



Planning Policy
East Devon District Council
Blackdown House
Border Road
Heathpark Industrial Estate
Honiton
EX14 1EJ

Date: 28 February 2020

Our Ref: LS M5/0107-20

By email only:

planningpolicy@eastdevon.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: EAST DEVON DRAFT AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPD

We represent the **South West HA Planning Consortium** which includes all the leading Housing Associations (HAs) across the South West. Our clients' principal concern is to optimise the provision of affordable housing through the preparation of consistent policies that help deliver the wider economic and social outcomes needed across the South West region. As significant developers and investors in local people, HAPCs are well placed to contribute to local plan objectives and act as long-term partners in the community. We welcome the opportunity to make comments on this document.

Definitions

While we acknowledge that the Council have more concisely reproduced national policy to define the various affordable housing tenures at paragraph 2.1, we recommend that the SPD refrains from reproducing national policy and instead simply directs readers to Annex 2 of the NPPF in order to ensure the document's longevity and consistency.

What mix of affordable housing tenures should be provided?

The text at paragraph 4.5 suggests that the Council will seek to restrict delivery of affordable housing to those tenures for which there is already a proven need in the SHMA. However, the SHMA is very dated and pre-dates the revisions to the NPPF which included the change in the affordable housing definition. Nevertheless, this should not prevent the Council from accepting evidence of need for the wider range of tenures set out in the NPPF, as this would limit the opportunities to meet housing need across East Devon. The text should be amended, removing reference to the Council's priorities for shared ownership, relevant equity loans, and other low cost homes for sale.

Are there any design standards that affordable housing should meet?

Paragraph 5.9 should be removed as it introduces an element of uncertainty for developers when seeking to understand the Council's policy position on requiring the national internal space standards on new residential development. As the Council has no adopted policy on this, it may use other design criteria for build quality, but internal space standards may only be set in policy and cannot be introduced or required through this SPD.

Affordable homes *in perpetuity*

Paragraph 7.15 notes that 'where possible', affordable housing will be subject to an *in perpetuity* restriction through Section 106 agreements. Referring to Appendix 3 which shows an example of a standard S106 Agreement, paragraph 2.4 states that "*affordable housing units shall only be used for the purpose of providing affordable housing and shall be so used in perpetuity*".

The act of securing affordable housing *in perpetuity* is exclusively applied to rural exception sites, as noted within Annex 2 of the NPPF. National policy refrains from securing all affordable housing in perpetuity as it can cause a number of issues for affordable housing providers and purchasers when attempting to secure mortgages for properties restricted in this manner. The Council is more likely to create barriers to affordable home ownership and may negatively impact sought after affordable housing delivery throughout East Devon by implementing such a policy. To ensure that the SPD is capable of being implemented properly and fairly, all references to retaining affordable housing in perpetuity should be removed unless explicitly relating to rural exception sites.

We would like to be notified of further consultations on the Affordable Housing SPD by email only to [REDACTED]. Please ensure that the **South West Housing Association Planning Consortium** is retained on the consultation database, with **Tetlow King Planning** listed as its agent.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

LEONIE STOATE BSc (HONS) MSc
ASSISTANT PLANNER
For and On Behalf Of
TETLOW KING PLANNING

[REDACTED]

cc: Aster Group
Guinness Partnership
LiveWest
Sovereign Housing Association
Westward Housing Group
Yarlington Housing Group

John Golding – Housing Enabling Officer
Melissa Wall – Housing Enabling Officer