



<u>Committee and Date</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Paper</u>
Council  16 July 2009		

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING INTERIM PLANNING GUIDANCE

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### Summary

The purpose of this report is to recommend the adoption of a single county wide Interim Affordable Housing Planning Guidance aimed at providing consistency of approach for exception sites and mixed urban developments. The Guidance will sit alongside existing policies contained within adopted local plans and act as a material planning consideration for decision makers. In due course the Guidance will be overtaken by the broad affordable housing policies to be expressed within the emerging Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework. Adopting a "sound" Core Strategy is planned for the spring of 2011, so Members will appreciate the need to set an early course for a Shropshire policy in the Context of the ongoing work on the Core Strategy ensuring that there is no pause in the delivery of affordable housing in the meantime.

### Recommendation

- A. That the responses to the public consultation process on the draft Interim Guidance, together with suggested responses and changes contained in appendix 2 to this report be noted.
- B. That the Interim Planning Guidance on Affordable housing at appendix 1 be approved and referred to Full Council for adoption as a material planning consideration when determining relevant planning applications in addition to existing policies in the various adopted local plans within Shropshire.

## REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

1. The delivery of affordable housing was a key priority of the former authorities making up Shropshire Council, and it remains a community and corporate priority for the new council. The Implementation Executive which oversaw the transition to Shropshire Council envisaged that an early goal for the new council would be the adoption of a single planning policy document that would help to provide a clear and consistent message to the public, development industry and our housing partners in respect of affordable housing.

## **BACKGROUND**

2. Members of the LDF sub committee of the Implementation Executive received a report on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2008 which introduced the work of a cross discipline Affordable Housing Working Group to assist delivery of the then draft Shropshire Housing Strategy in so far as it related to affordable housing delivery. The report, in particular, covered future supply side issues, progress on the LDF evidence base, and progress towards a Shropshire wide Interim Affordable Housing Policy Statement.
3. A subsequent report to the LDF sub committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December agreed to the scope and terms of, the draft Affordable Housing Interim Planning Guidance and the indicative timetable for adoption.

## **INTERIM AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLANNING GUIDANCE**

4. The desirability of having an interim affordable housing policy in place early in the new administration has guided the pace of progress on this policy development work. The limitations for the guidance, given that existing policies setting out percentages and thresholds will need to remain in place until such time as they are replaced by the Core Strategy, was also acknowledged and has reasonably limited the scope of the guidance. The Guidance concentrates on the areas of greatest potential for increased affordable housing delivery, being that of the common application of exception site policies on the edge of urban areas and in the rural village context to support the social sustainability of rural communities as envisaged in the Shropshire Housing Strategy.
5. The Interim Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing, once adopted, will sit alongside other policies and interim policy statements existing for the time being in the district and borough areas and it will act as a complimentary material planning consideration when discussing planning applications. This will facilitate a more coherent and positive approach to affordable housing designed to meet local needs where they arise.
6. The Guidance is considered to provide a realistic mechanism to extend the availability of an exceptions approach across Shropshire villages as envisaged by PPS3 "Housing" and supported by the recent Mathew Taylor Review.
7. The Implementation Executive for Shropshire Council on 3 February 2009 approved the Interim Planning Guidance (IPG) on affordable housing for the purposes of consultation. A six-week consultation period, including a range of events and meeting, followed (16 March – 27 April 2009) and resulted in significant interest and response levels. A summary of these responses and comments on them are set out at appendix 2 to this report.
8. In overall terms there has been broad support for an extension of existing opportunities and a locally distinctive approach that recognises the rural nature of Shropshire. An approach which has been seen at a regional level

as representing best practice and which has provoked significant national interest as a means of meeting the needs of and supporting rural communities.

9. Perhaps of most significance will be the introduction, via this Guidance, of a policy basis for now allowing individual self build plots to come forward in rural communities to meet some of the identified local need for affordable housing which will be held in perpetuity as such by way of a legal (section 106) agreement. These properties, limited in size and value through the legal agreement will be wholly owned by the individuals applying for planning permission and will be available for resale in the normal way but limited only through a cascade system to other local people, thus retaining the resource of the house and local people in their community of choice.
10. The development of this guidance at this time also chimes with national and regional emphasis on delivering rural affordable housing particularly within settlements of less than 3,000 in population, and closely matches the Government's own response to the Mathew Taylor Review.

<p><b>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</b>          Planning Policy for Affordable Housing Position Statement, LDF Sub Committee 6<sup>th</sup> October 2008.          Services Transition Sub Committee 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008          Planning Policy for Affordable Housing Position Statement, LDF Sub Committee 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008.</p>
<p><b>Human Rights Act Appraisal</b>          Human Rights Act implications arising from this report are centred on a person's right to a home.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Appraisal</b>          There are no environmental consequences arising directly from this report, however future policy development in respect of the distribution of residential development will be subject to sustainability appraisal and any individual planning applications arising will be considered on merit</p>
<p><b>Risk Management Appraisal</b>          There are no risk management issues arising directly from this report, however LPSA 8 is a key target for Shropshire Councils based on Affordable Housing Commencements and failure to deliver could have financial implications.</p>
<p><b>Community / Consultations Appraisal</b>          Interim Affordable Housing Guidance was subject to a 6 week period of consultation.</p>
<p><b>Member Champions</b> - Subject of ratification.</p>
<p><b>Local Member</b> - All</p>
<p><b>Appendices</b>          1. Shropshire Interim Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing          2. Draft Interim Planning Guidance On Affordable Housing Consultation Statement</p>