



# Strategic Planning And Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Report for:</b>	Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Title of report:</b>	Interim Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document: Draft for Public Consultation
<b>Date:</b>	6 March 2024
<b>Report on behalf of:</b>	Councillor Wilkie, Portfolio Holder for Place
<b>Part:</b>	I
<b>If Part II, reason:</b>	N/A
<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1: Interim Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document: Draft for Public Consultation  Appendix 2: Community Impact Assessment
<b>Background papers:</b>	None
<b>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</b>	SPD: Supplementary Planning Document

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<b>Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>A clean, safe and enjoyable environment</p> <p>Building strong and vibrant communities</p> <p>Ensuring economic growth and prosperity</p> <p>Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need</p>
<b>Wards affected</b>	ALL
<b>Purpose of the report:</b>	To present the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to the Committee as part of the

	programme for sign-off, culminating in a public consultation on the document.
<b>Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):</b>	That the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) be submitted to Cabinet on 21 May 2024, with a recommendation that it be approved for public consultation purposes.
<b>Period for post policy/project review:</b>	

## 1 Introduction/Background:

1.1. The Council's adopted planning policies on affordable housing are set out in the Core Strategy (2013) and Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2017):

[https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/adopted-core-strategy-2013.pdf?sfvrsn=80753a9e\\_2](https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/adopted-core-strategy-2013.pdf?sfvrsn=80753a9e_2)

[https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/dacorum-site-allocations-statement-june-2017.pdf?sfvrsn=d63a3c9e\\_10](https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/dacorum-site-allocations-statement-june-2017.pdf?sfvrsn=d63a3c9e_10)

1.2. The table below shows the key points in these policies:

Policy	Key points
Core Strategy Policy CS18 (mix of housing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a choice of homes, including affordable housing.</li> </ul>
Core Strategy Policy CS19 (affordable housing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires 35% affordable housing.</li> <li>At least 75% of affordable homes should be for rent.</li> <li>100% affordable housing on rural sites.</li> </ul>
Core Strategy Policy CS20 (rural sites for affordable homes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourages small-scale schemes for local affordable homes at selected small villages.</li> </ul>
Site Allocations Policies LA1-LA6 (one policy for each local allocation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>40% affordable housing required on six key sites called local allocations.</li> </ul>

1.3. Supplementary guidance on Dacorum's planning policies for affordable housing is currently provided by the following documents:

- Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (September 2013)  
[https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/planning-development/affordable-housing-spd-2013-nbsp-.pdf?sfvrsn=5b39f89f\\_0](https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/planning-development/affordable-housing-spd-2013-nbsp-.pdf?sfvrsn=5b39f89f_0)
- Affordable Housing SPD - Clarification Note (revised March 2022)  
[https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/affordable-housing-spd-clarification-note-update-march-2022.pdf?sfvrsn=119e079e\\_4](https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/affordable-housing-spd-clarification-note-update-march-2022.pdf?sfvrsn=119e079e_4)

1.4. There is a need to replace these documents by a new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), for the following main reasons:

1. To ensure that rented affordable housing is genuinely affordable for households in need of such housing.
2. To take account of changed Government guidance on affordable housing, including the introduction of First Homes.
3. To provide updated and expanded guidance on how our planning policies for affordable housing should be applied.

1.5. A draft new SPD has been produced for consultation purposes and is appended to this report (see Appendix 1). It is recommended that the draft SPD is referred to Cabinet on 21 May 2024 (after the 'purdah' period), with a recommendation that it be approved for public consultation purposes.

## **2 Draft Interim Affordable Housing SPD**

2.1 The purpose of the new SPD is to supplement our existing planning policies on affordable housing. It cannot change these policies. Revised planning policies on affordable housing will be included in the new Local Plan.

2.2 The new SPD is referred to as 'Interim', as it will be operational only until the new Local Plan is adopted. At that time it is envisaged that an updated Affordable Housing SPD will also be adopted, to supplement the new Local Plan's affordable housing policies.

