

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)**

### **Executive Summary**

The Affordable Housing Delivery Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides detail on how the Council's affordable housing policy, Core Strategy policy CS12, is to be implemented. The first version of the SPD was adopted in 2014, so a thorough revision of the document has been necessary to meet today's circumstances.

The draft revised SPD was approved by the Executive for a four week consultation at its meeting on 17 November 2022. The consultation period was between 21 November and 19 December 2022. The report outlines the various responses to the consultation and requests the Executive to recommend to Council to adopt the SPD for the purposes of interpreting affordable housing requirements in the Borough. A total of 13 individuals and organisations made representations. A summary of the representations and how they have been taken into account is in Appendix 1. Where Officers have proposed modifications, they are incorporated in the revised SPD, which is attached as Appendix 2. Overall, the proposed modifications are of minor nature and do not change the general thrust of the Draft SPD that was approved by the Executive for consultation.

The responses were considered by the LDF Working Group at its meeting on 11 January 2023 and the report at its meeting on 1 February 2023. The Minutes of those meetings are attached as Appendix 3. The Working Group has proposed some ways to address issues raised during the consultation on the SPD. These are incorporated in the SPD and/or the report.

### **Recommendations**

The Executive is requested to:

#### **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That**

- (i) the various representations to the Affordable Housing Delivery Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation together with Officer's responses and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted;**
- (ii) the revised Affordable Housing Delivery SPD included in Appendix 2 to the report be adopted as Supplementary Planning Document for the purposes of managing development across the Borough and other planning decisions ; and**
- (iii) the requirements of the SPD should apply from the date of adoption, in this case 30 March 2023.**

### **Reasons for Decision**

Reason: To ensure that there is up to date guidance on the interpretation of Woking Core Strategy Policy CS12: Affordable Housing.

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The item(s) above will need to be dealt with by way of a recommendation to Council.

**Background Papers:** None.

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## **Affordable Housing Delivery Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The report outlines the various responses to the consultation on the Affordable Housing Delivery Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and requests the Executive to recommend to Council to adopt the SPD for the purposes of interpreting Woking Core Strategy Policy CS12: Affordable Housing. The draft SPD was considered by Local Development Framework Working Group on 14 September 2022 and Housing Task Group on 22 September 2022 and approved by the Executive for a four weeks consultation at its meeting on 17 November 2022. The consultation period was between 21 November and 19 December 2022. A total of 13 individuals and organisations made representations. A summary of the representations and how they have been taken into account is in Appendix 1. Where Officers have proposed modifications, they are incorporated in the revised SPD, which is attached as Appendix 2. Overall, the proposed modifications are of minor nature and do not change the general thrust of the Draft SPD that was approved by the Executive for consultation.
- 1.2 The adoption of the Affordable Housing Delivery SPD will be significant to the delivery of the Core Strategy. It provides detailed guidance on how to interpret Policy CS12: Affordable Housing. The existing Affordable Housing Delivery SPD was adopted several years ago in a very different policy context, and requires an update to ensure the Council's position can fully support the delivery of affordable housing. The draft updated SPD addresses current national policy, legal context and affordable housing need, among other points, to ensure that it is clear how Policy CS12 should be interpreted in the light of those issues.
- 1.3 Given its significance as set out above, Members of the Executive are requested to recommend to Council to adopt the SPD. In adopting the SPD, the Council is also responding to concerns expressed by some members of the general public and Members to ensure that the rate of affordable housing delivery in the Borough is increased.
- 1.4 The SPD will be used by:
  - Planning Officers as guidance against which to assess the required provision of affordable housing when determining applications and offering pre-application advice.
  - Council Members when assessing development proposals in advance of and at Planning Committee meetings; and
  - Applicants and developers when preparing their development schemes, as guidance to indicate ways in which high quality and exceptional design can be achieved.
- 1.5 Officers are satisfied that the contents of the revised SPD including the proposed amendments are sufficiently robust and at the same time allow scope for flexibility to apply its key principles to the merits of individual applications and should therefore be supported for adoption. Overall, it will guide improvements in the provision of affordable housing by new market-led housing developments in Woking.

