

Cabinet – 11 May 2005

Supplementary Planning Document for Affordable Housing

Portfolio: Councillor Pitt – Housing & Community Safety
Councillor Longhi – Environment

Service Area: Community Regeneration & Housing
and Urban Regeneration

Wards: All

Forward Plan: Yes

Summary of report

This report seeks Members' approval of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Affordable Housing. The SPD, Sustainability Appraisal (SA), and Statement on Consultation (SOC) are available on the Council's website under "Supplementary Planning Documents" at www.walsall.gov.uk/environment/ldf/ldd.asp. The SPD expands on Policy H4 of the recently adopted Unitary Development Plan, and follows a formal consultation period.

The SPD does not contain any new policy. It gives housing developers clarity and consistency in the provision of affordable housing on new developments. It gives further detail to developers on property sizes and the tenure mix required. This contributes to increasing housing choice in Walsall, which supports both our Housing Strategy and the Regional Housing Strategy's objectives and regeneration of the Borough through building sustainable communities.

The SPD will be the framework for negotiation with developers and formal adoption by Council is required. This adoption process includes publishing the SPD, with the Sustainability Appraisal, the Statement on Consultation and an Adoption Statement.

Recommendation

Cabinet recommends to Council the approval and adoption of the attached Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Affordable Housing.

Resource and legal considerations

All costs will be met from within existing revenue budgets.

The SPD becomes a material consideration that the Council must take into account when making planning decisions.

The SPD will guide the content of Planning Obligations (Section 106 Agreements) entered into by the Council.

Citizen impact

The SPD provides guidance to ensure that the appropriate type of new affordable housing is developed. This will benefit both current and future citizens of the Borough, by providing housing that will meet their needs and aspirations.

Community safety

There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

Environmental impact

The SPD provides clear guidelines to developers that affordable housing must not be substandard housing, in space or standards.

A sustainability appraisal has been prepared, which shows that environmental impacts are either neutral or positive. A Screening Statement has identified that the environmental impacts are not great enough for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be required. This was sent to The Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and Environment Agency who have agreed that there is no need for a SEA.

Performance and risk management issues

The adoption of this SPD is an essential step in contributing to the Council achieving a Good 2 star rating in the March 2006 Housing Inspection and to ensure negotiations with developers are handled consistently based on clear policy.

Equality implications

Provision of more affordable housing will increase social and economic inclusiveness by making housing available to people with lower incomes.

Consultation

The preparation of this SPD has included consultation with developers, Registered Social Landlords, community members and statutory bodies. This process is outlined in the Statement on Consultation, which has followed Government guidance.

There were no comments that warranted fundamental change to the draft SPD, though some significant improvements have been made. Detailed responses to all of the comments received are given in Appendix 1 of the Statement on Consultation.

The main issues raised by respondents were:

- (a) There was support for providing more affordable housing and the aim of achieving balanced and mixed communities.
- (b) Some representations sought to broaden the range of providers of affordable housing beyond Registered Social Landlords. The Council considers that both

the UDP and the SPD leave open the possibility that other organisations might provide affordable housing, but the Council's clear preference is to work with RSLs. No significant change has been made in response to these representations.

- (c) Some representations sought special allowances for example for older person's homes and the paragraphs 4.6 and 8.2 have been altered to reflect this.
- (d) Some representations sought changes to the proposed housing mix in relation to factors such as site characteristics and estate management. Policies AH4 and AH6 and paragraphs 4.13 and 6.4 have been altered to reflect this.
- (e) Some representations said that insisting on complicity with the Housing Corporation Scheme Development Standards was inappropriate. Policy AH1(a) has been altered to express the Council's preference for these standards.
- (f) Some concern was expressed about supported housing schemes. Paragraph 6.2 has been altered to clarify the situation.

Vision 2008

This SPD specifically relates to the provision of affordable housing within the Borough. The most important linkages to the Vision will be in connection with the following priorities:

- Ensure all people are safe and secure - The SPD contributes to the creation of mixed tenure developments.
- Strengthen the local economy - The provision of affordable housing in mixed tenure developments may help to retain and attract key workers.
- Transform Walsall into an excellent local authority - This SPD is a key action towards the Council's aim of achieving a 2 star rating in the March 2006 Housing Inspection.

Background papers

Walsall Unitary Development Plan 2005
Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG3)
Circular 06/98: Planning and Affordable Housing
Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1)
Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12)
Regional Planning Guidance 11 (RPG11)
The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated regulations

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Signed



Executive Director: Jamie Morris

Date: 3 May 2003

Signed:



Portfolio Holder: Cllr. M Pitt

Date: 3 May 2005



Signed:

Cllr T Ansell on behalf of:

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. M Longhi

Date: 3 May 2005