



Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

Consultation Statement

November 2017

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Introduction

Purpose of Document

This Consultation Statement sets out how South Derbyshire District Council has undertaken community consultations and stakeholder involvement in preparing the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 155 sets out the Government's principles for community engagement; "Early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbours, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that Local Plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area, including those contained in any neighbourhood plans that have been made".

South Derbyshire District Council has written the Affordable Housing SPD in addition to the Local Plan to help applicants make successful applications and to aid affordable housing delivery. Paragraph 153 of The NPPF states "Each local planning authority should produce a Local Plan for its area. This can be reviewed in whole or in part to respond flexibly to changing circumstances. Any additional development plan documents should only be used where clearly justified. Supplementary planning documents should be used where they can help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery, and should not be used to add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development".

Statement of Community Involvement

In March 2006, the Council adopted its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which sets out how the community and other stakeholders will be engaged in the preparation of the Local Plan and in development management matters.

The SCI proposes possible methods of consultation involvement and indicates the approach which will be used to involve the community in the preparation of the Local Plan and SPDs. It also includes the approaches that may be used if it is believed to be beneficial and/or the resources are available.

The following table is an extract from the SCI, setting out how South Derbyshire will involve the community in preparation of the Local Plan and accompanying documents. It also indicates the additional approaches that may be used where it is believed that they would be beneficial and/or resources are available (P).

Method	Core and General Policies			Development Plan Documents (e.g. area action plan)			Supplementary Planning Documents	
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2
Making documents available for review at Council Offices and libraries	-	•	•	-	•	•	-	•
Newsletter or leaflet available at local venues, e.g. supermarkets, surgeries	•	P	P	•	-	-	•	-
Information sent to existing network or organisations and their newsletters	•	P	P	•	P	•	•	P
Press releases/ articles in press	•	•	•	•	P	•	•	P
Exhibition/ display in local areas	-	P	-	-	•	-	-	P
Information and documents on website	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Questionnaire survey	•	-	-	•	-	-	P	-
Public meeting/ surgery	-	•	P	-	•	P	-	•
Focus group with representatives of specific issue area	P	-	-	P	-	-	•	P
Workshop with representatives of range of issues or interest areas	P	•	-	P	-	-	•	P
Participative planning activities	-	P	-	P	-	-	-	-
Community liaison group	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

It was considered that a thorough public consultation at stage 2 (preparing the document) would be more valuable in producing an SPD than at stage 1, therefore this alteration to the prescribed practice was made. The consultation during stage 2 far exceeded the minimum levels set out in the SCI and included a number of additional approaches, which the SCI states may be used where it is believed they would be beneficial and/or resources are available. This included giving a copy of the

SPD to Registered Providers (information sent to existing networks and organisations) and producing a press release advertising the consultation.

The District Council undertook public meetings in the form of consultation/drop-in events. It was considered that undertaking traditional public meetings, which are normally held for a specific short period of time, could affect the number of consultees who would attend the events and get involved.

Drop-in events were designed to be as flexible as possible so that members of the public could turn up at any time during the event. They enabled consultees to read material on the consultation and discuss the consultation document with officers on a one to one basis.

The consultation undertaken on the Affordable Housing SPD is in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, which sets the requirements for producing an SPD.

Consultation

Who was invited to be involved at this stage and how?

The consultation on the Draft Affordable Housing SPD coincided with the consultation on the Draft Design SPD and the Local Green Spaces Development Plan Document.

The consultation period for the three documents ran from 12th June 2017 to 7th August 2017 following approval for consultation being given at Environmental and Development Services Committee on 26 April 2017.

Different methods of public consultation were used to maximise community and stakeholder engagement on the Draft Affordable Housing SPD, such as:

- a. All organisations and individuals on the Local Plan database (including Parish Councils and South Derbyshire's MP) were contacted by letter or email (where provided), informing consultees of the purpose of the consultation, how to find further information and how to make representations.
- b. South Derbyshire Parish Councils and Parish Meetings were sent a copy of the questionnaire and were requested to contact the Planning Policy team if they required a hard copy of the consultation document.
- c. A reference copy of the SPD was available to view in South Derbyshire District Council's Main Reception along with a questionnaire to take away.

- d. Reference copies of the SPD were available to view at all South Derbyshire Libraries and the following libraries outside of the District: Burton on Trent, Mickleover, Blagreaves and Sinfin. Questionnaires were also available to take away.
- e. A questionnaire was produced to find out consultees' comments on the Draft Affordable Housing SPD. These were available at all drop-in events, all South Derbyshire Libraries (and the libraries outside of the District stated above), the District Council's Main Reception and to download from the District Council's webpage.
- f. Details of the drop-in events were published on the District Council's website, and the Draft Affordable Housing SPD and questionnaire were available to view online or download.
- g. Nine drop-in events were held in various locations, with the aim of reaching all sections of the community. Planning Officers were at the events to talk through the consultation and answer questions from members of the public and stakeholders.

The drop-in events included information panels on the three consultation documents. Reference copies of the consultation material were also on display along with a questionnaire which consultees could take away with them.

