

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE -8 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER
FOR PLANNING AND GROWTH

EAST HERTS DISTRICT PLAN: AFFORDABLE HOUSING
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) - DRAFT FOR PUBLIC
CONSULTATION

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To agree that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the emerging Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is not required.
- To seek Members' agreement to publish the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE: To recommend to Council that:

(A)	In accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 it has been determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the emerging Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is not required as it is unlikely to have significant environmental effects; and
(B)	The draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), as set out in Essential Reference Paper 'B', be agreed and published for a period of public consultation.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 There is an ongoing need for affordable housing in East Herts. A significant proportion of this need will be met through the delivery of housing through the planning system by requiring developers to include affordable housing within their open market housing development as a part of planning permission
- 1.2 A key objective of the East Herts District Plan, adopted in October 2018, is to ensure that new housing is accessible to, and meets the needs and aspirations of the District's communities into the future.
- 1.3 Members may recall that in September 2017 it was agreed that a draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) should be produced to complement the adoption of the District Plan. On 19 December 2018 a draft was approved for public consultation, the consultation took place between 2nd January 2019 and 13th February 2019.
- 1.4 In February 2019 the government updated the National Planning Policy Framework which included a change to the definition of affordable housing. Due to this, the decision was made to produce a new Affordable Housing SPD for consultation in order to accommodate these changes and incorporate comments made during the consultation as well.
- 1.5 Once adopted the Affordable Housing SPD will replace the current Affordable Housing and Lifetime Homes SPD January 2008. The new SPD will be a material planning consideration which will be taken into account in deciding a planning application or on an appeal against a planning decision.
- 1.6 The SPD supports Policy HOU3: Affordable Housing, as set out in the District Plan, and seeks to ensure the effective and consistent implementation of the Plan's policies relating to the provision of Affordable Housing in East Herts.
- 1.6 A copy of the draft SPD is attached at **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 Supplementary Planning Documents are documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as affordable housing.
- 2.2 The draft Affordable Housing SPD has been prepared to provide further guidance to applicants in relation to the policies set out in Chapter 14: Housing of the District Plan.
- 2.3 In setting out the Council's expectations for the delivery of affordable housing, the draft SPD seeks to increase the efficiency of the negotiations between the council and the applicant, and ensure the delivery of affordable dwellings of a tenure, type, size and affordability, concurrent with identified need and ensure that it is effectively integrated within development sites in terms of location and design to create mixed and balanced communities.
- 2.4 An update to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is due for decision at Council on 23rd October 2019. It is intended that the draft SPD will be published for a period of consultation that will comply with the SCI.
- 2.5 Following consultation, a final version of the SPD will be produced. At the same time a statement will be prepared setting out who was consulted during the preparation of the SPD; a summary of the main issues raised; and how those issues have been addressed in the updated SPD.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 2.6 Under the requirements of the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), certain types of plans that set the framework for the consent of future development projects, must be subject to an environmental assessment. It is

therefore a requirement that the Council undertakes a Screening Assessment to determine whether the Draft Affordable Housing SPD should be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

- 2.7 The Council's Draft Screening Statement concludes that the Draft SPD is unlikely to have significant environmental, social or economic effects beyond those of the District Plan policies it supplements; does not create new policies and only serves to provide useful guidance on how to effectively and consistently implement the District Plan policies and therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 2.8 The Regulations require that the Council consults three statutory bodies in reaching this determination. Consultation has therefore been carried out with the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England. At the time of this report, one response has been received from Historic England that agreed with the Council's conclusions. No response has been received from the Environment Agency or Natural England at this time, although no contrary view is anticipated. The Screening Statement attached at **Essential Reference Paper 'C'** is therefore provided in draft, pending the receipt of consultation responses.
- 3.0 Implications/Consultations
- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

District Planning Executive Panel Meeting - 21 September 2017:
<http://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=151&MIId=3236&Ver=4&J=3>

Council – 19 December 2018:

<http://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Id=22860&J=6>

Essential Reference Papers

- ERP 'A':** Implications/Consultations
ERP 'B': Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
ERP 'C': Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement

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