local Development Scheme (April 2007)

Affordable Housing Development Plan Document - Preferred Options (July 2007)

The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (2006)

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (2004)