

## **Appendix B**

### **Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document**

#### **Consultation Statement**

Under Regulation 12(a) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, West Lancashire Borough Council consulted the following bodies on the scope of the proposed Affordable Housing SPD:

- Statutory Consultees (“Specific Consultation Bodies” as defined by Regulation 2 of the above Regulations);
- Locally active housebuilders and Registered Providers (including members of the joint West Lancashire, Sefton and Knowsley Housing Market Partnership);
- Locally active planning agents.

The table on the following pages records which parties made representations on the scope of the SPD, the issues raised by the said parties, and the Council’s response in terms of how these issues have been addressed in the draft SPD.

## Summary of comments made on Reg 12(a) consultation on Affordable Housing SPD

February 2015

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
01	Highways Agency	<p>General comments re impact of housing development on the strategic road network that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Agency will continue to review any new planning applications for housing based on the current arrangements with regard to <i>DfT Circular 02/2013</i> &amp; <i>NPPF</i> as well as the published guidance on transport evidence basis in plan making.</li> <li>• Developments of above 50 units should be accompanied by a Transport Statement / Assessment that considers the traffic impact upon the strategic road network; impact should be 'nil-detriment' when complete. Would encourage applicants to consider sustainability and reduce the need for vehicle trips.</li> <li>• Re. CIL: should development require alterations to the strategic road network, the cost of such alterations should be funded directly by the proposer via S278 Agreement (Highways Act 1980); having first consulted / scoped with the Agency. (S)</li> </ul>	<p>With regard to the three bullet points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments noted.</li> <li>• Noted. This requirement is better placed in a more general SPD (or in the Local Plan itself) rather than in any policy about affordable housing.</li> <li>• Noted. This requirement is outside the scope of this SPD.</li> </ul>
02	Sefton MBC	No comments at this stage; would be interested to see the document as it progresses towards adoption.	Noted. Sefton MBC will be consulted (as a Statutory Consultee) on the draft SPD following its intended approval for consultation by Cabinet.
03	The Coal Authority	No comments	-
04	English Heritage	No comments	-
05	Newburgh Parish Council	No comments	-
06	Marine Management Organisation	No comments	-
07	Wrightington Parish Council	Wrightington Parish Council would like the policies contained within this document to ensure that affordable home provision is only allowed on sites which can sustain the development by the provision of adequate amenities and facilities to meet the needs of the development.	The general development strategy of the 'parent' West Lancashire Local Plan (WLLP) (policy SP1) seeks to direct development to the most sustainable locations, where infrastructure, services and facilities are in place, or can easily be put in place.
08	Aughton Residents Group	Aughton Residents Group have always acknowledged the professionalism and expertise of the Senior Planning Officers in the Borough and therefore would not consider questioning their determination of the nature and volume of affordable and specialist housing needs of the Borough. There are however serious concerns that the officers recommendations and the	<p>With regard to the three summary points:</p> <p>1. The SPD must comply with "higher" / "parent" policies, in this case WLLP policy RS2, which states that affordable housing requirements must be met, but that viability will be taken into account when</p>

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p>real needs of the community are often disregarded in the face of party politics and political expediency.</p> <p>The development of the Local Plan identified the need for approximately 4,500 additional dwellings to meet the long term needs of the community. Councillors, when faced with challenges to the use of Agricultural Green Belt Land, were absolutely adamant that housing was needed for the next generation of local young families and for those unable to purchase quality housing at an affordable price. That being the case it is imperative that all developments are legally bound to deliver the requisite percentage of affordable housing on the actual site that the main development takes place. If young and/or less wealthy families in Aughton need affordable housing then they should be provided within developments in Aughton. Developers must not be allowed to offset the affordable housing requirements to other locations outside of Aughton. Why should members of our community be forced to live outside the area purely because Borough Councillors place greater weight on the financial rewards of allowing developers to avoid their affordable housing obligation, than on local people being able to live within their own community.</p> <p>In summary:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The SPD is unequivocal in the requirement for developers to deliver the requisite level of affordable housing.</li> <li>2. The SPD ensures that the Affordable Housing requirements are met within the actual development and not allowed to be offset or avoided.</li> <li>3. Planning Permission is not granted for any proposed development that does not deliver on the affordable housing requirements.</li> </ol>	<p>assessing individual schemes. This is in line with national policy. (It is unlikely WLLP policy RS2 would have been found sound at examination if it did not include such a reference to viability.) The SPD cannot be more unequivocal than WLLP policy RS2.</p> <p>2. Similar to the above, the justification to WLLP policy RS2 explains that affordable housing should be provided on the development site, but it allows off-site provision as an exception, where robustly justified. The WLLP does not allow for affordable housing to be "offset" (i.e. it does not allow for commuted sums in lieu of affordable housing) or avoided.</p> <p>3. As per (1) above, WLLP policy RS2 allows for viability to be taken into account. In certain cases, where robustly justified by evidence, this may result in some developments not meeting the percentage requirements set out in policy RS2. The SPD must conform to this policy approach.</p>
09	Natural England	No comments	-
10	Lancashire County Council	No comments	-
11	Halsall Parish Council	<p>Halsall Parish Council asks that consideration be given to use brown belt areas in preference to green belt areas and that any affordable housing built affords the residents reasonable room and incorporates drives and garden space with access of movement from back to front without having to transport rubbish through houses.</p> <p>Can the SPD also consider 30 dwellings per hectare as a maximum rather than a minimum density for housing developments in rural areas and that all rural developments fully take into account proposed changes in surface water drainage in West Lancashire, in particular the proposed flooding of parts of West</p>	<p>WLLP policy SP1 makes clear that the need to prioritise brownfield land over greenfield land for development is an important consideration, as does national policy. Similarly, development on non-Green Belt land is prioritised over development on Green Belt land. Such a policy is not considered necessary in the Affordable Housing SPD as it is covered by 'parent' policies.</p> <p>It is agreed that dwellings should provide reasonable room size; whilst a policy on this (or the</p>

