

## LOCAL PLAN SUB COMMITTEE - 2 JULY 2020

### PART I – NOT DELEGATED

#### 6. LOCAL PLAN – HOUSING MIX AND TYPE (DCES)

##### 1 Summary

1.1 This report sets out the issues which the new Local Plan will need to address in relation to housing mix and type, specialist and supported housing, self-build and custom housebuilding, and houses in multiple occupation. It also sets out the policy wording to be contained within the new Local Plan.

##### 2 Details

2.1 In addition to providing a significant increase in the quantum of new housing delivered, to meet future housing needs in Three Rivers it is important that new housing provides for a range of housing types and sizes. Providing a balance of housing will help meet the varied needs of the community and contribute to sustainability objectives.

2.2 Sustainable communities contain a mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures as well as jobs and local services that make a neighbourhood successful and it is important that new housing is provided across all sectors of the housing market to meet a wide variety of household needs and add to the choice of housing available. New homes therefore need to comprise a mix of tenures and prices, sizes and types.

2.3 There is also an ageing population in the District, and it is important that new development includes specific forms of housing for older people, as well as specialist accommodation to meet other needs.

2.4 Together with the other SW Herts local planning authorities the Council has undertaken a Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA). This is a comprehensive update on the Strategic Market Housing Assessment completed in 2016.

2.5 The LHNA considered a number of demographic indicators (based on the 2016 ONS projections) which include:

- An expected population increase of 9.9%
- When linked to the standard methodology Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) the population increase would be 19.3% and therefore some net in-migration would be expected to meet this shortfall.
- The largest growth in population is expected amongst the over 65s with an expected increase of 44.2%

##### Housing Mix

2.6 The policy basis the housing mix on modelling provided in the LHNA which provides separate housing mix requirements for market housing, affordable home ownership, and social/affordable rented housing.

2.7 The LHNA reveals different profiles in the size mix across the different tenures, with social and affordable rented housing being more heavily skewed towards smaller homes, market housing being more heavily skewed towards larger homes, and affordable home ownership housing sitting between the two.

- 2.8 It should be noted that the policy allows for the mix to be adjusted on a case by case basis. This may be when specific market conditions are considered or in the case of affordable housing when the Council's Housing Register suggests another mix may be appropriate in a certain location.
- 2.9 Where adjustment to the proportions is sought, applications should explain how relevant factors have contributed to the mix of housing being proposed.

#### Bungalows

- 2.10 The supporting text to the policy has included reference to bungalows however these have not been directly referred to in the policy itself. The text recognises that there may be situations where bungalows would be supported, however as low-density form of development it was not considered appropriate to set a target for these.

#### Housing for Older People and People with Disabilities

- 2.11 Given the strong link between people's ages and levels of disability, the LHNA considers housing needs from these groups together.
- 2.12 In assessing the need for housing for older people the LHNA sets out that there is projected to be a notable increase in the population aged 65 and over and given the ageing population and higher levels of disability and health problems amongst older people the LHNA identifies that there is likely to be an increased requirement for specialist housing options in future.
- 2.13 The supporting text provides the different definitions of housing for older people as set out in national planning practice guidance. The LHNA projected a requirement of 1,156 homes from 2020 to 2036 for these types of homes. The LHNA then divides this between 'housing with support' which covers retirement living and sheltered housing, and 'housing with care' which covers extra care housing or housing-with-care.
- 2.14 The LHNA also considers the need for older persons accommodation within a C2 Use Class (residential care homes and nursing homes) which also suggests a notable need in future for 683 care beds 2020 – 2036.

#### Self-Build and Custom Build Housing

- 2.15 The Council maintains a register of individuals or interested associations seeking a plot of land to construct a self-build or custom build house as a sole or main residence. There are currently 14 people on Part 1 of the register (local demand). In consideration of the number of people on the register there is no specific need for a policy to require a particular proportion of housing be self-build or custom build.
- 2.16 The LHNA notes that there is potential for larger development schemes to provide serviced plots for custom-build development to help drive forward delivery rates, and recommended new requirements for housing diversification on large sites in areas of high housing demand. As such, the policy supports strategic sites providing serviced plots.
- 2.17 However, the analysis within the LHNA suggests that there is not anticipated to be any substantial under-supply of sites to meet needs for self-build and custom housing and as such there is no specific need for a policy to require that a proportion of housing comes forward as self-build or custom housing.

### Student Housing

- 2.18 There are very few student households within Three Rivers and the wider South West Hertfordshire area, with the University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield being the only higher education institution close to the District. The majority of demand for student accommodation is on campus and the University is seeking to expand accommodation through redevelopment of existing facilities and development of new halls of residence to provide additional bedspaces. The LHNA does not identify a specific requirement for student housing within Three Rivers or the South West Hertfordshire area.

### Build to Rent Sector

- 2.19 The build to rent sector is defined as purpose-built housing that is typically 100% rented. Schemes usually offer longer tenancy agreements of three years or more and will typically be professionally managed stock in single ownership and management control.
- 2.20 This form of housing can make an important contribution to the supply of housing and meeting the needs of the community, including the needs of a mobile workforce, young professionals, households who have deferred house purchase or those who prefer to rent as a lifestyle choice. Build to rent schemes can also help to support housing delivery in times of economic and market uncertainty by providing more certainty of an end buyer for investors, helping to de-risk schemes.
- 2.21 It should be recognised that these schemes look to longer term returns rather than short term 'market' gains (compared to more traditional open market schemes), and will have regard to its particular characteristics during the decision making process when assessing the acceptability and viability of any schemes.

### Houses in Multiple Occupation

- 2.22 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are dwellings lived in by more than one family or groups of individuals who share facilities such as a kitchen or bathroom and can contribute to meeting the housing needs of some of the population, offering a more affordable way to live in the District.
- 2.23 It is important to get the balance of housing right and conventional residential development is generally considered to be more sustainable as it meets the broadest spectrum of housing need. While planning permission may not always be required to convert a dwelling to an HMO, where permission is required, the balance of housing will be considered as well as living conditions for future occupiers.
- 2.24 The Draft Housing Mix Policy is attached in Appendix 1.

## **3 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

- 3.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets.

## **4 Financial, Legal, Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications**

- 4.1 None specific.

## **5 Recommendation**

5.1 That the Local Plan Sub Committee:

- Note the contents of this report and recommend to the Policy and Resources Committee the Draft Housing Mix Policy as set out in Appendix 1 is included in the Local Plan, and
- That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning Policy & Projects and the Director of Communities and Environmental Services in consultation with the portfolio holder to make minor changes to all draft policies.

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### **Background Papers**

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

Planning Practice Guidance

Local Housing Needs Assessment (2020)

### **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Draft Housing Mix Policy