

Information from Planning

There are a number of ways that the Council can influence the provision of affordable housing within the City. Planning has a role to play in this but its influence is limited and based on reacting to the planning applications that are submitted for major housing developments. The Council can have a more proactive role in increasing affordable housing by using Council land and resources to build more affordable houses or fund RPs to build more.

In terms of the role of Planning, our approach to meeting needs for affordable and specialist housing is set out in Local Plan policy CP7. Policy CP7 sets out the Council approach to seeking affordable housing on planning applications and seeks to secure a maximum of 30% of the units on all planning applications for residential development of 15 units or more as affordable. The policy allows for a range of tenures to be provided and sets out the expectation that affordable housing is provided on site, and well integrated or 'peppercotted' within wider market housing layouts. The policy also supports opportunities for the release of public sector land, and particularly land owned by the Council, in order to provide sites for the delivery of new Council Housing and affordable homes.

The Local Plan policy, in terms of the percentage secured and threshold, was set based on local evidence and an assessment of what could be achieved in Derby due to viability. Detailed viability testing was undertaken during the preparation of the Local Plan, which clearly showed that 30% was the maximum that development could afford in Derby and actually many sites would not be able to afford that level. We set the policy at the more aspirational end of what the viability was showing to maximise the affordable housing on sites that could afford it. The policy is however flexible enough to reduce the affordable housing percentage on sites that cannot afford 30% or where there are competing planning objectives which are seen as higher priorities.

Any changes to this policy, to either increase the percentage of affordable housing secured or lower the threshold of where we seek affordable housing would have to be done through a review of the Local Plan. Such a change would need to be robustly justified with local evidence of need and viability. Work on a review of the Local Plan, will be undertaken on a Housing Market Area basis, in conjunction with Amber Valley and South Derbyshire. Whilst the recent withdrawal of Amber Valley's Local Plan at Examination stage means the HMA authorities will be looking to start the process of beginning a review earlier than anticipated; more detailed work such as providing evidence of housing need would not be started for at least 18-24 months.

The Local Plan policy is also backed up by the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document that was recently reviewed and published in August 2018. This sets out further details on how the Council secures affordable housing, including more detail on issues such as tenures, delivery, peppercotting and standards.

On any given planning application there are always competing objectives in terms of other planning obligations, but also in terms of regeneration priorities or major infrastructure

delivery such as drainage. These can have an impact on the level of affordable housing that will be achieved on a site. Officers will always try to negotiate an agreement that strikes a balance between these objectives. Members of Planning Control Committee will ultimately agree priorities on each planning application and may have to make difficult decisions over the provision of affordable housing and the delivery of a new primary school for example. The provision of affordable housing through the planning process must always be set in the context of ensuring all impacts of a development are mitigated in the most appropriate way. These parameters make it difficult for the planning process alone to make a significant impact on housing waiting lists. It needs to be looked at in a wider context.