

Annex 1: Adopted Affordable Housing Development Plan Document

Statement of Sustainability and Consultation

Sustainability Appraisal

1. Local authorities are required to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) during the preparation of local development documents such as the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document (DPD). This is to ensure that sustainable development is at the heart of decisions at every stage of plan-making and is an integral part of the process. The Affordable Housing DPD has been subject to initial and detailed SA to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the strategy to ensure that it accords with sustainable development. The SA incorporates the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with European and UK legislation (EU directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI No 1633), respectively).
2. The SA is an iterative, ongoing process and is integral to the preparation of the DPD. It has considered the effects of the emerging DPD on the environment and other aspects for sustainability. The findings of the SA on the Affordable Housing DPD showed that the document was sound.
3. A Sustainability Report accompanies the Affordable Housing DPD. This report documents the SA/SEA process and findings, and explains in greater detail the difference the SA process has made. The SA process, including consultation on the SA, has shown that the Affordable Housing DPD will make a significant contribution to the progression of Sustainable Development objectives for the South Hams area. The SA has influenced the plan progression, resulting in changes being made to the DPD. These are outlined below, however the SA Report (Submission Document), and in particular, section 9 should be referred to for further detail.

Options

4. Options for appraisal were constrained as the strategic approach had already been determined through Core Strategy policy CS6 'Affordable Housing'. The SA considered the options of more or less restrictive policies AH1 and AH2; it was concluded that less restrictive policies would increase the potential for adverse effects on a number of sustainable development objectives.

Affordable Housing DPD Objectives

5. The SA Report concluded that there were no significant incompatibilities between the DPD objectives and the SA objectives.

Affordable Housing DPD Policies

6. The policies were found to generally progress the SA objectives for sustainable development.

Adoption of the Affordable Housing DPD

7. The Independent Examination of the Affordable Housing DPD was undertaken in June 2008. In his Report, the Inspector found the Affordable Housing DPD to be sound, and stated in paragraph 2.3 that:

Alongside the preparation of the DPD the Council has carried out a parallel process of SA (CD182). There has been some limited criticism that the submitted DPD introduced new policies that had not been subject to SA. However, I agree with the Council and the consultants who undertook the SA that the changes between the Preferred Options Report (CD181) and the Submitted DPD are intended to provide greater clarity to the delivery of affordable housing. Having regard to Government guidance on SA (CD208) the new policies would not alter where housing would be permitted or allocated and therefore no new SA is required.

8. Therefore, it is considered that no further amendments to the SA report are required.

Monitoring of the SA and Core Strategy

9. The South Hams Local Development Framework (LDF) is designed to be an on-going, iterative process, in which all sections are kept up to date through a rolling process of public involvement, monitoring and, where necessary, adjustment. The SA process concluded that monitoring the impact of the DPD will be mainly through recording the number of affordable units achieved. It also included the suggestion of monitoring the conditions requiring landscaping proposals to indicate how many schemes will have had a visual impact. The levels achieved under the Code for Sustainable Homes will provide a good indicator of impact on energy use, waste and water.

Statement of Consultation and Involvement on the Affordable Housing DPD

10. The Affordable Housing DPD has been prepared in accordance with the minimum requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and relevant national policies and guidance. The Affordable Housing DPD has met the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

requirements relating to public consultation. It has been through two major stages of preparation, each subject to a six week consultation period: First, an Issues and Options stage in October-November 2004; and second, the Preferred Options stage in July-August 2007. The Affordable Housing DPD was subject to its final consultation, the Submission stage, from January-March 2008.

11. Regulation 28 and 31 Statements and a self assessment report, all available on the Council's website provide an audit of each consultation period. They document who has been consulted, how the consultation was undertaken, the main issues raised and how these issues have been addressed in subsequent stages of the document. In his report at paragraph 2.2, the Inspector concluded that:

"The Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been found sound by the Secretary of State and was formally adopted by the Council before the examination hearings took place (CD187). It is evident from the documents submitted by the Council, including the Regulation 28 and 31 Statements and its Self Assessment Paper, that the Council has satisfied the requirements of the Regulations. Test ii of paragraph 4.24 of PPS12 has been met."

Adoption

12. The Affordable Housing DPD has correctly followed the procedures and requirements through the stages of plan preparation, culminating in the independent Examination in June 2008. At the beginning of August 2008 the Council received the Inspector's final report, the recommendations of which are binding on the Council. The Council resolved to adopt the Affordable Housing DPD, including all of the Inspector's recommendations on 25 September 2008. With the Affordable Housing DPD having been determined to be "sound" through the Examination and following the process outlined above, the Council considers that there are no reasonable alternatives to the adoption of the Affordable Housing DPD in its final form. The Council has placed a public notice in local newspapers advising of the adoption of the Affordable Housing DPD.