

Final Statement of Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment

for the

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

October 2006

Sustainability Appraisal/SEA process so far

- A. A **Scoping Report** was prepared in April 2006 with the purpose of establishing the Sustainability Appraisal Framework for the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The framework was amended in the light of comments from the four main environmental bodies who were consulted in accordance with SA/SEA guidance (English Nature, Environment Agency, Countryside Agency and English Heritage).
- B. The assessment itself was contained within the **Sustainability Report** (June 2006) using the framework established through the Scoping Report process. The objectives of the SPD were tested against the framework and revealed positive or neutral/no impacts against the majority of the sustainability framework objectives. Two uncertain relationships and no conflicting relationships were identified.
- C. The sustainability impacts of options for the content of the SPD were then explored. The options related to the following three aspects of the SPD:
 - o The tenures that should be considered affordable
 - o The types of development to which Policy HG1 should apply
 - o The distribution of affordable housing within development sites
- D. This process enabled the selection of the more sustainable option for each of the above three issues for incorporation in the draft SPD.

Consultation Outcomes

- E. The Sustainability Report was published for consultation in conjunction with the draft SPD itself. No specific comments were received on the content of the Sustainability Report. The more significant changes made to the SPD as a result of the consultation process are as follows:
 - a) Confirmation that the site size thresholds in Policy HG1 relate to the gross number of dwellings being provided.
 - b) Addition of a reference to the potential use of cascade arrangements within section 106 agreements where there is a lack of certainty over the availability of public funding.
 - c) Clarification that any submitted financial appraisal will be assessed based on reasonable costs and assumptions and that the aim will be

for the Council and the applicant to reach an agreed position on the appraisal.

- d) Address an anomaly regarding the calculation of in lieu contributions so that it is consistent with the SPD's approach to the off-site provision of affordable housing.
- e) Confirmation that, in the absence of Total Cost Indicators (TCIs) or their equivalent, current local and land build costs will be used to calculate the levels of in lieu contributions

F. These refinements are not considered to be significant in sustainability or strategic environmental assessment terms as they relate purely to the process by which affordable housing will be secured. They do not impact upon the three specific option areas explored in the Sustainability Report.

Monitoring

G. The monitoring arrangements were set out in the Sustainability Report and in the draft SPD itself and have not needed to be altered as a result of the consultation. The confirmed arrangements are therefore as follows:

“The monitoring of this SPD will be encompassed in the Council's Annual Monitoring Report. The factors which are particularly relevant to the subject matter of this guidance are;

- The number of affordable housing completions
- The number of affordable housing commitments
- The number of affordable housing commitments on exceptions sites
- Average income compared to the average house price in Rother”