

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL - 19 DECEMBER 2018

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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 COUNCIL: that

(A)	in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, to determine 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 six-week period of public consultation.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Members will recall that on the 21 September 2017 it was agreed that a draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) would be produced, with the content to be agreed prior to public consultation (see Background Papers).
- 1.2 There is an ongoing need for affordable housing in East Herts. A significant proportion of this need will be met through the delivery of affordable housing through the planning system.
- 1.3 The East Herts District Plan 2018 contains the latest information on affordability and the housing market in East Herts. The District Plan sets out the council's approach to the delivery of affordable housing.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 The draft SPD has been prepared by Housing Services in collaboration with Planning and Legal Services. 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 Policy HOU3 of the East Herts District Plan, adopted October 2018, sets out the affordable housing requirements for the district.

- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 The draft Affordable Housing SPD has been prepared to provide further guidance to applicants in relation to the following District Plan Policies:
- Policy HOU1 - Type and Mix of Housing
 - Policy HOU3 - Affordable Housing
 - Policy HOU4 - Rural Exception Affordable Housing Sites
 - Policy HOU7- Accessible and Adaptable homes
 - Policy HOU8 - Self-Build and Custom Build Housing
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 The draft SPD covers all aspects of affordable housing and has chapters covering:
- Pre-application discussions
 - Design and Layout
 - Affordable Housing Delivery
 - Specialist Housing
 - Rural Exception Housing
 - Self-Build and Community Led Housing
 - Registered Providers
 - Funding
 - Viability
 - Monitoring

2.6 It is intended that the draft SPD will be published for a six-week period of consultation between 2nd January 2019 and 13th February 2019. The consultation will meet all the statutory requirements, including:

- Placing the consultation documents on the Council's website for the duration of the consultation;
- Notifying relevant consultees by email or letter;
- Making hard copies of the consultation documents available at the Council's offices in Hertford and Bishop's Stortford, and at libraries across the district.

2.7 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 SPD. It is currently anticipated that the final SPD will be presented to Members in spring 2019.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

2.8 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.

2.9 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.

2.10 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, no responses have been received, though 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.

2.11 The Executive, on 11 December 2018, supported the recommendations now detailed.

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&MId=3236&Ver=4&J=3>

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