

KEY CHANGES PROPOSED TO DRAFT SPG ON MARKET HOUSING MIX

1. **Greater emphasis on providing 'guidance' rather than rigid requirements**

Concern was expressed by Go-East (and others) that the document went too far towards introducing new policy requirements that ought properly to be contained within the development plan itself. Whilst legal opinion on this point has been obtained and suggests that the approach in the draft is lawful, some revision of the text is considered prudent against the background of potential legal challenges. Accordingly, the wording has been changed to make clear that the document provides guidance on the way in which policies HL5 and HL10 can be implemented on specific sites.

2. **Reduction in the recommended targets for smaller units**

From the representations received, the round table discussion and monitoring of development proposals since the draft SPG was issued, it is evident that aiming for a minimum of 40% smaller units (one or two bed) is a more achievable goal across the majority of sites than the 50% target in the draft. This assessment takes into account the economics of site development, particularly on small sites. Small unit provision at 40% or above will still represent a considerable step-change in supply compared with recent trends. Moreover, the guidance urges a higher level of small unit provision where possible.

3. **Increased flexibility to take site specific material considerations into account**

Feedback on the draft, and experience with its implementation, have also pointed to the difficulty of securing a balanced mix on some infill sites: in some situations one large and one small dwelling may sit uncomfortably together, be at odds with their surroundings, or pose difficulties in terms of development economics and marketing. Changing the percentage sought from 50% to 40% also makes it difficult to apply a target to such sites, where the total number of units is usually no more than two. The revised text does however state that every effort should be made to incorporate a smaller unit on such sites (or, at the very least, a three bed property).

4. **Not pursuing the blanket removal of permitted development rights on new one and two-bed dwellings**

Further consideration of this issue during the consultation process has indicated that this provision would in practice achieve relatively little (the minimum density requirements applying to new-build properties limit the scope to extend small units in any case). At the same time, objectors were concerned that removing permitted development rights in this way would affect the marketability of properties. On balance, therefore, it is recommended that this element of the draft is removed.

5. Incorporation of case studies to illustrate good practice

Three case studies of recent development proposals in Huntingdonshire have been included to give a practical demonstration of schemes that have achieved a good mix, as well as displaying a high quality of design. These comprise an infill site, a small estate scale development and a larger housing estate.