2.3 There are six parts to the SPD (see paragraph 1.11 in the draft SPD for further information):

- Part 1: Introduction and policy context
- Part 2: Affordable housing qualifying sites and overall affordable housing percentage
- Part 3: Different affordable housing tenures
- Part 4: Affordable housing mix, design and layout
- Part 5: Considering planning applications
- Part 6: Other considerations

2.4 The draft SPD is a lengthy and technical document, because it needs to cover a wide range of issues. However, in practice, only some sections in the SPD will be relevant in the consideration of any planning application.

2.5 To obtain an overview of the SPD, please see the Executive Summary or the slightly longer 'key guidance' at the start of each section.

2.6 There are several references in the draft SPD to the South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment (2020). However, an updated version of the Local Housing Needs Assessment is now close to completion. Before going to Cabinet, the SPD will be amended to reflect the new Local Housing Needs Assessment. A few other minor changes may be made to the SPD prior to Cabinet. For example, the text on review mechanisms (paragraphs 25.13-25.19) has been expanded as requested by the Strategic Leadership Team on 7 February, but may be amended further once internal consultation is completed.

### **3 Options and alternatives considered**

3.1 The alternative to having a new SPD is to continue using the existing SPD and Clarification Note (see paragraph 1.3 above). However, these documents do not provide comprehensive guidance on all the key planning issues relating to affordable housing and in some respects they are out-of-date.

### **4 Consultation**

4.1 Consultation has been carried out with the following Council teams:

- Strategic Housing and Regeneration
- Housing Needs
- Supported Housing
- Legal
- Development Management
- Infrastructure Planning and Developer Contributions

4.2 The draft SPD has been considered by the Council's Strategic Leadership Team and at a Strategic Leadership Team/Portfolio Holders meeting.

### **5 Financial and value for money implications:**

5.1 Other than the cost of undertaking public consultation, the draft SPD has limited financial implications for the Council.

### **6 Legal Implications**

6.1 The draft SPD supports the relevant policies of the adopted Core Strategy and is fully consistent with changes to National Policy since its adoption.

### **7 Risk implications:**

7.1 Without a new SPD, the Council will be in a much weaker position to obtain the optimum affordable housing offer on housing developments, including:

- The amount of affordable housing.
- Affordable rented housing that is genuinely affordable.
- An appropriate mix of affordable housing types, tenures and sizes.

### **8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights**

8.1 A Community Impact Assessment (CIA) is prepared to support the Interim Affordable Housing SPD (see Appendix 2).

8.2 There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

### **9 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)**

9.1 There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

## **10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)**

10.1 There are no implications to Council infrastructure arising from this report.

## **11 Conclusions and Next Steps**

11.1 This report explains why a new Interim Affordable Housing SPD is needed and presents a draft for the Committee's considerations. Following the consideration and approval of this report by Scrutiny and its publication, officers take on board any recommendations made by Scrutiny ahead of the report being presented to Cabinet on 21 May. If approved by Cabinet, then the draft Interim Affordable Housing SPD will be published for public consultation.

11.2 There will be a four week period of public consultation on the draft SPD. It will follow the standard process for consultation on draft SPDs, in accordance with relevant legislation and our adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

11.3 Officers will give careful consideration to all comments submitted on the draft SPD. A revised version of the SPD will then be submitted to Members in the summer, with a recommendation that the SPD be adopted by Cabinet. It will then be a material planning consideration, which the Council will take into account when deciding planning applications for housing development.

11.4 Following public consultation, the draft SPD will be updated and finalised taking account of comments received. A consultation report will be prepared that summarises issues and feedback received through the public consultation. Both documents will be presented to Scrutiny as part of the process for formally adopting the SPD later this year.

11.5 Once the SPD has been adopted, it will be a material planning consideration, which the Council will take into account when deciding planning applications for housing development.