

Affordable Housing

Supplementary Planning Document

Initial Consultation Document

Consultation Dates:

Monday 9th November to Monday 21st December 2020



The Purpose of the SPD

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are produced to support the implementation of adopted planning policies, through the provision of additional detail or explanation that would not be appropriate to include with a Local Plan itself. An SPD cannot create new or amend existing planning policies nor can it prescribe that particular areas of land be developed for particular uses; this is the role of the Local Plans. Once adopted, SPDs are material considerations in the determination of planning applications. This Supplementary Planning Document will apply to the whole of East Suffolk, apart from the area within the Broads National Park, for which the Broads Authority is the Local Planning Authority.

The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document is being produced to provide guidance primarily in relation to the following policies contained in the Council's adopted Local Plans:

[Suffolk Coastal Local Plan \(September 2020\):](#)

- SCLP5.10: Affordable Housing on Residential Developments
- SCLP5.11: Affordable Housing on Exception Sites

[Waveney Local Plan \(March 2019\):](#)

- WLP8.2: Affordable Housing
- WLP8.6: Affordable Housing in the Countryside

Once adopted, the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document will replace the following documents:

- [Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document \(May 2012\)](#) – this relates to the former Waveney local planning authority area;
- [Supplementary Planning Guidance 2 Affordable Housing \(July 2004\)](#) – this relates to the former Suffolk Coastal area.

About this consultation

This is the first stage of consultation and will inform the preparation of the SPD. The aim of this consultation is to gather feedback on what you think the SPD should include and address.

The proposed content of the SPD and a series of consultation questions are set out further below.

Please respond to this consultation by **5pm Monday 21st December 2020**, via one of the following means:

- Complete the [online questionnaire](#);
- Email your response to planningpolicy@east Suffolk.gov.uk; or

- Post your response to Planning Policy & Delivery Team, Riverside, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 0EQ

Please note that by responding to this consultation you are accepting that your name and response will be available for public inspection and published online in accordance with the Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012). View the [data protection statement](#).

Next Steps

The scope and content of the SPD will be informed by consultation responses, after which a full draft of the SPD will be prepared. The draft SPD will be supported by Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment screening opinions and where necessary full assessments.

Public consultation will be undertaken on the full draft of the Supplementary Planning Document.

Affordable Housing

Whilst the cost of housing varies across East Suffolk, access to affordable housing is an issue across the district. Government statistics show that the ratio of earnings to house prices is on average 7.85 in East Suffolk (i.e. the average house is 7.85 times the average earnings¹), meaning that for many households market housing is not an option.

Needs for affordable housing have been identified through the Strategic Housing Market Assessments that were produced as part of the evidence base to inform the production of the two Local Plans.

Addressing needs for affordable housing is a corporate ambition of the Council, with both the Housing and the Planning services playing a key role.

The Council's [Housing Strategy \(2017-2023\)](#) sets out the Council's ambitions for increasing the provision of affordable housing and includes a priority of 'Increasing the supply of new housing to meet a range of needs – a more proactive role for East Suffolk supporting the development of affordable homes.'

The [Housing Development Strategy 2020-2024](#) sets out the Council's approach to direct provision of affordable housing, setting out an action to develop and publish a 3-year rolling development programme with an objective of achieving at least 50 units per annum.

Affordable housing is delivered through the planning system primarily through one of two ways – through policies that require a proportion of affordable housing as part of certain market housing developments and through support for affordable housing to come forward in certain circumstances as an exception to planning policies for housing (known as 'exception sites').

The adopted [Local Plans](#) contain policies which seek to support and facilitate the delivery of affordable housing to address the needs for affordable housing that have been identified in the evidence base underpinning the production of the two Local Plans.

Affordable housing is defined for planning purposes in Annex 2 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#). This includes the following tenures:

- Affordable Housing for Rent
- Starter homes
- Discounted market sales housing
- Other affordable routes to home ownership (shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale and rent to buy)

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www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian

The Government has recently consulted on proposals to introduce First Homes as a further affordable tenure and the Council will address this as necessary through the preparation of the SPD.