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p>Lancashire due to the proposed closure of pumping stations into the Alt and Crossens.</p>	<p>adoption of the emerging national space standards for housing) would have been desirable in the SPD, such a policy cannot be introduced via an SPD (see HBF comment no. 7 below).</p> <p>WLLP policy RS1(d) has 30 dwellings per hectare as a minimum, but allows for lower densities where special circumstances are demonstrated. The SPD must conform to this policy.</p> <p>It is agreed that rural developments should take into account flooding-related issues, including the Alt-Crossens plans. However, the affordable housing SPD is not considered the most appropriate place for such a policy, the matter being covered in WLLP policy GN3.</p>
12	House Builders Federation	<p><b>1. Amount of affordable housing</b>  The proposed outline indicates the SPD will discuss targets and thresholds. In terms of targets these are set out within policy RS2 of the adopted Local Plan. It is important that the SPD does not seek to vary the targets set out within the policy as such an approach would be contrary to NPPF paragraph 174 which requires local standards including those for affordable housing to be set out within the Local Plan. If the Council can justify a variation of the target this should only be undertaken through a full or partial plan review.</p> <p>It is noted that the SPD will take account of the recent Government announcement upon a national threshold, this is supported. The NPPG and written Ministerial Statement also provide for vacant building credits. This applies where a vacant building is either brought back into lawful use or is demolished to be replaced by a new building. In such cases a financial credit equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of relevant vacant buildings should be applied (see NPPG ID: 23b-022-20141128 for further details). The SPD should also refer to this new provision.</p> <p><b>2. Type / tenure of affordable housing</b>  Further guidance upon the type and tenure of affordable housing to be provided would be beneficial to the understanding of affordable housing requirements. It is, however, important that the SPD applies any such requirements flexibly to take account of the viability and characteristics of individual sites as well as the changing needs over time.</p>	<p>With regard to the numbered points raised by the HBF:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Comments noted and agreed. The SPD does not propose to vary WLLP percentage requirement, unless evidence demonstrates a need to do so (as set out in WLLP policy RS2). The SPD covers the change to thresholds and vacant building credit.</li> <li>2. Noted. The SPD covers viability considerations.</li> <li>3. Noted. The SPD covers this matter as suggested.</li> <li>4. The SPD adds further clarification to WLLP paragraph 7.30.</li> <li>5. The section on CIL deals primarily with Social Housing Relief.</li> <li>6. Noted.</li> <li>7. Noted.</li> <li>8. The Council will consult the HBF on the SPD as it emerges.</li> </ol>

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p><b>3. Specialist housing for the elderly</b> Further information upon this element of policy RS2 would assist the understanding of the policy requirements and potential viability implications.</p> <p><b>4. On / off-site provision</b> Additional information which provides clarity upon the phrases 'exceptional circumstances' and 'locality' would aid the interpretation of policy RS2.</p> <p><b>5. The Community Infrastructure Levy</b> The inclusion of a section upon CIL may be beneficial, however the outline provides no detail upon what this may include.</p> <p><b>6. Viability of development</b> The inclusion of a section upon viability is supported.</p> <p><b>7. Space standards</b> The outline indicates the Council is seeking to impose space standards for affordable housing. This would be contrary to the Government's current work upon the Housing Standards Review which seeks to reduce the proliferation of local standards. The recent consultation '<i>Housing Standards Review - Technical Consultation</i>' (September 2014) clearly indicates that any space standard must be the proposed national standard which can only be introduced via a local plan examination. To introduce such a policy the Council would need to provide evidence which considers the impact and effect of that policy on development in their local area. The required evidence may include issues such as the need for such property sizes, impact upon viability, affordability of such property sizes and a transitional period. Given that this is an SPD and not a local plan the Council should not seek to introduce such a standard via this method.</p> <p><b>8. Information</b> I trust that the Council will find the foregoing comments useful in the preparation of the Affordable Housing SPD. I would happy to discuss these comments further if required. I also wish to be kept informed of any future consultations upon the Local Plan and associated matters.</p>	
13	Lathom South Parish Council	No comments	-