



New Affordable Homes Commissioning Brief - September 2008

APPENDIX 'A'
AGENDA ITEM 8

Introduction

This brief sets out East Herts Council's requirements for the affordable housing element on new development in East Herts District.

It accompanies and should be read in conjunction with the Council's Affordable Housing & Lifetime Homes Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the Council's Housing Strategy and is underpinned by the Council's Housing Needs Survey 2004 (updated in 2005).

The New Affordable Homes Commissioning Brief provides easy reference for both public and private sector developers. The brief can also be reviewed on a more regular basis and amended as appropriate to ensure that it remains up-to-date.

Affordable Housing Requirement

In order to go some way to meeting the identified need for affordable housing in East Herts, the Council requires up to 40% of the new properties built to be affordable.

In accordance with Policy HSG3 of the Local Plan Second Review, the 40% requirement applies:

- On sites proposing 15 or more dwellings, or over 0.5 hectares in the six main settlements of
 - Bishop's Stortford
 - Buntingford
 - Hertford
 - Sawbridgeworth
 - Stanstead Abbots & St Margaret's
 - Ware

- On sites proposing 3 or more dwellings or over 0.09 hectares in the Category 1 villages of:

- Braughing
- Hertford Heath
- High Cross
- Hunsdon
- Much Hadham
- Puckeridge
- Tewin
- Walkern
- Watton-at-Stone

- On sites proposing 3 or more dwellings or over 0.09 hectares in the Category 2 villages of:

- Aston (excluding Aston End)
- Bayford
- Benington
- Brickendon
- Dane End
- Datchworth
- Furneux Pelham
- Great Amwell
- Hadham Ford
- High Wych
- Little Hadham
- Standon
- Stapleford
- Thundridge
- Wadesmill
- Widford

Tenure Structure

The Housing Needs Survey 2004 identified the tenure structure which will best meet the need for affordable housing. Therefore, of the 40% affordable housing the Council requires:

- 75% of the properties to be rented;

- 25% of the properties to be intermediate housing that being:
 - properties at flexible levels allowing for subsequent 100% ownership;
 - properties to be fixed equity, marketed at 60% open market value;
 - properties for intermediate rent up to 20% below market rent level.
- The percentage required will be determined by the Council taking into consideration the current market and planning requirements.

Size Standards

Of all the affordable housing the Council requires the following proportions of each size of property:

- 1/3 1 bedroom 2 person
- 1/3 2 bedroom 3 and 4 person (ideally 2 bedroom houses)
- 1/3 3 bedroom 4 and 5 person (ideally houses or ground floor flats)

Social Housing Grant

The Council will no longer support the provision of Social Housing Grant or other public subsidy for affordable housing on any site subject to a planning agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, unless it can be proved by use of a recognised economic appraisal toolkit that the scheme becomes unviable.

Schemes that are brought forward which are not subject to a s106 agreement will be considered for public subsidy, including the Housing Corporation funding, in accordance with the Council's Schedule of Rates as set out below.

- Fixed Equity – Nil Grant
- Shared Ownership – £24,500
- Intermediate Rent - £28,000
- Rented 1 bed - £31,000
- Rented 2 bed - £35,000
- Rented 3 bed - £41,000

Uplifts will be available for rehabilitation and conversion schemes.

Design & Quality Standards

The accommodation must meet the relevant Level of the Code for Sustainable Homes and the Housing Corporation Design and Quality Standard such that it would attract the Housing Corporation's Social Housing Grant and other public subsidy such as East Herts District Council capital funding.

Space Standards

East Herts Council expects all general purpose accommodation to be built in accordance with the Housing Corporation standards applicable at the time. As of September 2008 these were.

- 1 bed 2 person units - 45 to 50 square metres
- 2 bed 3 person units - 57 to 67 square metres
- 2 bed 4 person units - 67 to 75 square metres
- 3 bed 5 person units - 75 to 85 square metres

Special Needs Requirements

In accordance with our Housing Strategy and Herts County Council Supporting People Strategy it may be necessary to seek specific affordable housing provision for those with a special need. This may be wheelchair standard accommodation or supported housing for specific needs group.

Provision will vary from site to site and additional grant may be made available to assist in the cost of provision, subject to evidence that such a subsidy is required.

If you have any queries about East Herts Council's New Affordable Homes Commissioning Brief please contact the Council's Housing Development Manager on 01279 655261.