The drop-in events took place at the following venues:

13 June 2017, Tuesday, 9.30am-2pm – Civic Offices, Civic Way, Swadlincote
 22 June 2017, Thursday, 9.30am-2pm – Civic Offices, Civic Way, Swadlincote
 28 June 2017, Wednesday, 2.30pm-7.30pm – Melbourne Assembly Rooms, Melbourne
 29 June 2017, Thursday, 3.30pm-7.30pm – Hilton Village Hall, Hilton
 5 July 2017, Wednesday, 2.30pm-6.30pm – Repton Village Hall, Repton
 12 July 2017, Wednesday, 3.30pm-7.15pm – Rosliston and Cauldwell Village Hall, Rosliston
 13 July 2017, Thursday, 4pm-6.15pm – Frank Wickham Hall, Etwall.
 17th July, 2.30pm-7.30pm - Aston on Trent War Memorial Hall, Aston on Trent
 20 July 2017, Thursday, 4.30pm-7.30pm— Civic Offices, Civic Way, Swadlincote

- h. The drop-in events were advertised on Twitter.
- i. A short URL code was created for the District Council's webpage, which set out information on the consultation.

- j. The District Council issued a press release advertising the consultation and drop-in events.
- k. On 11th July copies of the Draft Affordable Housing SPD were provided to the Affordable Housing Registered Providers who attended South Derbyshire's Registered Providers Liaison Group. Those Registered Providers which were not at the Liaison Group were posted a copy of the document. The Registered Providers were asked to provide comment on the SPD.
- l. The consultation document was available to view at Safer Neighbourhood and Area Forum meetings. All meetings were held between: 6.15pm—8.30pm.

Etwall Area Forum	12 June 2017 — Hilton Village Hall
Swadlincote Area Forum	13 June 2017 — Goseley Community Centre
Melbourne Area Forum	19 June 2017 — Melbourne Assembly Rooms
Newhall Area Forum	20 June 2017 — Old Post Centre, Newhall
Repton Area Forum	26 June 2017 — Milton Village Hall
Linton Area Forum	28 June 2017— Walton Village Hall
Linton Area Forum	28 June 2017— Walton Village Hall

What were the main issues raised?

In total nine responses were received on the Draft Affordable Housing SPD. A summary of the comments received can be found below. The page numbers referred to relate to the draft version of the document.

- One comment supports the growth of affordable housing in line with research that sets out the health benefits of affordable housing. However it also points out that the increase in housing mass will have wider implications on the health care support available and asks that this is included as a key driver when developments are considered.
- One consultee states that the document is NPPF compliant, states that the introduction and housing needs section on pages 9, 10 and 12 are based on a good range of supporting evidence and supports a number of approaches within the document including: affordable housing on development phases on page 21; the 'Mechanism for Delivering Affordable Housing' on page 15; affordable housing design set out in paragraph 2 of page 14; and the fourth paragraph on page 12.
- One consultee stated that the proposals align to those proposed in Repton Parish's Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- One consultee states that the document defines and details the District Council's high expectations for developers to deliver fit for purpose affordable housing that integrates with new development and communities

- One consultee considered that the mechanism to effectively drive down house prices and rents and hence make them affordable is for Local Authorities to build large quantities of housing of all types and make them available at least at the 80% target rent or less. This would move tenants away from private rented market and address the need for social rented housing.
- One comment stated that the SPD provides greater clarity and certainty as to how Policy H21 of the Local Plan Part 1 will be applied.
- On Page 14 the document states “The Council will not support schemes where the affordable housing offered are...” The consultee states that there is no evidence supporting the need for a negative position (‘not support) over one that retains an element of flexibility (i.e. ‘prefer’)
- The SPD should be amended to delete the text ‘Exceeds 2-storey’ from the uppermost box on page 14. The consultee states that three storey dwellings are not unsuitable for use as Affordable Housing. Another consultee suggested that in order to maximise sq. foot living space in 3, 4, 5 bedroom properties it may be advantageous to build 3 storey properties.
- It was suggested that the SPD should be clear that the mix of affordable housing tenure sought within the document is a starting point for negotiation as tenure mix could have an impact on viability. The document should make clear that viability may be a material consideration when determining affordable housing tenure mix.
- One respondee stated that it would be more appropriate for the SPD to determine housing mix on as case by case basis, having regard to local need at the time and viability.
- One consultee states that at outline application stage the detail of location, tenure, type and size of units, amount of affordable housing and viability are likely to be unknown. However another consultee supports the ‘Layout plans’ section on page 19 which requires that the delivery of affordable housing is agreed in principle at outline permission.
- It was stated that The Housing White Paper (Feb 2017) sets out the Government’s intention to introduce Starter Homes as an affordable housing product. The consultee states that the consideration of Starter Homes as affordable housing should not solely be limited to previously developed land.
- A comment was made that the District’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is currently 5 years out of date along with outdated information on the number of households on the District’s housing register. This impacts on the accuracy of data in the Draft Affordable Housing SPD.
- One consultee stated that the aim of providing affordable housing to the same standard as market housing is laudable, however such requirements will surely militate against any developer wanting to build these houses knowing that they will only receive 50% of the market value.