### **2.0 Nature and analysis of representations**

- 2.1 A total of 13 individuals and organisations responded to the consultation. Of these, five had no comment to make. The other representors raised issues including, among others:

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- Issues caused by the implementation of the national First Homes policy.
- Concern about detailed wording of a small number of requirements.
- Request for NHS staff to be mentioned as key workers.
- Querying the Borough's record of Affordable Housing delivery, and what the SPD will do to improve it.
- Full support for the proposed details of policy application.

2.2 The range of issues summarised above are by no means exhaustive. A full summary of the representations received and Officer's response with recommendations is included in Appendix 1. Members are encouraged to read this in full.

### **3.0 Summary of the draft Affordable Housing Delivery SPD**

3.1 Members are assured that the structure of the revised SPD has not changed from the draft that was approved by the Executive before it was published for consultation. Proposed modifications as a result of consideration of the representations are highlighted. However, for the avoidance of doubt, the key topics covered in the SPD are listed below. The SPD is structured into six parts as follows:

- Planning and Housing Policy Context: National, local and neighbourhood planning policy; CIL; Annual Monitoring Reports; the Housing Strategy, and affordability.
- Local Evidence of Housing Need: Guidance on the delivery of different types, sizes and tenures of affordable homes needed, including the new topics of First Homes and Build to Rent.
- Delivery of Affordable Housing: On-site and off-site provision of affordable housing, including how to calculate any financial contributions that may be required.
- Requirements for Affordable Housing Provision: Guidance about the situations in which Affordable Housing provision will be required by policy CS12.
- Planning Process: Guidance regarding Section 106 procedures, scheduling of affordable housing, maintaining accommodation as affordable housing, recycling of receipts and affordable housing delivery requirements off-site.

### **4.0 Next stages of the process**

4.1 Subject to the recommendations of the Executive it is expected that the report will be considered by Council for adoption at its meeting on 30 March 2023. When adopted, the SPD will take immediate effect from the date of adoption.

### **5.0 Corporate Strategy**

5.1 The SPD will make a meaningful contribution to the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and its objectives to deliver new affordable homes. It will help create an enterprising, vibrant and sustainable borough by ensuring that development makes more contribution to the provision of affordable housing.

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### **6.0 Implications**

#### Finance and Risk

- 6.1 The Core Strategy was adopted in October 2012 and reviewed. The Site Allocations DPD was adopted in October 2021. Planning applications continue to be submitted to deliver their requirements. It is important that the revised Affordable Housing Delivery SOD is adopted and in reasonable time to provide the necessary framework to ensure better provision of affordable housing on the development coming forward. Failure to support the recommendations of the report could further delay the adoption of the SPD.
- 6.2 There are no additional financial implications for preparing the SPD (other than an expected rise in financial contributions from developments towards affordable housing). The preparation of the SPD has been done in-house, and the cost has been met from the existing Planning Policy and Housing Service budgets.

#### Equalities and Human Resources

- 6.3 There are no human resources implications for preparing the SPD. The SPD would have positive impacts on equalities by leading to increased provision of affordable housing.

#### Legal

- 6.4 The SPD should be prepared to so as not to conflict with the adopted development plan. Officers will continue to ensure that this requirement is met to avoid the risk of legal challenge.

### **7.0 Engagement and Consultation**

- 7.1 The revised SPD has been prepared with the active involvement of the relevant sections of the Council. In particular, the document was prepared jointly by the Planning Policy and Strategic Housing and Development teams, and the Development Management Team were consulted during its production. The draft SPD was published for consultation between 21 November and 19 December 2022, and comments by organisations and individuals have been taken into account in finalising the SPD. The responses and revised SPD were considered by the LDF Working Group on 11 January and 1 February 2023 respectively, and subject to the decision of Executive it will be considered for adoption by Council on 30 March 2023.

REPORT ENDS