Proposed Content of the SPD

Based upon the content of the existing Supplementary Planning Guidance and Supplementary Planning Document, the policies in the Local Plans, evidence informing the Local Plans and known issues, the following topics are proposed to be covered in the SPD:

Definitions

It is proposed that the SPD will provide information in relation to different affordable housing tenures, with reference to the definitions in the NPPF, in relation to how these tenures can be operated.

The SPD will provide guidance on how affordable self or custom-build may be able to be provided, and the relationship between affordable housing and self and custom-build.

The SPD will also provide guidance on different models of community led housing.

Mix/tenure of affordable housing

Policies in the Local Plans set out requirements for a proportion of affordable housing provision as part of market housing developments. The SPD cannot and will not change these policy requirements.

It is proposed that the SPD will provide guidance on how an appropriate mix (size and tenure) of affordable housing is to be identified at the site specific level, within the scope of the Local Plan policies.

The SPD will also cover requirements for affordable housing on specialist housing developments (such as extra care accommodation).

Guidance will be provided on affordable housing provision in build to rent developments.

Section 106 agreements

Section 106 agreements are legal agreements through which the way in which affordable housing is provided and retained is secured.

It is proposed that model Heads of Terms (i.e. the content of Section 106 agreements) and model clauses are included in the SPD. Upon adoption of the SPD we plan to use these heads of terms as a default in all s106 agreement unless specific and exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise.

Occupancy and allocation

The SPD will explain the approach to occupancy / allocations of affordable properties in relation to different tenures.

The Council's allocations policy will remain outside of the SPD.

Calculation of financial contributions

The SPD will include guidance on the circumstances in which a commuted sum may be payable, how the amount will be determined and on the broad principles of how commuted sums will be spent. The SPD will not set the Council's policy or programme on the spending of commuted sums.

Viability assessments

Local Plan policies WLP8.2 and SCLP5.10 provide for exceptional circumstances under which the requirement for affordable housing under the policies may be varied. Guidance on viability appraisals is set out in Appendix 5 of Waveney Local Plan and Appendix G of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. The SPD will set out the necessary steps where a 'variation' to the requirement is sought.

Vacant buildings credit

Paragraph 63 of the NPPF states that where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped the affordable housing contribution should be reduced by that amount. The Council has an existing [guidance note](#) and it is proposed to bring this guidance into the SPD.

Design of affordable housing

The Local Plans expect that affordable housing will be built to the same design standards as market housing. The SPD will provide guidance on design matters related to affordable housing including how this relates to other design related policy/guidance such as Building for Life 12. Guidance will also be provided in relation to phasing.

Local Housing Needs Assessments

Policies SCLP5.11 and WLP8.6 require that affordable housing on exception sites would meet an identified local need. The SPD will provide guidance on how local need should be identified, for example how local surveys or assessments should be carried out and what information would be needed.

Community Infrastructure Levy

Advice will be provided on Discretionary Affordable Housing Relief for CIL and how this operates within the district along with any other affordable housing CIL considerations.

Questions

1. Do you consider that the proposed content of the SPD is appropriate?
Yes/No
If no, please suggest how the scope and content of the SPD should be amended.
2. Are there any elements of the existing [Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document \(May 2012\)](#) or the [Supplementary Planning Guidance 2 Affordable Housing \(July 2004\)](#) that should be retained?
Please provide details.
3. Are there any elements of the existing [Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document \(May 2012\)](#) or the [Supplementary Planning Guidance 2 Affordable Housing \(July 2004\)](#) that should **not** be retained?
Please provide details.
4. Are there any specific elements of the Local Plan policies that you consider require additional guidance in the SPD?
If yes, please explain what guidance is required.
5. Are there any elements of national policy on affordable housing that you consider require additional guidance in the SPD?
If yes, please explain what guidance is required.
6. Are there any specific elements of Section 106 agreements that you consider need particular explanation or guidance in the SPD?
If yes, please explain what guidance is required.
7. Do you have any views on the design of affordable housing that you consider should be addressed in the SPD?
8. Are you aware of any good practice in existing SPDs from elsewhere that could be applied in East Suffolk?
If yes, please provide details.
9. Do you have any other comments for us to consider in drafting the Affordable Housing SPD?