- It was stated that the document correctly points out that the over 75 age group is increasing, however the document and GL Hearn base documents make no mention of residential homes, nursing homes etc. The consultee goes on to add that a proportion of the aging population will be housed in such accommodation, hence reducing the housing need for this age group.
- A comment was provided in relation to Annex Two, observing that the National Space Standards required for affordable homes was updated in May 2016.
- One respondent states that the definition of affordable housing conflates “affordable to buy” with “affordable to rent”.
- An observation was made with regard to how commuted sums are used in the District, as there is the perception that the money is not used to fund alternative affordable housing on sites within the District.
- The Council has been asked to consider “rent to buy” properties as affordable housing, as the Draft SPD mentions only “social rent”, “affordable rent” and “starter homes” when referring to affordable housing.
- It was suggested that the Council acknowledge that Registered Providers, including those not ‘known’ to the Council can provide affordable housing in South Derbyshire.
- It was noted that there are references to in perpetuity to ensure that affordable housing be kept as affordable units. One consultee states that other affordable housing models such as rent to buy will make a valuable contribution to meeting local affordable housing need, but will not be suitable to this restriction. Therefore the Council should alter the wording to reflect the Government proposal that some affordable housing products “may not be subject to in perpetuity restrictions”.

How, where necessary, these issues were addressed

- The Affordable Housing SPD has been amended with regard to the restrictions over multi-storey dwellings. Previously the document stated that South Derbyshire District Council will not support schemes where the affordable homes offered exceeded two storeys. This has been removed and no longer documents this restriction. The Council recognises that the previous restriction over multi-storey dwellings was not beneficial to space standards and the delivery of affordable homes within the District.
- South Derbyshire District Council recognises that new developments may impact health care services and other services within the District. This is considered along with other factors affecting the social infrastructure of the area such as education, access to leisure and transport links when any planning application for a housing development site is processed. Although the Affordable Housing SPD does not directly address this, the Council’s stance on infrastructure can be found in the Local Plan Part 1 Chapter 9. The

Council recognises the importance of improving local physical, social or green infrastructure and that this is essential to creation of sustainable communities.

- South Derbyshire District Council recognises that the current Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was written in July 2013, and is almost five years out of date. The Council is due to undergo the process of putting a new SHMA out to tender, which will provide more current statistics for the District. Whilst the Affordable Housing SPD has drawn data from the 2013 Derby HMA (Housing Market Area) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), data was also taken from South Derbyshire District Council's Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme to determine the current housing need within the District.
- Annex Two of the SPD now makes specific reference to the space standards as being updated in May 2016.
- The Draft Affordable Housing SPD provides a definition of affordable housing as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The document also provides a clear definition between social rented, affordable rented, immediate housing and starter homes. Therefore, no amendments have been made to the Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document on this matter.
- Amendments have been made to the section titled 'Commuted Sum in Lieu of on-site Provision' after comments were received about how and where commuted sums are used within the District. The document explains that a commuted sum can be used to fund the purchase of new build housing or contribute to the regeneration or redeveloping of existing housing within South Derbyshire.
- Whilst it is acknowledged that an increasingly older population may have a greater proportion of housing needs met through residential care homes, it is not considered necessary to amend the Draft SPD with respect to this.
- Policy H21 makes clear that the viability of any proposed scheme will be taken into consideration, as will the SHMA or other up to date evidence. The SPD also states that "negotiations regarding tenure split will be based on viability with regard given to the Government's intention to introduce a proportion of starter homes on sites."
- With respect to the comment 'no evidence supporting the need for a negative position' with regard to the affordable homes offered (page 14), the Council is not seeking to advocate schemes that are known to not be preferred by Registered Providers.
- The Council will continue to build affordable housing itself where the right opportunities arise.
- The approach taken under 'layout plans' with regard to S106s and outline consents, that the delivery of affordable housing must be agreed in principle, including percentages, types and tenures, has been supported by the County Council and has been retained.

- Rent to buy/try before you buy homes are an intermediate product where occupants benefit from a subsidised rent for up to 5 years (during which time the lower rent levels allow them to save). Applicants are offered the new build homes following means testing (usually through a help to buy agent) as they cannot earn over £60k and must not already own a property. After the five years the tenants are expected to purchase the homes from the provider. Whilst the Council supports the need for a mix of tenure types within the 30% affordable on-site provision, the affordable housing element must remain in perpetuity for future generations and this can be achieved by working with our not-for-profit registered providers and through delivery of the Council's own new build schemes. The Council are required to ensure new supply of affordable units to meet newly arising need and this can be achieved by negotiation of on-site provision that will meet needs in the District over the longer term. The Rentplus model and other similar schemes would not meet this definition as occupants can be required to vacate their homes after the initial five year period. This does not happen with not-for-profit registered providers as they would convert the tenure at the end of the five years rather than make the household homeless/end their tenancy.