

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 24th May 2012

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Policy and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Physical Environment

SUBJECT: Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document – Approval for a period of Public Consultation

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report seeks the approval of the Executive Board to publish the consultation draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for a six week period of public consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) the consultation draft Affordable Housing SPD (Appendix A) is approved by Executive Board for the purposes of public consultation for a six week period.**
- (2) any minor drafting amendments which may be made to the consultation draft Affordable Housing SPD prior to public consultation be delegated to the Operational Director – Policy, Planning and Transportation in consultation with the Executive Board Member, Physical Environment.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Affordable Housing

- 3.1 In planning terms 'affordable housing' refers to a particular type of housing tenure, which is delivered by a Registered Provider and secured in perpetuity. Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households who cannot afford to access suitable market housing.
- 3.2 National planning policy supports affordable housing being sought through the planning system on private housing sites as a form of 'planning gain'. At present, affordable housing in Halton is provided solely by Registered Providers, and is not sought on private housing sites as the adopted Unitary Development Plan does not contain the policy framework to enable this. The Core Strategy is set to introduce a policy requiring the provision of affordable housing on market housing

sites delivering 10 or more residential units. This policy is due to come into force later this year when the Core Strategy is adopted.

Purpose of the Affordable Housing SPD

- 3.3 The purpose of the Affordable Housing SPD is to provide greater certainty and clarity for all parties involved in the delivery of affordable housing in Halton through the planning system. It expands upon policy CS13: Affordable Housing in the Halton Core Strategy, providing guidance to prospective applicants. Specifically this SPD aims to:
- a) Maximise the opportunities available and ensure the smooth delivery of affordable housing to meet Halton's housing needs; and
 - b) Reduce uncertainty, ensure a consistent approach and provide clear guidance for all stakeholders to follow.

Halton's Affordable Housing Needs

- 3.4 By considering Halton's housing needs through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the financial viability of development through the Economic Viability Assessment, the Council has developed an affordable housing policy within the Core Strategy, policy CS13: Affordable Housing. This policy seeks to maximise affordable housing, whilst taking into account the financial viability of sites to deliver this requirement.
- 3.5 The Halton Core Strategy policy CS13: Affordable Housing states that affordable housing units will be provided, in perpetuity, on schemes including 10 or more dwellings (net gain) or of 0.33 hectares in size or greater for residential purposes. Affordable housing provision will be sought at 25% of the total residential units proposed. The Affordable Housing SPD provides the guidance required to assist developers to deliver this level of affordable housing across the Borough.

Next Steps

- 3.6 Once consultation on the draft Affordable Housing SPD has been conducted, the responses will be analysed and taken into account in making any revisions to the SPD. It is intended that a further report will then be taken to Executive Board, seeking formal adoption of the Affordable Housing SPD to assist the implementation of the Core Strategy policy.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The SPD once adopted will form part of Halton's Local Development Framework (LDF). The content of the SPD will thus be a material consideration for the determination of all residential development applications which trigger an affordable housing requirement. The SPD will therefore provide Halton Borough Council with greater detail and certainty to deliver affordable housing across the Borough.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 No other implications.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The SPD will help to ensure that children and young people across the Borough grow up in, and thrive in, safe residential environments and communities.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Although the priority of employment, learning and skills in Halton is not specifically referred to in the SPD, there is a close relationship between the economy and the housing market, with housing a driver of, but also responsive to, local economic growth and performance.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The priority for a healthier Halton is reflected within the SPD through supporting the development of well designed residential communities which are sustainable and accessible to all.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The SPD will contribute to ensuring high standards of residential design for affordable units, this will include creating places that feel safe, secure and welcoming for everyone.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The SPD fully supports the creation of good quality residential environments which will assist in the urban regeneration of the Borough.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 No legal or financial risks to the Council have been identified.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The SPD addresses a number of equality and diversity issues particularly in meeting the housing needs of Halton's communities. The SPD also encourages developers to meet high access standards in the design of affordable housing provision such as those for wheelchair accessible housing.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

9.1 These are set out in Section 3, Supporting Information.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 No alternative options have been considered at this stage.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 The SPD will be effective from the date of adoption by the Council's Executive Board and it will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications from this point. It is hoped that the SPD will be adopted at the same time as the Halton Core Strategy, later this year.

12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Halton Core Strategy Revised Proposed Submission Document (May, 2011)	Places, Economy and Transport Team, Municipal Building	Alasdair Cross
Halton Core Strategy Post Submission Changes (May, 2012)	Places, Economy and Transport Team, Municipal Building	Alasdair Cross
Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (May 2011)	Places, Economy and Transport Team, Municipal Building	Alasdair Cross
Economic Viability Assessment (November 2010)	Places, Economy and Transport Team, Municipal Building	Alasdair Cross
The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012	Places, Economy and Transport Team, Municipal Building	Alasdair Cross