



North Devon Council and Torrige District Council

Report Date: 15th July 2022

Topic: North Devon and Torrige Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

Report by: Senior Planning Policy Officers (NDC/TDC)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This report provides feedback on recent consultation undertaken on a jointly prepared draft North Devon and Torrige Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), together with the Councils suggested responses, which are incorporated into a revised SPD.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. This Committee agrees the proposed revisions to the draft North Devon and Torrige Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, consequent of undertaken consultation, as presented in appendix 1.

2.2. This Committee agrees that the Councils adopt the North Devon and Torrige Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, provided as appendix 2.

2.3. This Committee delegates to the Torrige Planning Manager and the North Devon Head of Place, Property and Regeneration, in consultation with the Chairperson of this Committee approval of any minor amendments and corrections to the Affordable Housing SPD provided as appendix 2, prior the documents publication.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. To enable adoption of the North Devon and Torrige Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, which will provide additional guidance on the interpretation and implementation of relevant local plan policies, national planning policy and guidance in the interest of enhancing the delivery of affordable housing.

4. REPORT

4.1. The North Devon and Torrige Local Plan adopted in October 2018 (the "Local Plan") includes a commitment to prepare a range of supplementary planning documents. This report deals with the Affordable Housing

Supplementary Planning Document, which adds to the detail of relevant policy contained within the Local Plan and subsequently issued national planning policy and guidance.

- 4.2. Members will be aware that supplementary planning documents are limited in their scope, as they cannot alter adopted local plan policy, however they can reflect updated national planning policy.
- 4.3. SPDs are significant, as when adopted they will be taken as a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications and in respect of this SPD, will help to facilitate the more effective delivery of affordable housing.
- 4.4. A draft Affordable Housing SPD was considered by an Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group on 11th March 2022, which agreed the presented document for consultation. Consultation followed over a six-week period from 31st March to 13th May 2022. The consultation exercise was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Councils' Statement of Community Involvement. The draft SPD together with a statement of consultation was published on the Councils' websites on 31st March 2022. Copies of the documents were also made available for inspection at the Councils' principal offices. Statutory consultees, individuals and organisations included in the Councils' local plan data base were informed of the consultation with advice on how to view and comment on the document. Social media was also used to publicise the consultation event together with notices in the local press.
- 4.5. In response to the consultation, 272 comments were received, provided by 25 respondents, which comprised: 51 in support, 33 in support subject to amendment, 90 objections and 98 general comments. A summary of the responses together with a consideration of the issues raised and the amendments proposed to the draft SPD was presented in a schedule to the Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group on 27th June 2022. From the Group's discussion, a revised schedule of consultation responses and recommended changes to the draft SPD is provided as appendix 1 to this report.
- 4.6. This Committee is asked to consider the recommended responses to the consultation, as presented in appendix 1. The majority of comments received in response to the consultation resulted in a recommendation of no change to the SPD, on the basis that the raised issue is already addressed by the SPD, the sought change is outside of what can be achieved by an SPD and what is possible with regard to the scope of adopted policy in the North Devon and

Torrige Local Plan. Additionally, a significant number of comments were in support or provided a general comment.

4.7. A number of changes are however recommended to the draft SPD, the basis for such generally relates to the considered need to provide additional guidance, provide clarity and to ensure there is consistency of commentary throughout the document. The main points of change to the draft SPD, as set out in appendix 1, are:

- confirmation that the Councils' intention is to optimise the delivery of affordable housing, as enabled by the constraints of the Local Plan and national planning policy (new paragraph following 1.11);
- confirmation that affordable housing is also referred to as social housing (amendment to paragraph 4.1);
- recognition that locally provided information could be used to evidence housing need (new paragraph following table 2.1);
- detail provided as to how to access the housing research which supports the SPD (new paragraph following 2.25);
- clarification on the use of grant funding to deliver affordable housing (paragraph 4.4);
- confirmation of the range of housing which can be described as intermediate housing (paragraph 4.6);
- recognition that the Councils will utilise Policy ST17 to secure an appropriate housing mix, including size and type (paragraph 4.44);
- additional detail provided justifying the Councils position to retain the evidence split between social and intermediate housing, against the Government's expectation of increasing affordable home ownership (paragraph 5.24-5.26);
- recognition that subject to justification, the Councils may accept an alternative to securing maximum occupancy on the basis of bedspaces (new paragraph following 5.39);
- clarification that the Councils will seek affordable housing built to national space standards (paragraph 5.37); and
- confirmation of the trigger points, by housing numbers, with variance by site size, on when affordable housing will be required to be delivered as part of a development scheme (paragraphs 5.46 and 5.47).

4.8. In addition to the points of change the SPD presented in appendix 2 includes an update to the Foreword which reflects a status change from a draft to adopted SPD.



4.9. In reviewing the consultation comments this Committee will recognise the scope of enabled change to the SPD. It should be noted that this topic area, together with others will be subject to review, benefiting from updated evidence and an examination of policy options, as the Council update the current Local Plan.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Adoption of the Affordable Housing SPD forms part of the planning policy teams existing work programme, any associated cost in respect of document production, notification and publication will be shared across the Councils.

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. No impact identified.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. No environmental implications result from the recommendations of this report. All associated environmental considerations related to the implementation of Local Plan policies associated with the SPD were considered through the examination of the Local Plan.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

8.1. Schedule 2, paragraph 1.1.1-1.1.3 of the North Devon Council and Torrige District Council Joint Planning Policy Agreement.

9. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- North Devon and Torrige Local Plan 2001-2031 (adopted 2018):
<https://www.torrige.gov.uk/localplan>
- Draft North Devon and Torrige Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning



https://consult.torridge.gov.uk/portal/planning/localplan/spds/draft_affordable_housing_spd_1

- Practice Note 1: Affordable Housing on Development Sites:
<https://consult.torridge.gov.uk/portal/planning/localplan/adoption/practice/>
- National Planning Policy Framework (2021):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents>
- Town and Country Planning Regulations (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/contents/made>

(The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

11. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The North Devon Council and Torridge District Council Corporate Priorities have been considered in the drafting of the report.

12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers:

Cllr P. Watson (TDC) Lead member for Planning and Development.

Cllr M Prowse (NDC) Lead Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning Policy

Helen Smith (TDC) Planning Manager

Sarah-Jane Mackenzie Shapland (NDC) Head of Place, Property and Regeneration