

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF THE JOINT PLANNING

West Northamptonshire Affordable Housing
Draft Supplementary Planning Document for Public Consultation

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the intended public consultation on the attached draft supplementary document on the provision of affordable housing in West Northamptonshire.
- 1.2 The supplementary planning document (SPD) is being drawn up to provide interim supplementary policy guidance based on the saved local plan policies of the three districts of West Northamptonshire until the adoption of the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document and Core Strategy. These are programmed for adoption in the Local Development Scheme for September 2011 and January 2011 respectively. The saved local plan policies are reproduced in Appendix C of the attached draft SPD.

Consultation

- 1.3 The Local Development Scheme programmes the issuing of the draft SPD for public consultation in April 2009. Consultation starts at the beginning of the month and will last for 6 weeks, a period set by regulation. A press notice will be placed in the local papers prior to the consultation period and besides placing the SPD on the JPU and council's websites copies will be made available at council offices and local libraries. The details will be laid out in the press notice. Letters saying the document is out for consultation and where it can be seen will be sent to interested parties and stakeholders. These will include housing associations, parish councils, developers, the Housing and Communities Agency and West Northamptonshire Development Corporation.

Content

- 1.4 The draft SPD draws on the following sources:
- Planning Policy Statement 1 Delivering Sustainable Development, January 2005
 - Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing, November 2006

- East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, 2005
- East Midland Regional Plan Secretary's of State Proposed Changes, July 2008
- West Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, June 2007 (SHMA)
- Housing Market and Needs Study 2006, 2008 Update.

1.5 These documents have supplied the key information incorporated in the SPD, including:

- a threshold level set at 15 dwelling for urban areas and 4 dwellings in rural areas. Confirmation on the rural threshold levels is awaiting evidence on development site sizes from South Northamptonshire and Daventry Districts.
- levels of provision of 40% in Daventry and South Northamptonshire Districts and 35% in Northampton Borough. The SHMA suggests that higher levels are possible in rural South Northamptonshire, that is 50%. The updated Housing Market and Need Study (2008) indicates that levels above the 35% and 40% could be justified by needs evidence but there may be problems of site viability. The SPD contains the proviso that where viability is an issue evidence should be provided by developers to justify proposals which do not meet the requirements of the local authorities.
- indications that there is a level of need that exceeds the possible supply of affordable housing (taken as a percentage of the allocations contained in the emerging East Midlands Regional Plan) this is illustrated in Table 3.1
- the definition of affordable housing taken from PPS3
- the split between social rented and intermediate housing and the mix and type of housing are to be decided on proven needs at the time proposals come forward.
- information on the split between social rented and intermediate housing is contained in the SHMA and is reproduced in Table 5.1. A review of the SHMA is being undertaken and provision is made to take the results into account when they are available. Proven need at the time of a planning submission is also taken into account when deciding the provision of these two types of affordable housing.

1.6 In addition to these points the SPD recognises the role of viability in the provision of affordable housing and sets out to maximise the yield of affordable dwellings from residential developments by means for cascades within legal agreements. Section 106 cascades will allow adjustments to tenure splits and housing mixes to maximise the provision of affordable housing on sites where there is marginal viability. Increasing the affordable provision above the level that would have otherwise been possible will attract grant from the Housing and Communities Agency.

- 1.7 The SPD covers the provision of exception housing in rural areas where it is attached to or provided within villages of less than 3000 dwellings. Elsewhere specialist providers, such as providers of retirement homes, are required to build their share of affordable dwellings at the same level as other developers.
- 1.8 Measures are included to cover phasing, design issues, off site provision and developer contributions.
- 1.9 A sustainability appraisal is attached to the SPD in Appendix G and will be published at the same time the draft is published for consultation in April 2009.
- 1.10 Daventry and South Northamptonshire District Councils will be supplying information on the sizes of rural housing sites in support of the lower rural threshold of 4 dwellings. The threshold may be varied in light of the forthcoming evidence. Daventry Council will also supplying a list of its preferred housing association partners and amended percentage figures for Table 3.2.

Recommendation

- 1.11 The Joint Strategic Planning Committee is recommend to approve the draft SPD for public consultation for a six week period to start in April 2009.