

Forest Heath District Council

(This report is a key decision. This report has been subject to appropriate notice of publication under the Council's Access to Information Rules)

Report of the Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Transport

LOCAL PLAN WORKING GROUP

26 JULY 2012

LOP12/003

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – JOINT AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (Forward Plan Reference – May12/03)

Summary and reasons for recommendation(s)

A Supplementary Planning Document relating to Affordable Housing has been developed by St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath to assist all involved in the delivery of affordable housing. Members will recall that the Local Development Framework Working Group, at its meeting on 8 May 2012, approved a version of this for public consultation. This consultation never commenced and further work has been done to the document to introduce a 'Local Connection Criteria' to enable to allocation of housing to those in need. No other changes have been made to the previously agreed document but it is considered necessary to receive the approval of the Working Group before consultation on the amended document takes place.

Prior to being adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, the document needs to be the subject of public consultation and the Working Group is therefore requested to recommend the approval of the draft Supplementary Planning Document for consultation

Recommendation(s)

That the Local Plan Working Group resolve that the Joint Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document be approved for public consultation.

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How will the recommendations help us meet our strategic priorities?

1. The Local Development Framework relates to the following Corporate Priorities: Affordable and accessible housing, Community engagement and communication, Community safety, Economic regeneration, Street scene and the environment, and Transport issues.
2. The provision of this Supplementary Planning Guidance will ensure the more consistent determination of planning applications, thereby contributing towards the Authority meeting its priorities.

Wards affected

3. The Supplementary Planning Document will be applied District-wide. It therefore affects all Wards.

Key issues and Discussion

4. Members will note the previous consideration and approval of this draft document in May 2012 (see previous covering report at Working Paper 1). The revised draft SPD is shown at Working Paper 2, with the additional paragraphs (5.30 and 5.31) included.
5. These set out the hierarchy of local connections that will apply when housing is being allocated. These seek to introduce a higher priority for allocation to people with greater local connections.

Timescales and what happens now?

6. If these changes are agreed consultation can commence as soon as required. In this instance however, it is proposed to run the consultation at the same time as the Development Management Policies consultation (see report elsewhere on this agenda) since there are significant benefits to both the Council and to potential respondents in running them together. This is anticipated to commence soon after Council on 25th September 2012, for a period of 8 weeks. All responses to the consultation will be reported and if necessary, a modified version of the document will be put forward for final approval with the final document anticipated to be adopted around February 2013.

Community impact

7. The implications of adopting this SPD are significant, and will lead to consistency of approach when dealing with planning applications that raise issues in relation to affordable housing.

Financial and resource implications

8. This SPD can be delivered within the projected Local Development Framework budget. This includes provision for professional fees and community consultation to ensure that the timetable for delivery is met.

Risk management implications

9. The preparation of an up-to-date planning policy framework is a statutory requirement and the lack of such a framework militates against the proper planning of the District and, particularly in light of the emerging National Planning Policy Framework, could place the Council at risk of planning appeals being upheld with the possible award of costs against it.

Legal/Policy implications

10. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, (2004), requires Forest Heath District Council to prepare and keep an up to date Local Development Framework. A Local Development Framework is essential for the continuation of an effective planning service and key to other Council services areas.

Documents attached

Working Paper 1 – Local Development Framework Agenda report – 8 May 2012
Working Paper 2 – Revised draft Affordable Housing SPD.

Background Papers

None