

AGENDA ITEM NO.

**COMT
CABINET**

7th JUNE 2007.

**DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS AFFORDABLE HOUSING
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

SECOND DRAFT FOR PARTICIPATION

(Report by Head of Planning Services)

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report outlines the background and content of the revised (Second) draft of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Developer Contributions Towards Affordable Housing. Cabinet is asked to approve the draft document as a basis for public participation.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The need for Affordable Housing is recognised as a significant issue both locally and nationally; the Government issued a new Planning Policy Statement on Housing (PPS3) in November 2006.
- 2.2 A first draft SPD on Developer Contributions Towards Affordable Housing was the subject of public participation from 25th September 2006 to 6th November 2006. The Second Draft incorporates changes in Government policy set out in PPS3 and a number of changes suggested by those responding to the First Draft SPD. It has also provided the opportunity to update information, such as the position with the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy. The advantage of the Second Draft is that it is now built upon a very robust participation base.
- 2.3 The draft SPD will be subject to full public participation for six weeks. The draft document will be sent to a wide range of consultees including planning consultants/agents and registered social landlords; a public notice will be published in local newspapers to advise the wider public and copies of the document will be placed in all libraries and public access points in the District. All representations duly made will be reported back to Cabinet and taken into account when adopting the SPD.
- 2.4 The SPD gives more detailed guidance as to how the existing Affordable Housing policies in the Development Plan (the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 2003 and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration 2002) will be implemented and delivered. The SPD is subject to a Sustainability Appraisal which will be published alongside the document.

3 CONTENT OF THE DRAFT SPD

- 3.1 The SPD proposes a number of supplementary policies which take their cue from existing “saved” Development Plan policies. As with the First Draft, these are Policies AH1, AH2, AH3 and AH4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan alteration 2002 and Policy P9/1 of the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 2003.
- 3.2 It also recognises that the Council has embarked upon the preparation of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment, one of the key requirements of PPS3.
- 3.3 The changes from the First Draft, resultant from considering representations and revised Government guidance include:
- Recognising that PPS3 has reduced the national indicative site size threshold to 15 dwellings from 25, and that this takes precedence over the Development Plan.
 - Removing references to Circular 6/98 which has been cancelled by the publication of PPS3.
 - An explanation of the saved Development Plan policies.
 - Determining the threshold for providing contributions towards Affordable Housing as the net increase in dwellings which takes into account any loss through demolition or conversion.
 - Clarification that the policy on site-size thresholds by the artificial subdivision of sites would apply to sites allocated in the Development Plan but that where development is proposed on a “windfall site” the site would be defined as that which would form part of a natural planning unit and is within the applicant’s control.
 - Amending the text on the size of clusters of Affordable Housing dwellings to note that in some urban situations there may be a case for developing clusters of more than 15 units subject to a very careful approach to layout and a high standard of design in order to achieve integration with the rest of the development.
 - A strengthening of the point on viability to take account of the costs on some sites, especially brownfield sites, which may incur additional costs of clearance, decontamination etc., while other sites may incur higher levels of contributions for other infrastructure provision.

4 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 There will be a six-week period for public participation starting later in June to be consistent with the newly adopted revised Local Development scheme. The results of that participation will be brought back to Cabinet before adopting the SPD.
- 4.2 The Draft SPD, together with supporting material such as the sustainability appraisal, will be publicised through newspaper advertisements and the Council’s web site. The latter will also be used to host an ‘interactive’ version of the report which enables comments to be submitted electronically. It will also be

sent direct to appropriate consultees including developers' representatives and Registered Social Landlords.

5 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves the Draft SPD as the basis for public participation
2. Delegates authority to the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy for any minor editing changes and approval of the Sustainability Appraisal.

Background Papers:

Dept for Communities & Local Government, 2006, *Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing*

HDC, 2006, *First Draft SPD Developer Contributions Towards Affordable Housing*

HDC, 2005, *Sustainability Appraisal: Scoping Report*

HDC/Fordham Research, 2002, *Housing Needs Survey*

HDC/Fordham Research, 2006, *Housing Needs Survey Update*

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