



Cabinet

Report for:	Cabinet
Title of report:	Interim Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document: Draft for Public Consultation
Date:	21 May 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Sheron Wilkie, Portfolio Holder for Place
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Interim Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document: Draft for Public Consultation Appendix 2: Community Impact Assessment
Background papers:	Dacorum Borough Council Statement of Community Involvement https://web.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/statement-of-community-involvement-adopted-july-2016.pdf?sfvrsn=4
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	SPD: Supplementary Planning Document

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Corporate Priorities	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need
Wards affected	ALL

<p>Purpose of the report:</p>	<p>To present the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to Cabinet for sign-off, prior to public consultation on the document.</p>
<p>Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):</p>	<p>1 That Cabinet approves the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation.</p> <p>2 That Cabinet notes that a final version of the SPD will be presented to Cabinet for adoption towards the end of 2024, following the conclusion of the consultation process.</p>
<p>Period for post policy/project review:</p>	<p>This Affordable Housing SPD document is for consultation only at this stage. A final version of the Affordable Housing SPD will be produced following the consultation period.</p> <p>Once the final document is agreed at committee, there will be a six-week legal review period allowing for any challenge. Following the six-week review period the SPD will formally be adopted by the Council.</p> <p>There is no requirement for a review of the SPD after adoption. The Council can choose to amend the SPD if there is a change to National, or Local, Policy on affordable housing. However, the text and policies from the SPD will be included in the Local Plan and, upon adoption of the Local Plan, the SPD would be superseded. The status of the Affordable Housing SPD will be clarified at the time of the future Local Plan adoption.</p>

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

- 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
- 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

- 1.4. There is a need to replace these documents with 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 the Council's planning policies for affordable housing should be applied.

- 1.5. A new draft SPD has been produced for consultation purposes and is appended to this report (see Appendix 1).

2 Draft Interim Affordable Housing SPD

- 2.1 The purpose of the new SPD is to supplement the Council's existing 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.
- 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.

3 Options and alternatives considered

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 also been considered by the Council's Strategic Leadership Team and at a Strategic Leadership Team/Portfolio Holders meeting.
- 4.3 The Council's Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft SPD on 6 March 2024. The committee did not make any recommendations to Cabinet, but the chair asked members to submit written comments on the document. None have been received.

Public consultation

- 4.4 If approved by Cabinet, the draft Interim Affordable Housing SPD will be published for public consultation.

4.5 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 which is included as part of the background papers to this report.

5 Financial and value for money implications:

Other than the cost of undertaking public consultation, which is covered by the Local Plan budget, the draft SPD has limited financial implications for the Council.

6 Legal Implications

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:

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). The SPD has been assessed as a neutral or positive impact when considering all protected characteristics. Public consultation on the draft Interim Affordable Housing SPD will enable the Council to consult with a much wider range of stakeholders, including those who represent protected and vulnerable groups both within the Borough and beyond.

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

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

There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

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

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

11. Statutory Comments

Monitoring Officer

This SPD will ensure that the Council's affordable housing policies are consistent with relevant government guidance and best practice and will provide a framework for consistent and informed decision making.

S151 Officer:

The SPD will make decision making more transparent and consistent, without any direct impact on the council financially.

12. Conclusions and Next Steps

- 12.1 This report explains why a new Interim Affordable Housing SPD is needed and presents a draft for Cabinet's considerations. 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.
- 12.2 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.
- 12.3 At this stage, the draft SPD will also be amended to reflect the revised South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment, which will contain a wide range of information and advice on housing needs including the need for affordable housing.
- 12.4 The updated draft SPD and the consultation report will be presented to Scrutiny and Cabinet as part of the process for formally adopting the SPD later this year.
- 12.5 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.