

CABINET – 31 MAY 2006

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report asks Cabinet to adopt the attached guidance as Council policy. The over-riding aim of the guidance is to improve the delivery of affordable housing.

It sets out in detail the Council's affordable housing objectives and how it aims to achieve them in relation to sites where planning policies require a proportion of housing to be set aside for affordable housing purposes.

The document will act as a guide for developers and landowners, making explicit what the Council's expectations are.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Affordable Housing Guidelines set out in Appendix 1 to the Report be adopted, subject to any minor editing changes to be agreed by the Director of Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities.

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DETAIL:

1 Background

- 1.1 The provision of affordable housing is amongst the Council's key Local Plan and Housing Strategy priorities.
- 1.2 One of the principle ways of ways of providing this housing is through the application of Local Plan Policy H5 which requires, on suitable sites, a proportion of housing to be set aside as affordable housing. This is achieved through negotiation with land owners and developers. Although the Local Plan policy provides a sound base for negotiation the lack of detail, particularly with respect to how the policy is to be implemented, creates a degree of uncertainty.
- 1.3 To overcome this problem Affordable Housing Development Guidelines have been drafted. These deal only with development proposals where planning policies would trigger an affordable housing requirement. They do not deal with proposals for rural exception affordable housing.
- 1.4 The underlying aim of the guidance is to improve the supply of affordable housing.

2 Affordable Housing Development Guidance

- 2.1 The guidance sets out the Council's affordable housing priorities and makes clear how these should be achieved. It is worth highlighting several points that are covered in the guidance.
 - 2.1.1 The priority is for the provision of social rented housing.
 - 2.2.2 Affordable housing should be well integrated with market housing and designed to a high standard.
 - 2.2.3 Landowners/developers should make land available for affordable housing at nil cost.
- 2.2 A companion model planning agreement will be published at the same time as the guidance, following the principles established by the approved version of the document.
- 2.3 It is intended that the guidance acts as a pre-cursor to a formal affordable housing supplementary planning document that will be prepared in the future.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:3. CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 3.1 The guidance will help achieve the Council's goal of having a population that live in decent and affordable homes, and the *Home and Jobs* priority of providing housing to meet the needs of the whole community.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 There are no direct resource implications as a result of this paper, however one of the aims of the guidance is to improve value for money in the wider provision of affordable housing. On occasions the Council does assist directly in the funding of affordable housing development. This guidance will limit the levels of this assistance needed by helping control the values of affordable housing land. The provision of affordable housing also limits the need to accommodate households in other forms of accommodation, for instance temporary accommodation, which are a cost to the Council.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

- 1 Affordable Housing Development Guidelines.